Impact of Kolanuts Trade on Socio-Economic Development of Sagamu,

1910-1970

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Abstract

The ancient town of Sagamu in the old Ijebu-Remo Province is a household name regarding the cultivation and production of kolanuts *cola nitida* (gbanja), especially the white variety, in the whole of South-Western Nigeria. This species of kolanuts attracted some itinerant Hausa kolanuts merchants in large number from the north to the town between 1910 and 1970. This paper examines the impact of kolanuts trade on the socio-economic development of Sagamu. It sheds light on the origins of gbanja kola; types of the nuts involved in commercial transactions; and the volume of the trade in Sagamu. In the course of this study, primary and secondary sources, which have been critically assessed and evaluated were used without necessarily undermining the historicity of the subject-matter. The paper concluded with the lessons to be drawn from the trade by contemporary Sagamu society and Nigeria in general.

Keywords: Trade, market, kolanuts, merchant, development.
Introduction

There is something unique that can be used in identifying every society in the world. Indeed, this identification mark is, however, more visible with societies that are homogenous in nature. This could have being the case with Sagamu, a society identified with the cultivation and production of kolanuts in South-Western Nigeria. *Cola nitida* (gbanja) was introduced into the agricultural economy of South-Western Nigeria between 1880 and 1920. This was possible, according to B.A. Agiri because of “the suitability of the innovation, mobility factors in land, labour and capital and most principally by the demand factors”. In fact, there existed an ever-expanding market for the nuts in northern part of Nigeria from the pre-colonial era.

Further, the Hausa of northern Nigeria are known to be the greatest consumers of kolanuts. Indeed, the virtues of kola were known to them about eight hundred years ago. Kolanuts (*guoro*) became as important to them as betel among the Hindu, opium among the Chinese and cigarettes among Spaniards. In fact, it was so much in demand that, it was believed that some in the Muslim north would spend their last coins to procure a lobe to chew. Kolanuts were stimulants equivalent to coffee which was very much in demand among their oriental co-religionists. Kolanut equates with dry dates of the Bedouin Arabs in its ability to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst, enabling them to work for longer periods without tiredness and keep them awake for a longer period. This was corroborated by the Arabs who used it in crossing the broad expanse of the Sahara towards the Mediterranean Sea. Early sixteenth century accounts recorded that the people of the Cape Verde chewed kolanuts for these same reasons.
Kolanuts, among the northern folks, indeed, entered activities of daily life and almost constituted a language. This could be seen in marriage ceremonies where the quantity of the nuts sent by the would-be groom to the bride’s family depended on the wealth of the former. Also, during festivals, kolanuts constituted one of the items given by the rich to the poor. Kolanut, accompanied by oral messages, was and still remains, in many communities in northern Nigeria, the system of issuing invitations to friends.

However, it was as a result of the realisation of the use in which kolanuts had been put to, that the Hausa kolanuts merchants began to penetrate Yorubaland by the 1920s. They came in larger numbers to Otta, Egba-Owode and Sagamu. This influx of the Hausa kolanuts traders increased the demand for the commodity in these areas. This was however, followed by the establishment of the traditional Hausa organisation of landlords and brokers usually associated with long distance commercial activities.

From the 1920s, Hausa traders began to be drawn to Sagamu because of the availability of the white species which was preferred by the Hausa traders to the red variety common then in Egba-Owode, Otta and other places in South-Western Nigeria. At Makun in Sagamu, they were lodged in houses belonging to fellow Muslims, helping them to get food, buy the nuts and arrange for labour for the peeling and bulking of the commodity. Moreover, the increasing number of the Hausa kola merchants who began to arrive in Sagamu after 1940, and who passed through other Yoruba settlements on their way to and from northern Nigeria brought a great awareness of the trade in kolanuts to the local farmers. With this awareness, Sagamu became more popular as regards the trade. By the 1960s, Sabo kolanuts market had become the hub of commercial activities in the whole of South-Western Nigeria. In fact, it is not an over-statement to say that “no kolanuts no
Sagamu”, especially when taken into consideration the role that kolanuts trade played in the socio-economic life of the area.

**Origin of Gbanja (cola nitida) in Sagamu**

The introduction and imposition of colonialism in many parts of tropical Africa from the 1880s was generally followed by the introduction, adoption, and cultivation of new cash crops by African farmers with a view to meeting new demands in foreign markets.\(^{16}\) The case of gbanja kola (*cola nitida*) in Nigerian agricultural economy fell into this group. Although, it was not an export commodity, it was mainly cultivated in order to meet the ever-growing demand for it in northern part of Nigeria.\(^{17}\) However, the demand for *cola nitida* or gbanja kola in northern Nigeria had existed for many centuries. This was ultimately accounted in varying degrees for the adoption and cultivation of the crop in Nigeria.\(^{18}\) The other type which can be implied the term kola is *cola acuminata*, another species of kolanut which has the same chemical contents as *cola nitida*, but with a different flavour. *Acuminata* kola was in existence in South-Western Nigeria when *cola nitida* was introduced in the nineteenth century, but as far as kolanuts trade was concerned in Sagamu, it was of relatively slight importance economically.\(^{19}\) By the first decade of the sixteenth century, *nitida* kolanuts had been imported overland into Hausaland from the Futa Jallon and Guinean Highlands of West Africa via the trading activities of Soninke and Mali traders.\(^{20}\) By 1700, the nuts were obtained from the Asante forests through the important market town, Salaga, in the Gonja district, north-east of the Asante kingdom, in present day Ghana. The Hausa traders became the main suppliers of the commodity.

However, from 1860 upwards, the sea link between the producing areas in West Africa and Hausaland via Lagos and the River Niger became prominent.\(^{21}\) Indeed, available
records indicate that imports into Lagos from Sierra-Leone and perhaps the forests of the modern Republic of Guinea, began in 1863. From 1870, imports reached Lagos from the Windward Coast of West Africa - the areas of Liberia and Ivory Coast, present day Cote d’ivoire, and had surpassed by far those from Sierra Leone in 1880. In the same vein, the first documented imports into Lagos from the Gold Coast (Ghana) occurred in 1879. By 1885, Gold Coast (Ghana) had become the leading exporter of *nitida cola* to Lagos thereby accounting for more than 85 per cent of the total imports for any one year through to the late 1920s.

According to S.A. Agboola, it is not quite clear when exactly *cola nitida* was introduced into South-Western Nigeria. But he opines that Golmer’s reference to disputes between the Otta and Egba people by 1854, suggests that it could have been cultivated in the area that is South-Western Nigeria, even before 1850. Agboola argues further that, that was more possible as Sierra-Leone ex-slaves started returning to the Lagos interior by the 1840s, and that private individuals who migrated to the Gold Coast (Ghana) could have returned with some of the seeds even before that date. Also, northern Yoruba traders, who were in contact with their Hausa counterparts by the early years of the eighteenth century or even earlier, could have learnt about the profitability of the kolanuts trade between the Hausa States and the Asante of the Gold Coast (Ghana).

Also, available records show that, the Yoruba *Saro* (ex-slaves) pioneered the introduction of the *nitida cola* into South-Western Nigeria as a commodity of trade in transit to Bida and the markets in Hausaland. But it was in 1882 that the crop was first planted by one of them, Captain James Pinson Labulo Davies, on his private farm at Itele, a town very close to Ijebu-Ode in present day Ogun State. By the Nineteenth
century, the Yoruba *Saro* had formed a distinct and economically important group in Lagos.\(^2^8\) This was because they had received training from Christian Missions in Sierra-Leone, the purpose of which was to inaugurate socio-economic changes in Yorubaland. In fact, many of them had been converted into Christianity and were imbued with the ideas of their Christian masters. The same could be said of the Muslims among them who were also affected by similar ideas. Upon their return to Lagos and other parts of South-Western Nigeria, they had tried to fulfill these expectations.\(^2^9\) For example, Captain J.P.L. Davies became merchant exporting palm produce from Lagos to Britain while, others like Shita Bay dominated the *nitida* kola trade from Sierra-Leone and other producing areas in West Africa to Bida.\(^3^0\)

Those indigenous Muslim traders in Lagos, such as Sumonu Animashaun, Alapafuja, and Esibi Arowosegbe and some freed Hausa slaves, like Degbari and Hajiya Dogo together with Benjamin Lewis, a Yoruba *Saro*, all of whom had established contacts with Bida, Kano, Sokoto and Keffi and became agents for the new trade with the Gold Coast\(^3^1\) (Ghana). This brought about the importation of *nitida cola* into Lagos and taken by overland routes such as Lagos - Abeokuta - Iseyin - Shaki - Ilorin and Lagos - Ikorodu - Sagamu - Ibadan - Ilorin.\(^3^2\)

In 1897, an experimental station for *cola nitida* was established at Ikorodu, which was followed in 1900 by model farms set up at Olokemeji in Egba territory and at Mamu, a boundary town between Ibadan and Ijebu for ex-slaves. In 1910, some other experimental stations were established at Agege and Ibadan.\(^3^3\) These experimental stations bred many seedlings and sold them at half a penny or distributed them free to local farmers. Also, some chiefs on the payroll of the Government were given seedlings as parts of their
The seedlings nursed at Lagos Botanical Garden included: *nitida cola*, cocoa, coffee, caesarea, rubber and ire rubber (*funtumia elastica*). It was, in fact, from these various primary centres that the *nitida* kola crop was introduced into South-Western agricultural economy. Its acceptance by the local farmers was partly due to their knowledge of the existing indigenous species; *cola acuminata* (*obi abata*). This was, also made possible because many of the early planters had obtained information and knowledge about the new crop during their stay on these farms as hired labourers or through their kinship ties with the farm owners. Apart from this, the ever-increasing number of Hausa kola merchants who began to settle in Lagos after 1880 and who passed through other Yoruba communities on their way to and from northern Nigeria brought a great awareness of the trade in *nitida cola* to the local farmers.

In fact, between 1900 and 1905, the innovation had spread from Otta and Agege areas to Abeokuta province. One Mr. Oguntoyinbo of Egba-Owode district of the province is believed to have cultivated the trees at about 1900, eighteen years before the Egba Native Administration established a small demonstration farm in Abeokuta to distribute the new crop to Egba farmers. Encouraged by the sale of the seedlings at the Ikorodu experimental station, many farmers in Ijebu-Remo towns, including Sagamu had begun to cultivate the new crop between 1905 and 1910. Another account or source has it that the innovation of the new crop, (*cola nitida*) reached Ijebu-Remo direct from the Gold Coast (Ghana) through one of the returning soldiers from the Anglo-Asante War of 1900. This returning soldier, according to this source, came back in 1906 with some *nitida* kola seedlings which he cultivated in his village, Irolu - a village of about 10km to Sagamu. Thus by 1910, the cultivation of the crop was becoming popular in Abeokuta and Ijebu areas that were close
to Agege and Ikorodu. Whatever the origins of the *nitida* kola which came to South-Western Nigerian interest among the Yoruba farmers, its cultivation was immediate and lasting. Indeed, it had a more favourable reception and spread than cocoa. As indicated earlier, as the techniques of cultivating the traditional kolanuts (*cola acuminata*) were already well-known, it was relatively easy to apply these to the new variety, which was in any case hardier.

**Types of Kolanuts Involved in Commercial Transactions**

For the purpose of clarity and understanding, it is important to distinguish from the outset among the various species of kolanuts that were involved in the commercial transactions in Sagamu. Indeed, at least, forty species of kolanuts have been identified by Botanists. But of these species, only two had relevance to the kolanuts trade in Sagamu. These are *cola acuminata* (*obi abata*), the indigenous species and *cola nitida*, the one that was introduced. A distinguishing feature is that the *nitida* cola has two cotyledons or lobes while *cola acuminata* has more than two. It was in fact, the availability of the white variety of *nitida* nuts that attracted the Hausa kolanuts merchants to Sagamu. Although, both species are chewed as stimulants by the peoples of West Africa as each nut contains equal quantity of caffein - about two percent. Similarly, over the centuries, the nuts have been presented by the people as gifts to guests. Also, it was *nitida cola* that were known to have been important as a trade commodity in the Western Sudanese empires since very early times. Official records indicate that as early as the fourteenth century A.D., *nitida* nuts had formed parts of the articles of trade between the Western Sudan and North Africa and the source of production seemed to have been from among the Mande - West Atlantic language speaking peoples. It was this *nitida* nuts that were more popular as an article of trade in
Sagamu, too, just like that of Tran-Saharan trade that took place between Muslims from North Africa and the people of the Western Sudan around fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

**Volume of the Trade**

The history of kolanuts trade in Sagamu would be totally incomplete without discussing the sources of supply to Sabo central market which became the hub of commercial activities in Remoland during the period under review. Sagamu was surrounded by a number of towns and villages where women traders thronged in search of unprocessed nuts. Some of these towns and villages included: Igbo-Oolo, Oke-Selu, Emuren, Fakale, Iraye, Kanuyi and Sotabo. Others were Simawa, Iwelepe, Ewu-Olono, Ode-Lemo, Lantoro, Oke-Ate, Sugbudun, Ajegunle and Mosafejo. Also, there were some other towns and villages which equally served as sources of supply to Sabo central market in Sagamu. These were Imota, Agbowa, Odo-Nla, Odo-Kekere, Igode, Mowo-kekke, Mowo-Nla and Ewu-Elepe. Others included Gberigbe, Gbagidan, Agura, Adamo, Ewu-Oliwo and Liadi. Here, women traders bought directly from farmers. These women traders moved from one town or village to another in search of unpeeled kolanut pods. Their role however, was to bring kolanuts from these towns and villages and to supply the two major local markets in Sagamu. These markets were Oja-Oba in Ofin area and Oja-Awolowo located in Makun district of Sagamu respectively. There were, however, some big towns in Remoland which had little or no farmlands with which to supply Sabo market. They included: Ogere, Ode-Remo, Ishara, Ikenne, Ililisan, Akaka, Irolu and Iperu. The practice was that traders from these towns did go to either Oja-Oba or Oja-Awolowo or both to buy unpeeled kolanut pods from traders that went to buy from different towns and
villages discussed above. These set of traders, indeed, played a different role entirely in the supply chain of the commodity. They peeled the pods and processed the nuts especially when the fresh kolanut came out, and shared stored it till when the produce became scarce. During the period of scarcity, women traders from Sagamu trooped to these towns with a view to buying from those traders that stored it. More importantly, some farmers brought kolanut pods directly to local markets thus by-passing the women traders, especially when the former felt cheated with the pricing system of the later in the previous trading encounter. If these farmers could not do that, their wives would bring the commodity to the two local markets in Oja-Oba and Oja-Awolowo, respectively, to sell on behalf of their husbands. On such occasions they made higher profits from such trips.

Furthermore, the entry of Yoruba women into the trade, marked important development in the marketing of kolanuts in Sagamu. Sagamu women were also known to have visited village markets in Egba-Owode district to buy kolanut in pods, which they processed and sold in Sabo central market. Indeed, these women traders played a vital role regarding the growth and development of kolanuts trade in Sagamu. They searched every nook and cranny of farmlands with a view to making the nuts available to the Hausa kolanuts merchants from northern Nigeria, who came in droves searching for the commodity throughout the year in Sagamu. In fact, they were a vital source of supply to be reckoned with as far as the chain of supply of kolanuts was concerned in Sagamu during the period under review.

Table 1 below shows the tonnage of kolanuts that was carted away to Northern Nigeria between 1961 and 1970.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(Long) Tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>8,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>9,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Basket Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>9,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>10,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>10,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>11,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>12,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>12,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>13,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>14,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey in Sagamu, 2013.

The organisation of the trade was triangular one. The first stage started from the farmers in the farmlands who made the nuts available to the women traders from town. The women traders formed the second stage in the distribution processes. They bought from the farmers in the farmlands and resold to another set of women traders at Oja-Oba and Oja-Awolowo unprocessed, who in turn, peeled and processed the nuts for onward supply to the Sabo central market. The third and final stage took place at Sabo market where the Hausa traders came in large numbers in search of the peeled and processed nuts. However, the Hausa traders from northern Nigeria revolutionised the trade through the introduction of a new pricing system and the measuring units. These innovations by the Hausa traders were meant to curb the excesses of the Yoruba women traders who virtually dominated the trade from the farmlands down to Sabo central market. These innovations could still be noticed in Sagamu till date as far as the organisation of the trade is concerned.

At the Sabo central market, there were standard and common units of measurement. They were in different sizes. Four different sizes of baskets were in use. They were, the large, medium, smaller and smallest measures weighing about 68kg, 34kg, 17kg and 9kg
respectively. Prices, however, depended on the size of the basket and the quality; size and colour of the nuts (see the tables below).


Table 2 (Fresh nuts) (₦)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuts</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Measure (c.68kg)</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Measure (c.34 kg)</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Measure (c.17 kg)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest Measure (c. 9kg)</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey in Sagamu 2013.

Table 3: (Dried Nuts) (₦)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuts</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large measure (c. 68kg)</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium measure (c. 34 kg)</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller measure (c. 17 kg)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest measure (c. 9 kg)</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey in Sagamu, 2013

Impact of the Trade

Nowhere had the impact of the kolanuts trade been felt in Sagamu than on its economy. Indeed, the trade brought a total revolution to its economy which transformed it from a traditional to a modern one. In other words, the trade in kolanuts impacted and touched Sagamu as a society positively in all the facets of its economic life. The trade brought fortunes to individuals, farmers, traders, and even, the local government at large. More than eighty per cent of the population of Sagamu earned their living as kolanuts farmers, traders, transporters, middlemen, and, even as professional packing men.57
The influx of the Hausa traders increased the demand for kolanuts in Sagamu. In this way, cultivation and production of the commodity increased tremendously. As the economy of Sagamu was increasing as a result of the trade, so also was the economy of the individuals that took part in the trade improved. The farmers were the first set of individuals that benefited greatly from this trade. They, indeed, made huge profits from harvests of kolanuts which was used to better their living conditions. In fact, more than ninety per cent of the old buildings in Sagamu were erected from the fortunes made by the farmers from kolanuts production. To buttress this, kolanuts trade was popularly referred to as “a ya ni lowo ma gba”, (the loose translation is: “A money lender that doesn’t take it back”). Some of the farmers who had the foresight then used the proceeds from their kola harvests to get their children educated.

Moreover, the Yoruba kolanuts women traders also generated some wealth from this trade. As indicated previously regarding the organisation of the kola trade in Sagamu, the efforts made and role played by these women cannot be over-emphasised. They, too, with zeal, responded energetically in making sure that this commodity was available throughout the year with a view to meeting the ever-increasing and insatiable demand for the nuts by the itinerant Hausa traders from the north. Through their participation in the trade, they were able to make some profits, which made them to become wealthy. Some of them just like the farmers, had some landed property at Sabo area of Sagamu which were rented out to tenants, through which they generated another source of capital to expand their trade. The wealth they derived from the trade also helped them to get their children educated. Indeed, the trade brought them to the limelight, to the extent that some of them held various traditional chieftaincy titles within and outside Sagamu.
Similarly, the transporters benefited immensely from this trade. In fact, road transportation development played a crucial role in the growth and development of kolanuts trade in Sagamu. With the construction of motorable roads in Sagamu and its environs and head portage became obsolete, some individuals emerged as transporters who began to ply the farmlands and towns. This innovation in transportation development boosted the trade. This made it easier for the farmers to acquire more distant farmlands, even the kolanuts women traders, too, became more active in the trade. They were able to search every nook and cranny of the farmlands since there were vehicles to carry them and their wares from farmlands to the local and Sabo central markets in Sagamu.

Consequently, these transporters were able to make some gains which enhanced their standard of living. The good road networks also increased the volume of the trade in Sagamu, thereby boosting its commerce and economy. Some of these transporters later became a big name in transport business in Sagamu. They included Alhaji J.O. Fayemi (a.k.a J2), Alhaji Akibu Illo, Alhaji Yayah Mosadoluwa, and a host of others.

Apart from the individual farmers, women traders and transporters, the local authority, too, benefited immensely from the trade between 1910 and 1970. This was, however, possible through the revenue that was generated from kolanuts trade. It, therefore, became possible for the local authority in Sagamu to execute some developmental projects, which along the line transformed the economy from agrarian to a commercial one. It was the money generated inform of revenue from the two local markets of Oja-Oba, Oja-Awolowo and Sabo central market respectively, that brought about the provision of such social and infrastructural services like roads, education, pipe-borne water, hospitals, dispensaries and rural health centres.
Education remained a vital social sector that caught the attention of the Sagamu local authority at this period under review. Some elementary schools, in addition, to the existing mission schools were established. They included: Local Government School 1, Sabo, Local Government School 1, Ijagba, in 1955 and 1958 respectively. These elementary schools that were established boosted the enrolment of pupils into these schools. They however, complemented the existing mission schools in terms of yearly pupil enrolment. The tables below show the Pupil Enrolment into the two Local Government Elementary Schools in Sagamu between 1966 and 1970.

Enrolment of pupils into two Local Government Elementary Schools in Sagamu between 1966 and 1970.

Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.G. School 1, Sabo, Sagamu</td>
<td>1965/66</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966/67</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1967/68</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1968/69</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.G. School 1, Ijagba, Sagamu</td>
<td>1965/66</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966/67</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1967/68</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1968/69</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>657</td>
<td>525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


With the establishment of these two elementary schools, the yearly pupils’ enrolment also rose as we have seen from the two tables shown above. This in fact, brought about the increase in literacy level in Sagamu. However, as said earlier, pupils' enrolment in these two schools complemented that of mission schools, which were inherited from missionaries by the local authority during the period, especially from 1970s onward. Some dilapidated buildings among the existing mission schools were also rehabilitated through the revenue generated from kolanuts trade. These included: Wesley School, Oko, St. Paul’s School, Makun, Ansar-Ud-Deen School, Makun and so on. Education boosted interactions between Yoruba and Hausa communities in Sagamu around this period. By the 1940s, the idea of establishing a school for Muslim children was mooted by the leading Yoruba Muslims. To this effect, funds were raised, and land donated, and by 1942, Ansar-Ud-Deen elementary school was established at Makun quarter. The school served as a veritable avenue for quick integration of the Hausa group in Sagamu. The founders of this school included the following: Alhaji Kadiri Ibrahim Osideromu, Alhaji Aliyu Oladipupo, Alhaji Oseni Benson, Alhaji Kafaru (Ross) Adekanbi, Alhaji Tijani Ogunnusi, Alhaji
Sunmola Lanleku, Mr. Saka Lawal Solarin, Mr. Sule Balogun. Others were Alhaji Sule Kudaisi Seriki Lawal, Alhaji Rufai Ogunjimi, Mr. Idris Oluwakemi Seriki Lawal, Mr. Jubril Soloye, Mr. Alimi Kilaja (Giwa Adeen), Mr. Abudu Lasisi and Mr. Lawal Awoyemi.

By 1950, considerable numbers of these children were already of school going age. Children mixed more freely among their peers and learnt very fast from one another. Although, the Ansar-Ud-Deen School was meant to inculcate Islamic practices among Muslim children, it also served as an avenue for socio-cultural borrowing among Yoruba and Hausa children. Notable among the Hausa children who attended Ansar-Ud-Deen Elementary School, Sagamu in the 1950s included: Ali Magaji Dan Sagamu, Garba Magaji Dan Sagamu, Mallam Dogo Dan Daura, Sanni Aliyu, Umar Ingawa and Amadu Liman.

From this elementary school, some of them proceeded to secondary schools within and outside Sagamu. Within Sagamu, there was the Remo Secondary School which was established in 1946. Later, the Muslim High School was founded in 1957. These schools were well attended by Yoruba and Hausa Muslim children. There is no doubt that by the 1970s, the level of integration by many Hausa families into the Yoruba social life was very high. Indeed, young Hausa men were already marrying Yoruba girls. A typical example of the demonstration of a high level of integration among Hausa families was the case of Mallam Magaji’s family. He was one of the early Hausa settlers that came to Sagamu. His first son, Garba was born in Sagamu. Even though, Garba had Hausa parents, he got the nick name, “son of Sagamu”, (Garba Magaji, Dan Sagamu). Young Garba attended Ansar-Ud-Deen Elementary School, and it was in the school that he was fond of claiming among his school mates that he was a son of Sagamu, because he was born and bred in
This claim, in Hausa language is translated as “Dan Sagamu”, (son of Sagamu). However, the adoption of Sagamu, as a family name, gave special regard and popularity to Garba Magaji in particular and the Magaji family in general. This helped to boost the family trade, and it launched the family into active politics in the 1960s and 1970s in Sagamu.

As indicated above, the level of interaction was so high that, even when Sabo was finally created as a separate quarter for the Hausa group, there was the initial reluctance to move there. And when the Hausa group moved, some Yoruba also, gradually followed them, to the extent that Sabongari became a quarter for Yoruba and Hausa occupants, just like all other quarters in Sagamu. By the 1970s, the social transformation of Sagamu was evident in the large number of mosques in Sabongari, Makun and Ofin quarters. Numerous Quranic Schools also emerged for the children of both Hausa and Yoruba Muslims. Indeed, the period between 1950 and 1970 witnessed a new socio-economic development which promoted closer relations between the Yoruba and Hausa groups in Sagamu. The Yoruba and the Hausa groups inter-married, shared institutions, religion and social values, and were able, through dynamic relationship and socio-economic interactions and intermingling to create a oneness of culture at the grass-roots of social life.

Health is another sector that benefited tremendously from kolanuts trade in Sagamu during the period under review. Indeed, the maxim that “healthy citizens determine healthy economy”, came into fore as far as Sagamu economy was concerned around this time. Generally, health is regarded as central to a community well-being as well as to personal welfare. In fact, health has a strong influence on people’s earning capacity and productivity; it affects educational performance (and this determines employment prospects) and it is fundamental to people’s ability to enjoy and appreciate all other aspects
of life.\textsuperscript{84} It was in the light of this statement that health as a sector was given attention by the local authority in Sagamu during this period. Consequently, a number of dispensaries, health clinics, maternity centres, and so on were established. These included: Agura Health Centre, Sabo, Ogijo Health Centre, Ogijo, Makun Maternity Centre, Makun, Oke-Ate Health Clinic, Oke-Ate among others.\textsuperscript{85} With the provision of good healthcare in the area through the establishment of these institutions, people’s living standard was greatly enhanced. For instance, the health centres provided a wide range of curative services while some of them also provided training facilities for sub-professional staff and facilities for research. Maternity centres equally provided midwifery services to patients within the area. The dispensaries gave regular basic curative services to out-patients. And finally, health centres were largely designed to provide and co-ordinate preventive and curative services in the rural areas within the Sagamu local authority.\textsuperscript{86}

Finally, one other area in which the revenue derived from the trade in kolanuts transformed this town and its economy around this time was in the area of road development. Howard Gauthier argues that “economic development requires adequate and effective transport services”.\textsuperscript{87} Also, the crucial role ascribed to transportation in the developing economies is vividly captured in Lord Lugard’s famous dictum: “the material development of Africa may be summed up in one word-transport”.\textsuperscript{88} Transportation is equally seen as an integral part of the economy of every society, whether it is in advanced or simple economies; and both production and distribution of goods at all levels rely heavily on transportation.\textsuperscript{89} Thus, transport bridges the gap between the producers and the consumers, thereby contributing to the development of the economy of every community or society.\textsuperscript{90} With the construction of motorable roads, Sagamu was open, especially to the
surrounding major market centres. The rural hinterland became more accessible.⁹¹ Some of these roads were constructed within the town, and even in the rural areas. They included: Sabo-Ode-Lemo road, Ayegbami-Ayepe road, Oke-Ate-Simawa road, Emuren-Igbo-oolo road, Sagamu – Ikenne road⁹² Ode-Remo-Akaka road, Ilisan-Akaka road, Iperu-Ode-Remo road, and so on.⁹³ All this added to the existing ones which transformed the economy of the area significantly from an agrarian to a commercial one. In other words, the number of motorable roads increased greatly, which in turn, aided the movement of goods and people from the farmlands to the major markets in town. This in effect, promoted commerce within Sagamu and the rural areas under it. In fact, the town’s present status today owes much to this trade.⁹⁴

**Conclusion**

This paper has discussed the impact of kolanuts trade on socio-economic development of Sagamu between 1910 and 1970. It has shown that kolanuts trade was, indeed, one of Sagamu’s most prosperous enterprises. As indicated earlier, the paper revealed that, Sagamu was highly blessed with a number of towns and villages that served as main sources of supply for this commodity. These were farmlands where women traders thronged with a view to buying from the farmers. They bought some unpeeled nuts in pods, brought same to town via Oja-Oba and Oja-Awolowo, processed and supplied them to the central Sabo market. This was, however, possible because of the improvement in the road network. This road development in fact, acted as the catalyst that promoted the trade. This development reflected in the volume of the trade and the tonnage of kolanuts that was transported to northern Nigeria between 1961 and 1970 by the Hausa kolanuts merchants.
Further from our analysis above, it is clear that kolanuts trade had a profound and positive impact on the socio-economic development of Sagamu. We have noted already the enormous economic benefits the town and its people derived from this trade. So positively important did the trade in kola become to the economic well-being of the people of Sagamu that they abandoned many other businesses and responded energetically to the demands for the nuts by the itinerant Hausa merchants who thronged Sagamu for this commodity during the period under study.

What are the lessons here for contemporary Nigerian society? In fact, there are many lessons to be learnt from the trade by the local, state and federal governments in Nigeria. Nigeria as a country needs to retrace her step and have a focus on agriculture again. Put differently, governments at all levels in Nigeria should go back to agriculture, as we have seen what Sagamu benefited from kolanuts trade during the period under study. Agriculture was the mainstay of Nigerian economy from 1960 till early 1970s, when oil was discovered in the Niger Delta region in commercial quantity. Oil and gas have outlived their purposes and no longer serve the best interest of the country with the continuing fall in prices of oil in the international market. The thirty-six states and seven hundred and seventy-four local government areas depend heavily on monthly payouts from federally collected revenue, mostly oil receipts for their survival. No wonder about twenty-seven states out of thirty-six can no longer pay salaries of their workers! Our folly in relying on oil has caught up with us; hence, governments at all levels, Sagamu local government inclusive, should diversify the economy with a view to creating job for the teeming population of Nigerians. Here, a focus on agriculture is crucial, as it will remain the largest employer for the foreseeable future.
The other lesson to be drawn from the trade by contemporary Nigerian government is the unity the trade brought to Yoruba and Hausa communities in Sagamu. This was possible then through the development of education which aided social interaction between the children of Hausa and Yoruba in the study area. Such interaction continued, even after school, and often led to inter-marriages and a long term relationship between the two communities in Sagamu. The takeaway here is that governments at local, state and federal levels in Nigeria should give education a top priority. As the saying goes “an educated mind is a liberated mind”. In other words, education as a sector should be given a proper attention it deserves. This will go a long way in liberating us as a country, and indeed, taking us out of the woods. As a society, we need a knowledge based economy, and this can be achieved through commitment to revamping our educational sector. This is the secret behind the success of the technologically advanced countries of the world, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, and so on.

Endnotes

1. Every society in the world has an identification mark. This might be what that society is known for or is capable of producing which others benefit from. Sagamu is known for this commodity (kolanuts) within the country and even outside it.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. For details see OnuonaNzekwu, Nigeria Magazine, No 71, December, 1961, p.299.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.301.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
13. Ibid. p.29.
14. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
20. B.A. Agiri, “The Introduction of kola”.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. B.A. Agiri, “Trade in Gbanja”
36. Ibid. p. 27
37. B.A. Agiri, “The Introduction of Nitidakola”.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. S.A. Agboola “Agricultural Changes”
43. B.A. Agiri, “Trade in Gbanja”.
44. B.A. Agiri, “The Yoruba and Pre-colonial Kola Trader”.
45. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p.17.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., p.18.
52. M.A. Aderoju, “The Growth and Impact”.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid. p. 19.
56. Ibid. p.39.
58. N.A.I, Ofin Local Authority Council File No. 12, 276, “Hausa Settlement at Sagamu”, minutes dated 6th October, 1941.
64. *Ibid.*
65. V.S. Akran, “Yoruba-Hausa Relations”.
71. V.S. Akran, “Yoruba-Hausa relations”.
75. *Ibid* p. 300
91. M.A. Aderoju, “The Growth and Impact”