

The Socio-Economic Development of Shika, 1928-1975

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Abstract

A robust socio-economic activity constitutes the life wire of every society. No society in human history has made any meaningful progress without a thriving socio-economic activity. It is against this backdrop that the paper examines the socio-economic development of Shika between 1928-1975. The aim of the paper is to clearly bring out the role of population expansion in boosting the socio-economic development of Shika. Shika is one of the thriving towns in Zaria emirate that was established in 1928 as a labour camp for the agricultural stock farm. The conducive nature of its environment motivated the British colonial government to set up its farm. The research deploys the use of qualitative method of research which relies on the use of primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from field work conducted by the researchers and data from National Archives Kaduna while the secondary information was collected from books, journals and unpublished works. The paper argues that the rapid development witnessed in Shika was as a result of the socio-economic activities of the people of Shika and the cordial relationship that existed among the people which enabled the town to thrive. Findings from the research reveal that the people of Shika were skilled farmers, artisans and traders. The paper concludes that Shika became a town to reckon with as a result of its robust socio-economic activities.

Keywords: Shika, Development, Socio-Economic and Migration.

Introduction

Shika is presently in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The settlement was established in 1928 as a labour camp for the Agricultural Stock Farm. Some villages existed in the area and still exist before the establishment of Shika. The early villages that existed in the area include, Makoye, Tsibiri, Biye, Mahuta,

Gugurfa, Miligoma, Samaru and other smaller villages.¹ The date when human settlements appeared in Shika area is not clear. But, archeological evidence suggests that antiquity of human settlements or existence in Shika area, dates to the 7th and 10th century A.D.² The paper is an attempt to examine the socio-economic development of Shika within the period under review. The settlement grew rapidly as a result of the establishment of government institution in the area. The establishment of the Agricultural Stock Farm which later became National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI) in 1975 which is the terminal date for this research³ attracted people to settle in Shika and to take up job offers with the institution.

The socio-economic activities of the people served as boost to the development of the area. Agriculture constituted one of the major mainstay of the economy like every other society in Nigeria. Shika has rich agricultural farmlands which encouraged agricultural activities in the area. They were not left out in trading activities as one of the thriving markets in Zaria was Shika market which attracted many traders from different parts of Kaduna to take part in the trading activities. The major items that attracted traders to Shika market were; grains of different types which were cheaper because the market was directly supplied by farmers and livestock ranging from chickens, goats, cattle, etcetera. This led to an increase in the population of Shika. Many people migrated and settled in Shika. The inter group relations among the different ethnic groups in the area was cordial as people mingled with one another without fear victimization. The paper is divided into three parts which include introduction, economic and social development of Shika and conclusion.

1. A.Z. Ibrahim, "Evolution of settlements in the Shika Area of the Zaria Plains" A Seminar Paper Presented to Department of History, A.B.U. Zaria, 2008, Pg. 2.

2. A.Z. Ibrahim, "Evolution of settlements in the Shika Area of the Zaria, Pg. 12.
3. <https://napri.gov.ng/> Accessed 27 May, 2022

Social Development of Shika 1928-1975

The era of colonial rule in Nigeria coincided with remarkable changes in the socio-economic conditions of the country. There was an unprecedented movement of migrants all over the Nigerian area and the result was the development of a complex mixture of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups.⁴ Shika illustrate this clearly, from what could be described as an initial rural community made up of farmers, artisans, dyers, it started expanding as a result of the establishment of some institutions like the Institute of Agricultural Research (I.A.R.) in 1922 and NAPRI. The resultant effect of this was the gradual change in the nature of the community. It became concentrated with tailors, traders, mechanics, technicians, professionals and others engaged in working for the institution. These groups of people were forced to find accommodation in Shika and as such formed part of the community with their families. This can be best described in the changing nature of human population as illustrated in the table below;

Villages	1952	1963
Samaru	1,840	7, 133
Bassawa	1,258	1,708
Bairmi	*	629
Bomo	1,928	1,197
Hanwa	1,448	2,718
Giwa	*	3,167
Biye	*	1,853
Palladan	711	1,194
Shika	503	1,888

Source: Cited in Oyedele History of Samaru and its environs up to 1987.

⁴ H. N. Mohammed, "The Evolution of Samaru from C.1924-1975," Unpublished B.A. Project, Department of History, A.B.U. Zaria, 1977, Pg. 34.

From the table, it is glaring that in the 1963 Census, the number of people in Shika had risen to 1,888.⁵ This is an indication of the role of increased economic activities in Shika which made it attractive for people from other parts of the country to settle in the area. For Barimi, Giwa and Biye the researcher could not get their 1952 Population Census figures as a result of paucity of information on the areas but their census figures for 1963 show that they had an appreciable population in comparison with their neighboring communities. Samaru witnessed a rapid increase as a result of the establishment of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria which is situated in the community.

As the institution expanded in terms of units, departments and livestock, the population of workers also increased. It drew workers from various part of the country, at the senior cadre; the composition of staff was cosmopolitan, with researchers from various part of the country. While at the junior staff cadre, it was dominated by the locals from Shika and neighboring villages. They were also engaged in casual labour for the institution. The reason why they were not employed at the senior cadre of the institution was attributed to the lack of necessary qualifications for such positions.⁶ With the upsurge in population, workers sort for accommodation in the outskirts of the institution. Though, the institution had housing facilities, the houses were not enough to accommodate its workers. In the junior staff quarters only 20 houses were available for workers. A complex tenant system emerged, workers rented houses in Shika village, workers who were also empowered acquired lands and developed such landed property for rent.⁷

5. U. Nneka, "The Impact of Primary Health Care Delivery System on Rural Development: A Case Study of Shika District in Giwa Local Government Area, Kaduna State" Unpublished B.A. Project, Department of Geography, A.B.U. Zaria, 2005, Pg. 23.

6. Abdullahi Shehu aged 42 years interviewed at NAPRI in Shika 9th September 2009.

7. John Bijimi aged 56 years interviewed at NAPRI in Shika 13th September 2009.

The kind of houses built were essentially those with low rent, the room and parlour accommodation was in high demand by low income earners. House rents for a room and parlour ranged from 5-7. Houses in Shika were either completely rented, private or both. The sharing of a compound or a dwelling unit between household became a common practice with the inhabitants of Shika. The degree of sharing ranges from 4-5 household per compound. This was characterized by inter mixture of various ethnic group large percentage of the compounds have mixed migrant population. Inside the compound there was little inter-ethnic ill feeling, this characterized most of the compound.⁸

The type and quality of the environment in which people live in is a measure of the socio-economic status of any society.⁹ Sanitary standard in Shika was poor, with little or no proper drainage system. Some dwelling houses were without solid waste disposal system, like latrines. Majority of those that had latrines were those that used the pit type. The inadequate provision of latrine led to people using neighboring environment for sewage disposal.¹⁰ It is important note that within the period under study the area did not receive enough attention from the government in terms of infrastructural development for example the area was without electricity supply except in the Shika Stock Farm. The availability of electricity in Shika Stock farm was not strange as power was needed for the day to day running of the farm.

There was an acute shortage of needed essential services and facilities in Shika. This was evident in terms of power cut and insufficient water supply. As at the early stage of the Shika Stock Farm water needed for the agricultural stock farm was obtained from Shika stream.¹¹ The first Zaria water works was established and commissioned in 1937 with a designed capacity of 10 million

^{8.} H. N. Mohammed, "The Evolution of Samaru from C.1924-1975,"
^{9.} B. Danjuma, "Residential Housing and Economical Problems in Zaria" Unpublished B.A. Project Department of Geography, 1981, Pg. .45.
^{10.} B. Danjuma, "Residential Housing and Economical Problems in Zaria", Pg., 46.
^{11.} NAK/ZARPROF 26359 S.I. Shika and Samaru Water Supply.

liters of water daily and the second water works commissioned in 1975 with designed capacity of 50 million liters of water daily.¹² Shika had a fair water supply which passed through it to Giwa. As the institute expanded in size and livestock, the institute sunk wells and boreholes to meet the needs of the institute. The people of Shika relied on these water facilities for their water supply. Most of the compounds were at the risk of taking polluted underground water by pit latrines. The danger was greater considering the fact that, well and pit latrines were located in the same compound.¹³

Substandard buildings were also a common feature of settlements in Shika. Not much of the buildings were constructed with cement alone, but what we had was the use of mud for the main building while cement was used to plaster some of them. Data from the field shows that Shika had a steadily increasing population and new houses that sprang up without any semblance of order or planning. People built anywhere, leaving very little space for adequate ventilation and roads. People who lived in such substandard housing stood the risk for the collapse of the building in case of very strong winds or thunderstorms during the rainy season. The National Concord Newspaper illustrated this vividly when it reported that a family of nine died in a midnight tragedy when all victims of a collapsed mud wall building took place in Wednesday night.¹⁴

Shika emerged as a settlement housing the population and staff of NAPRI/ABU, it lagged in the provision of adequate primary health care services. The community relied greatly on the services provided by NAPRI clinic and the health institution located within Ahmadu Bello University. In the whole of Shika, there were only two primary health care centres namely; Shika dispensary which was transformed into the local government comprehensive health centre and the National Animal Production Institute meant for

^{12.} NAK/ZARPROF 26359 S.I. Shika and Samaru Water Supply.

^{13.} B. Danjuma, "Residential Housing and Economical Problems in Zaria". Pg. 45-49.

^{14.} B. Danjuma, "Residential Housing and Economical Problems in Zaria", Pg. 43.

NAPRI staff.¹⁵ The establishment of ABU teaching hospital in Shika, entails the further growth and development of Shika. Herbal / traditional medicine also constituted another significant aspect of medicine widely preferred by some people to modern medicine. The people were able to maintain a healthy lifestyle through the help of traditional medicine.¹⁶

Educational facilities in Shika were sketchy. In 1938, the colonial government established Elementary Primary School at Shika. This primary school served the primary educational needs of Shika. As the population of Shika expanded a Government Day Secondary School was established to cater for post primary school educational needs of students. Before its establishment parents sent their wards to schools in neighboring communities of Giwa and Samaru. There also existed some Quaranic schools organised at various locations in Shika for religious and moral instructions.¹⁷ Furthermore, some churches and mosques were built to cater for the religious needs of the community. The predominant churches during this period were St. Theresa Catholic Church, ECWA and Apostolic Church. These centers of worship have increasingly become focal points in the rapidly, developing town.

Economic Development of Shika 1928-1975 A.D.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy of Shika. When we look at agriculture from a wider perspective, within this period it was glaring that, rural societies in Nigeria were essentially agrarian societies with vast arable land and conducive climate suitable for the production of varied crops, fishing as well as other economic activities. Rural areas in Nigeria derive 90% of their livelihood directly or indirectly from agriculture. It was on this premise, that, Walter Rodney noted that, countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are called agricultural countries because they

¹⁵. NAK/ZAPROF 2,857/37 Dispensary at Shika.

¹⁶. Mallam Makoye aged 84 years interviewed at his residence in Shika 13th September 2009.

¹⁷. John Bijimi aged 56 years interviewed at NAPRI in Shika 13th September 2009.

rely on agriculture and have little or no industries. But, their agriculture is unscientific characterized by the use of crude implements of hoes and machetes. Their yields are far less than those of developed countries. In industrialized countries agriculture has become an integral part of the industry with much more advanced agriculture than the rest of the world.¹⁸ Shika is not left out in this context because agriculture has been the dominant activity in the town. This was an outcome of the factor of geography which offers favorable conditions for agricultural activities. This can be well understood when we look at the strategic location of Shika within the northern guinea savannah region, which is conducive for cereal and leguminous crop.¹⁹ Makoye noted that Shika has fertile land for agricultural purposes which results to high yields. He estimated that for a hectare of land farmers could get between 40-50 bags of maize. According to him the output would have been higher if modern agricultural practices were deployed on the farms.²⁰

Various crops were grown in Shika during our period of study. As the first heavy rain comes, the major staple grains were planted. The major staples include; guinea corn, millet, maize, which were planted early. The other leguminous crops of groundnut and beans were sown some few weeks after the staples. Groundnut was a major crop grown in the area. It has many uses for instance, it was processed as cooking oil, the oil was rubbed on the skin to make it soft and it was used as lamp oil.²¹ Another important crop grown in the town was sugarcane it was grown in Fadama around Rafin Shiika. The strategic location of Rafin Shiika was conducive for the growing of sugarcane. Various sugarcane Fadama were located around rafi Shiika. Sugarcane was used for the preparation

18. W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. (England: Boogle-Loverture Publishers, 1972), Pg. 24.

19. A.Z. Ibrahim, "Evolution of settlements in the Shika, Pg.1.

20. Mallam Makoye aged 84 years interviewed at his residence in Shika 13th September 2009

21. A. Abdulkadir, "The Agricultural Economy of Birinin Zazzau in the 19th C." *ZAHIR* Vol. 1 No.1 2006, Pg. 86.

of sweet meals like Nakiya, Dakuwa, Tsimi and brown sugar. Root crops were not exempted from the varieties of crops grown in Shika. These included yam, cassava, and sweet potatoes. The production of yam expanded considerably during this period, this was as a result of the changing status of yam as a major staple of the inhabitants and the arrival of migrants; Tiv, Igbo, Idoma, Igala for whom yam was a staple.²²

Farmers in Shika adopted shifting cultivation or bush fallowing techniques to conserve the fertility of the soil. This involved in the main rotation of fields rather than crops.²³ These methods were practicable because during the period under study land was still relatively surplus. No chemical fertilizers were used. Our oral informant noted that, at the initial stage when fertilizer was introduced, farmers rejected its use.²⁴ Inquiry into such neglect of the use of chemical fertilizer demonstrated farmers' choice for the use of local manure in improving the fertility of the soil. This range from backyard manure, from the family livestock, to the accumulated rubbish of the household that has been accumulated since the last farming season i.e. taki juji, or bola. The refuse decomposed and turned into dark soil called taki (fertilizer) which was carried to the farm in baskets or sacks, on head or donkey.²⁵ Food stuff accounted for a large share of the value of goods produced in Shika annually. Agriculture remained the matrix in which all other indigenous economic activity is set. The inhabitants of Shika find it difficult to abandon farming for other occupation, which were often times undertaken on part-time or seasonal basis. Instead surplus from the agricultural sector was used to finance other productive ventures. And the surplus that accrued from agricultural produce remained the

22. Usman Tudu aged 82 years interviewed at his residence in Shika 13th September 2009.

23. A.C. Olu, *Topics on Economic History of Nigeria*. (Ondo: Crofes Publishers, 1999), Pg. 47.

24. Mallam Makoye aged 84 years interviewed at his residence in Shika 13th September 2009.

25. A. Abdulkadir "The Agricultural Economy of Birinin Zazzau in the 19th C," Pg. 89.

basis for trade.²⁶

Farmers in Shika had an excellent means of storage. After harvest they transported their crops on donkey back. This was the predominant means of transportation during this period. The crops were stored in Rumbu, a special granary designed to preserve food in good condition for at least three years. Grains were stored unthreshed, while pits were dug for tubers meant for storage. The farmers sold only a portion of his crops to solve immediate and pressing needs, while the rest was kept until much later when food was scarce in dry season and to attract higher prices.²⁷

Animal husbandry and livestock rearing constituted another significant aspect or feature of mixed farming which dominated the fabrics of Shika economy. To supplement their income farmers raised a variety of livestock and poultry; cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, guinea fowl and duck were the livestock that were mostly reared.²⁸ Fulani pastoralists resided permanently within the vicinity of Shika because of the availability of clean drinking water for their herds even during the dry season and the availability of pasture. Abdulkadir noted that, pastoralist camped their cattle on farmlands during the dry seasons feeding the herds of cattle on corn stalks left on the farms and in some cases the farmers also made available the corn busk Kakayi removed after threshing. This whole process of feeding the herds on the farms had a positive effect in the farmlands. Through this process the soil was manured with animal droppings. Most Fulani pastoralists went about with their cattle seeking for pasture while the sedentary Fulani raised their cattle and other livestock within the four walls of Shika. Our oral informant noted that, high breed sheep were brought from as far as Katsina before the coming of the

^{26.} A.C. Olu, *Topics on Economic History of Nigeria* ...,p.47

^{27.} A. Abdulkadir, "The Agricultural Economy of Birinin Zazzau in the 19th C," Pg. 91.

^{28.} A. Abdulkadir, "The Agricultural Economy of Birinin Zazzau in the 19th C," Pg. 91

British. Also with the establishment of NAPRI in Shika, the productivity of the livestock improved greatly.²⁹

Apart from farming, the people of Shika were engaged especially during the dry season in various non-agricultural activities. Trade constituted a vital part of non-agricultural activities in the town during this period. Shika had a vibrant market which constituted a meeting point for trading activities. Items of trade came from Shika and neighboring villages. The market was organised on weekly basis, Tuesdays and Saturdays.³⁰ Traders from far and near patronized the market. The traders came mostly from Samaru, Bassawa, Bomo, etcetra, items of trade were principally grains (beans, groundnut, millet, corn etcetera), livestock, pottery items, cutleries and other essential household items. Traders purchased grains at wholesale prices from Shika market and this was sold at retail prices. Buyers and businessmen especially from Samaru often bought grains in bulk in anticipation of a future rise in prices. Shika market transformed into a consumption centre which supplied food stuff to the community and other neighboring villages of Tsibiri, Biye, Mahuta, and Samaru which purchased a bulk of her grains from Shika market. The market though substandard was the biggest market in the locality. Between 1956-57 cotton purchased from Shika stood at 123 tonnage, farmers had an estimated income of €4,551 between 1969/70 the tonnage purchased rose 553, farmers income rose to €20,461.³¹

One aspect of trade worth noting in Shika environs was the extent of the trade among married women in Purdah (seclusion). This form of trade referred to as hidden trade by some scholars is

^{29.} Mallam Makoye aged 84 years interviewed at his residence in Shika 13th September 2009.

^{30.} Mallam Makoye aged 84 years interviewed at his residence in Shika 13th September 2009.

^{31.} G. Jeremiah, "Market Centres in Zaria Division, Nigeria: An Analysis of their Evolution and Locational Structure" Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, 1973, p.418

common in the northern part of the country.³² The practice of women seclusion restricted free movement of married women especially during the day time. In this house trade, women in Purdah became important retailers of both agricultural produce and other consumer goods. These women largely operated within the walls of their household, without coming into physical touch with the majority of their customers. This important aspect of marketing was fulfilled through young children and old women as intermediaries. These women traded in assorted items such as salt, natron, okra, and other food items.

Other non-agricultural activity in Shika included blacksmithing. Blacksmithing is an indispensable craft. As a profession, the craft itself was usually hereditary, from father to son, however, there were exceptions. They played vital roles in the supply of agricultural equipment. Since agriculture was the dominant occupation of the people the relationship between other farmers and blacksmith was symbiotic.³³ They were the major suppliers of farm implements, weapons, and building implements. The craft was popular before the coming of the British into the area and the importation of iron implements into the area. In the early days of colonialism, the use of local iron was popular until the later part of British colonialism where it was discouraged as a deliberate policy of the British to promote their goods. This resulted to peoples' dependence imported iron implements which destroyed indigenous industries.³⁴ The craft itself was an all season occupation and the blacksmith either did not do any farming at all or only cultivated a few furrows, part of the tools made were hoes, hand plough, axe, knives, sickle, sword, and a whole range of other agricultural and service tools. They also carried out repairs on them. It is important to note that, in Hausa land before the colonial

³² T.B. Ingawa, A Study of Rural Economic History of the Major Cotton producing Districts of Kaduna Emirate During the Colonial Period, 1900-1939, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis University of London 1984, p. 299-300

³³ The farmers gave part of their harvest in return for farm tools.

³⁴ S. Bello, "Birinin Zaria" in G. Ashiwaju (ed), Cities of the Savannah, Kaduna: Life-Up Nigeria Magazine Publication, 1985.

era, blacksmithing depended on indigenous smelting and mining for their raw materials. With the British colonialism, blacksmithing began to change. In the first place, the colonial government legislated against mining and smelting of iron pig. Hence, blacksmithing venture was reduced to smelting of metal scrap called (karfen bature)³⁵ and this continued to the post-independence era.

Discussion on the economic development of Shika will not be complete, without looking at the expansion of population and development in NAPRI/ABU which was the main impetus for the growth of the economy. The economic development of Shika was hinged on the institution of Shika Animal Stock Farm, this transformed into National Animal Production Institute in 1975, under the auspices of Ahmadu Bello University. Most of the wage earners in Shika are NAPRI employee and because they form the majority of the population, Shika developed into a cosmopolitan centre. This can be fully appreciated with a look at the waves of migration into Shika. Migrants from different parts of the country migrated into Shika either as workers with the institution or as traders, this served as stimulus to the economy. NAPRI supplied milk, beef and eggs to Shika community, Samaru, Giwa, ABU main campus and other neighboring communities. Beef was sold by the institution on monthly basis, while eggs were sold on weekly basis; there were also weekly sales of milk. The institution processed milk into yoghurt for sale, NAPRI yoghurt has wider network or market, it supplied ABU main campus, Congo campus and other tertiary institutions within Zaria.³⁶ Buyers from far and wide patronized the weekly and monthly sales of eggs and beef as the prices were relatively cheaper and affordable. Also, the institution focused on the improvement of hybrid livestock, animal husbandry and nutrition. Part of the feeds for the livestock was purchased from

^{35.} T.B. Ingawa, *A Study of Rural Economic History*, Pg. 340-341.

^{36.} John Bijimi aged 56 years interviewed at NAPRI in Shika 13th September 2009.

Shika market and neighboring Giwa market.

Extension officers of the institution were engaged in community development / extension services. This involved the dissemination of information to farmers on how they could improve their livestock through various scientific techniques of cross breeding, artificial insemination and proper nutrition livestock. This was met with a lot of resistance from farmers who preferred traditional method of improving their livestock. The dissemination of information and extension services was not limited to Shika environs alone, it cut across different part of the country. One of such prominent farmers who benefitted greatly from the services of NAPRI was Simtu Farm Enterprises located in Shika. Some of the Fulani pastoralists later embraced the services of the institute alongside the use of traditional technique in improving their livestock.³⁷

With the expansion of Samaru due to the establishment of ABU, farmers and cattle owners moved out to find farmlands and grazing fields. The university has virtually bought all the lands around Samaru and so the only alternative for those who wanted to farm on a large scale or for those who owned substantial number of cattle was to move out to Shika and neighboring villages where such lands were available.³⁸ From this we could see that Shika served the farming needs of Samaru. In the 1980's a community bank was established at Shika, it served the saving needs of the community. Traders and waged income earners patronized the bank for their savings. Association like the Southern Kaduna Association kept their money with the bank. The bank did not last long after its establishment; it collapsed as a result of mismanagement.³⁹ The building later became the Shika Development Area.

^{37.} Abdullahi Shehu aged 42 years interviewed at NAPRI in Shika 9th September 2009

^{38.} H. N. Mohammed, "The Evolution of Samaru from C.1924-1975," ... p. 22

^{39.} John Bijimi aged 56 years interviewed at NAPRI in Shika 13th September 2009.

Conclusion

The paper has shown that the rapid socio-economic development of Shika between 1928-1975 was predicated on the establishment of the Shika Stock Farm in 1928 which later became NAPRI in 1975. This encouraged the influx of migrants into Shika in search of economic opportunities which found expression in the various economic activities that sprang up around Shika ranging from agricultural activities to trade. In terms of social development, the paper found out that the development of infrastructure in terms of electricity, hospitals, schools was slow as it did not receive the needed attention from the government rather emphasis was more on Shika Stock Farm and this was apparent because of the role the farm played in serving the interest of the government. The paper posits that in the history of Shika as a settlement the establishment of Shika Stock Farm played a central role in the influx of migrants and the socio-economic development of the town.

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