

Yagba-Ilorin Relations In Historical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The nature and pattern of relations between *Yagba* people and *Ilorin* could best be understood and appreciated if set against the circumstances surrounding their migratory trend. This paper takes a look at the nature of intergroup relationship between *Yagba* people and *Ilorin* in view of their historical background. The paper revealed the type of relationship which was that of fear, suspicion and master to servant during the *Nupe-Fulani* hegemony in the 19th century and resentment cum hatred in the colonial era. The study equally showed how *Yagba* people became integrated with the local inhabitants and the erstwhile sour relationship eventually metamorphosed to mutual and cordial relationship and mostly felt in the area of socio-economic fusion. Archival and documentary methods of information gathering were used in the course of this study.

KEYWORDS: Yagba, Ilorin, Nupe-Fulani, colonial, Oyo, Ile-Ife

1. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENCE

The term *Yagba* is coined from the word *Iya agba* –meaning old woman. There are two versions or accounts to the traditions of origin of the *Yagba*. One account claims that the *Yagba* people were descendants of a famous princess, who in her later life was called *Iya-Agba*. She was said to have led a group of immigrants from old *Oyo* to settle at the present location of *Yagba* society. This account was given by *Yagba* of the defunct Ilorin Province.³³ Supporting this claim, Iyekolo while quoting Kenyo in his book, *The History of Yagba People* claims that the *Alafin's* seat of government called *Oyo-Ile*, fell victim of Nupe warriors, forcing one of the *ayaba* (queen) to migrate to this part of *Yoruba* world known as *Iyagba* named from the expression of *Ilu-Iya Agba*. The ancestors of *Ere*, *Egbe* and *Eri* are said to have come from *Oyo*.(Iyekolo 2000)

The other account or version of the tradition of origin of the *Yagba* is that which claims that they migrated from *Ile-Ife*, which is the generally accepted dispersal source of all the *Yoruba* people. Those holding to this claim are *Yagba* of *Ife-Olukotun*, *Ejuku*, *Isanlu* and *Mopa* of the present day *Yagba* East Local Government and *Mopamuro* Local Government Areas respectively. On the surface, these accounts of origin appear contradictory, but they probably can be reconciled. Both have one salient point in common, that is, both agree on the fact that they are descendants of migrant founders. In short, *Yagba* groups represent a mixture of several migrants of diverse origins.

Furthermore, there appears to be divergent claims and counter claims in respect of the oldest settlement in the area. For instance, the people of *Yagba* West accept *Akata Ere* as the oldest settlement while the people of *Yagba* East regarded *IlaiAwoyo* as the point of dispersal in *Yagbaland*. The claim of *Akata Ere* as the oldest settlement in *Yagba* society and point of dispersal as championed by *Iyekolo* seems merely a recent rationalization. An excavation carried out in one *Yagba* site, *Awoyo*, yields a radio carbon date of 665+-145B.P.(Obayemi:1977) which implies that *Awoyo* is an ancient place dating back to about 13th century A.D. Archival evidence equally supported *Awoyo* to be the oldest site of habitation in the entire *Yagbaland*.

From the foregoing, one may submit that all the sub-groups identified in *Yagba* society recognised sacred sources of origin and point of dispersal and a long history of association and cooperation at various levels. However, one important question that comes to mind is the question about the aboriginal inhabitants of the region, because one cannot assume that the region was altogether unpeopled. But from oral and written investigations, the origin of the aboriginal inhabitants of *Yagba* society is shrouded in obscurity.

Yagba society is a sub-*Yoruba* ethnic group in *Kogi* State. It has boundaries with the *Nupe* in the North, the *Ekiti* in the South and the *Ijumu* and *Bunu* in the South-East with approximate land area of 3,454 square kilometres. The National Population Census put the population figure at 331,329 (Official Gazette 2009). *Yagba* people speak a dialect called *Okun*. Presently, they are mostly in *Kogi* state while some can be found in *Kwara* and *Ekiti* states, although, two factors can be adduced for these people being found in different places. First, the *Nupe* raids of the 19th century and secondly, the British incursion, which culminated into the partition of the people into different zones for political and administrative convenience.

1.1 POLITICAL ORGANISATION BEFORE EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

Politically, in the pre-colonial *Yagba* communities, there was no central authority, that is, the entire *Yagba* society had not been thoroughly organised into one single government in the modern sense. They lacked powerful monarchies (Law 1977). There had been at no time a paramount chief. There existed a council of elders

who met occasionally to decide on matters affecting the entire people. In short, there existed a form of government in which it was difficult to locate the locus of power. The system of government as obtained was a prototype of village democracy. The family was the smallest unit of political organisation and authority (Ajayi 1985). At the lineage level, the head is called *Olori ebi* who was the oldest member of the lineage. In most cases, lineages fused together to form a village or town. Some mini-states have internal subdivisions such that two or more lineages formed component subsidiary units within the community (Obayemi 1981). The village was the highest political and administrative unit and whoever ruled or presided over the village ruled in conjunction with the council of elders made up of priestly class, heads of the clans coupled with the supportive roles of secret societies and age grade system. Those who constituted this Privy Council were often traditional chieftaincy title holders. Since they constituted the ruling organ of the society, they were revered. They were revered and held in high esteem because they were the custodians of the customs, values and mores or norms of the society and also seen as those who possessed the wisdom to decode those age long mores and traditions. The lack of central authority made it difficult to have a strong organised force to defend their small independent domains against *Nupe-Fulani* invaders. The political system prior to the *Nupe* hegemony was aptly summarised thus; power and authority rested in the hands of three categories of leaders: priestly class, the clan heads and the new men of power catapulted into positions of leadership by the circumstances of the time. It was this 'gerontocratic socio-political set up with its characteristic consensus politics that catered for the psychological and societal needs' (Ijagbemi 1984). There was relative peace in *Yagba* communities as each independent settlement neither waged war on one another nor on their neighbours.

1.1.1 YAGBA COMMUNITY UNDER NUPE HEGEMONY

The termination of political intrigues or succession dispute in *Nupeland* through the military and political effort or mediation of *Gwandu* which led to a durable and regularised system of succession by *Dendo's* descendants made *Nupe* kingdom sought for expansion and this thus culminated in the exploitation of the surrounding people in its drive for economic prosperity and local military supremacy. At the onset, the military undertakings were in the forms of raids, 'smash and grab' operations to acquire slaves for export. Mason asserts that:

during the concurrent reigns of *Etsu Usman Zaki* and *Masaba*, the earlier undertakings in the south-east were followed by more frequent and better organised efforts....It was in this period that *Ejuku*, later a centre for *Nupe* domination in the area of East *Yagba*, was defeated after a three year siege (Mason 1970).

The political horizon changed with the invasion of *Yagba* communities. The series of raids became more incessant and intensified. It was during this period that the political history of *Yagba* society changed because the annexation brought them under the political rule of *Bida*. *Yagba* villages acquiesced to the request of *Nupe* representatives to pay tribute as a sign of submission. People who identified their interests with the *Nupe* were installed to manage the collection and dispatch of annual tribute which they sometimes accompanied to *Bida*. These agents known as the *Ogba* were put in charge of conquered districts and tribute was paid annually to *Bida* (Gazetteers 1972). The *Ogba* were *Nupe* representatives who served as the link between the *Nupe* potentates and their subjects and were saddled with the responsibilities of collecting tributes and to ensure absolute loyalty of the people under him to the central government. The *Nupe* administrative policy based on the *Ogba* was vigorously pursued with *Yagba* society divided into south east *Yagba* and south west *Yagba* under *Ogba Raji* and *Ogba Maliki* (National Archive Kaduna 1917) respectively, although, some local people were given the responsibility of *Ogba* too. This subsequently saw the integration of the entire *Yagba* society into some systematic tribute paying relationship with *Bida*. The appointment of individual to exercise responsibility beyond their own immediate mini-state was an innovation in the political history of *Yagba* people (Obayemi 1978).

1.1.2. YAGBA COMMUNITY UNDER COLONIAL CONTROL.

The *Yagba* people, having realised that they could not in their individual positions remove the yoke of *Nupe* subjugation and imperialism, made recourse to the British. They openly solicited for the intervention of the white man. Indeed, there are records relating to deputations from these districts to *Lagos* and elsewhere and there are local confirmation that some leaders actually asked for the British to come and shield them from the *Nupe* (Obayemi 1978). Respite, however, came through the effort of the Royal Niger Company constabulary which made the *Nupe* forces to retreat, thus, marking the end of the *Nupe* conquest. From 1897, the company took over the administration till 1900, when the British colonial administration, effectively ended *Nupe* colonialism South of Niger (Mason 1970). The *Okun* speaking people were easily coerced and incorporated into the foreign colonial system. By detaching them as Southern *Nupe* from *Bida*, the British were spared the trouble of

subjugating the *Yagba* mini-states one after the other, as was the feature of groups, which had no paramount rulers and had to be conquered on a village by village basis, with British invasion and conquest of Nigeria. Being fed up with the tyrannical and oppressive domination of the *Nupe*, *Yagba* people did not put up any resistance to the British. It was an exchange of masters, which probably, was dictated by the local historical situation. Thus, in administering the area, an indirect rule system which was hitherto employed by erstwhile lord over the *Yagba* people was maintained. A point of departure from what was obtainable in the northern Nigeria where the system was in practice was that, while emirs were made use of, in the case of *Yagba* society, the erstwhile enemies were retained instead of resorting to pre-*Nupe* mode of governance. Aside this, people were elevated to position of power and authority, especially those who had no claim to that position. Such people were warriors and hunters who came to prominence as a result of their gallantry performance in the various *Nupe* raids. They became the rallying point for the people and eventually overshadowed the clan heads. The institution of village and district headships introduced by the colonial power changed the political pattern of the area. In administering the area, *Nupe* men were appointed as district heads, though, the people protested against it. For instance, the appointment of *Kpotun*, a *Nupe* man was vehemently resisted. He was said to be tyrannical, arrogant and cruel especially in the collection of tax, 'inability to pay one's tax in time invariably led to brutal beating and the people were subjected to all sorts of indignities' (Ijagbemi 1984). His methods, as a 1928 official report stated, appeared to have been unduly despotic (National Archive Kaduna 1928). In fact, the high-handedness triggered protest such as *mokobon* which literally means the *Nupe* is rejected especially in *Yagba* West. One cannot but subscribe to Ijagbemi's assertion that the rejection must be viewed against the background of the general anti-colonial protest movement in Nigeria (Ijagbemi 1984). The *Nupe* were seen as agents of the British colonial oppression apart from the fact that they had politically subjugated *Yagba* people.

Subsequently, due to protest against the use of *Nupe* men as district head, the *Oaju* of *Ere*, a *Yagba* man was eventually chosen as the district head. However, the termination of *Nupe* rule did not end the inclusion of *Yagba* West under *Lafiaji-Pategi* division in *Nupe* Kingdom. The *Oaju* of *Ere* apparently ignorant of the newly won independence, assumed that *Yagba* West was completely independent of *Lafiaji-Pategi* axis, engaged in actions that gave that impression. 'He assumed appendages of royalty with his paraphernalia of office...and claimed the right to communicate direct with the District Officer ignoring entirely the *Etsu* of *Pategi* whom he treated with scant courtesy' (National Archive, Kaduna 1931). Due to his obduracy, or independent nature, such as taking unilateral decision and by-passing the laid down procedure, 'he was removed in 1931 on the flimsy excuse of tax speculation and replaced with the *Agbana* of *Egbe*' (National Archive, Kaduna 1931). The *Yagba* West protest eventually yielded fruitful result when the people were merged with their kith and kin in *Yagba* East.

On the other hand, prior to the institution of village and district headship in *Yagba* East, the people were under the leadership of the *Obaro* of *Kabba*. The *Obaro* who reigned from 1888-1923 was more of an accomplice than subject of the *Nupe*. With this, his role was transformed and the exalted position the *Obaro* thus occupied was at variance with his traditional role because in the indigenous socio-political setting, he was just the head of *Owe* ethnic group. Hence, for collaborating with the *Nupe* invaders, the *Obaro*'s power and authority were extended over the non-*Owe* groups such as *Yagba*. He was regarded as the paramount ruler overseeing the collection of tribute from those areas (Apata 2011). However, in 1924, the *Olukotun* of *Ife*, Chief *Ajibola Asejogba* I was appointed as the district head. He was called *Oba Yagba*, meaning the chief of *Yagba* people as distinct from being merely a chief of his village (National Archive, Kaduna 1931). He died in 1928 and was succeeded by Mr. *Oju Aloko* who was addressed as *Obaro* of *Mopa*. He was instrumental to the merging of *Yagba* West with *Yagba* East in 1934.

1.1.3. MIGRATION OF YAGBA PEOPLE TO ILORIN

To be able to get a glimpse of the pattern and nature of the *Yagba* community migratory trend into *Ilorin*, it is necessary to delve briefly into the concept migration. Migration as a term has attracted diverse definitions. The Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines it as moving from one place to go to live or work in another (Hornby 2000), while Chambers English Dictionary defines it as changing your home to another area or country. Despite diverse definitions, all agree to the fact that it involves the movement of people from a place to another. Though a point of agreement can be observed in the various definitions of migration, the same cannot be said of their classifications and factors responsible for migration. The inability of scholars to reach a consensus on this issue has brought about a number of schools of thought. The schools of thought are economic, political, religion, social, superiority complex and adventure.

An economic school of thought is of the belief that an environment which could bring about a means of livelihood or sustenance for man in terms of food, trade and material well being is bound to attract migrants. It is believed that any economically viable environment would favour trading activities and hence, possess a

pulling force attractive to people from all walks of life. Migrants of such areas would come with the hope of getting a better living condition and chances are that they would stay put at such place once the prospects are favourable.

Another school of thought however did not agree with economic school of thought. They argued that politics, not economy forms the basis for migration. They hold the view that if the government of any country is a popular government with clear cut programs, it is bound to promote and encourage all initiatives that could better the lot of its people. They submitted that no matter the amount of mineral resources a country possessed, if such country is being ruled by a tyrannical and a government without a focus, its best brain would not be able to move the nation forward. The consequence of this would be a case of suffering amidst plenty, this in turn they believe would encourage and lead to migration. Illsley, shared this view as contained in his article, the motivation and characteristics of internal migrants; a socio-medical study of young migrants in Scotland, an article published in *Milbank Memorial Quarterly* (Illsley et al 1963).

The social school of thought argues that even if there is a good government as well as sound economy, people of any nation can still migrate if the social relationship among its people is below average. Man they believe is a social animal or being whose fulfilment in life is not complete without a network of good social relationship. This relationship is of double dimensional, which is, relationship of man with his fellow men and his relationship with his environment. It is argued that if man could relate in good faith with his fellow men, there would be good Government and sound economy. This view is stressed thus: while economic reason cannot be over-emphasised in any human migration, uneconomic reasons among which social relationship is a strong factor also contribute to migration (Isichie 1986).

Furthermore, the religious school of thought holds a different opinion. Religious motivations are seen as being responsible for the greater percentage of migration across the globe. The expulsion of the Jews from England is cited as an example in the *World Book Encyclopedia Volume 10* to buttress or support the assertion. It is believed among the students of this school that religious persecution has led and may still lead to a lot of migrations in the world.

Of recent, the revival of the age long Whiteman's justification for their intrusion into the African continent has given birth to a new school of thought, which is adventure. The love for adventure is argued to be underneath the European's migration to Africa. Every migration is believed to be propelled by fiery spirit of adventurism. This argument is predicated on the natural instinct of man to know more and discover new things and places.

Another approach to the issues that lead to migration is the natural forces school of thought. Students of this school hold the view that often man's inability to control or forestall natural forces and disasters force him to move to a safer place. *Elizabeth Isichie* is among the proponents of this thought. *Isichie* identifies war as part of the natural forces and proceeded to explain the Yoruba civil wars and its attendant migrative effect (Isichie 1986).

The last school of thought is the superiority complex argument. Proponents of this idea claim that the dominance of the superior power over the inferior causes migration. It is explained that once the superior power moves in and dominated the inferior power at the latter's aboriginal place of abode, the inferior with time would be forced to move. The obnoxious trans Atlantic slave trade which forcefully transported millions of Africans to the New World is an example.

A thorough examination of these schools of thoughts revealed that each of these schools has one thing or the other to do with most migrants in the history of mankind. A close analysis shows that one or combination of these factors plays a leading role in the migration of the *Yagba* people to *Ilorin*. However, the most pronounced factor at the initial migratory trend was the superiority complex school of thought argument. Prior to 1900, the joint slave raids of *Nupe* and *Ilorin* on *Yagbaland* resulted in the presence of *Yagba* people in *Ilorin*. *Masaba*, one of the contenders to the throne of *Nupe* Kingdom while on campaign in *Yagbaland* to acquire slaves between 1833 and 1840 had to abruptly put an end to the campaign due to revolt in *Lafiaji* to force him out of *Lade*, his base capital. He escaped to *Egbe*, a *Yagba* community where he raised army to regain his capital which he re-occupied in about 1845 (Aptata 2011). Between 1850 and 1857, another rebellion by *Umar Barbushe* forced *Masaba* to flee to *Ilorin*. From there he intensified his military campaigns in *Yagbaland* with the collaboration of the *Fulani* in *Ilorin* brought about by the Islamic revivalism of the 19th century that resulted in the establishment of *Sokoto* Caliphate. The *Fulani* of *Ilorin* were thus imbued with the idea of spreading the religion of Islam. Hence, the joint *Nupe-Ilorin* attacks on the *Yagba* communities. Apart from this religious motive, *Yagbaland* was attacked in order to collect tributes and acquire captives to cultivate crops thus, the forceful influx of *Yagba* people into *Ilorin*.

The joint *Nupe-Ilorin* attack brought about oppressive systems that gave little in turn for the burdens imposed on the subjects. In fact, *Nupe-Ilorin* domination of *Yagba* communities with its excessive taxation

forced many of the *Yagba* people to abandon their towns made for inaccessible hills. As *Nupe-Ilorin* intensified their raids for slaves in *Yagbaland*, *Kabba* and *Ebira* lands, the Royal Niger Company became increasingly discomfited. This eventually culminated in an expedition dispatched by the company. The feeble resistance put up by the ill-prepared *Ilorin* troops was crushed easily. The Emir of *Ilorin* himself fled to *Ogidi* in the western outskirts of *Ilorin* where he took refuge. Later when he returned, he had to act tactfully in that circumstance of hopelessness and helplessness. He welcomed the commanders of the invading troops and made a moving speech in which he acknowledged their military superiority. He also affirmed that as Muslims, the people of *Ilorin* accepted without reservation the Q'uranic injunction that 'Allah gives power to whom he pleases and takes away power from whom he pleases' (Jimoh 1994). The Emir therefore assured the conquerors of *Ilorin*'s cooperation. Goldie in response to this good gesture proclaimed his company's recognition and acceptance of *Oba Suleiman* as the Emir of *Ilorin* and as a sovereign over all the territory under him before the invasion. A treaty to this effect was signed between the Emir and Royal Niger Company by which the Emir became a vassal of the Royal Niger Company with effect from February 1897 (Vandeleur 1898). This turn of events brought about the introduction of provincial administration which gave birth to *Ilorin* Province and Middle Niger Province.

In 1901, the Middle Niger Province was split into two, making the *Nupe* component a separate province called Niger Province while the remaining *Kabba*, *Kakanda* and *Oworo* lands were constituted into what became *Kabba* Province from that time. The separation was effected to appease *Yagba* people who had vehemently opposed their merger with the *Nupe* of *Lafiaji* and *Patigi*. The delineation of *Ilorin*, *Kabba* and *Nupe* Provincial boundaries became a source of trouble between *Ilorin* and *Nupe* on one hand and *Kabba* people on the other. Both *Ilorin* and *Nupe* persistently laid claims to substantial portions of *Kabba* Province as part of territories which they owned before the advent of colonial rule which further resulted in the delimitation of the boundary between *Kabba* and *Ilorin* Provinces in 1905 (National Archive, Kaduna 1912). It is in this process that some *Yagba* towns became integrated with *Ilorin* Province. *Ilorin* and *Kabba* remained separate Provinces until 1913 when *Kabba* Province was amalgamated with *Ilorin* and it remained part of *Ilorin* Province till 1921 when *Kabba* was re-separated from Province following persistent protests by the people of *Kabba* which *Yagba* was an integral part that culturally they had nothing in common with the people of *Ilorin* Province. This separation lasted till 1967 following the creation of States that *Ilorin* and *Kabba* Provinces were re-amalgamated to form what was then called Central-West State and later re-named Kwara State.

The upgrading of *Ilorin* from a Provincial Headquarters to a state capital following the creation of Kwara State in 1967 was a milestone in the migratory trend of *Yagba* people in *Ilorin*. It resulted in deployment of hundreds of public servants of *Yagba* origin from *Kaduna* to *Ilorin* following the disbandment of public service of the erstwhile Northern Region of Nigeria. *Yagba* people were among those public servants that nurtured the then young state to maturity. This was evident in the fact that virtually all the government departments had considerable percentage of public servants of *Yagba* origin.

Besides these facts, economic factors constitute an important motive for the migratory trend of *Yagba* people to *Ilorin*. In the words of *Ravestein*, 'bad or oppressive laws ...unattractive climate, uncongenial social surrounding...have produced migration, but none can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to better themselves in material respects' (Ravestein 1889). Moreover, *Emielu* quoted Hance of his observation in discussing migration in Africa thus, 'among the factors which led to the changed attitude towards migration, the most important was the increasing desire of Africans to acquire the material and cultural outlook of modern life' (Emielu 1987). Consequently, due to changing values and rising expectations of *Yagba* people, there emerged new demands for goods and services which were not obtainable in *Yagba* society.

Moreover, social factor played significant role in the migration of *Yagba* people to *Ilorin*. Cordial inter group relations with its attendant inter-marriages motivated many to migrate. Married women migrate to join their husbands. Couple with this, was the excitement conceived to be inherent in city system. This was evident in the glamour and fantastic tales about the city usually told by migrants returning to the villages and in attempt to boost their ego exaggerate the pleasure of *Ilorin* city. More so, it was highly prestigious to have been to a major city, for such people command a great deal of respect and importance.

Additionally, religion was an imperative factor in the influx of *Yagba* people. Most Christian clergy especially from *Yagba* West origin trained at *Igbaja* Theological Seminary in 1941. They were taught theology and pastoral works and they later took over the administration of Sudan Interior Mission/Evangelical Churches of West Africa from the missionaries and did marvellous work in church administration as Evangelical Churches of West Africa presidents, secretaries and evangelists at *Igbominaland* and *Ilorin* environs. Muslim adherents from *Yagba* East towns of *Ife-Olukotun*, *Ejuku*, *Isanlu*, *Igbagun* and *Oranre* migrated to *Ilorin* to learn under Islamic Clerics and Scholars.

1.1.4. ACTIVITIES OF YAGBA PEOPLE IN ILORIN

The post-independence migratory trend of *Yagba* people to *Ilorin* was economically motivated. Hence, some *Yagba* people apprenticed themselves in various vocations such as Auto mechanic, Carpentry and Furniture, Metal fabrication and Tailoring. Most of these apprentices were young people whose parents could neither afford to send them to school nor were interested in western education. Although, there were some who preferred to be an apprentice to going to school.

Also, some were actively engaged in trading activities, ranging from sale of beverages, selling of raw and cooked foods and even patent medicines. Able bodied men took to driving as means of livelihood. Some operated relaxation centres where people unwind after a hectic day at work to take pepper soup and drinks. One significant thing about *Yagba* people in *Ilorin* was seen in their ingenuity in local brewing of guinea corn into what is referred to as *pito* and *burukutu* in local language. People who patronised these centres cut across tribes resident in *Ilorin*. These centres were always beehives of social activities.

In the educational sector, considerable percentages of *Yagba* origin were well represented in educational institutions. In fact, education was being referred to as the only industry *Yagba* people possessed. This was borne out of their desire to be educated which they pursued with zeal and enthusiasm.

Yagba people were equally lovers of religion. Their activities in the churches attended were significant. The efforts of late Reverend. *Ariye*, a *Yagba* man at the propagation of Christian religion in *Ilorin* was outstanding. He was popularly called 'Billy Graham' for his oratory and preaching charisma.

One interesting aspect of *Yagba* people is that majority of them were involved in farming activities notwithstanding other business engaged in. Perhaps, farming has become a pastime for *Yagba* people.

In conclusion, analysing the relationship that existed between *Yagba* and *Ilorin* at the initial stage, one sees that even after the subjugation of *Ilorin* by Royal Niger Company forces and the system of colonial administration established, *Yagba* people were still resentful of the *Ilorin* people due to harrowing experience in the hands of *Nupe-Ilorin* raiders. The resentment manifested in the various protests in 1901 when they opposed their merger with the *Nupe* of *Lafiaji* and *Patigi*, for certain *Yagba* communities of *Ere*, *Egbe* and *Okeri* were under *Patigi* District. Also, the protest re-appeared in 1913 when objection was brought to merging of both *Ilorin* and *Kabba* Provinces which *Yagba* was an integral part with the assertion that they had nothing in common culturally with *Ilorin*. One thing to note in this relationship between *Yagba* people of *Okunland* and *Ilorin* even with the establishment of colonial administration is that, it had departed from that of fear, suspicion and master-slave, a feature of pre-colonial epoch to hatred from *Yagba* people to the *Ilorin* people. However, the mutual and cordial relationship which eventually existed in post-independence era could be said to have been possible in the course of time, since time is seen as a healer of wounds. The *Yagba* and local inhabitants in *Ilorin* now freely mixed together, interact and work side by side with other inhabitants. The inclusion of *Okun* programme, a well wisher programme designed for *Yagba* people by Kwara Radio and anchored by a *Yagba* man was an evidence of harmonious relationship. *Yagba* settlements are spread all over *Ilorin* metropolis. Related to this is the cordial relationship of *Yagba* people with other ethnic tribes, *Hausa*, *Ibo*, *Nupe*, *Ekiti*, *Igbomona*; which reflected in inter-marriages and cultural diffusion. *Yagba* language was easily picked by local inhabitants through co-habitation and interaction. Some Muslim adherents from *Yagba* communities especially those that came to *Ilorin* to learn under Islamic scholars and clerics could now speak Arabic language. *Ilorin* people especially the butchers are present in *Yagba* villages and towns. Likewise, *Ilorin* timber businessmen are seeing all over *Yagba* villages in search of timbers for their saw-mill businesses. *Yagba* community integration into *Ilorin* society and their relationship with the local inhabitants which was mostly felt in the area of socio-economic fusion resulted in appreciable contributions to the development of *Ilorin*. In 1991, the then Military President of Nigeria, General *Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida* severed *Yagbaland* from Kwara State and merged with some communities from *Benue* State to form a new State, known as *Kogi* State.

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