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Tradition of Concubine Holding in Hausa Society (Nigeria), 1900 – 1930

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Abstract

This paper examined the tradition of holding women as concubine in Muslim societies of the Hausa. Concubine holding changed the status of women and was acquired by slavery. This paper analysed concubine holding as a phenomenon that challenged female status in Hausa society. It put into perspective, the trajectories of concubine holding from the legends in the tradition of origin. It analysed the rights and privileges accrued to a concubine. And by the beginning of the twentieth century, the question of concubine holding was conveniently desirable under Islamic law and while the British law attempted to change the practices as part of efforts to abolish slavery. Thus, the paper contended that; concubine holding was part of the accepted norms in the sexual notions, which specifically privileged women to change their status and negotiate power in Hausa society. The paper adopted the historical approach by analysing court records, archival materials of the Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna, as well as books and journals relevant to the theme.

Keywords: Concubine holding, British law, Islamic law, Hausa society

Introduction

Female concubines in the culture of Islamic societies featured as objects of sexuality (Athamina, 2007). Concubine-holding practices of the past, subsists in almost of the areas Islam spread to. Therefore, slavery while it produced required labour, was complicated in gender and international relations. The African nexus extended to the empires of western and central Sudan (Ajayi & Espie, 1965). Acquisition of slaves in the empires of West Africa externalized the culture to areas of Islamic expansion. It is in the context that the culture of concubine-holding entangled with sexuality became prominent in Hausa society. The historical method is adopted in this work. The focus is on the early colonial era in Hausa society of northern Nigeria in the early phase of colonial rule from 1900 to 1930. Different factors account for women's power and powerlessness among the Hausa, in this context this work engaged primary and secondary sources. Specifically, the work deployed the sources to explain the intersection of British and Islamic culture in the status of women in the society.

Colonialism recreated new gender relations that evolved clash of legalities in the Islamic and British law. From this, the female slaves were implicitly meant to fulfil sexual urges of the master and by Islamic law, there seems to be implicit jurisprudence prohibiting it. Free women and slave women in the Islamic context are of different classes.

These cultures spread as Islam expand where lots of women were sold to slavery. But the practice of purchasing slaves effaced as the conquest stopped. However, the demand for female slaves was profound in their roles as:

They were used to provide sexual services to the elite class, in the urban society, either on private individual basis, or on a public commercial one. Some of the female Slaves were employed by masters as hostesses to entertain and amuse customers in taverns or in houses of prostitution (Athamina, 2007, p.1)

Before the 1804 revolution of Uthman dan Fodio, women as well as men were involved in shared leadership in Hausa society. There were Queens who led and governed empires. A lofty Hausa legend in this realm was the Bayajida sojourn in Daura, where accounts rendered his association with the Queen as one of the pivotal factors in explaining the traditions of origin of the Hausa. Bayajida being an immigrant with a legacy of militarism at wars commanded the respect of the Queen of Daura (Hallam, 1966). His show of bravery in killing a snake referred to as '*Sarki*' made him a force to reckon with. And for a reward, there was an agreement for marriage between him and the Queen. However, the status held by the Queen could not allow her to responsibly act as a woman in marriage, hence, she offered Bayajida a concubine. This offering served as the take-off point in this discourse to put into perspective, the phenomenon of concubine holding which featured prominently as a form of slavery. The historical roots of concubine holding can therefore be understood as a norm which has been established because the offer of concubine to Bayajida suggests that there were women whose class status stand for slavery and servitude before nineteenth century. This name signified a form of conquest on the part of Bayajida because he did not accept the Queen's offer for division of power in the Empire, rather he requested marriage. These probably made the Queen accept to marry him and had a son '*Ba mu garinmu*' to challenge the seeming power of the concubine.

The possibility of Bayajida legend in the entrenchment of concubine holding was visible in the fact that, his Berber origin and culture from North Africa was not necessarily Islamic. Together with the original inhabitants, Berber aristocracy submerged the female power displayed by the Queens. As Hallam noted of Berber migration:

The newer arrivals sought for a means to assume the rule, at first by forming alliance with servile subjects, later by uniting with existing rulers, an amalgamation in which physiological assimilation was rapid... They obtained ascendancy over a fairly wide territory which crystallised into seven city states of Hausa Bakwai. Certain material aspects of Berber culture were retained, but Islamic faith of the migrants lapsed or lay dormant until the conversion of Hausaland commenced four centuries later (Hallam 1966, p. 59).

Considerably, concubine holding had been part of pre-Islamic Hausa culture and it has been an obvious norm associated with class and aristocracy. Though the exact period of Bayajida's migration appeared controversial, its contact with Daura around the sixteenth century, and it practically changed the structure of female power as the intertwine of marriage and concubine

holding subdued the legacies of the power displayed by the Queen (Ifemesia, 1965). Subsequently, this paper analyses the interplay of Islamic law, British law in the trends and its quest in the abolition of slavery, and ultimately the changing phases within the first thirty years of colonial rule.

Features of the Concubine

Female slaves are often imported into Islamic societies, and subsequently their lives are entrenched in a complicated reality, gendered in the nuances of legal interpretations. Athamina analysed how the lives of slave women in the Arab world were transformed in the context of Islamic changes (Athamina, 2007). The question of licit and illicit is quite complicated in the understanding of interpretations in Islamic history. Before the twentieth century, female lives in Islamic societies are understood to be of restriction, yet sexuality is a discourse that puts into perspective how class differentiation of women recur by slave status. Kecia Ali analysed men's freedom in avoiding the withdrawal method while having sex with slaves (Ali, 2016). On the other hand, legitimate women (wives) require consent before the avoidance of withdrawal method. Invariably, the female slaves have the tendency to give birth to children more than legitimate wives. Complicated in this legality is the web of purchases of female slaves that expanded the empires. Of which, in the pre-colonial era, it is rarely distinct to point out the free status of slaves, rather it is most plausible to interpret the sexual reasoning as most suitable in the context of power relations. The Ottoman Empire example suffices to explain the way politics interface sexuality especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when women as concubines, mothers and wives. Therefore, the empire was well known as the "Sultanate of Women", women who bore sons even as concubines took the position of Valide Sultan (Pierce, 1993). Within the Harem which seems like secluded place for women, they step out to control the empire on behalf of their sons (minor) as mothers or for their husband as wives. Their reign accounted for significant changes in the architectural designs they evolved for the empire, especially in the city and urban areas (Pierce, 1993). These roles influenced those of other Muslim societies as it was profound in the empires of western and central Sudan in West Africa (Ifemesia, 1965).

Scholars of Islamic societies deciphered the implicit narratives of sexuality and legality, but it is quite spectacular that the agency of resistance was profound in the era of British colonialism as analysed in this paper. Basically, the patriarchal nature of the society found it comforting to perceive female slaves as a means to sex at their own peril.

From the outset, the colonial state considered the issues of slave women a special case to be critically handled. This perception was held forth in the linguistic interpretations given to concubine in Hausa society. Firstly, they were referred to as *sad'aka* (to put in a room) which means seclusion. Also, the word *Kulle* (purdah) was derived from *Makulliyah* (another name concubine). *Kulle* often described the phenomenon of purdah and seclusion of Hausa women within household compound, where they were expected to be absolutely indoor. According to M.G. Smith, the *Makulliyah* (concubine) was kept in line with the principle of purdah marriage where she was given the basic needs of clothing, food and shelter. (Smith, 1954a). The provision of these needs amounted to the practice of 'lock up' for women captured as slaves. By this, they were not free women because they were treated as slaves within the household. Children bore by them had free status. But a master could never marry the concubine under the Islamic law. Therefore, Islamic law displayed rigidity in the interpretation of the distinction between marriage and concubine holding.

Ordinarily, the need for sex accounted for the want of concubines before colonial rule in Hausaland. The male thoughts of simple and accessible sex partner made it institutionalized.

As Imam Imouru pointed out: “When a man sees a beautiful slave and likes her, he keeps it a secret. He sleeps with her regularly and she becomes his concubine, *korkora* [K’wark’wara]” (Ferguson 1973, p. 231).

Different interpretations were given to seclusion after the revolution of Uthman Dan Fodio in 1804. The pronouncement for the seclusion of women meant a lot to men. To male holders of concubines, female seclusion was interpreted to prevent women from sexual interaction with other men. This was meant to guarantee return on investment for initial acquisition. However, Islamic law in itself created a complex situation for concubine, while they were secluded, they were not absolutely equal to free wives. This discrimination, as Uthman Dan Fodio stated: “Those who allot days [i.e. nights] to their concubines, treating them as equal like their wives, all of them, the fire is their portion, be sure of that!” (Hiskett, 1985). The statement meant that concubines were not given sleeping nights despite seclusion. Thus, legally, there are bending conditions by which a man could sleep with his concubine such as during illness, pregnancy or nursing period. The legality of not sleeping with concubines at night gave the concession to engage in sexual act during the day. Hence, it was allowed that:

There is no allotting of sleeping-nights to concubines whether they’ve concessive by him or not ... One goes secretly to sleep with a concubine who has borne you a child, but a male comes openly to his wife’s house to sleep with her. Or if he prefers, he sends for her to come to him wherever he is (Hiskett, 1985).

Invariably, a concubine could be kept to satisfy conditional sex, when free wives were not readily available and of course, seclusion by denial might set in. However, homosexual relations among concubines were frowned at. Two concubines were executed from engaging in homosexuality because they used artificial penis. This act was done by the concubines of Caliph Abdurrahman (1891-1902). The throats of the concubines were slit and heads hung on a pole by their plaited hair (Skinner 1977a, 1977b). Furthermore, seclusion by denial meant that the concubines were not free to take sexual decisions as homosexuality was grievous under Islamic law and practically it was the prerogative of the master to determine when to have sex with concubines in their seclusion. A reciprocal implication for female slave power was that the ability to change status through reproduction. In Islamic societies of the past, such women were regarded as *umm walad* (Schacht, 1969).

The Islamic Legality of Concubine Holding and Female Power

While masculinity was central to the ownership of concubines, Islamic law clearly stated the management of concubines, and after Uthman Dan Fodio’s revolution, the dichotomy between slavery and concubine holding became more complex. The focus on sexualizing Muslim women is profound in the construct of slavery in Islamic societies. Scholarly works on Islamic jurisprudence in the insights of western ideas agreed that enslaved women had rightful ownership, that is, “ownership by right hand” (Ali, 2017; Brockopp, 2000). Reason being that from historical perspective there are no justification for the situation where a male owner asks for the consent of the female slave before sex. (Ali, 2017) Indirectly, it is implicit because sources are rare to question the norm. Therefore, it is assumed legitimately that female slaves were naturally bound by Islamic law to consent to sex. The implication for sexuality and reproduction is framed in these legal understanding. The necessity of consent and the need to make female slaves produce children for expanded population is evident in the contraceptive practice of withdrawal (Azl) (Ali, 2017).

Uthman Dan Fodio, was a prominent reformist of the eighteenth century, who turned around the traces of paganism to the full practice of Islam in Hausa society. Though concubines initially had the status of slaves, but on acquisition they enjoyed some privileges. And the seclusion was borne out of the fact that Islam frowned against adultery and fornication. Invariably, concubine holding was a way of engaging conditional marriage. Conditions for the practice became more regulated in the nineteenth century and in fact issues of paternity made it more procedural and subject to Islamic legality. The aftermath of the 1804 Islamic revolution in Hausa and undoubtedly changed the social relations of sexuality, because it created new ways of constructing gender roles (Boyd & Mack, 2013; Mack & Coles, 1991). In one of his writings, Uthman Dan Fodio in *Bayan wujub al-hijra 'ala 'l-'abad* analysed the reasons for taking women as concubines, especially those captured from unbelievers, after the observance of one menstruation and after capture from non-Muslim societies (El-Masri, 1978). This practice was meant to safeguard the paternity of children bore by concubines. More importantly, ability to conceive was one of the factors that granted a concubine more right within the master's family. If not, she could be resold, inherited by others or be disposed of. By the death of the master, of which she had children, she no longer had the status of a concubine, but of a free woman. According to Islamic law as practised after 1804, the acquisition of concubine was meticulously handled (Mack & Coles, 1991).

For the concubine with children within the household, she had the opportunity to negotiate domesticity. Since she had children, she could assertively be less involved in domestic work. The fact remains that she was yet a free woman, but she had the power to reduce her level of subordination. Age was also a means of power for concubines. After the child-bearing age, a concubine can move around without much seclusion and she could even remarry (Lovejoy and Hogendorn, 1993). This condition varied, as in some Hausa societies such as Daura, concubines such as those elderly and no more children bearing were allowed to move around (Lovejoy and Hogendorn, 1993). They were indirectly retained within the family compound but became more experienced and powerful for the recycling of the domestic and agrarian economy for sustainable livelihood.

British Law and the Concubine Personality

The impression given by the British for the abolition of slavery was in correlation to the instrumentation of concubine holding in Hausa societies. Firstly, the British did not want slavery practised and the Islamic law indirectly regulated female slavery to satisfy sexual demands of men and ultimately to avoid fornication which was grievous in the dictates of the religion. However, a twist to the situation occurred in the twentieth to the situation occurred in the twentieth century as Lord Lugard noted in 1902 created cases for consideration under British law (NNAK Northern Nigeria Annual Report). The native courts were taken as a resort to negotiate freedom by concubines who filed for divorce to avoid seclusion. Here in, the British were careful to admit the quest for women's freedom because of the fear that they might become prostitutes, then add to the level of criminality. Thus, for the fear of prostitution, the British favourably supported Islamic law. The support came in the form of pronouncements from Lugard that all slave girls should be placed under a guardian (NNAK, H.R.P. Hillary, Sokoto Monthly Report Jan 1905. Sokprof 2/2 401/1905).

Colonialism became an opportunity for women to run away from seclusion. However, prostitution increased. The complexities created a double standard entangled between Islamic and British law. Major Hausa societies of commercial significance such as Kano became places for prostitution. In fact, some colonial officials took it as an opportunity to satisfy sexual urge. Since the British law granted freedom, colonial companies, for instance, Niger

Co. had white male workers who relied on the sexual services of free concubines (Lovejoy & Hogendorn, 1993). The fact that British officials (men) were single in the services of colonial administration warranted the need for the services of prostitutes which concubines and slave girls offered. On the other hand, the British wanted tough measures to check the free movement of concubines, thus the freedom granted by the Islamic law was even questioned and it was desired that concubines should still be in seclusion (Lovejoy and Hogendorn, 1993). Prominent in the demand for sex were the men of the West African Frontiers Force (WAFF), they tacitly used concubines, despite the restrictions from British and Islamic legal systems.

At the conquest of Sokoto in 1903, Lord Lugard promised the caliphate that concubines would no longer enjoy freedom allowed by British Law. Part of which was the instance at which women were harboured at the barracks of WAFF (Lovejoy & Hogendorn, 1993). This was strategically done to guarantee acceptance after conquest. Invariably, the freedom granted by British law for concubines was compromised. But for the presence of Native courts, women still explored the opportunity of freedom. Women still refused to submit to the compromise despite the pressure. Even when the Native courts ordered women to return to seclusion under their masters, they were reluctant and then the question of redemption fee. A third party was required to pay redemption fee for such concubines. And inability to pay redemption may lead to jail terms. In Ilorin for instance, a concubine was seen in iron chains in jail because she was not ready to marry a crippled aristocrat (NNAK, Register of Freed slaves, Ilorin year ending 31st December 1906, SNP 15/1 Acc/21). Subsequently, she regained freedom. To an extent, in order to avoid seclusion, women opted for even jail terms to acquire freedom.

To address the abnormality in making concubines remain under seclusion, British law closed the gap between concubine holding and marriage. Lugard gave the opportunity for women's emancipation by marriage. (Lugard, 1906) The British legal instructions further increased the power of women to retreat from Islamic law that had been binding for centuries, thus, instead of concubines, attention was shifted to marriage. Accordingly, for women here was that they could change their status by the payment of redemption fee. Therefore, the transition from concubine status to marriage required redemption. For example, a concubine gained emancipation in Bauchi court in 1906, though through her master who paid for the purpose of marrying her, especially as she had children for him (NNAK, Return of Freed slaves, Bauchi Province for Quarter Ending 31st December 1906, SNP L15/1 Acc 121).

Secondly, a concubine whose redeemer is not the master, but a third party was allowed freedom, once the redemption was paid to the Islamic court and transferred to the master. Subsequently, the court issues certificate of freedom. By implication, there was a difference between emancipation and marriage. A concubine might gain freedom without marriage. Whichever way Lugard's instructions meant a lot for female power in Hausa society. Based on this, three teenagers were free from concubine holding and seclusion in Kano of 1906. Probably through their encounter with WAFF soldiers, they used the emancipation law to gain freedom. A Resident in Kano stated that:

These three women were married to three soldiers respectively. They were wed with the consent of their owner and in each case; I redeemed them in the presence of the Native Alkali. I warned soldiers that these women were now free and that they were responsible for their persons and must produce them at any time, unless for good reason shown (NNAK, Return of Freed slaves,

Bauchi Province for Quarter Ending 31st December 1906, SNP L15/1 Acc 121).

British law increases women’s power as they quickly sought for a redeemer to free them from concubine status and the non-Hausa relatives had the opportunity to get their women lost in the captivity of concubinage. For instance, a Kanuri woman was enslaved in Borno in 1903, sold in Bauchi and her brother found her in Bauchi in 1906, paid for her redemption, thereafter issued certificate of freedom to return to Borno. Much as the British policy changed a social structure of women’s power, it still could not encompass other facets of Islamic law on women’s lives. And mostly, the policy had to pass through the Islamic courts. Despite the colonial approach, Islamic courts subjected issues of concubinage and seclusion to matters related to divorce, inheritance, land ownership and children custody. All these meant a lot for transition from concubinage to emancipation.

The Alkali Yabo of Sokoto in 1908 asked for clarification of British law concerning redemption of slave girls who became concubines of the redeemer. The resident replied that:

Before our advent there was a distinction between the slave bought for labour, and the slave bought in order that the purchaser might make her a “sadakka” or concubine. In the second case the transaction would be called “buying in order to lockup”. When slave dealing was declared illegal the native ceased “buying in order to lock up” and called it redemption. As in most cases [in which] there was no certificate of freedom this redemption was indistinguishable from purchase. The order at present is that in all cases of redemption the court gives a properly witnessed certificate of freedom [and] if this is not done, the parties are liable to prosecution for slave dealing (NNAK, Stanley Report No. 36 on Sokoto Province for Half-Year ending June30, 1908, Sokprof 2/9985/1908).

The resort to redemption in the colonial period undoubtedly created spheres to reclaim freedom. But statutorily, as it were in the Islamic courts, ‘freedom’ for women had been subsumed under the dictates of Islamic revolution that they could rarely move about voluntarily, have proprietary rights nor full measure of inheritance. Invariably women’s lives were practically attached to masculine interpretations of Islam. Marriage and concubine holding as it were, did not afford women the opportunity to own land and they could not move about without the company of males. Even at redemption, their redeemer was expected to be husband or be a guardian to provide for their daily needs and subsistence.

Despite the colonial approach to achieve independence for women, the social structure of Hausa society still persisted as the Islamic courts adopted the British policy of redemption but still used it as an avenue to maintain concubine, but not slavery. For the first thirty years of colonial rule, the Islamic courts managed slave girls to attain certificate of freedom for in most cases continuation with their redeemer. By the 1930s, a total of about 103,000 slaves were granted certificate of freedom in Islamic courts. The redemption occurred in three categories; redemption for marriage; redemption for concubine status and self-redemption.

Women freed for marriage and concubine status, 1901-1921

Year	% of all slaves	Females	Total slaves	% of females	Total females
1901-1905	5	134	2,767		
1906	21	121	581		
1905-1906	28	162	584	45	360

1907	27	43	159		
1916	35	251 ^a	706	52	476
1917	24	1,724	7,137	37	4,624 ^b
1918	18	1,335	7,540	29	4,644 ^b
1919	13	574	4,292	22	2,592 ^b
1920-1921	17	359	2,157	28	1,302 ^b

: NNAK, *Northern Nigeria Annual Report*, 1905-06, 481; SNP 15/1 Acc 90; SNP 15/1 Ac 121; *Northern Nigeria Annual Report*, 1907-08, 614; SNP 10/5 435p/1917; SNP 10/4 236p/1916; SNP 10/7 331p/1919; SNP 10/8 263p/1920; SNP 10/9 120p/1921.

Female slaves freed to marry in 1916

Emirate	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36+	Total
Katsina	25	52	41	13	1	132
Daura	-	1	-	1	2	4
Kazaure	2	1	-	-	-	3
Kano	20	13	12	4	1	50
Nassarawa	1	3	2	-	-	6
Niger	-	2	1	-	-	3
Total	48	72	56	18	4	198
Percentage	24	36	28	9	2	100

Source: NNAK, SNP 10/5 435p/1917.

A twist to the scenario was the fact that the British generated revenue from redemption fees before issuing certificate of freedom and indirectly the fostered concubine holding to maintain the sensibilities and support of Hausa aristocrats. And even within the first thirty years of colonial rule, the British were concerned with the redemption but were silent on the fact that the women were retained in the household of men. As Arnett described in 1918 that:

Whether a woman is ransomed for marriage or for concubinage the procedure before the Court is the same in that money is paid to the master and the woman is handed her certificate of freedom. The difference lies in the declaration of the ransomer. In the one case he says "Na pansabauya, ta zamadiya" (I ransom the slave woman, she becomes free). In that case marriage will follow. In the other case he says, "Na pansabauya, nasa ta daka" (I ransom the slave woman, I set her in my house). Although she has been certified as free, the effect of the emancipation is held in suspense as long as she remains a member of that man's household (NNAK, E. Arnett, May 23, 1918, in "Revision of Memo on Slavery," SNP 17 Supplementary Acc 61 1598/1918).

Hausa society compromised British pronouncement on freedom, and antislavery stance, but the rights and power of women were subdued.

In a contrast, women also opt for concubine in the homes of aristocrats because of the worthwhile domestic lives available rather than be a free woman with poor men. They want their children's status to be attributed to the rich and access to material possessions. (Christelow, 1993) Reasons for extending slave positions to girls borne by slave women in Hausa society was consequential to the early Islamic societies where boys were not admitted to their paternal families unless they prove worthiness in the society (Athamina, 2007). Therefore, the rush to side-line the British legal system in colonial Hausa society was a culture of continuity to make girls of slave women available for sex. Even among free women, the legality of concubine (Jawari) was well entrenched in mutual intra-gender relations. Accounts of post-Muhammad Arab societies portray a situation where concubines mattered in family politics. To gain goodwill, free women as wives offer concubines as gifts to their husband in the eighth and ninth centuries. For free women it was a political move to ensure their sons' appointment to leadership positions.

Before the 1930s, women resisted the position of post-redemption return to concubine status which meant slavery in the house of their masters or redeemers. In most cases, the women run away. And basically, they refused to serve as expected because of the certificate of freedom which British policy offered of which they could seek redress in court. Invariably, women used the situation to negotiate a lifelong freedom even as concubines. To an extent, concubines become freer than wives in marriage. It was observed that:

The most curious result .is that the woman so ransomed for concubinage is actually freer than the woman ransomed and married as a wife. The matrimonial law undoubtedly gives the wife great freedom and facility for divorce, but nevertheless if a woman desires a divorce, she must either show good cause or else repay the dowry into Court. But in the case of the concubine there is no tie of any sort. She leaves the man at her will as a free woman and she may at once marry whom she likes. Cases have occurred of girls inducing rich men to ransom them as concubines in order that they may immediately leave them and go and marry someone else. The man who has paid the ransom money has no redress and the Court contents itself with reprimanding the *girl's* dishonesty. It is obvious that under such circumstances the ransom for concubinage will not take place unless the woman really desires it or has led the man to suppose that she will be a contented inmate of his household. It is also certain that the man will treat the woman fairly or else very quickly lose her and his money (NNAK, E. Arnett, May 23, 1918, in "Revision of Memo on Slavery," SNP 17 Supplementary Acc 61 1598/1918).

Concubine Mother and Status of Girlhood

Zaman in Hausa means time and *Turawa* means English or European people. The duo meant a period of European rule. The status of girls was entangled between the British law and Islamic law, girls born within this era were also perceived as potential concubines. In most cases, the Hausa Fulani aristocrats' insatiable demand for concubine was almost extended to the daughters of concubines. Attempts were made at taking girls in this category as slaves. However, the mothers resisted the phenomenon by asserting that the girls were born in the European era and not of slave era. For instance, a man attempted to pay a redemption price of six cows and 140,000 cowries to the master of a girl for marriage but her mother insisted that she was born in the era of Europeans and therefore, no need for redemption. Based on this, the Kano Judicial council cancelled the idea (Christelow, 1993).

The changing status of women to reject unnecessary hardship in concubine status of the colonial era, gradually affected women's slavery and thus the question of women's power made its way credibly to challenge the rigid masculinity and patriarchy offered by the

misinterpretation of Islamic perspective on women. The fact that a girl bore by a concubine became a free woman and the British abolition of slavery could not allow for the supply of girls as concubine. The mother-daughter right assertion became contentious that girls had to be protected with certificate of insurance. As Webster observed:

the question of concubinage is ... becoming a pressing one. A Moslem cannot hold a free woman in concubinage. The supply of concubines thus ceased 18 [sic] years ago. This will cause great heart burnings and takes away the last benefit the Fulani has from his slaves (NNAK.Webster, May 15, 1918, in "Revision of Memo on slavery," SNP 17/2 1598/1918).

Hence the British law offered protection for girls as parents objected to subjecting them as concubines. Parents were puzzled on how to handle their girls, despite the certificate of insurance because the aristocrats wanted a perpetual entrenchment of slavery. However, children of slaves were continually taken as slaves. The female offspring of slaves married to each other were seriously scrambled for because colonial legislation rarely protected them. In this category, most of these girls were taken from rural slave estates (Ibrahim, 1988a). Again, the level of poverty in slave estates entrenched the use of girls as concubines even in the colonial era. Some slave parents due to their economic conditions still perceived concubine holding as a source of money in the 1920s. Compromise on part of the parents was largely responsible and to an extent, the League of Nations made enquiries into the practice of female slavery in 1924. (NNAK, Arnett's Memorandum to M. Delafosse, August 9, 1925 Arnett papers).

In order to reduce the powers of Islamic courts, the colonial legislations contended that parents of girls of slave origin should determine the status of their girls and thus, the contract should be of marriage and not redemption. As another way of emancipation, it was preferred that the Islamic courts should end their intervention. The Sultan of Sokoto also supported the idea of marriage by bride price but unlike the British, still preferred it to be under the jurisdiction of Islamic courts. Hence the draft resolution went thus:

1. Any Native born since the advent of the British Administration is born free.
2. Any native who buys or sells a slave during the British Administration is guilty of an offence.
3. Any Native who ransoms any Native born since the British Administration or enslaves such Native is guilty of an offence. Any Native who commits any of the above offences is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years.
4. Any Native who ransoms a slave except before an Alkali is guilty of an offence. Any Native who commits this last offence is liable on conviction to imprisonment for 2 years (Lovejoy & Hogendorn, 2003, 255).

Gradually, marriage substituted concubinage by this pronouncement after 1930s

Conclusion

Evidences of reproductive system in Islamic societies showed that, the concubines as women were used to increase the population, especially to birth and train boys for sustainable power relations in the Empires. The intervention of the British in the sexual culture of Hausa society was basically a framework to ensure the abolition of slavery. The British were concerned about the abolition of slavery. The British were concerned about accomplishing the abolition of slavery even about a century after its abolition. However, they were entangled in a diplomatic scene to ensure that the colonial conquest of the Hausa Emirates occur with

changes in social norms such as to reduce concubine keeping for sexual and domestic life. Since the British achieved political control by conquest, they could not be too assertive and rigid in the abolition of women's slavery, rather various legal means such as redemption and control ordinances were adopted. An opportunity for women was that; British involvement created avenues to seek redress, negotiate freedom and refusal to implement domestic responsibilities within the household. On the other hand, Islamic courts constantly found ways to entrench the culture of concubine holding. This trend affected the low response for the enrolment of women in formal schools in the subsequent years of colonial rule.

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