



DYNAMIC MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF NIGERIA

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ABRKA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

DYNAMIC MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF NIGERIA
DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ABRAKA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA.
Email: dmjon2080@gmail.com
ISSN: 2955-0564

Volume 4, Number 1, January, 2024

PUBLISHED BY DYNAMIC MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF NIGERIA
DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ABRAKA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

GRAIN DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING SYSTEM IN BORNO 1973-1985

By

Halima Baba Shehu PhD

Department of History, University of Maiduguri,

Email: halimababa@unimaid.edu.ng

&

Abubakar Mohammed

Department of History, University of Maiduguri,

Email: burarambe@unimaid.edu.ng

Abstract

The article examines the grain distribution and marketing system in Borno State, Nigeria 1973 -1985. It focuses on the process of marketing and distribution of staple food in Borno State through the various stages of marketing system from the Rural markets to Urban Markets. The paper revealed that the distribution and marketing of grains in Borno from the rural to the urban Centre goes through three stages of distribution and marketing from the farm to markets in rural and subsequently urban Markets. It goes through the different types of marketing systems in both the rural and urban centre. The study adopted the qualitative research method. Primary sources like oral interviews were also used through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with some key players in the distribution and marketing of Grains in Borno State as well as library research.

Key Words: Rural Market, Urban Market Distribution, Grains, Traders and Brokers

Introduction

The article discusses the process by which grain produced in Borno State is distributed through the various chains of distribution i.e. farmer/producer, wholesalers, retailers and consumers through the various marketing system, from the farm to the local markets in the rural areas down to the urban centre. The distribution and marketing of grains in Borno during the period under review can be described at three levels: the village markets, the bulk markets and the urban markets. The village markets being the closest to the farmers, usually operate on a weekly basis, on a specific day of the week. The second level markets are the bulk markets, such as the popular grains market located in Biu town of Biu Local Government area and the Muna market located about 10km outside Maiduguri on Maiduguri – Gamboru road. These bulk markets operate daily and deal with some special staple foods. Gamboru market in Maiduguri, for example, has a special section for only grains such as maize, millet, wheat, cowpea, and guinea corn. The urban market is the last level at which consumers buy grains. These are retail markets where grains are sold along with other products. Examples of such markets are Maiduguri Monday Market, Budum Market, Tashan Bama Market etc. within the Maiduguri metropolis. These markets operated daily except on some special occasions like Sallah. Therefore, this article will examine the marketing systems in Borno i.e. periodic markets system, its operation, organisation, and long and short-term changes in the market system. It also looks at the means of grain exchange during the period under review in Borno. The distribution procedure from the markets to the final consumer is also considered. However, before discussing the distributive and marketing system in Borno, we are briefly going to consider the storage system of grains in Borno before it is distributed to the various markets across the state and the methods of marketing.

The objectives are to:

- i. examine the distribution of grains in Borno State
- ii. discuss the marketing system of grains in Borno State
- iii. Trace the history of the marketing system in Borno State
- iv. analyse the periodic marketing system
- v. highlight the role of urban markets in the distribution of grains in Borno State

- vi. evaluate the role of specific retailers in the marketing system
- vii. Consider the organizational structure of the marketing system in Borno

Methodology and Sources of Data

The qualitative research method will be mainly in this work. Oral sources through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) were also adopted. The primary sources are archival materials such as annual reports, and government documents, oral interviews with farmers and grain traders. The secondary sources include unpublished materials such as theses, conferences, seminars, workshop papers, published materials in the form of textbooks, articles in journals, government publications, library and internet materials were also used.

Grain Distribution

The distribution and control of grains in Borno from the producer to market and to the consumer are in the hands of three chains of distribution. The farmers or the producers who are the original owners of these grains are the first part of distribution, and the second chain in the distribution of grains are the local businessmen in the villages who are the closest to the farmers, and also control the chain of distributors of people coming to purchase from the urban centers and lastly, in the chain of grain distribution are the consumers who are the end users of these commodities. The role played by these chains of distributors seriously impacts the distribution and marketing of grains in Borno.¹

The farmers or the producers of grains i.e. wheat, maize and millet in Borno need the principal medium through which their grains will be distributed to the inhabitants of the urban centers, therefore, markets became the sole distribution points of such staple foods. In most cases, before grains reach the markets, they follow a certain procedure. That is to say, it is only in a few cases that grains go straight from the farm to the market. It is first stored and then transported into the markets.

Most farmers (big or small) store their grains that are not needed for immediate use (either for home consumption or market) in their private granaries. These granaries, called (*rumbu*) in Hausa (*Braa*) in Kanuri and (*bi*) in Bura language, are mostly located within the family compound. It is a specially built structure made from a mixture of dry grass and clay, consisting of a big resting on large stones and covered with thatched roof. Apart from the *rumbu* there are other methods used in storing foodstuff in Borno.²

The most dominant storage used in the area during the period under review was the *rumbu*. The size usually depended on the output of the farmers or the household head. However, the average size of the *rumbu* was the type built to store about thirty-five to forty bunches of maize, while bigger ones could contain up to fifty bundles.³ It should be noted that, *rumbu* was mainly used to store grains like millet, beans, rice and maize. The grains are normally kept un-threshed to avoid damage by insects. Furthermore, the fact that much of the storage period was in the dry season and the foundation of *rumbu* was made on large stones means little or no losses of grains from moisture. Cereals that were to be consumed immediately were usually threshed soon after the harvest, packed in sacks and stored in rooms.⁴

Marketing System

Marketing is the total of all business activities involved in the movement of commodities from production to consumption. It is also the production process by which products flow through a system, from producer to final consumer.⁵ Marketing is usually seen as a “system” because it comprises several interrelated structures that along with production, distribution and consumption underpin the economic process. The need for marketing arises with the production of a surplus. It supplements production in that it makes what is produced available to consumers and users at the time and place required.⁶

For many agricultural commodities, three facts dominate the process of marketing. Firstly, agricultural commodities tend to be produced at a considerable distance from centre of consumption. Secondly, agricultural commodities are often harvested within a distinct and short interval of time. Thirdly, consumption tends to be relatively over time.⁷

The agricultural process greatly influences the pace and direction of agricultural development. Prices

serve as market signals of the relative scarcity or abundance of a given product. Prices also serve as incentives to direct the allocation of economic resources and to a large extent they determine the structure and rate of economic growth. The liberalization of the agricultural market implies accepting potentially substantial variations in prices across time, space and product form. This price variation is necessary if agricultural markets are to perform their functions.

An efficient marketing sector is an important multiplier of economic development. It does not only link the sellers and buyers but also stimulates inputs and consumption. It guides the producers towards new production opportunities and encourages innovation and improvement in response to demand and prices.⁸ Production and marketing constitute a continuum and lack of development. To increase food production, therefore, there is a need to develop a more efficient marketing system for the various crops. An important step toward improving the functioning of markets in this case is to understand the nature and effects of transaction costs facing input suppliers, farmers, food retailers and/or consumers.⁹

In the course of performing marketing functions (e.g. assembly, processing, transport and storage) variations in prices occur. It is thus, important to identify the nature as well as the causes of such changes and determine whether or not they reflect efficiency in the marketing system. Thus, the analysis of agricultural prices will serve as an essential step in the formulation of more rational and sustainable price and marketing policies.

Adam Smith who is sometimes called the father of economics, clearly saw that a country could gain by engaging in trade. To make his claim plausible and credible, he tried to illustrate it by giving examples: starting from trade between individuals and extending it to trade between nations. According to him, a tailor does not make his own shoes, he exchanges a suit for shoes, thereby both the shoemaker and tailor gain. In the same manner, Smith argued, a whole country can gain by trading with other countries.

Most of the farmers do not keep their grains after harvest, but take them to the market for sale immediately after harvest from the farm, while others keep them for the long period so that the prices of the grains will go a bit higher in the market before selling. It is important to note that the prices of grains are cheaper immediately after the harvesting period. A grain dealer like Alhaji Gambo Modu Ngumdo said he inherited the business from his father 30 years ago. He stated that they buy the grains from the farm owners in the rural areas, and sell them at wholesale prices at Muna market in Maiduguri to other wholesale and retail sellers in Maiduguri markets.¹⁰ The price of grains during the drought period, especially in 1983 was very high and commodity in minimal quantity due to loss as a result of drought.

Grains in Maiduguri markets are brought from all the local governments across the state and outside the state except for wheat which is produced in few local governments in the state. Grains like maize and millet differ in variety depending on the local government that is producing them and the seediness. In all the levels of markets, physical marketing facilities such as car parks, and space for loading and off-loading are generally inadequate and not well organized and in some cases in very poor condition; sometimes they are completely absent, as most of the rural grains markets are periodic markets that held once a week.

Periodic Markets

The grains in the rural and urban areas were mostly sold in markets with no or very few facilities. More recently, and following a common trend in geography as a whole, it has been suggested that there is a need for greater emphasis on the dynamic nature of market systems and their significance in the ongoing process of rural development. In a study of periodic rural markets in Borno, Northeastern Nigeria, Gina Porter has drawn attention to specific questions:

“We need to know more about the day-to-day working of periodic market systems, especially how people, goods and vehicles move through the system. In addition, we need to know much more about the long term dynamics of the market system, for example, where markets are declining; where they are expanding; where new markets and roads are being built; who makes the decision and where new investments and with what consequences; how markets vary from week to week and

season to season in terms of people present and goods exchanged, and how well the potentialities and alternatives of the existing system are understood by people trading in particular markets”¹¹

Grains marketers of the rural and urban areas in Borno are predominantly Kanuri in Northern Borno and Babur/Bura in Southern Borno. As in Hausaland (and in contrast to many Yoruba bush markets) villages and markets lie in close proximity to one another. A few large settlements are found that possess no market or only a small market, while some small settlements have large thriving weekly markets. There is no direct relationship between settlement size and market size. There is, however, some correlation between market size and location with respect to road transport. In the survey area, the smallest rural markets were generally in remote locations and the largest were on tarred roads or major bush roads which have mammy-wagon and mini-bus services to Maiduguri and other market towns. They are all basically retail markets, though some bulking of goods takes place for sale in larger regional markets.

Markets usually commence around 10:00 am and close about 4:00 pm with a peak of activity occurring at Mid-day. During the rainy season if there is a heavy downpour, however, markets sometimes start as early as 8:00 am and most of the traders will have disappeared by 11:00 am. The Hausa-style late afternoon and evening markets are not a common feature of Borno rural areas.¹²

The physical structure of the rural markets is very limited today as it has always been. In the market at Kukawa, Barth found only a few very light sheds or stalls, with no regular layout and in many markets nowadays there are only flimsy stalls constructed of poles and a Zana-mat sunshade, or nothing at all in which case traders sit under any available tree with their wares spread out in front of them. Despite the outward appearance of disorder, the internal arrangement of goods in the markets tends to follow a common pattern which is most apparent in the larger markets of the region. The hub of the market is focused on the sellers of vegetables, spices, cloth, groceries and jewellery items. At the periphery the Shuwa and Fulani with their milk and butter for sale and the grain, rice and groundnut sellers, in a specially demarcated area, often with their goods piled up in shallow, sometimes concrete-lined-hollows in the ground. Other peripheral positions are occupied by butchers and water sellers, blacksmith dealers, wood carvers (making handles for the blacksmith's products) and cooked food sellers. Finally, at some distance from other traders, the livestock sales take place. The arrangement is a logical one which takes account of fire hazards, access to transport for heavy, bulky products, and so on.

In all the rural markets foodstuffs occupied the greater area. Imported manufactured goods were much less well represented than foodstuffs, though far more are sold today in the small bush markets than used to be the case. Locally made craft items were found to be almost as important as manufactured items and, in a few cases, none at all.

Traders encountered in the markets of Borno fulfilled various functions and can be grouped into discrete types: indeed, in Kanuri, they are given special names. Representatives of the most common trading groups encountered in the survey area were the *Gurdoma*, the *Fatkema* and the *Tewurma*. The *Gurdoma*, is a woman trading in small items, particularly food items and spices, but also pots, bowls and ear and neck ornaments. She generally carries her merchandise in a large calabash. The *Fatkema*, mentioned by name by both Barth and Nachtigal in their descriptions of Kukawa market, is in some respects the male equivalent, also selling small items and spices. He may sell trinkets, hair powders, needles and thread, spices, wool and a host of other bits and pieces. He may visit just one local market per week or a few local markets. The *Tewurma* is a person who sells often from a table various western-type items, biscuits, wrapped sweets, matches, cigarettes, soap, etc. All the above-mentioned traders operate on a small scale with very little capital invested in their stock.¹³

Less frequently encountered in the rural markets of Borno is the Sawurma, the itinerant trader, usually male, who travels from market to market. He is more commonly found trading in the larger urban markets. He may travel long distances in order to buy commodities and each has his own speciality (*sanya*). He normally deals in sizeable quantities or items of high value and tends to use motor transport to carry his goods, because of the quantities involved. The Sawurma was found in the survey area dealing in such goods as salt, potash, dried fish, mats and cloth. He may sell in the markets through the dilemma, an

agent who sells on commission, and will contact this agent when he arrives at a market to sell his merchandise. The *Sawurma*, like the small-scale traders of Borno, tends to return to his home each night whatever the distance involved.

The *dilalma*, like the *Sawurma*, specializes in various commodities such as livestock (horses, donkeys, cows, goats, sheep) grains, mats, clothing (gowns, shoes, caps etc) or manufactured goods. He arranges sales between prospective buyers and prospective sellers and takes his commission from either one or the other, depending on who contacted him first.

Since the broker advises on the price which can be expected at a particular market, he is often regarded as a thief. The *dilalma* has been a long-standing feature of Borno markets. Barth in Kukawa notes:

“All this sale of horses, camels etc., with the exception of the oxen, passes through the hand of *dilalma* or broker, who according to the mode of announcement, takes his percentage from the buyer or the seller.”

Schultze reports the presence of numerous brokers in the markets of Borno and a report on the Bama region in 1926 remarks on the importance of brokers in the livestock trade. The *dilalma* may be male or female, but in the survey area no women were encountered. The majority of commission agents here were selling livestock (for which they must have a permit to deal from the local government headquarters each year), corn and millet, new cloth, hardware and sometimes groundnuts and kolanuts. They were generally located in the bigger markets. In the smaller markets of the district, there are no commission agents at all, with the exception of those dealing in animals. Only in the case of livestock is trade in a commodity exclusively in the hands of the commission agents. In all other commodities, in addition to the *dilalma*, ordinary traders are selling on their own account and in most of the rural markets the brokers form a small minority.¹⁴

Urban Grain Markets

The history of grain trading as a staple food in Borno dates back to the creation of Yerwa as capital by the British, then the act of marketing grain was in the front of each household with the display of the commodity in containers.¹⁵ The act of displaying grains for sale during this period was particularly common among the people of Makera area in the metropolis. Gradually the act of grain trading moved to the Monday market area around early 70's. However, due to the limitation of space in the market some of the grain sellers later moved to Baga road market which has continued with the business up to the present time. The majority of the grain sellers are found in Baga Road market.

The principal participants in the grain marketing system in Borno markets were the producers, Marketing Board, grains elevator, brokers, millers, livestock farmers, other animal feed processors, food manufacturers, grain exchanges and exporters. The physical grain marketing system in markets across Borno begins with the assembling and collecting points located in the rural areas close or far from the producers. The next stage involves storage as earlier discussed in the previous chapter which are of two types i.e. the local storage in the rural areas and the national grain marketing facilities owned and operated by an appointed parastatal and of private grain elevators and the grain milling companies which in some cases are privately owned, and in others are government enterprises. Although the size and method of operation differ from place to place, the assembling and collection points in Borno grains markets usually have grains brought to them either directly by the farmers/producers or rural entrepreneurs.¹⁶

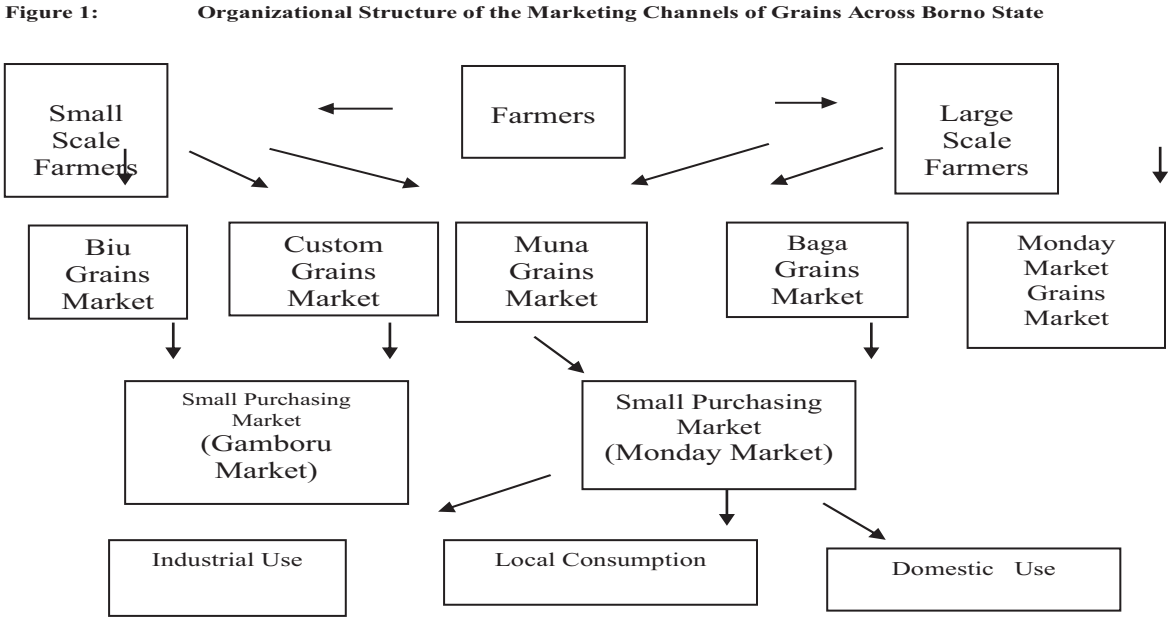
The marketing of grains has been a very big business with much profit in Borno, as grains were produced in many local governments across the state in large quantities. However, with the reduction in rainfall as a result of the droughts of 1973 to 1981, the production and marketing of grains across Borno has been on the decrease.¹⁷ During the drought years there was a severe fall in crop production activity ranging from 20% to 100% due to acute shortage of rainfall. Rainfall plays an important role in agricultural production in the state. Secondly, the destruction of crops by pest infestation, thirdly, lack of good storage facilities led to failure in crop production. Food items grown within this region was not enough to feed the population. The federal government and other voluntary organizations had to come to the aid and rescue the state with food, through massive importation and the establishment of the National Agricultural Food Production Programme in the state.¹⁸ However, the level of drought intensity differs from one local

government to another. This is due to variations in rainfall across the local government areas. The drought condition was most severe in the Northern part of the state.¹⁹

After the drought years of 1973 – 1983, grains were produced in the state in reasonable quantities with the gradual take off from the drought years as improved seeds, were introduced to boost grain production in the state. The rate of production in the state has greatly reduced, and most of the commodities in the market for sale are from other places like Dandume in Katsina, Tudun Wada in Kano and also wheat from Marte and Biu areas of Borno state.²⁰

Indeed, grains that are produced in the rural areas of Borno, are distributed to the urban centres through various means of distribution for onward marketing in the various urban markets.

Figure 1: Organizational structure of the Marketing Channels of Grains Across Borno State



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure 1. The above shows the organizational structure of grain trade across Borno State. The farmers in the rural areas who comprise both small and large-scale farmers are the producers of grains. The small-scale farmers who constitute the majority produced only for subsistence but part of the grains is sold out in order to solve household problems. However, large-scale farmers produce grains for commercial reasons. The grains produced are brought to the urban grains market. The urban grains market is also categorized into two – parts the bulk purchasing and small purchasing markets. The grains dealers are also known as the Fatomas. They collect money from the grain merchants to buy grains for them in small purchasing markets in rural areas and sometimes in bulk purchasing markets. The grain merchants sometimes go to the bulk purchasing markets to buy grains themselves. Some of the large-scale farmers are so powerful that after producing the grains they go to the farmers and purchase the grains directly.

After purchasing the grains, they usually bring them to the local markets in the urban centres, some of the grains are used as raw materials for some industries in the state and beyond, while some are used for domestic purposes i.e. local communities in Nigeria. The remaining parts of the grains find their way into the larger industries of breweries across Nigeria. For example, in Lagos, there are many brewery companies as well as in Southern Nigeria, Kaduna and Jos. It suffices to also mention that some of the grains are exported to neighbouring countries of Niger, Senegal, and Mali among others.

The production of grains i.e. wheat, maize and millet across Borno has undergone a series of stages from the use of simple farming implements: - hoes and cutlasses to the use of modern machines: - tractors. Grains produced in these regions are mostly staple food that is been consumed by the majority of the people. However, the Sahelian drought of 1975 – 1985 has some impact on the production of these grains.

Endnotes

- 1 R. O. Folorinso (1993). Marketing of Grains in Borno State: A case study of Bama, Konduga and Biu Local Government Areas, Annals of Borno Vol.10, pp.71-76, University of Maiduguri Press, 1994.
- 2 Interview with Bello Haruna Mai Hatsi, Biu market, Biu on 20th December, 2017.
- 3 Bello Haruna Mai Hatsi, ... 20th December, 2017
- 4 P. H. Giles (1965). The Storage of Cereals by Farmers in Northern Nigeria. Samaru Research Bulletin, No.42, p.200, ABU Zaria.
- 5 Adekanye, T. O. (1988): Concepts and definitions in, T. O. Adekanye (ed.) Reading in Agricultural Marketing.
- 6 Olukosi, J. O. Isitorm S. N. (1990): An Introduction to Agricultural Marketing and Prices, Principles and Application. Living Books Series G. M. Publications, Abuja, pp.15-20.
- 7 Arndt et al., (1998): Maize Markets and Rural Storage in Mozambique, A Spatial and Temporal Analysis <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/libs/pcl/mapcollection/Africa/Mozambique-rel/195.jag>.
- 8 Abbot, J. C. (1990): Agricultural Marketing Enterprises in the Tropics, Longman Group, U.L. pp.55-76.
- 9 Goetz, S. J. (1995): "Markets Transaction costs, and Selectivity Models in Economics Development" In: Gregory J. S. (ed) Prices, Products and People; Analyzing Agricultural Markets in Developing Countries, Lynne Renner Publisher, Inc. Bauldes, Colorado, pp.383-402.
- 10 Interview with Alhaji Gambo Ngumdo in Fezzard ward, Maiduguri, on 17th of January, 2018.
- 11 Gina Porter (1986). Periodic Rural Markets in Borno, Northeastern Nigeria, Annals of Borno Vol.III, University of Maiduguri, p.107.
- 12 Gina Porter (1986).
- 13 Gina Porter (1986)... p.121.
- 14 Interview with Ali Bukar in Maiduguri on 30th October, 2018.
- 15 Interview with Mohammed Emmah in the Custom grains market on 10th October, 2018.
- 16 Interview with Alhaji Ari Mustapha in Benishiek grains market on 14th November, 2018.
- 17 Interview with Mohammad M. Emmah, at Custom Grains markets, on 10th October, 2018.
- 18 File Document Borno State Ministry of Agriculture, p.8.
- 19 Drought (1983) Report, Ministry of Agriculture Maiduguri, p.6.
- 20 Interview with Abdullahi Mohammed in Monday Market, 20 – 10 - 2018.