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Editor: Dr. Saikat Banerjee

Editor: Dr. Saikat Banerjee  
Assistant Professor, Department of English  
St Xavier's College, Ranchi, Jharkhand



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## **The Emergence of Hausa Popular Music Flows in Gombe**

Dr Ibrahim Lamido

Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State  
and

Abubakar Mohammed Gombe, Ph.D

Department of English,  
Gombe State University,  
Gombe, Gombe State

Email: [amgombe2@gsu.edu.ng](mailto:amgombe2@gsu.edu.ng)

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**Abstract:** This paper studies the emergence of modern Hausa music in Gombe. It establishes links between modern Hausa music and religious songs. It presents the nature of training and the introduction of guitars and other modern musical gadgets with the motivational roles played by popular singers like Bala Miller's and Sony Lionheart. It exposes the dominant use of Hausa language among the non Hausa natives of Gombe. Popular television channels like the South African channel O and the famous Arewa24 that presents *Zafafa 10* (the outstanding 10) are equally linked in addition to the traditional role of Indian films and *Indiyan Hausa* (translated India). Gombe Modern Hausa musicians adopt to the influence of Kano based models including Aminu Ladan Alan Waka, Binta Labaran (Fati Nijar), Mahmud Nagudu, Misbahu Ahmad among others. The paper relates the conflicting ideas of Islamic historical background of Gombe and the growth of modern Hausa music among non Hausa natives. It adopts the recorded oral interview method with the aid of existing recorded music that are stored in cellular phone, CD plates and memory device as well as adopts postcolonial theory to justify the dominance of colonial culture in postcolonial Gombe. It establishes the origin, identify and documents key players as well as records of Gombe musical studios between 1999 and 2022. It presents discussion and conclusion.



**Keywords:** Hausa, Modern music, Gombe musicians, postcolonial culture, Gombe Emirate

## **Introduction**

Scholars like (Adamu (2019) are of the view that modern Hausa music was pioneered by northern Christian's artistes such as Bala Miller and Sony Lionheart who had extensive training in the use of guitars and other modern musical gadgets. Their preserved musical language was Hausa speculatively to indicate not all Hausa musical entertainment is based on Hausa indigenous instruments. Bala Miller's composition, *Sardauna Macecin Mu* (Sardauna Our Saviour) and Sony Lionheart's *Zaman Duniya* (The Worldly Life) are examples. These songs became club anthems particularly in Kano, Kaduna and Jos. The modern Hausa musical traditions were sustained in clubs by small bands like Elcados and Super Trots in Jos using domesticated Hausa soul music (Adamu, 2016). The non-Hausa artistes felt the need to reach out to the Hausa audiences in their performances. This was witnessed in I.K Dairo's song *Tuwo da Miya, Mu Tafi Damaturu* and A'isha Fallatiya's *Muna Maraba da Sardauna Sakkwato*, a song composed for the late premier of northern Nigeria using string quarter of sorts with an accordion (Horn and Shepherd, 2019:171). The mainstream Hausa youths became consumers of modern music. The Hindi films encouraged the creation of Hausa home video including the imitation of Hindi songs and dance but with different musical backing as against the early Hindi films that use traditional musical instruments. The Hausa songs and music serve as sub narratives superimposed on the main film plot, popularly came to be known as *Nanaye* music. The lyrics are often recorded separately from the accompanied music with male and female voices singing the verse alternately (Adamu 2019)

In 2007, there was a lull in Hausa film production leading to a new phenomenon where Hausa singers produced songs for general popular consumption rather than for a particular film. These songs were



considered modern because of the role of Yamaha synthesizers in their composition but using the same *Nanaye* performance format. The pacesetters of this sub style include Aminu Ladan Alan waqa, Binta Labaran (FatiNijar), Mahmud Nagudu and Misbahu Ahmad among others. This culminates into what came to be known as modern Hausa music (Adamu 2019)

This paper attempts to trace the emergence of the modern Hausa film music in Gombe owing to the long mutual relationship between the Hausa people and Gombe community. The paper tries to identify the key players, the promoters and the historical factors associated with modern Hausa music flow in Gombe. It has its scope on only the Gombe indigenous artistes of modern Hausa music.

### **Theory and Method**

This paper adopts post-colonial theory as its theoretical framework. This is because Post-colonialism, as a theory deals with socio-political and cultural changes. It also tries to handle an initial awareness of the social, psychological, and cultural inferiority enforced by being in a colonized state. It is used to justify the music dominance over traditional drumming sixty-three years after independence. This indicates that the colonial heritage gains more acceptance among the children and grandchildren of the colonies. Therefore the struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy remains political. Modern music has its root in western musical instruments that promote the mixture and desired tune for the musicians and the audience.

### **Methodology**

The paper uses observation and interview in collecting data while ascertaining the relevance of .diskettes, cellular phone, CD plates and memory device in musical record keeping. The interviews were mostly conducted at the music studios and online using phone. Fifteen respondents between the ages of 30 and 50



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were engaged. They included 10 males and 5 females. The data is presented and discussed with vividness. It was conducted within Gombe with the support of two research assistants.

### **Gombe: The Study Area**

Gombe was established seventy-eight years before the invasion of colonial masters in 1903. It was operating on Islamic teachings but colonialism created Native Authority that restricted the emirate's power and post colonialism created Local Government Area that replaced Emirs with Chairmen. During the colonial era, Gombe palace was the arena for displaying audio-visuals known as *Majigi*. The postcolonial politicians erected viewing centres that attracted youths. Court singers were popular and attracted audience from near and far. To further complement viewing centres, Abubakar and *Miyetti* cinema were established in Gombe. Music became more prominent with the establishment of clubs, hotels and studios along Sabon Layi and Jekadafari major roads.

The present Gombe became the seat of Gombe Emirate in 1919 and the state capital of the Gombe state in 1996. It was initially founded at Gombe Abba by Modibbo Bubayero (Abubakar I), one of the flag bearers of Shehu Usman DanFodio in 1825. Colonial era commenced during the reign of Emir Umaru Kwairanga (1898-1922). Geographically, Gombe lies within the tropical west sudanian savanna ecoregion. With major features such as the Gongola river which flows through Gombe north and east into Lake Dadinkowa. Gombe is multi ethnic. It is inhabited by the Fulani, Bolewa, Tera, Kanuri, Waja, Tangale, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Tiv among others. The people of the area are predominant farmers, traders and merchant who engage in various business activities.



## **The Hausa Influence on Gombe Community**

Research establishes the long relationship between the Hausa people and the inhabitants of Gombe.. Lamido (2012:42-43) identifies that the Hausa and the inhabitants of Gombe relate in Islamic education and trading. Hausa scholars with their pupils and Hausa traders with their aids migrated to Gombe and intermarried with the natives. Hausa traditional musicians, praise singers and hunters joined the emirate during the ninth Emir, His Royal Highness, Sir Abubakar Umar (1936-1984). Hausa became the language of early Quranic learning, business, palace songs as well as lingua franca.

## **Hausa Modern Music**

Hausa popular music as distinct from traditional music came about as a result of catalytic forces outside the ethnic mainstream of Hausa traditional societies (Adamu 2006:19). It is therefore an offshoot of eastern and western civilisations that found its way into Africa at different times associated with socio-economic factors.

The major impetus for the development of Hausa popular music is the music of Hindi films which gave rise to a form of music known as *Nanaye*. This gradually came to have a life of its own as a genre distinct and independent of Hausa film. *Nanaye* music played a significant role in the development of two other forms of Hausa music *madhee* and technopop (Adamu 2019:09). The Hindi films became popular in Hausa land between 1960s and 1970, and beyond. The Hausa youths adapt the Hindi films sound track into Hausa traditional and popular music. A glaring example was the adoption of the soundtracks metres by pupils of *Darika* schools in Kano while composing songs. An all-girls choirs adapt religious message, particularly for the love of the prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH). It was developed by *Darika* school



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teachers using Hindi films sound track metres. The idea was to wear away girls and boys excessive love of Hindi film lyrics whose meaning they did not know (Adamu 2007:28).

The emergence of Hausa films in 1980 precipitates into songs and dances routine first using the traditional musical instruments and later the modern musical facilities such as piano particularly Yamaha synthesizers. The Hausa youth took advantage of Casio tome MT-140 from Kano State History and Culture Bureau donated by the visiting American flutist and lecturer, Richard Donald Smith in 1986. The Casio Organ provides an alternative form of modern entertainment for youth in and around Kano primarily at ceremonies and other social events. The organ was played by a staff of the Bureau Nasiru Ishaq Gwale, Alee Baba Yakasai and Shu'aibu Idris Lilisco. It was followed by the purchase of PSR-220 Yamaha synthesizer in 1996 by Iyantama Multimedia Studio. The new organ produces a perfect blend of various instruments appealing to Hausa musicians seeking ways to explore a combination of sound samples whose outcomes clearly departed from the traditional definitions of Hausa sounds (Adamu 2006:37). The organ was later replaced by Yamaha PSR-730 by the same studio. The new one came with a vast expanded range of country, jazz, dance, latin, rock, soul and waltz. It further opened doors to revolution of Home video film music. Sangaya film was the first to benefit from the superior range of sound samples of the PSR-730 (Adamu 2015:38)

Synthesizers' business blossomed with the purchase of PSR-740 in 2001 by Iyantama multimedia Studio. Other music studios that use modern music include Muazzat and Sulphur studio. In Jos, the Lenscope Media used the latest organ with Cakewalk Pro version 9 music software. The combination promoted the



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creation of Hausa techno pop and Hausa rap music genres (Adamu 2015:38). Thus the Iyantama Multimedia provided basis for globalising Hausa popular culture, thereby creating a completely new genre of Hausa popular music.

With the emergence of modern musical facilities and establishment of studios, singers were using meters from Hindi film songs switched to using metres of Hausa video film sound track. Non-ethnic Hausa singers contributed to the emergence of more forays into Hausa popular culture. Notable among them are Funmi Adams and Zaki Adzee. In addition, Hausa community with its youths, through American MTV and South African channel O, were exposed to music videos and Hausa lyrics. This coincided with the explosion of American rap music and global hip hop urban youth culture.

### **Hausa Popular Music in Gombe**

The Hausa popular music first emerged in Gombe during the reign of the first civilian Governor, Late Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu (1999-2003). The first singer that came to limelight was Umar Fantami, a political singer. Umar Fantami and Mukhtar Je-Ka-da-Fari used to travel to Kano to compose their songs at Ali Baba Yakasai studio. Mukhtar established a temporary studio at Bolari quarters, Gombe. They recorded songs in deck system using Yamaha Piano and later transferred into Cassette for public consumption.

In the year 2000, Al Sa'adu Muhammad Dan Musa (Al Sa'ad) who turned out to become most popular in Gombe emerged. He started his performance in wedding occasions where he sings for the couples. He, later, composed political songs for politicians. His songs became popular and travel near and faraway places. His popularity gained him a lot of reverence by the youth in Gombe who see him as the king of





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Hausa music in Gombe. His popular song *Abubakar Hashidu Jagaba* attracts much publicity. Around year 2000, Joe studio, Gombe contracted the popular Kano based musician Ibrahim Danko who played musicals for songs. The composed musicals were brought to Joe studio in Gombe for blending.

Muhammad Bons a.k.a *Nice* and Buhari Jikan Jauro emerged in 2001. They composed political songs for their political godfathers. Buhari was later, in 2002, said to have been famous in singing against his master's political opponents. His popular song was '*Sai Malam Murtala*' which he composed for Mallam Murtala Aliyu, a one-time gubernatorial aspirant in Gombe state. It was also composed in Joe studio, Bolari. Buhari Jikan Jauro's first song was *Idan Rana ta Fito Tafin Hannu ba ya Kare* in praise of the former military Head of States, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in the year 2002. There emerged in 2002, Habu Kasa who composed a song for the Gubernatorial aspirant of the opposition party, PDP, Muhammad Danjuma Goje using deck in radio station. The song titled: '*Yanci na Runguma* was composed using hand clapping in addition to musical instruments. The song turned out to be popular among the youth in Gombe state owing to its adoption as campaign song in 2003 by the opposition party.

In 2004, there emerged Saleh Ibrahim El Square, who composed songs but never sing any in the studio. El Square worked with Buhari Dan Jauro to sing his first song which centred on his love for his girlfriend, Amina.

Interview with most of the singers reveals that the majority of the musicians lack formal training. They never had a master to teach them singing. They developed their talent through observation and imitations. For example, AlSa'ad Gombe related that he gained his experience from the songs of Sa'adu Bori, the



popular Niger republic musician. Others like, Sale El Square, claimed to have learnt their musical talent from some other Hausa traditional musicians like Ali Makaho.

### **Musical Studio in Gombe**

Francis a.k.a Franco was the first to establish musical studio in Gombe in 2003. He named it Franco Studio. He was an Igbo man. The studio was located adjacent Dadinkowa Motor Park in BCGA. Emmanuel Williams, a Tangale from Billiri, was the first to compose Hausa song in the studio. This was followed by his younger brother Joseph Williams and his partner Enoch Zailani who were singing in Hausa using musical instruments belonging to their church. They later establish Real Time Studio in 2004. The duo took advantage of being indigenes and their close affinity with the Hausa people as against the owner of Franco Studio, an Igbo man. They attracted the emerging local Hausa singers who rush to the new studio to compose their songs. The pacesetters to composed Hausa songs devoid of religious themes were the Late Sunusi Tinkirawa, Muhammadu Danko, Isa Gombe, Late Auwal AMD, Z – Square who learned how to sing using modern musical equipment from the Real Time Studio. Sunusi Tinkirawa set his pace with his song praising Malam Danlami Arab, a one-time state commissioner (Kwami et al 2021:14). The singers in turn taught musicians such as Umaru Babba dan Umma and Jijo Mai Ganga who developed their skills under Sunusi Tinkirawa. Salisu na Gombe developed his skills under Late Auwal AMD. Most of these singers composed new songs without imitating others. They attained prominence in singing. Contemporary musicians seem to differ as they mostly commenced by imitating famous songs, a process they considered as their learning stage, before composing distinct songs.



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Women musicians mostly commenced as chorus singers to different artists and at different studios. With experience, they start composing their songs in the studio. Among the women singers who grew into the profession through same procedure, include: Late Maijidda a.k.a Meju, Hafsa Gombe, Hafsan waka, Kubra Gombe, Hauwa Fullo Gombe a.k.a Hauwa, Goggo, Ummin Mulki, Zakiya Jalingo and Late Amina Zintu among others. The Real Time Studio remained the centre for their compositions. Other emerging studios where songs were composed include Sale Square Studio which was in 2012, Salisu Studio was launched on 27 of August, 2017, Nuran Waqa Studio was established in 2014, Suko Baba Studio was established in 2020, Young Doctor Studio was established in 2013, and Babba Dan Umma Studio was established in 2016 among others.

It should be noted that the singers are largely not performing solo. Most of them performed in company of chorus who are mostly women. The women who grow into singing also have a flock of other women serving as chorus singers.

Hausa Hip Hop music emerged in Gombe in 2007. The pacesetters of the new music first perform in English. It was in 2011 that the Hausa Hip Hop was ushered into the Gombe music circle. Thug Gee was the first to set the pace for Hausa Hip Hop music with his 'We so Fly' which was sang in 2008. Other front liners, in this new talent, are Joe Shagi who started in 2009 with English Hip Hop and later delved into Hausa Hip Hop. Odj Lil B, Amadi and Lil Shams started in 2010, Gadson started in 2011. The popularity of the Hausa Hip hop later culminates into the emergence of more singers among which include S. Nigger who started in 2012, De Gwagwa Master started in 2013 and Malaxy Baby came up in 2015.



## Discussion

The data collected and analysed show that the Hausa modern music, in Gombe, started flowing in the mid-1999. The musicians that set the pace travelled to Jos and Kano studio to compose their songs. The trend continued to hold until the emergence of Franco studio, the first musical studio in Gombe and especially the coming of Real Time Studio. The later led to the emergence various musical studios in Gombe. The preponderance number of the musicians played solo in the first place and later, the new emerging singers engaged chorus singers who are mostly women. It is also established that most of these chorus singers became leaders of singing groups. Thematically, the singers began their carrier with love songs and later diversify into political and social themes such as public enlightenment, praise, moral lessons and so on. Hip Hop songs centre on socio-political issues including themes such as revenge, use of invectives on their opponents, and so on. Apart from the musical instruments use in the composition of songs, the use of hand clapping by the chorus singers was added. The first to set the pace of the new style is Habu Kasa in 2000. Others in this category include Auwal AMD and Dan Musa among others. Modern musicians such as Sale El Square, De Gwagwa Master, Malaxy Baby, Amadi and others add to their music the traditional musical instruments such as Kalangu, horn etc. Those popular in the mixture of these instruments include Sale El Square in his songs '*Uban Siyasa*' and '*Marhababi Saba*', Hauwa Fullo Gombe in her song '*Sai Talba*' among others.

The investigation reveals that most of the singers especially the pacesetters did not have the privilege of learning under masters. Most of them are either traditional singers that switched into modern musicians or people forcing themselves to develop their music talent by imitating old Hausa songs. However, Lamido



(2021) reveals that Talatu, a modern Hausa singer from Kaltungo is said to have learnt her art of singing from Bala Miller whom she worked with in Kaduna as her master in the art. Talatu specialises in praise singing more especially of the incumbent Emir of Kaltungo whom the musician composed many songs in praise of his leadership qualities and attributes. Early modern singers in Gombe rely on popular songs and popular artistes for their perfection. They learnt their art from the popular Hausa musicians (Lamido 2021: 87).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper discussed the emergence of Hausa modern music in Gombe as obtained from the data which were collected using interview, visitations to studio and analysing contents of storage facilities like CD. Modern music does not require any special training or hereditary. Most of the key players in the emergence of the genre in Gombe had little or no prior singing experience. The paper identified and documented men and women who play crucial roles in the flow of Hausa modern music in Gombe with their songs that set the pace for Hausa music. It was also established that the pacesetters did not undergo learning process yet, the younger generation who served under them were also exposed to Kano and Kaduna musicians. It preserved information relating to the emergence of musical studios with their owners and locations within Gombe.

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