

## Challenges of Traditional Markets Administration in Yagba Communities, North-Central Nigeria, 1900-2010

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### Abstract

Market remains central to the socio-economic lives of the Yagba people, a sub-Yoruba ethnic group in North-Central Nigeria. Yagbaland, being a society whose dominant pre-occupation is agriculture, the administration of the traditional markets become imperative because of the markets vital position to their economic base. However, there are certain clogs which have made effective and efficient administration of the markets partially unattainable. In view of this, this study examines the challenges from colonial to post-independence and the implication for the development of the people. Methodology adopted for the study is historical, involving archival materials, oral interviews and secondary sources.

### INTRODUCTION

Market administration becomes imperative when cognisance is taken of the significance of market in the socio-economic life of Yagba people. Market has different meanings, referring to a lot of things and idea. Scholars from various disciplines have attached different meanings to the word market. Hodder<sup>1</sup> defined market as 'an authorized public concourse of buyers and sellers of commodities meeting at a place more or less strictly limited or defined, at an appointed time.' Good<sup>2</sup> defined markets as 'specific sites where sellers and buyers assemble on appointed days, to exchange goods and services and to participate in a variety of social activities complementing routine business transactions.' Polanyi<sup>3</sup> defined market as institutions comprising a supply crowd or a demand crowd or both. He expatiated further that both supply crowds and demand crowds are multiplicity of hands desirous to acquire, or alternatively, to dispose of, goods in exchange. Ayittey<sup>4</sup> contended that market was inevitable even if self-sufficiency was assumed to be strictly operative. It was physically impossible for a homestead to produce all its needs on the farm. By necessity, a surplus over its needs was required to exchange where exchange could be made more easily. Olaoba<sup>5</sup> upheld in the simplest form, that market can be defined as 'the institution for the exchange of goods and services'. Hodder, Olaoba and Ayittey seem to have seen market as a meeting point of actualising economic desires while, Good's definition of market covers the whole essence of what market place can be used for apart from economic activities.

The concept of administration, in its broadest sense, is synonymous with management. Administration conveys the idea of group cooperation under executive direction, seeking fulfilment of goals through planning and organisation. Administration must exist in any organisation that is set up for a definite purpose or objective. A market, for instance, consists of many different groups of people coming together in a complicated process of buying and selling, and large numbers of people have to be supervised, coordinated and controlled. So, any establishment in which large numbers of people are involved, calls for administration, because administration is the capacity of coordinating many, and often conflicting, social energies in a single organism, so adroitly that they shall operate as a unit.<sup>6</sup> Administration is thus defined as the pivot on which social stability rests. This is because administration ensures the establishment of institutional processes and machinery through which the function of an enterprise is carried out from day-to-day.<sup>7</sup> Markets are indigenous institutions and all market places can be seen economically as mechanisms designed to rationalise the fundamental problems of collection and distribution posed by spatial and temporal variations in demand and supply.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, marketing, according to Khol and Downey,<sup>9</sup> is defined as 'the performance of all business activities involved in the flows of goods and services from the point of initial... production until they are in the hands of ultimate consumer.' Dahl and Hammond<sup>10</sup> appear to follow the same theme, and view marketing as a sequential series of functions that need to be performed as the input or product moves from its point of primary production to ultimate consumption. The underlying idea is that production ends and marketing begins when transfer of ownership takes place. The charge to marketing, in an exchange system, is to effect coordination between what is produced by the producers and demanded by the customers.

Marketing is, therefore, nothing more than one dimension, an ongoing process, within the exchange system that serves to bridge the gap between the producer and consumer. Being a bit more specific, marketing might be defined as the set of economic and behavioural activities that are involved in coordinating the various stages of an economic activity from production to consumption.

According to Olaoba,<sup>11</sup> the origin of market is shrouded in mystery. The market seems to have evolved and developed long after farming methods were perfected and practised in the traditional Yoruba society. Indeed, several different concepts, variables, and kinds of analysis have been employed in the search for an

understanding of market development.

Markets, in Yagba society, play a vital role in the economic, socio-cultural and political life of the people. Economically, they serve as centre for collection and local exchange of produce originating in the immediate hinterland of a market. Also, the markets are not only economic institutions but serve socio-cultural and political functions. Therefore, it is not surprising that markets can be and are used for nearly every conceivable purpose that requires a large number of people gathering, together under controlled conditions.

Furthermore, markets provide an avenue for social intercourse, to meet people, to gossip or to discuss and keep abreast of local affairs. Bohannan<sup>12</sup> asserts that in West Africa...markets were major centres of entertainment. Dancers, singers, musicians and other artists display their skills in the market. Besides, markets serve as centres of inter-ethnic contact and channels of communication. In the words of Good<sup>13</sup>,

improved roads, modern forms of transport, increased literacy...  
transistor radios, and in selected areas, television have all been  
instrumental in helping to overcome many factors that have  
traditionally impeded information flow in Africa. However,  
despite the often remarkable advances in communication... majority  
of rural inhabitants are illiterate and most people outside the towns  
still do not own or have access to radio.

Moreover, market places are associated with religious activities. Markets serve as avenues for the performance of public rituals. Sacrifices are made to the market spirits for the peace and tranquillity of a town or community. Handling the market spirits with disdain or levity could spell doom. Ojo<sup>14</sup> gave an example where Ewi of Ado-Ekiti through diviners and priests forecast disaster for the town and implored the town people to keep away from the market for a day in order to propitiate the market spirits. The distrust of the traditional ceremonies and superstitions by many people in the town made the warning to be ignored. The resultant effect was that;

On the day the offering should have been made, a man ran amok,  
marcheting a girl to death in the market and seriously injuring  
several other people. All in the market fled, and marketing  
operations were not resumed until the people had been assured  
that the necessary offerings to the market spirit had been made.

Bohannan<sup>15</sup> commented that markets were consecrated with shrines associated with them. The consecration emanated primarily from the need for peace and calm at the market place. 'It was believed such consecration would guarantee that supernatural sanctions would back up the political authorities in the maintenance of peace in the market place'.

Moreover, the Yagba indigenous markets are always under the watchful eye of officials. These are usually appointed authorities, especially the market chief and crops of assistants appointed by the traditional rulers with the duties of keeping the peace and order, enforcing regulations, preventing dishonest dealing and maintaining the cleanliness and repair of the market. Some are in charge of levying a fee on goods entering the market and charging rents on stalls. These are market administrators and their position within the market is, therefore, strategic and pivotal.

## STUDY AREA

The study area is Yagba communities, a sub-Yoruba ethnic group in North-Central Nigeria. They have boundaries with the Nupe in the North, the Ekiti in the South and the Ijumu and Bunu in the South-East. They have approximate land area of 3,454 square kilometres. The National Population Census put the population figure at 331,329.<sup>16</sup> Yagba society is undulating having dotted chains of hills interspersed with small rivers. Some parts of Yagba settlements verging the South Western States have rain forest type of vegetation with tall trees and thick forest. Most of the residents are predominantly farmers. People in this area grow cocoa, coffee, banana, orange as cash crops in addition to limited corn, cassava and yams. The appearance of marketable surpluses and the development of exchange eventually led to trade relations among the indigenous Yagba communities, and subsequently, the creation of local markets. Rural markets are the major outlets for the surplus production of the farmers and they serve to link villages with local and urban markets. In Yagba communities, the emergence of markets was as a result of local exchange needs. Being a society that is organised on subsistence economy, whose main pre-occupation is agriculture, the people were concerned with production for consumption and inter house exchange. Such pattern of production, which was primarily subsistence in nature, provided little or no room for specialisation as each household had to practically produce all its needs. With this system of subsistence life and exchange of commodities done mostly by barter, marketing process seems not to play much role. Thus, this system of subsistence production of the people fits into the claim of Clifford<sup>17</sup> that,

the vast majority of the indigenous population is still independent of the outside world for all their essential supplies. They can and do spin their own thread, weave their own garments, provide their own food stuffs and even when necessity arises, forge their own tools and make their own pottery. For them, imports from Europe are still in the main luxuries with which they can dispense. However, with time and as individual specialised, it gave rise to the production of marketable surpluses, which could not be exchanged easily for goods and services produced out of the farm. With this came the assertion of Hopkins<sup>18</sup> that: it is now something of a common place to point out that the conventional 'subsistence economy' in which each household produced its own requirements, had little application in pre-colonial West Africa. More so, the disparity in the vegetation zone necessitated

dependency of one zone on the other.

Also, Olaoba,<sup>19</sup> while quoting Dush and Osuji said, market as a social and economic institution, had long been recognised since the stone age, when man in equilibrium with nature, was able to exchange certain commodities he had with those he lacked but needed. This claim was further attested to by Johnson<sup>20</sup> thus, households engaged in craft production seem to have purchased not only their food; but also their raw materials. Weaving households for example did not produce their own cotton thread but purchased them from others. As such, it was the appearance of marketable surpluses and the development of exchange that eventually led to trade relations among the indigenous Yagba communities. Exchange of goods in a local scale and internal exchange between different parts of Yagba communities, had for long, been features of the economy. Trade by barter then became popular among the indigenous Yagba communities in the early days, but due to its disadvantages such as the double coincidence of wants, lack of unit of measure, difficulty of holding large stocks of commodities in storage for future exchange, the use of money as a medium of exchange evolved and this marked the beginning of the development of an efficient marketing system. That is, specialisation of production between different parts of Yagba communities and neighbouring regions unavoidably calls for and in turn, stimulates the growth of an extensive system of trading and markets. The Yagba word for market is *Ojà*, and they have always conceptualised the market in their everyday conversations, especially, the processes of marketing such as *Ojà títà* (process of selling) and *Ojà rírà* (process of buying). One good example of Yagba philosophy and world-view fits into the words of Olaoba; the world is a market place while heaven is the home; hence the saying, *Ayé l'ojà, òrun n'ilé*.<sup>21</sup> Also, there is this belief that market and marketing activities must be stopped if after sometimes there has not been rain. When this is done, the belief is that those preventing rain from falling through diabolical machination would be forced to release it when there is no buying and selling in the market. This action, is however, accompanied with performance of certain rituals or sacrifices.

Marketing activities in Yagba communities have other concepts. There is, for example, the concept of market which traditionally could be at five or nine day interval. Besides this, there are daily markets. The good thing about the market concept is that the producers could always have a centralised place where they displayed their wares.

In Yagba communities, the concept of daily markets served a good purpose for daily needs while the concept of occasional days indicated the fact that there are products, which are not necessarily needed on daily basis. As such, the concept recognised the importance of some products, which have to come from somewhere else other than the immediate surroundings. In all these, the Yagba communities show a good skill of economic activities, in that they are able to balance between urgency and what could not be immediately needed.

## **CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL MARKET ADMINISTRATION IN YAGBA COMMUNITIES, NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA, 1900-2010**

The general condition of physical insecurity which prevailed in Yagba society in pre-colonial days posed a challenge to smooth marketing activities and administration. Lack of central authority in Yagba society made it difficult to have a strong organised force to defend their small independent domains. Hence, the end of political intrigues in Nupeland, which led to a durable and regularised system of succession, made the new Nupe kingdom sought for expansion. This, in turn, culminated in the exploitation of the surrounding people in its drive for economic prosperity and local military supremacy.<sup>22</sup> This led to the invasion of Yagba communities with the military operations in order to acquire slaves. The series of raids became intensified and more incessant. The Nupe invaders plundered without compunction in the markets of Yagba communities which led to the disruption of economic activities leading to the extinction of market activities. Market activities were in comatose in the course of the invasion as market centres provided a convenient raiding base for the Nupe. Large scale devastation of lives, properties and continued threat to their existence made Yagba people to seek refuge on the hill-tops and forests. So, insecurity was a limiting factor in the effective and smooth market administration in pre-colonial Yagba communities.

Moreover, in a related development to the above challenge, Yagba communities who acquiesced to pay tribute to the Nupe as a sign of submission came under the control of Nupe representatives known as *Ogba*. The *Ogba* were installed to manage the collection and dispatch of annual tribute. They served as the link between the

Nupe potentiates and saddled with the responsibilities of collecting tributes and to ensure absolute loyalty of the people. However, lack of refraining influence on the *Ogba* so appointed made them see themselves as local chiefs. They forcibly maintained the loyalty of the people and most times, the market places provided an appropriate avenue to enforce the collection of revenue. Due to high-handedness and belligerent attitude of the appointed *Ogba*, market population was always scanty. More so, there were always clashes between the *Ogba* and the people in the markets. This was borne out of the fact that, some local people were given the responsibility of *Ogba*, for it was believed by the Nupe lords that local people would be able to know the nooks and crannies of Yagba villages and this would ensure adequate exploitation of the human and material resources of the fiefs. Coupled with this, the emergence of Ejuku a Yagba community as a centre for tributes collection was greatly resented by other Yagba communities. Others detested the idea of elevating the community to a position of prominence, especially the way the Nupe were capitulating Ejuku into a position of power and authority.

Also, in the establishment and maintenance of the markets in Yagba communities, communal effort was always employed. This required the services of the young and able bodied men in the communities to clear the bush around the market places and to help in enforcing and implementing market policies assigned them. However, these able bodied men were taken as captives to Nupeland and their absence had adverse impact on market administration in Yagba communities.

Additionally, in the pre-colonial Yagba society, there was no central authority. Yagba society was not thoroughly organised into a single government, in the modern sense. There had, at no time, a paramount chief or ruler. In short, Yagba society lacked powerful monarchies<sup>23</sup>. In most cases, lineages fused together to form a village or town. Some mini-states have internal divisions such that two or more lineages formed component subsidiary units within the community<sup>24</sup>. With this political arrangement or structure, each clan had its own market. Hence, it was observed that in a single community, there existed several clan markets under separate market authorities and most times operated on the same market day. This system made a well coordinated market administration difficult. For instance, in Mopa, according to the *Obaàró* of Mopa, Chief Toyé Aloko<sup>25</sup>, there were several markets in the community, though with some going into extinct, leaving few. The markets had existed among different clans that constituted Mopa in pre-colonial time. In fact, the establishment of *Ojà-idi igbá* market in Mopa which originally belonged to *Ilçtçjú*, one of the several clans that made up the community, was an attempt to rejuvenate and maintain this clan identity with the market.

Ejuku and Jege communities equally had their own shares of different clans with known markets. It was a pre-colonial feature which was a challenge to a well coordinated and effective market administration in Yagba communities. This habit of clan affinity to a particular market occasionally resurfaced when political intrigue in a community make clans in such villages to attempt to establish markets known or associated with such clans.

Furthermore, there were certain human and spiritual forces<sup>26</sup> that militated against the presence of market in some communities. The establishment of market in a community would definitely result in people from different villages and communities coming together for marketing activities. Hence, with the presence of people from all walks of life, development was bound to take place in such communities where the markets were established. But there were forces that abhorred development in a community, as such, every effort at having a market that could engender development in such community were rebuffed and frustrated. That was why some markets did not see the light of the day or fizzled out while the surviving ones remain small with skeletal patronage until those powerful forces were appeased.

Besides, market places, for instance, consists of many different groups of people coming together in a complicated process of buying and selling with large numbers of people. So, in any establishment in which large numbers of people were involved, disputes inevitably arose and violent fights occurred. Quarrels emanated over space in the market, and between creditors and debtors. As a result of the small extent of the market places, traders most times struggled with one another over space to display their wares in the market. Also, trading was at times done on credit basis between the traders and buyers or among the traders themselves and to collect debt from someone who persistently refused to pay resulting in insults which often times degenerated to fisticuffs. Cases of theft as well caused uproar in the market places. Instances like this became a recurrent decimal or challenge that market administrators had to grapple or contend with so as to ensure smooth marketing activities.

Another challenge of market administration in pre-colonial Yagba society was lack of financial capability to put up a permanent structure. Most of the market places were in the open air under trees with few sheds to provide shades to the traders and buyers. Timber and palm frond were the common materials used, and these were susceptible to fire outbreak or disaster and disruption of marketing activities in the course of rain.

## CHALLENGES OF MARKET ADMINISTRATION IN COLONIAL YAGBA COMMUNITIES

The British colonial administration became effective as from 1900 with the termination of Nupe rule in Yagba society<sup>27</sup>. Thus, in administering the area, indirect rule system hitherto adopted by the Nupe over Yagba communities was retained. Due to this, Nupe men were appointed as district heads. However, their high-



handedness and belligerent character especially, in the collection of taxes, as it was exhibited in the pre-colonial days continued. Meanwhile, the market places were always an avenue to collect such taxes. As a result of this, Nupe appointees were vehemently resisted. In fact, their high-handedness and belligerent character triggered protest such as *moköbön*<sup>28</sup> which literally means the Nupe is rejected. Hence, the use of the erstwhile Yagba arch-enemies in the administration produced a hostile and precarious environment, and this made smooth market administration impossible.

Moreover, the political intrigues among the various village heads in Yagba were a challenge to market administration in colonial Yagba. The Native Administrative system instituted by the colonialists to maintain law and order and to exploit the subjects translated into practice by assessment and collection of taxes. The Native Authority system was established around the traditional rulers; hence, the British political overlords felt Yagba society, whose political organisation was acephalous in nature could be better dealt with by organising them under one authority or district headship. This idea of district headship which was mooted by the Resident in 1913 was not to be until 1924<sup>29</sup> as a result of uncompromising attitudes of some village heads that were approached who wanted to guard their autonomy. However, despite the controversies it generated, in 1924, the Olukotun of Ife, Chief Ajibola Asejogba (1) was chosen as the district head. The newly installed district head performed the duties conferred on him. He toured the areas under his jurisdiction and saw to the assessment and collection of taxes. Unfortunately, the village heads that would have facilitated effective market activities and administration were uncooperative. According to Olorunmonu,<sup>30</sup> in 1928, the Oba of Ife was at Kabba as a plaintiff before the District Officer, Dr.C.K. Meek, in the case against the Isanlu community under Oba Arungbemi (1915-1935) for their unwillingness to cooperate with him as the paramount ruler of Yagba.

Additionally, poor road networks in Yagba land militated against market administration in colonial Yagbaland. Most Yagba communities were isolated from the major market towns and they had to resort to amateur road construction. By 1912<sup>31</sup>, the stretch linking Kabba/Isanlu/Egbe was cleared. *Iroko* trunks strong enough for motor were provided over small rivers<sup>32</sup>. In fact, to ease the problem of transportation, plans were made in the early 1920s to build motorable roads. In 1923, Niven, Assistant District Officer for Kabba reported that work had started on Pategi-Ilorin and Okene-Kabba network of roads<sup>33</sup>. By 1927, 27miles of roads had been built between Egbe and Pategi while Ife-Olukotun, Ponyan and Jege combined, for example in 1935 to clear a 26miles stretch of road in order to establish a link with Omuo-Oke a major population and market border town in the Southern Province<sup>34</sup>. The implication of the bad road networks on marketing activities was the inability of the colonialists and their agents to traverse those communities to assess the market activities and to collect data on the prices of commodities. All these efforts at roads construction were evidence of the palliative measures towards ameliorating the challenges posed by poor road networks to market administration.

In addition to the above challenge and as earlier mentioned, withdrawal to inaccessible places made it difficult for the colonialists to effectively administer the markets of the affected areas. In 1910, this inaccessibility made James<sup>35</sup>, a colonial officer and Dr. Craig<sup>36</sup> of the Sudan Interior Mission forced the different clans that made up Mopa for example, to come down from the hills.

Furthermore, finance was also a challenge to market administration in colonial Yagba. As was the policy of the British colonists, the colonial officers were reluctant to get themselves heavily involved in the financial responsibility in administering Yagba communities. Under this situation, a lot of infrastructure such as good market stalls, potable water and toilet facilities, which would have enhanced smooth marketing activities were lacking. The few relics that pervaded few market places were constructed using free labour of Yagba people.

## CHALLENGES OF MARKET ADMINISTRATION IN POST INDEPENDENCE YAGBA COMMUNITIES

In traditional Yagba communities, virtually all the markets were linked with religious activities. Markets were consecrated with shrines. The consecration emanated primarily from the need for peace and calm at the market place. As earlier mentioned, Bohannan,<sup>37</sup> 'said, 'consecration would guarantee that supernatural sanctions would back up the political authorities in their maintenance of peace in the market place', that was why in Yagba communities, when markets were to be established, it always involved rituals and sacrifices which were buried in the market places. Most times, those involved in the ritual activities are no more and it made it practically difficult for market administrators to move such markets. Hence, most markets in Yagba communities still remained choked up in-between residential buildings. This is an indication to the fact that traditional shrines attract markets to themselves especially where there are strong beliefs in the involvement of sacred authority in market activities. Efforts to relocate such market were always difficult and when such markets were forcefully moved, they hardly drew customers and eventually fizzled out or faded away. This was because the traders normally returned to the old market places for their marketing activities no matter how small or congested it was. Attesting to this, the *Báale Otun* of Ejuku community, Chief Usman Ibrahim, corroborating this fact as stressed by the Elejuku of Ejukuland, His Royal Highness, Oba Samuel Adetiba said in Yagba dialect thus;

*Kabiesi, ihin a ri mobe nka,  
e je o ran ko libe  
Afi aba mo ibi ari hi, ese be,  
a ba tie ko oja ko libe, on a  
pedo pada ha be.<sup>38</sup>*

Meaning:

Your Royal Highness, what we buried there  
makes it impossible for them to be relocated.  
Except we know the spot, if not,  
even if we relocate the market from there  
they will still return back there.

In a related development, take for instance, the market established around *ayékólòbó* shrine in a community called Igbagun. According to the *Obaojà* (male market administrator) of the community, ‘when the market was to be relocated, the instruction was that marketing activities should still be maintained around the shrine’.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps, the warning seemed to have been ignored. This is because the shrine is now surrounded by houses and mosque, leaving no space for marketing activities. The implication of this is that, the market in the community is rarely patronised by people. In fact, the market is almost going into extinct. Hence, when efforts are made to relocate such markets to more spacious place, it is always difficult and when such markets are forcefully moved, such markets eventually fade away. At times, efforts by the market administrators to remove market women from the road-sides of market places in order to ease traffic movement and prevent roadside hazards were often rebuffed. This could not be unconnected with the ritual involvement in the establishment of the traditional markets.

Moreover, a major challenge in the administration of Yagba markets was that markets, most times, were established for political consideration by the Local Government Authorities. Instead of overhauling the existing markets, political office holders constructed markets in areas where it was not easily accessible without putting into consideration the market users. Whereas, the market women in such areas still carry wares on their heads to the market. As a result, the market women found it difficult to trek long distance with loads on their heads thereby abandoning such markets.

Furthermore, inadequate finance to put in place new structures to replace the ageing ones scattered across the area as well as provide the basic infrastructure to enhance smooth market activities had always been a challenge to market administration. For market administrators to really have a smooth market administration, adequate financing is imperative.

Additionally, quarrels and disputes in the market places have always assumed a recurrent decimal such that those in charge of market administration, often times, had to contend with. In any establishment where large numbers of people were involved, disputes inevitably arose and violent fights occurred. Quarrels emanate over trading space in the market and between creditors and debtors. As a result of the small extent of the market places, traders most times struggled with one another over the limited space to display their wares in the market. Traders spread over any available space, good or bad, convenient or otherwise. Also, trading is, at times, done on credit basis between the traders and buyers or among the traders themselves and to collect debt from someone who persistently refused to pay, resulted in insults which, often times degenerated to fisticuffs. Cases of theft, as well, caused uproar in the market places. Apart from these, instances abound where quarrels arose between a trader and a customer as a result of the manner a commodity was priced by the customer which the trader felt to be ridiculous. Thus, they would hurl abusive languages at each other.

Besides, roads that lead to the markets were so bad that vehicles conveying farm produce found it difficult to enter the market, and thus, off-load such goods at the entrance of the market. In the process, movements, in and out of such markets were disturbed. And when checked or confronted by the market authorities, it resulted in abusive remarks, such as, ‘are you blind’<sup>40</sup> to see the deplorable condition of the entrance into the market?

In addition, the unwillingness of some market executives to assume the position and the concomitant responsibility constituted a challenge to market administration. For example, in one of the major Yagba markets, the market for almost five years remained a ghost of its usual self as a result of the refusal of the chosen *Ìyálojà* (female market administrator) to accept that responsibility. According to her, her refusal was based on the fear that it was only ‘witches’ that could take up the challenges of that position as widely believed.<sup>41</sup> Another example was the case of *Ìyálojà* who though reluctantly accepted the position, but felt it was antithesis to her religious belief, hence, hardly come to the market, abandoning the duty to her colleague.

Also, corrupt practice such as revenue collectors having personal receipts which they issued to the market users instead of official receipts. Inexperienced people and persons of doubtful characters were sometimes charged with the task of revenue collection for the Local Government and this, at times, resulted in

the loss of the much needed funds for effective administration.

Political influence, in no small measure, served as constraint to the modern market administration. As part of administering the market by the Local Government Authorities, revenue generation remains an indispensable and integrated part. That was why market charges were introduced to generate funds. However, as little as the market charges were, some people still defaulted or refused to pay. This is because market fees collected by market administrators did not reflect in the maintenance of the traditional markets. To address this phenomenon, the Local Government Authorities put in place a revenue task force to enforce adherence. In the process, the task force resulted to seizure of goods and wares of defaulters. But unfortunately, most times, letters were received from the political god-fathers ordering the release of seized goods. In fact, one of the Local Government officials complained 'we have become enemies to some people simply because we are performing our constitutional duties'<sup>42</sup>. This has really cowed the Local Government Authorities in market administration. Although, Local Government activity seemed to be dictated by the potentiality of high revenue yield which explained less commitment to effective administration of most markets in Yagba communities.

Lack of essential infrastructure in the market places such as potable water, toilet or latrine and electricity affected market administration. Water, for example, was needed for effective cleaning of the abattoir and also for cleaning the toilet. However, the absence of this had made the market environment strewn with dirt. Also, this affected the use of the dilapidated toilet facilities where they existed; hence, it was difficult for the authorities to prevent the littering of the market environments with human faeces with its concomitant repulsive odour.

The market structures remain dilapidated resulting in the failings of the conditions germane to smooth marketing activities. Though, the market administrators attributed this to financial constrain, well, this could be said to be a problem of priorities. Agreed there must have been scarcity of fund; however, the distribution of the little amount available reveals in clear term the preference of the administrators.

Communal crisis with its resultant splitting of markets in the communities posed a challenge to the administration of markets. For instance, a chieftaincy feud which lasted for a decade in one Yagba community affected the market operation and administration. There were ill-feelings and apathy among the indigenes, and this really had adverse impact on the markets. Market could not hold for fear of insecurity.

The implication of these challenges on the Yagba communities is that traders from other areas shifted to well administered and well-maintained markets in the neighbouring communities. This adversely affected the means of livelihood and socio-economic status of Yagba people whose source of commodities supply were from outside Yagba region while others experienced low sales and patronage due to reduced population. There is need to integrate the traditional authorities, as was the case in pre-independence era into modern market administration in order to ameliorate the challenges and enhance traditional markets vital position in the socio-economic lives of the Yagba people.

## Notes

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