

# BRITISH COLONIAL ENTERPRISE AND THE EVOLUTION OF COSMOPOLITAN TOWNS IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF KAFANCHAN, 1926-1960

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**Abstract:** This paper interrogates the role of the British colonial enterprise in the evolution and development of Kafanchan town. The research employs content analysis of both primary and secondary sources in order to reconstruct the history of the town. Findings from the study trace the evolution and development of Kafanchan town to the construction of the railway line from Southern to Northern Nigeria that culminated in a station at an unsettled area of land: Kafanchan. The town evolved in response to the temporary sheds erected as quarters for construction workers and staff of the Nigerian Railways who belonged to diverse ethnic groups. Due to the strategic nature of this railway station, the population grew. This triggered the emergence of a settlement that was cosmopolitan right from its foundation.

**Keywords:** *British colonial enterprise, railway, cosmopolitan towns, Kafanchan, Nigeria*

## Introduction

The name Kafanchan has been through a great deal of group propaganda aimed at appropriating some sort of geographic dominance over the area. The Secretary of Fanstwam Chieftdom, Mr Samuel Maigida (2020), has argued that Kafanchan is another name for Fanstwam. He, however, could not give further meaning to what the name stands for and how it came into being. This may be connected to the fact that his ethnic group has adopted Kafanchan alongside Fanstwam as their name. However, Salisu

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Bala (2006) provided insight into the origin of the name Kafanchan in the following way, “when the labourers were measuring the site with tapes, their foreman instructed them by saying ‘Kafa-Chan,’” meaning: establish it there or put it over there. This was how the name Kafanchan emerged, he argued. Regardless of the controversy associated with the origin of the name Kafanchan, it is undoubtedly so that the name of the town “Kafanchan” was not used until the construction of a railway through Fanstwam in 1926.

The population of Kafanchan town, as of 21 March 1932, was put at 42,988. The breakdown of the population is as follows: Ayu 3,227; Gwandara 1,392; Kagoma 5,591; Kagoro 3,057; Kaje 9,881; Kaningkon 2,326; Birom 710; Mada 363; Ningwam 1,483; Ninzam 7,039; Numana 3,184; Nungu 336; Yeskwa 421; Hausa 3,709; Various Groups 269 (National Archive Kaduna, 1932). The last group referred to migrants from the Southern parts of Nigeria. The challenge with this data is that the figures were taken for the sake of tax assessment and were often doctored to increase revenue. It is also pertinent to note that there is no population record for Kafanchan as a town during the colonial era. The reason is that parts of the town fell under the direction of Jama’ Division, Kagoro District, Kagaoma District, and Jaba District.

It is important to note that the evolution and development of Kafanchan town cannot be understood in isolation from the factors that propelled the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914. Tamuno (1980, p. 393) argues that the British colonial government adopted the policy of a gradual amalgamation of the various administrative units in Nigeria in order to secure a central direction of policy and to pool economic resources. The amalgamation policy started in 1906, following the amalgamation of the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos with the Niger Coast Protectorate to form the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (Falola and Heaton, 2008, p. 117). Although Lord Lugard was not a member of the 1898 Special Committee that recommended that the British “Niger territories” be amalgamated, he nevertheless played a significant role in the amalgamation process (Falola and Heaton, 2008, p. 117).

In 1902, for example, Fredrick Lugard passionately urged the colonial office to amalgamate the Northern and Southern Protectorate of Nigeria. He argued that the amalgamation would go a long way to end the rivalry and antagonistic economic policies that were being implemented by the colonial office, which was to its disadvantage (Kums, 2006, p. 9). Similarly, with the burgeoning economy of the Southern region, the unification was envisaged in order to support the Northern region until it would become self-sufficient.

The unification of the two provinces was also meant to relieve the British colonial government from bearing the financial burdens of the North in the form of an Imperial Grant-in-Aid, estimated at £300,000 per annum. This was in addition to the subsidy advanced by the Southern Protectorate (Kums, 2006, p. 10).

Consequently, Lord Lugard and British colonial technocrats were assigned the responsibility of unifying the two protectorates. This project received a further boost when Lugard was appointed Governor of Northern Nigeria. He was then saddled with the responsibility of amalgamating the two provinces. Lugard immediately merged departments of government such as Survey, Railway, Judiciary, Treasury, Military, Post and Telegraph, and the Audit Department. His ideas were critical to the overall control and administration of the country. It was with these milestones that Lugard successfully midwived the new polity now known as Nigeria on 1 January 1914 (Kums, 2006, p. 11).

Undoubtedly, the railway was central to the British colonial enterprise in Nigeria. This explains why it was one of the earliest infrastructures to be developed by the British, and a major department singled out for unification during the amalgamation of government administrative departments. The railway was constructed to ease the evacuation of raw materials from Nigeria to Britain and other European countries rather than to meet the transportation needs of Nigerians (Jatau, 2018: 116). However, there were un-intended positive fall outs arising from the construction of railways to the Nigerians. One of these was the evolution and development of Kafanchan town as an urban centre.

It imperative to state that there already existed a village settlement by the name of Kafanchan before the building and completion of the railway station at Kafanchan (Kwalbe, 2006, p. 51). Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan Kafanchan town that emerged as a railway labour construction camp in 1926 remains today as an enduring footprint of the British colonial enterprise in Nigeria (National Archive Kaduna, 1928). Today, Kafanchan town has grown into prominence as an important commercial and political centre. It is the biggest town in Southern Kaduna (Zone 3) Senatorial District (Kazah-Toure, 1999, p. 135). A major constraint to the present paper is the paucity of secondary sources. This notwithstanding, attempts were made to review relevant studies.

James Kantiyok's "The establishment and development of Kafanchan Town, 1927-1957" (1975) is a groundbreaking study of the history of Kafanchan.

His work provides a detailed history of Kafanchan within the colonial period, in which every aspect of the growth and development of this locality was discussed going back to the pre-colonial history of the area. Despite the abundance of colonial records, the author chose to present the history of Kafanchan as the history of an ethnic group (Fantswam, now also referred to as Kafanchan). This may not be unconnected to the fact that he is of the Fantswam ethnic group.

In “Levels and differentials in fertility at Kafanchan: A study in population geography” (1985), Moses Mamman provided a piece of statistical information regarding the population composition of the town in its early years. He also brought to fore major economic activities and how these triggered the population explosion in Kafanchan. Although a population study not written from a historical perspective, this is no doubt important source material for the study of the history of Kafanchan.

“The foundation of Kafanchan, c. 1933: The historical background,” by S. Bala (2007), furnishes the readers with the pre-colonial political dynamics that laid the foundation for the subsequent colonisation of the area during the Indirect Rule System (Bala, 2007, pp. 155-156). Regrettably, the work succeeds in weaving the evolution of Kafanchan town to mean the same as the history of the activities of the Fulani ethnic group with no recognition given to the autochthonous groups.

Godwin Danjuma Kwalbe’s (2016) work, “A History of Kafanchan to c. 2000,” was a study of the inter-group relations in the area around Kafanchan town from the pre-colonial period with emphasis on how colonial policies divided the population of the area into Muslim and non-Muslim groups. It demonstrates how the strategy adopted by the British ended up creating tensions which resulted in ethno-religious feuds that characterised intergroup relations in post-colonial Kafanchan. The author seems to have focused his attention on contemporary intergroup dynamics in Kafanchan and how British colonial policies laid the foundation for the ethno-religious crisis that bedevils the town.

No work from the foregoing has examined comprehensively the role of the British colonial enterprise in the evolution of Kafanchan as a colonial cosmopolitan urban centre. The present study, therefore, seeks to highlight the important role played by the British colonial enterprise in the evolution, development and emergence of a town that has become a melting pot for diverse cultures in Northern Nigeria. In order to achieve the objective of our research, we divided the paper into six sections. The introduction is followed

by a geographical survey of the area in order to find out what made this location a choice destination for its inhabitants long before the imposition of British colonial rule. The next section deals with the evidence of human life in this area since pre-colonial times, while the fourth section examines the colonial expansion in the area and its subsequent domination. The fifth section is an assessment of the colonial economic interest that pushed the British into the interior of Nigeria using technological improvement in the transportation sector for maximum exploitation. The paper argues that the modern cosmopolitan town of Kafanchan evolved at this point, precisely in 1926 with the completion of the railway station. Finally, the conclusion brings out the pertinent findings of the paper.

### **Geography, 'Peopling,' Socio-Economic and Religious Practices of Kafanchan**

The present town known as Kafanchan is situated in the southern part of Kaduna State where the main railway line from Port Harcourt branches to Jos and Kaduna (Buchanan, 1955, p.76). It is located exactly on Latitude 90 37'N, 8021'E and Longitude 802'E, 806'E (Moses, 1985, p.48). The town is approximately 3,072 square miles (Bala, 2006, p.1). By road, Kafanchan is about 104 kilometres from Jos and 240 kilometres from Kaduna (Buchanan, 1955, p.76). The town is on a low-lying plain that drops gently westward from the Kagoro Hills, which form part of the Jos Plateau. The general slope of the land extends from the Plateau to the Kagoma Scarp and the Kwoi-Nok and Chori Plateau, which again punctuates this undulating countryside that becomes very rugged. Consequently, several valleys and deep gulleys were created by this type of relief system; they are mostly natural.

The geology of Kafanchan is a basement complex consisting of pre-Cambrian igneous rocks – the resultant effect of weathering which has given rise to the red tropical lateritic soils that become very muddy and sticky in the rainy season and dusty in the dry season (Sankey, 1983, pp. 5-6). Because of its location on the windward side of the Kagoro Hills, which forms the southern escarpment of the Jos Plateau, the prevailing trade winds are the southwest and northeast trade winds. The former is responsible for the rains (orographic type) averaging about 150cm-200cm (1500mm-2000mm) from April to October. The northeast trade wind is dry, dusty, and cold, experienced between November to March. All these are responsible for two seasons: wet and dry with an annual mean temperature of about 780f, typical of Savannah areas (Sankey, 1983, pp. 5-6).

The general height of the settlement is between 2,400 and 2,420ft above sea level. To the west is River Matsirga, popularly referred to as River Wonderful with its fairly broad plains, and to the east of Kafanchan is the River Sarki; together, they provide extensive marshlands. This has made available varieties of aquatic animals and seafood. There are, in addition to these animals along the banks of the rivers, trees of utmost importance to the existence of human life such as palm trees. All are useful for economic activities in terms of food and crafts. The marshlands that result from the action of overflowing are relatively fertile for agriculture, which is the mainstay of the people (Sankey, 1983, pp. 5-6).

The area forms a transition zone between the Forest and the Savannah belts. It comprises transitional woodland as its climax vegetation. This supports the existence of valuable economic trees such as shea butter, tamarind, locust beans, iroko tree, silk cotton, ebony tree, fig tree, delep palm, rubber climber, mahogany, and mango, among others. This area had long served local communities since pre-colonial times as a viable hunting ground for animals, such as buffalos, roan antelopes, leopards, porcupines, apes, and a few lions, among others. The plains are highly suitable for grazing and cultivation of a wide variety of food and cash crops (James, 1997, p. 1). However, due to heavy and increasing human activities such as agriculture, bush burning, deforestation, and mining, among others, over the years, the vegetation has significantly changed.

It is very difficult to figure out exactly when the diverse ethnic groups within and around the area of study first settled here. However, many of them have stories regarding migration from areas in Bauchi, Plateau, Taraba, Benue, Kano, and Katsina. This has remained mere folklore with no concrete historical proof. For instance, Yusufu Turaki (2017, p. 26) has pointed out that “the Ninkyob (Kaninkon), Gong, Ham (Jaba), Rindem, and Nyankpa have no evidence of having migrated from elsewhere.” Instructively, one of Nigeria’s foremost historians, Obaro Ikime (2006), argued that most of these traditions of origins were usually formulated to gain some status of superiority before new neighbours or claim a connection to places of political authority. In most instances, they are not to be taken as historical truths.

There is also an abundance of archaeological evidence pointing to the fact that the entire zone of Southern Kaduna, where Kafanchan town is situated, has been inhabited for many centuries. For instance, Yohanna states that:

In the first place, the vegetation of the area is already man-made. Issues like the seasonal nomadic activities of the Fulani,

the vagaries of the weather, and the soils cannot be said to be serious enough factors to result in the present state of vegetation. A trip from Kagoro ... through Kwoi, Kagoma, Tsakiya, Jaban Kogo, Kachia, and Geshere to Saminaka shows clearly the extent to which the vegetation has seriously been altered due perhaps, to centuries or millennia of man's activities. (Yohanna, 1982, p. 8)

This means not just that the area has long been inhabited by people before the Hausa/Fulani started moving into the area in the late eighteenth century (Kazah-Toure, 1999, pp. 109-144); it has been full of economic activities since pre-colonial times. Moreover, archaeological evidence provided by the ancient Nok Civilisation, an exceptionally fine head of terracotta found 25ft deep in 1944 during tin mining close to Kafanchan, confirms the existence of human life in the area for many centuries. This is true as carbon dating revealed that the work of art was from a period between 900BC-200AD (Fagg, 1957, pp. 288-293). Again, Kazah-Toure (1999, p. 112) posits that most of the ethnic groups are autochthonous to the area with little or no contact with the outside world. This has made them culturally and linguistically unique and exclusive in comparison with many Nigerian groups. In line with the language compositions, the various groups in the area of study have been classified as Benue-Congo or Semi-Bantu groups. This is because their language structures are similar (Turaki, 2017, p. 27).

Their socio-political organisation since pre-colonial times shows that these ethnic groups had been independent polities. Nevertheless, there is evidence of vigorous and long-term intergroup relations between them and their northern neighbours. However, their political structure was less developed when compared with their northern neighbours from the emirates; hence they are classified as non-centralised polities (Turaki, 2017, p. 43). Political power was not completely separated from spiritual authority. It was interwoven and rested in the hands of clan elders without much hierarchy. In general, the governments of these ethnic groups had good semblances with modern democracy in terms of its respect for the opinion and views of every member and without the concentration of power in the hand of a single dictator who wielded power or superimposed his whims and caprices over all members of society. Also, political boundaries were fluid; hunting grounds and fishing streams served as boundaries among them. This also explains why most of the conflicts among them were usually around the question of land, fishing, and hunting grounds. However, only small-scale armed clashes were recorded among them in the pre-colonial era. The real

conflicts within the area were mainly with the neighbouring emirate of Zazzau, which was seeking an in-route to the area for economic interests: slave raids (Kazah-Toure, 1999, pp. 112-113).

Their religious worldview was highly complex. It was difficult to separate religion from other aspects of their lives. Everything was seen and interpreted from a spiritual (religious) standpoint. They had the concept of God in their religious lives. The only caution to take is that their conception of God was not the same as in Islam or Christianity, which are monotheistic. The ethnic groups (living in the Kafachan area) knew the Supreme Being but rather worshipped him in the company of or through other deities. This earned them descriptions from Christian, European, and Arab writers as animism, idolatry, paganism, heathenism, fetishism, witchcraft, magic, juju, and primitive religion (Turaki, 2017, p. 29). These names were derogatory due to the poor understanding of their religious system or as a result of being judged from an outsider's point of view.

Importantly, religion permeated their daily lives. Worshipping God or a deity was connected to people's socio-economic survival. For instance, spirits or deities had much to do with victory in war, the fertility of one's wife, bumper harvest, the outbreak of diseases, protection from one's enemies, etc. Therefore, because of the centrality of religion and the spiritual world, there was no limit to the number of deities worshipped and the methods of approaching them. All of these were accompanied by a strong reverence for ancestors. These were the spirits of dead relations who still played key roles in the lives of their living family members. They were honoured and called upon for intervention in difficult times (Turaki, 2017, pp. 35-36). This belief was closely followed by a firm belief in reincarnation. They believe that the soul of a dead relation or a member of society can be given birth to in real life as a child to continue his or her existence. This practice was celebrated particularly when the attributes, traits, and features of a deceased person were seen in the life of a newborn. It can also be acclaimed if a male died and a male child is given birth on the same day or within a few days interval (Turaki, 2017, p. 33).

## **Colonial Conquest and Administration of Northern Nigeria**

The journey to military conquest of Northern Nigeria dates back to 1 January 1900, when the flag of the Royal Niger Company gave way to the Union Jack of Great Britain under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel Fredrick Lugard,

the High Commissioner, and a declaration of protectorate over the area by the British (Turaki, 2017, p.74). However, this declaration by Great Britain did not translate to an immediate loss of independence by the polities in Northern Nigeria. It, however, signalled the beginning of the colonisation of the area by the British government. For the centralised Hausa States of the Sokoto Caliphate it took a period of three years (1900-1903) for most of them to fall under the invading British forces (Turaki, 2017, p. 74). The situation was different for the area of study due to the existence of mini-republics instead of a centralised political structure that would have made the work easier, as in the emirates. The other reason for the staggered nature of the British conquest was the factor of geography. Unlike their northern neighbours, who were occupying flat and grassland areas, here, the land is punctuated by many hills and mountains with woodland forests that served as hideouts for local communities (National Archive Kaduna, 1915, pp. 12-13).

After the formal submission by the emirs of Lafia and Jama'a in March 1903, the British posted an Assistant Resident in Jama'a in October 1904. He was accompanied by a military detachment (Ames, 1972, p. 19). But, as could be expected, the local communities considered this invasion a violation of their territorial integrity and therefore vehemently resisted the attempts to occupy their land. This action was countered by the destruction of property and the loss of lives by the invading British force. Most settlements at this time were burnt down and people were taken away as war captives (Jatau, 2018, p. 28).

The brutal and punitive strategy succeeded in weakening the resistance put up against the British invading forces. It is pertinent to note that sustained resistance continued into the later days of colonial rule. It took the British over twenty years to carry out punitive patrols and tax enforcement in this area as its major activity without having firm military and political control over these independent polities (Turaki, 2017, p. 91). In order to maintain its presence among these ethnic groups, the British colonial government created an emirate in 1902 and made this a division under Nasarawa Province to coordinate political affairs in the area consistent with the philosophy of Indirect Rule (National Archive Kaduna, 1913; Abubakar, 1999, pp. 457-458).

### **British Colonial Enterprise and the Evolution of Kafanchan, 1926-1960**

The surrounding landscape of Kafanchan was dotted with clusters of settlements or hamlets. By 1915, the situation changed permanently due to

a survey carried out for the extension of the northeast railway from Benue Bridge. This route was to run through Doma, Keffi, and Yeskwa District, then proceed northwest towards Kaduna. In 1919, a route running west from Keffi through Abuja to Minna junction was also surveyed with a line running from Benue Bridge to Lafia and skirting the western slope of the Mada Hills, Jagindi, Bakin-Kogi, and Fadda Kagoro; then finally to Manchok (Moroa), Jos and Bukuru (Kirk-Greene, 1972, p. 23).

The actual construction of the Eastern line, however, commenced in 1912 from Port Harcourt and reached the coalfields of Enugu in 1916, and Makurdi in 1924 (Mabogunje, 1968, pp. 144-125); then finally, Kafanchan Junction was completed in 1926 (Jaekel, 1997, p. 190). The choice of the area of Kafanchan to build a railway station was due to its good flat and open land and abundant economic opportunities, which were of strategic interest to the colonial authority (Jaekel, 1997, p. 190 and 205). Human labour was available and strategic, in addition to enough food and cash crops (millet, corn, ginger, pepper, and livestock), and mineral deposits such as Limestone, Tin, and Columbite. The last mineral was scarce and global supply depended on Nigeria for the main ore of Niobium used in gas turbines, jet engines, and rockets. The implication of this was that Kafanchan Station became one of the most important railway stations in Nigeria (Jaekel, 1997, pp. 189- 190).

From the foregoing, one can infer that the choice of the site for a railway junction was influenced by British colonial interests and not a desire to develop a town. Nevertheless, the town evolved in response to the activities engendered by the British . The construction of the railway had significant economic impact on the people of Northern Nigeria and the British colonial government. For instance, the effect of the extension of a railway from Kafanchan to Jos was significant. While it took 35 days for £29.10 of a ton of tin to be transported from Jos to the coast by a beast of burden or by foot, with the railway in place the journey was reduced to 35 hours and the cost to £8 per ton. At the same time, the amount of export increased from 10,926 tons in 1927 to 13,069 in 1928 (Mabogunje, 1968, pp. 145-146).

The building of the railway station was done alongside the construction of European quarters for railway staff, who would take charge of the various departments at this junction. Because of this, there also emerged temporary shelters for the autochthonous population and for traders, contractors, and labourers of Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Igala, Jukun, and Nupe extractions, among others, who were attracted by the booming economic opportunities provided by this innovation in the transportation sector (National Archive Kaduna, 1926).

Strictly speaking, this new town started as a construction camp that usually would have been destroyed by the construction authority as soon as they no longer needed it but in this case was left to grow into a squatting community. This made the population surge rapidly beyond the expectations of the colonial authority. The authority responded by acquiring land from the local communities to meet up with the need for expansion and to start a community that was safe by hygienic standards. The lands the authority acquired were recommended for compensation by the Colonial Government at the cost of £3 per acre (National Archive Kaduna, 1926).

Amid the growing population, the colonial authority had to produce a new layout in 1928 with the survey plan numbered No. A6413 from the previous plan M.287 that was prepared in July 1924 (Rowling, 1949, pp.43-44). The new plan made provisions for a motorable way from the residential plot, six business plots, and a railway postal agency. There was also a provision within this new layout for main roads of up to 18” wide and subsidiary roads of 12” wide. In all, the layout made provisions for social amenities right from the beginning of the new town (Kantiyok 1975, p. 19). This made Kafanchan town one of the few colonial settlements in Nigeria that were given adequate attention with consideration for safety and future development (National Archive Kaduna, 1928, p.7). This desire to have a clean and safe town was demonstrated by the intention to destroy the grass town that was springing up. Consequently, the authority introduced the condition of registering plot holders as a strategy to drive away the shanty type of buildings by persons described as “undesirables” who were being attracted to the emerging settlement (National Archive Kaduna, 1928, pp. 7-8). This was followed by the visit of the Senior Health Officer of the Northern Province in 1931 to ensure compliance with the outlined standards (Sankey, 1983, pp. 5-6).

With the economic potentials of this settlement being noticed early, the African and Eastern Trading Association applied for a trading site in 1927; the Niger Company was granted a holding right to a temporary site on 1 September 1928, while their agent arrived in Kafanchan on 22 September 1928, intending to start clearing the site and erect a building (National Archive Kaduna, 1928, p. 5). A market was established in 1930. With an increase in population and in commercial activities, this market was relocated to a new site in 1950. The Native Authority was augmented by building permanent stores and latrines in 1954 (Kantiyok, 1975, pp. 64-75). It should be noted that the post office (established in 1928) served dual purposes, that of delivery of mail and parcels and of financial transactions.

To ensure the security of lives and property, Kafanchan town received its first police detachment of three constables in 1929 (Kantiyok, 1975, p. 39). Their activities were first restricted to the railway station and its immediate surrounding, which had a great concentration of settlers. By 1933, ten Yan Doka (bodyguards) of the emir were reorganised into the Native Authority Police Force and were used to police the entire town. However, due to the overwhelming responsibility before them, the District Officer (D.O.) had to write to the Provincial Resident, E. S. Pembleton at Jos in 1935 requesting for government police that should be stationed in the town to complement the efforts of the Native Authority Police Force. The emir of Jama'a, Mallam Muhammadu, on his part, requested the employment of six night guards due to the rise in crime rates. In response to this request, a sub-detachment of 20 constables was established under a non-commissioned officer. In the same year, the Native Authority Prison was built and it commenced operation with about 33 prisoners having sentences ranging from 14 days to 1 year. Any sentence above 1 year was made only at Jos (Kantiyok, 1975, pp. 41-45).

The matter of health care was given priority through sanitation. The sanitary officers embarked on house-to-house inspections and defaulters were fined. A team of medical officers arrived in 1928 from Jos to inspect Kafanchan and eventually gave approval to a site close to the railway station for the construction of a hospital; this was the cradle of the present general hospital now christened Sir Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa Memorial General Hospital, Kafanchan. It started as a health facility for railway workers but has since grown into a major medical referral centre for the whole of Southern Kaduna. Due to its growing popularity and acceptance among the local population from the beginning, the facility became inadequate leading to an extension completed in 1954 with additional specialised units like the X-Ray section. This was happening alongside the ante-natal clinic adjudged to be very successful (National Archive Kaduna, 1955, p. 2).

Efforts aimed at providing clean, safe, and portable drinking water yielded positive results in 1930 when four public wells were constructed at strategic locations. By 1938, six additional public wells were constructed for the immediate surroundings; then the town was provided with pipe-borne water in 1948, especially in public places like hospitals, markets, police barracks, prisons, and the European quarters. In 1957 the streets were finally able to have taps and the public wells were closed down. The railway corporation started providing electricity in the town, albeit first limited to their quarters, offices, and locomotive sheds; some individuals within the mission stations provided private generating plants (Sankey, 1983, pp. 61-63).

For proper coordination of this new political space, the British introduced the machinery of Native Administration within the Indirect Rule system. The Native Administration was composed of three arms: Native Authority, Native Courts, and Native Treasuries. The bulk of the administrative work revolved around the Emir, District Officer, and Resident Officer in that ascending order (Turaki, 2017, pp. 54-92). Jagindi, located not far from Kafanchan town, became the headquarters of the Jema'a Division while Kafanchan town was made the seat of the Jama'a Emirate and also in 1933 of the Jama'a Native Authority with the transfer of the Jama'a Emirate from Jama'a-Sarari (Madakiya) to Kafanchan (Hogben and Kirk-Greene, 1966, p. 554). This singular colonial decision gave a boost to the socio-political status of Kafanchan town.

Christianity and Western education were two major weapons used to increase the pace of modernisation and intergroup interactions in this area. These institutions brought together people from different ethnic, cultural, and regional backgrounds. Since the bulk of the ethnic groups within the area were not Muslims but adherents of the African Traditional Religion (A.T.R.), they were available for proselytisation by Christian Missionaries. In principle, the Lugardian administration encouraged the work of Christian Missions in this area. They were, however, discouraged from evangelising the Muslim areas based on an agreement not to disrupt their existing social structure.

In 1910, Reverend F. E. Hein of the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) opened the first Christian Mission Station at Kwoi in Southern Kaduna. This was followed by a second station at Kurmin-Musa opened by Reverend T. Allen in 1921. Thereafter, Reverend T. Archibald opened a station at Kagoro. By the 1930s, Kafanchan town had about four Christian Missions operating under the auspices of the Sudan Interior Mission, Roman Catholic Mission, Baptist Mission, and Church Missionary Society (Turaki, 2017, p. 10). The activities of these missions further increased the population and the diversity of inhabitants of the town.

In the area of educational provision, the experience from the southern part of the Nigeria where the Christian missionaries were given a free hand for proselytisation and education resulted in the bulk of the population being educated. With time, the educated elite became a threat to the colonial government. This led the British to not give education priority in their policy formulations and implementation. In Northern Nigeria, education was left to the Christian Missions. The indigenous population, especially

the “pagans,” were to require Western civilisation. Over time, this led to the emergence of two separate educational programmes pursued within colonial Nigeria. The targets were the children of chiefs, teacher training centres, and technical/clerical schools. In non-Muslim areas, the interest of the colonial government was to regulate the content of the curriculum in order not to allow indigenous groups to get too much (Turaki, 2017, pp. 78-87).

At Kagoro, a few kilometres away from Kafanchan, the first Western school was established by the Sudan Interior Mission in 1929. The primary objective was to equip the indigenous population with adequate knowledge of the word of God so that they could, in turn, be able to reach out to their communities. In 1930, the Native Elementary School was officially established in Kafanchan town as a school for Muslim boys. This was the first elementary school established in Southern Zaria (Turaki, 2017, pp. 113-119). Subsequently, the real efforts toward providing education in this area came from Christian Missionaries. The Roman Catholic Mission set up a school in 1936, the Church Missionary Society in 1937, the Sudan Interior Mission came in 1946 and the Baptist Church opened a school in 1952 (Kantiyok, 1975, pp. 54-63).

Kafanchan town also played a significant role in the decolonisation process in Nigeria. On 4 June 1946, a delegation of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (N.C.N.C.) arrived in town and held a successful rally at the C.M.S. school ground. Over 4,000 people were in attendance. At the end of the rally, a resolution was reached mandating the leadership of N.C.N.C. to represent the people of Kafanchan. On their part, the railway workers organised a ceremony to honour Pa Michael Imoudu, the President of the Railway Workers Union, for his sacrifices (Abba, 2007, p. 58).

With the inception of the Macpherson Constitution in January 1950 (Abba, 2007, p. 16), the Northern People’s Congress (N.P.C.) emerged as the anointed party of the Native Authority (N.A.) in Northern Nigeria. This did not put an end to the existence of other political organisations; rather, it made their existence a threat to the northern political establishment and, to some extent, to the British colonial authority. The presence and activities of the radical Northern Elements Progressive Union (N.E.P.U.) were felt among the inhabitants of this town. Nevertheless, because the Native Authority Administration was sustained by segregation and oppression of the local population, who were considered as labour reserves and tax contributors to the colonial economy, the bulk of them during the decolonisation period were involved with such political organisations as the United Middle

Belt Congress (Turaki, 2017, pp. 224-226). To the NPC-led government in Northern Nigeria, this step was considered an affront to the northern establishment while to the former, it was a deliberate action to weaken and break the stranglehold of the Caliphate on a people that were never conquered during the Sokoto Jihad (Hassan Kukah, 1993, pp. 7-8). This opposition to minority rule continued throughout the colonial era.

## **Conclusion**

In precolonial times, the Kafanchan area was a zone of fruitful intergroup cooperation between various ethnic groups. There were no rigid boundaries among these unique and culturally similar groups. Their identity remained as such until the eighteenth century when the demographics started experiencing a change with the migration of Fulani pastoralists, Hausa traders, and slave raiders in response to both the abundant economic opportunities and the Trans-Saharan trade route that passed through this area to Keffi and the Benue Valley.

During the colonial era, the name Kafanchan was featured as a village the major parts of which were inhabited by the Kaninkon ethnic group (Smith, 1987, pp.18-21); its borders were transitional precincts among the indigenous groups within the area such as the Kagoro and Kaje. It was not the name of an ethnic group but the name of a village or settlement. The evidence from tax assessment records based on “tribal” units does not reveal Kafanchan as one ethnic group. This cannot be disputed because the British colonial economy survived on taxation and could not have ignored such a “tribe” if it would have existed in such an open area. Similarly, a compilation by Joseph Greenberg, later edited by Abdullahi Smith (1987) does not list a tribal group named Kafanchan.

However, the British colonial enterprise attracted people from different ethnic backgrounds to this location. This led to the fusion of similar languages over time. Ultimately, a separate language group emerged and adopted the name Kafanchan. This was seen with the appearance of the name Kafanchan as an ethnic group on the colonial tax assessment records that list a population of less than a thousand people in 1935 (Provincial Gazetteer, 1918).

The area further experienced increased human activities with the growing European search for raw materials and overseas markets as well as the expansion of British colonial enterprise. As a result, there was a significant transformation in its demographic composition leading to greater interaction among Nigerians. Likewise, improvements in the transportation sector and

the expansion of the railway line from the southern part of Nigeria to the northern part of Nigeria culminated in the completion of a major junction at Kafanchan in 1926. This event triggered the massive migration of people and goods to Kafanchan and the subsequent urbanisation of Kafanchan town. The provision of colonial infrastructure and social amenities such as the rail and road transportation system, schools, health institutions, electricity, and pipe borne water, among others attracted Nigerians from different parts of the country to Kafanchan, thus, making Kafanchan a heterogeneous community. There is no doubt that the British colonial enterprise played a significant role in the evolution and development of Kafanchan as a cosmopolitan and urbanised town.

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