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## Shehu Aliyu Hadejia: A Businessman and Philanthropist in Kano State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This article examines the life, business career, and philanthropic contributions of Shehu Aliyu Hadejia, one of the notable businessmen and philanthropists whose activities significantly impacted on the socio-economic and religious development of Kano State. The study explores his entrepreneurial background, highlighting how his success in business provided the foundation for his philanthropic engagements. It assesses his philanthropic interventions in education, healthcare, religious development, poverty alleviation, and community welfare with particular attention to the establishment of Islamiyya schools, construction of mosques, support for orphans and assistance to the less privileged. Historical methodology was employed in the process of conducting this research. The study relies on both primary sources, including oral interviews with his friends, associates, employees and beneficiaries of his philanthropic activities. Secondary sources such as books, journal articles, archival records were also utilized. All the consulted sources have been critically evaluated so as to make the study more authentic. The article argues that Shehu Aliyu Hadejia represents a model of entrepreneurship whose business success helped in social transformation. It concludes that his enduring legacy demonstrates the vital role of philanthropy in complementing government efforts towards sustainable socio-economic development in Kano State.

**Keywords:** Shehu Aliyu Hadejia, Philanthropy, Entrepreneurship, Kano State, Islamic Education, Community Development

## INTRODUCTION

The history of Kano State is inseparable from the contributions of indigenous and non-indigenous businessmen who combined business success with social responsibility. As one of the oldest commercial centres in West Africa, Kano has produced generations of merchants whose economic activities extended beyond wealth creations to the provision of public welfare through philanthropy. The Islamic principles of charity (sadaqah, and waqf), influenced many successful business operators in Kano to set aside certain portions of their private resources to improving the lives of the less privileged through promotion of education, construction of mosques, supporting healthcare delivery, and financing or sponsoring community development projects and programmes. These philanthropic gestures have played a significant role in complementing government efforts in addressing social and economic challenges in the State. Among these distinguished philanthropists that operated in Kano include Shehu Aliyu Hadejia, who accumulated wealths from his commercial enterprises that enabled him to conduct philanthropic activities aimed at enhancing the welfare of individuals and communities across Kano State. His philanthropic interventions covered various sectors, including Islamic education, religious infrastructure, poverty alleviation, healthcare assistance, and support for vulnerable members of society. The article examines his life history with emphasis on his business and philanthropic activities in Kano State.

## A CONCISE HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SETTLEMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN KANO

The precise date which marked the beginning of people settlement in Kano remains debatable among Historians and scholars. In this regard, however, Olofin had these words to say:

....the dating of man-made relics suggested that the earlier settlers engaged in iron smelting culture at about 320-380 AD. This implies that people must have been there for more than one thousand years to develop such skills of iron smelting. Development of settlement is said to criss-cross centuries starting as isolated groups of hunters on and around the hills of Dala, Goron dutse, Magwan, Bompai and Panisau all in the present day kano Metropolitan.<sup>1</sup>

The history of Kano has been marked by the trends of immigration into the city. These immigrations were by diverse groups of blacksmiths, scholars, preachers, itinerants, merchants and invaders who came in large numbers and many of whom eventually made Kano their home.<sup>2</sup> The earliest groups of people who made Kano their home were the groups of blacksmiths from Gaya, a small village about 60 kilometers from the present Kano. These immigrants settled around Dala Hill in the seventh century.<sup>3</sup> Prior to their settlement, they came to Kano in search of iron-ore which was used for manufacturing of farming implements, weapons and domestic utensils.<sup>4</sup> The settlement of the group of blacksmiths contributed significantly to the establishment of Kano City as many other groups were attracted which resulted in setting new industries such as dying, weaving, tanning and so on. Almost all the new immigrants came along with their respective skills.<sup>5</sup>

Historical evidence suggests that Kano experienced different movements of people within and around the ancient Kano region between the ninth and nineteenth centuries AD. One of the notable groups settled

<sup>1</sup> A. Odoemene (2016), "Patterns of Migration and Population Mobility in West Africa: Evidence from Ancient Kano, c. 800-1800 AD." *Africa Zamani*, Vol. 24, P.18

<sup>2</sup> A. Odoemene (2016), "Patterns of Migration and Population Mobility in West Africa: Evidence from Ancient Kano, c. 800-1800 AD." *Africa Zamani*, Vol. 24, P.18

<sup>3</sup> A.O.Adebimpe(2014), "An Assessment of the Impact of Plot Standard on Physical Development: The Case Study of Kano Metropolitan, Nigeria." *The International Journal Of Engineering And Science (IJES)* Vol. 3. No.2 P.18

<sup>4</sup> M.U. Adamu (1999), *Confluences and Influences: The Emergence of Kano as a city State*, Kano, Munauwar Books foundation, P.15

<sup>5</sup> M.U. Adamu (1999), *Confluences and Influences: The Emergence of Kano as a city State*, Kano, Munauwar Books foundation, P.15

around Dala Hill were Bagauda-led Maguzawa (animists) immigrants who succeeded in conquering the Dala settlement and eventual establishment of a formidable political entity at the end of tenth century. These two streams remained the most significant primary immigrations into the Kano area, but not alone, until in the fifteenth century. The Kwararafa and Bornu States had at several times invaded the settlement and had some of their subjects incorporated into Kano.<sup>6</sup>

The arrivals of the Wangarawa, Tripolitarians, Beriberi, Arabs of North Africa, Tokarawa, Fulani, Kambari,<sup>7</sup> and other notable neighbouring states like Kanuri, Gobir, Kebbi, Yauri, Zazzau, Asben, and Nupe, made Kano a cosmopolitan society and equally continuous movements of immigrants into the area.<sup>8</sup> The diverse nature and origin of Kano people paved the way for the mixture of cultures of different tribes and proliferation of new ideas and practices. As Shea argued:

".....the migratory trend attracting diverse and heterogeneous groups from far and near had developed Kano into an area of immense interchange and mixing of ideas, practices and experiences from other cultures."<sup>9</sup>

These various groups that formed settlements in different locations in Kano conducted numerous economic activities such as farming, craft and commerce for their survival. The economic activities of Kano people had been energetic and productive for centuries before the conquest and eventual establishment of colonial administration.<sup>10</sup> The indigenous people of Kano were predominantly known for their involvement in agriculture and commercial transactions as a major preoccupation. They had a very much attachment to their land, and that might have been the reasons for regarding it as an invaluable asset. The people practising agricultural production were mostly peasants engaged in subsistence production typical of an agrarian society with majority producing arable crops.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from subsistent farming, the people of Kano especially those living in large urban centres like Kano City had engaged in various forms of crafts such as blacksmithing, silver-smithing, and gold-smithing, weaving, leather-work, potting, building, tailoring, dyeing, butchering, tanning, woodworking, and a variety of specialist traders. Furthermore, within many of these occupations there was further functional specialization.<sup>12</sup> The people set up cottage industries for the provision of goods and services in their respective areas of specialisations. Particularly, the blacksmithing industry which was purposely developed for the need of weaponry, hunting apparatus and farm tools as noted earlier. It is argued that these occupations contributed to the transformation of Kano into manufacturing centres.<sup>13</sup> For instance, blacksmithing was an ancient occupation which provided indigenous people and early settlers of Kano a means of survival. Some quarters where blacksmithing industries were established in wards such as Diso, Galadanchi, Kwalwa, Yalwa, Gyaranya, Tudan Makera, Kofar Mazugal and Dandalin Turawa. In terms of specialisation, for instance, Smiths from Tudun Makera and Dandalin Turawa specialized in manufacturing

<sup>6</sup> A. Odoemene (2016), "Patterns of Migration and Population Mobility in West Africa: Evidence from Ancient Kano, c.1800 AD." *Africa Zamani*, Vol. 24, P.18

<sup>7</sup> M. Muhammad (2018), "The End of History: The Role of Immigrants in Kano Textile Industry". *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Volume 6, p. 69

<sup>8</sup> A.O.Adebimpe(2014), "An Assessment of the Impact of Plot Standard on Physical Development: The Case Study of Kano Metropolis, Nigeria." *The International Journal Of Engineering And Science (IJES)* Vol. 3. No.2 P.18

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad, M. (2018), "The End of History: The Role of Immigrants in Kano Textile Industry". *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Volume 6, P. 69

<sup>10</sup> A. M. Bichi and M. Muhammed (2014), "Land, Labour and Economy of Kano" in Y. M. Adamu and A.A Jimoh (eds) *Studies on Labour and Production of Kano*. ABU Press, Zaria. P. 1

<sup>11</sup> A. M. Bichi and M. Muhammed (2014), "Land, Labour and Economy of Kano" in Y. M. Adamu and A.A Jimoh (eds) *Studies on Labour and Production of Kano*. ABU Press, Zaria. P. 1

<sup>12</sup> P.J.Jaggar(1978), "The Blacksmiths of Kano City : A Study In Tradition, Innovation and Entrepreneurship". M Phil. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. P 17

<sup>13</sup> M. Muhammad (2018), "The End of History: The Role of Immigrants in Kano Textile Industry", *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Volume 6, P. 69

traditional metal locks. Those of Kofar Mazugal and Kwarim Mabuga wards were experts in the production of swords and horse equipment.<sup>14</sup>

Kano people were known for their specialisation in textile production and development.<sup>15</sup> The textile production led to the establishment of dying clusters in various wards like Karofin Kofar Mata, Karofin Sheshe, Karofin Zage, Karofin Kwalwa, Karofin Sudawa, Karofin Wanka da Shuni, Karofin Dagauda and Karofin Dala in addition to Karofin Kura and Karofin Bunkure in Rano district. The coloured materials produced included Turkudi, Dan Kura and others.<sup>16</sup>

The evidence available indicates that from the fifteenth century onwards Kano developed into one of the major commercial centres in the Western Sudan.<sup>17</sup> It was argued that the famous Kano Central Market (Kasuwar Kurmi) was the major point of widespread interregional and international trade. Commercial links across the Sahara Desert to Tripoli for instance, were well-organised and considerable supplies of cotton clothes and leather products were transported from Kano to North Africa. An extensive trade in these same commodities, in addition to ironware and foodstuffs like salt and grain, linked Kano not only to the rest of Hausaland, but also to such distant areas such as Borno, Adamawa, Nupeland and Yorubaland. Since then Kano remains attractive State for transportation business<sup>18</sup>

Some of the items carried from Kano comprised of gold, dyed cloths, leather goods and slaves, which were exchanged for salt, Arab dresses, cowries and a number of European goods such as Manchester cotton, French silks, glass beads from Venice and Trieste, paper, mirrors, needles and guns. The Arab merchants acted effectively as middlemen in the exchange of the West African products for European manufactures.<sup>19</sup> Kano excelled in West African trade as most of the kolanuts that were supplied from Ghana was largely under the total control of Kano traders. By the nineteenth century, Kano developed into a major commercial metropolis in West Africa. It was also the centre of a rich agricultural district which produced adequate foodstuffs for its great population. In addition, Kano owed part of its prosperity to the industry and skill of its craftsmen, especially the weavers, the leather workers and the dyers, the products of whom attracted many traders from many parts of Africa.<sup>20</sup> Prominent groups of people participated in trading activities were the Tokarawa, Agalawa and Kambarin Beriberi. While the Agalawa and Tokarawa had Tuareg origins, Kambarin Beriberi had Borno ancestry. They lived in the areas of Kano city such as Darma, Dala, Madabo, Sabon Sara, Bakin Ruwa and Salga, the Agalawa and Tokarawa could also be found in places outside the city, which included Utai, Kura, Bebeji Garko, Bichi, Madobi and Kumurya.<sup>21</sup> The abundance of natural resources including soil fertility and the economic activities conducted by indigenes, settlers or immigrants made Kano a giant commercial centre in the West African sub-region.

## A BACKGROUND OF SHEHU'S EARLY LIFE

Shehu Aliyu Hadejia is one of the great business operators and also philanthropists in Kano State. He conducted many philanthropic activities in various angles of Muslim society of Kano State, Nigeria. Shehu

<sup>14</sup> P.J.Jaggar(1978), "The Blacksmiths of Kano City : A Study In Tradition, Innovation and Entrepreneurship".M Phil. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. P 23

<sup>15</sup> M. Muhammad (2018), "The End of History: The Role of Immigrants in Kano Textile Industry", *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Volume 6, P. 69

<sup>16</sup> M. Muhammad (2018), "The End of History: The Role of Immigrants in Kano Textile Industry", *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Volume 6, P. 70

<sup>17</sup> P.J.Jaggar(1978), "The Blacksmiths of Kano City : A Study In Tradition, Innovation and Entrepreneurship".M.Phil. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. P. 23

<sup>18</sup> P.J.Jaggar(1978), "The Blacksmiths of Kano City : A Study In Tradition, Innovation and Entrepreneurship", M Phil. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. P. 23

<sup>19</sup> R. Olujemi Ekundare(1973), *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960*, Methuen & Co Ltd London.P 23

<sup>20</sup> R. Olujemi Ekundare(1973), *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960*, Methuen & Co Ltd London.P 23

<sup>21</sup> M. Muhammad (2018), "The End of History: The Role of Immigrants in Kano Textile Industry", *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Volume 6, P. 70

Aliyu was born in 1942 at Madachi Village in Hadejia Emirate in Jigawa State.<sup>22</sup> His father was a subsistence farmer who had a passion for Islamic knowledge. As part of the tradition of parents of Madachi village, Shehu was sent to Gaidam, a town in Borno State (the town is now in Yobe State) for Qur'anic Education in his childhood in 1950. His presence in the town was very exciting as he was able to concentrate on the goal he was expected to achieve.<sup>23</sup> During his stay in Gaidam, Shehu was described as devout, intelligent and brilliant. Due to his dedication and hard work, he was able to complete memorization of the Holy Qur'an at the age of thirteen. He then moved to Gashua where he studied basic Islamic Knowledge like *Hadith*, *Fiqhu* (Jurisprudence), and *Sira* (Life histories). Shehu did not go deep in his search for advanced Islamic knowledge; the little knowledge he acquired was enough for him to observe all his religious duties.<sup>24</sup>

After completion of Quranic education, he returned home where he continued staying with his parents for about a year or two, before he left home for Bauchi State. His arrival at Bauchi was a turning point in his life history. It was the beginning of his working career as he was employed to work as Mechanic apprenticeship at the Garage of Alhaji Idi Tula in the late 1950s. Having realized that there were more opportunities in Jos City in Plateau State, Shehi did not stay for long with Idi Tula. He proceeded to Jos where he received Mechanic and Driving training at the Garage of Mr. Steven in Jos in 1958. The training improved his knowledge in handling mechanical tools and driving skill.<sup>25</sup>

In his search for a greener pasture, the young Shehu discovered that the business of transportation and mechanics was more flourishing in Kano compared with other States where business activities were at a growing stage. He decided to go to Kano in order to get a better opportunity to engage in a Mechanic or truck driving job. This decision brought his stay in Jos City to an end in 1960.<sup>26</sup> Upon his arrival at Kano, Shehu was hosted at Fagge Quarters where resided at the accommodation of Mallam Tijjani who was his friend since childhood. He later became a father-in-law to Shehu. Having stayed for a few months at Fagge, he was employed in the Garage of Alhaji Sani 'Yantandu Kano in which he served as Truck Driver and Mechanic, although he did not work for long with Alhaji 'Yantandu.<sup>27</sup> Shehu was then employed by another transportation company owned by a Lebanese in Kano where he also served as a Truck Driver who conveyed goods to various States of Nigeria. Working under a Lebanese exposed him to various business opportunities in south-east and South-Western regions of the country.<sup>28</sup>

## HIS BUSINESS CAREER

Shehu realized that there was a high demand for firewood in Kano, for this reason, he did not hesitate to engage in the business of firewood selling in the State. The best way to get the firewood is that whenever he conveyed goods to certain destinations in the South, instead of returning with an empty truck, he began to go to bush or forest to get firewood which he used to gather gradually at Kofar Wambai 'Yan'awaki. He did not sell the firewood at any time except in the rainy season when a truck could not access the forest which made firewood too scarce and as a result, it became more valuable and expensive.<sup>29</sup>

The successful conduct of firewood business was a product of the effort made by the Colonial Government whereby artificial plantations were made in various provinces in Northern Nigeria in order to ensure a persistent supply of woods for cooking and furniture at affordable prices.<sup>30</sup> However, Kano was considered

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Mallam Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Mallard Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Mallam Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Mallam Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Mallam Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>30</sup> NAK/OCCF/2929/336/1944



as a province where firewood was being supplied from distant locations with low cost of transportation since the demand for the firewood was very low.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, following independence, the demands for the use of firewood was very high which enabled Shehu Aliyu to take advantage of the situation to concentrate more on the business of firewood. He eventually became one of the major suppliers of firewood in Kano City.<sup>32</sup>

With the profit accrued from the business of firewood, he purchased his own truck with a wooden body. The possession of a truck paved the way for his growth and development in the business of transportation. He continued to drive his own truck and at the same time doing the business of firewood. In his efforts to get a more lucrative business in the transportation sector, he decided to engage in another transportation business in Aminu Kano International Airport.<sup>33</sup> Firstly, Shehu met Alhaji Mutun-daya who had been there operating a transportation business so as to assist him to commence his own business. Mutun-daya was prominent in this business as most of the businessmen who imported goods by Air patronized his services. In his response, Mutun-daya told Shehu that the body of his truck could not be suitable for Airport Transportation. Therefore, he had to get another truck with a metal body to enable him to operate the business smoothly. Shehu was uncomfortable with the response, because he had no capital to purchase another truck with a flat metal body which is fit for transporting containers.<sup>34</sup> With the support of Mutun-daya, Alhaji Ubagaba hired a flat metal truck body for him which was connected with his Truck Head at the rate of 600 Naira per month. This development paved the way for the commencement of business of transporting goods from Aminu Kano International Airport to any assigned destinations within or without Kano State.<sup>35</sup>

In 1980 when Inland Container Company was established at Abdullahi Bayero Road, Kano, he decided to leave the Airport and join the Company as a transporter. Shortly after he started with the Inland Container Company, Alhaji Ubagaba, the actual owner of the metal body of his truck became uninterested to continue the transaction with Shehu. He stopped hiring the truck metal body to Shehu which made him infuriated. This situation propelled him to take the Head of his truck to the Southern part of Nigeria where he spent about thirteen months before returning to Kano. He then returned with the truck with a flat metal body.<sup>36</sup> Having returned to Kano in 1981, Shehu was unable to begin operating in the Inland Container Company because his truck had no insurance. With the support of the manager of the Inland Container Company who was a Yoruba named Kenneth, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia established his Transportation Company called Shehu Aliyu Hadejia Transportation Company Limited together with the insurance.<sup>37</sup>

The establishment and development of the Company contributed significantly in making Shehu rich since he has an indigenous company. Due to the effective services of his company, Shehu Aliyu dominated the business of transportation in the Inland Container Company as most of the importers of goods preferred his transportation services of the company over others. In his effort to ensure that the company meets the demands of the customers, Shehu purchased two additional trucks and employed drivers to work with them in order to be conveying the goods assigned to the company at the right time. It is important to note that his business of firewood also developed with the trucks used in supplying the firewood from States such as Bauchi, Gombe, Plateau and so forth.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> NAK/OCF/2929/336/1944

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mallam Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Alh. ABubakar Isah Fagge on 07/12/2022 at Fagge, age 64

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Alh. ABubakar Isah Fagge on 07/12/2022 at Fagge, age 64

During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia's transport company witnessed remarkable expansion and consolidation. The company grew rapidly, operating more than thirty-five trucks that provided haulage services across different parts of Nigeria. As the business expanded, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia acquired a parcel of land near the Inland Container Company along Abdullahi Bayero Road in Kano, where he established the company's headquarters. This strategic development enhanced the company's operational efficiency and strengthened its position within the transport industry.<sup>39</sup> The establishment of the headquarters also led to the creation of a Maintenance Services Unit, which was responsible for repairing faulty trucks and carrying out routine maintenance on operational vehicles. As the Managing Director, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia personally supervised the activities of the unit, drawing on his extensive knowledge and experience in mechanical engineering. His direct involvement ensured that the company's fleet remained in good working condition, thereby minimizing operational downtime and improving service delivery. In addition, the company established a Workshop and Training Unit charged with the responsibility of training newly recruited drivers and mechanics, as well as providing periodic retraining for existing staff. Shehu Aliyu Hadejia actively participated as one of the instructors, sharing his technical expertise and practical experience with employees to enhance their professional competence.<sup>40</sup> In 1995, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia diversified the company's operations by establishing a Commercial Bus Transportation Unit. This unit was based at the 'Yankaba Commercial Motor Park in Kano and was created to provide passenger transport services to various towns and States including Gumel, Hadejia, Jigawa, Gashua, Yobe, and Maiduguri in Borno State. The venture commenced with a group of five buses, but within a relatively short period the number increased to about twenty, comprising both large and small buses. This rapid expansion was largely attributed to the company's commitment to providing reliable, efficient, and customer-oriented transport services. Working in close collaboration with officials of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), the management ensured that buses departed on schedule, thereby minimizing delays and avoiding unnecessary inconvenience to passengers. These practices earned the company a reputation for dependability and contributed significantly to its commercial success.<sup>41</sup>

Shehu Aliyu Hadejia Company collaborated with Kano State Pilgrims Welfare Board in order to ensure that the luggages of the Pilgrims was not missing regularly. In 2001 the Management of Kanon Pilgrims Board consulted Shehu on how to overcome the problem of missing and misplaced Pilgrims' properties. Because it was discovered that a cargo used to land safely but in the process of transporting the goods and bags to Hajj Camp some properties got missing. Shehu Aliyu proposed suggestions which according to him could address the problem. Having taken all suggestions into consideration, the Management of Pilgrims Board decided to award the contract of transporting all the Pilgrims properties conveyed by a cargo so that the problem would be addressed fully. Since then the problem was fully overcome and addressed. The business also generated unprecedented revenue for the Company.<sup>42</sup>

The Company had a Water Supply Unit which has water tanks that were used to fetch and distribute portable water to various places. Individuals or companies that need water supply for a particular purpose patronize the services of the company at an affordable price. Under the Unit, there was also a Pure Water Section in which sachet water was being produced on a regular basis. There were also large cool drums for the sale of ice water particularly during the dry season.<sup>43</sup> All the business activities of Shehu Aliyu Hadejia

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Tijjani on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 45

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Tijjani on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 45

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Tijjani on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 45

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Alh. ABubakar Isah Fagge on 07/12/2022 at Fagge, age 64

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Mallam Ibrahim Yusuf on 23/12/2022 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 66

enabled him to become one of the wealthy people of Kano who conducted a number of philanthropic works for the betterment of the society.

### AN ASSESSMENT OF HIS PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES

Throughout his lifetime, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia devoted a substantial portion of his wealth and resources to philanthropic activities aimed at improving the welfare of the society. His philanthropic interventions covered various sectors such as mosque construction and renovation, Islamic and formal education, healthcare, provision of potable water, food distributions, assistance to vulnerable groups, and other community development initiatives. These philanthropic gestures earned him recognition as one of the leading Muslim philanthropists in Kano State. The following discussion examines and analyses some of his major philanthropic contributions.<sup>44</sup>

One of Shehu Aliyu Hadejia's most notable philanthropic projects was the construction of a perimeter fence around Fagge Juma'at Mosque. Before 1994, the mosque was enclosed only by a wire fence, making it highly vulnerable to intrusion. Recognizing the need to enhance security, he voluntarily undertook the construction of a permanent fence using cement blocks and reinforced concrete. The project initially encountered opposition as unknown people attempted to disrupt the project.<sup>45</sup> When the late Emir of Kano Ado Bayero was notified about the development, he expressed his dismay over the issue and he quickly redeployed fadawa (Emirate Police) to the area in order to provide maximum security during the project. He was also persuaded to continue with his intention. In his response, Shehu Aliyu agreed to continue and brought back all the building materials, which he previously took away, to the place and continued with the project. Within a short period, the project was completed.<sup>46</sup> Following the completion of the project, the mosque became fully secured as only screened people were allowed to access the premises of the mosque. Shehu contributed significantly to the construction of many Juma'at and five daily prayers in various Quarters of Muslim community of Kano metropolis such as Fagge, Dakata, Rijiyar Lemo, Brigade, Kwaciri and so on. He also contributed significantly with money and building materials such as cement, blocks and rods for the building of Usman bin Affan Juma'at Mosque located in Iyaka Road under Islamic Foundation of Nigeria. It was completed and commissioned in 1995.<sup>47</sup> These philanthropic activities had positively impacted on the spiritual development of Muslims. The worshippers were given an opportunity to pray in their respective localities.

In the area of education, in 1995 Shehu Aliyu built Islamiyya School in the premises of Abdullahi Bayero Juma'at Mosque (Waje Mosque) located in Fagge local government area. The people of the area organized themselves and requested him to build Islamiyya School for the Islamic education of their children. Within a very short time he purchased whatever building materials needed to commence the project. It was said that since the commencement of the project no single day in which workers did not work until it was completed. The school contains four classrooms and one staff room and two toilets; one for male and the other for female. After the building of the school was completed, Sarki Ado Bayero was the one who commissioned the school. He also appreciated the effort of Shehu Aliyu for the wonderful project executed.<sup>48</sup> The School was named Themarul Tahfizul Qur'an. The subjects being taught in the school consisted of Qur'an with *Tajweed*, *Sira*, *Fiqhu*, *Tauheed* and *Hadith*.<sup>49</sup>

According to Shehu Aliyu Hadejia's will, another school was established at part of his house at Fagge D1 No. 287. The School was named Shehu Aliyu Hadejia Group of Schools. The Schools being operated

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Mallam Ibrahim Muhammad on 23/12/2022, at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 66

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2023 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Ubali Ibrahim on 08/12/2022 at Dorayi, age 55



included Islamic Junior and Senior Secondary, Tahfiz and Islamiyya Schools and Section for Married Women. These schools have been under the control of Abu Ayubal Ansary Foundation. The subjects being taught in the secondary school section are in accordance with the syllabus recommended by Kano State Ministry of Education.<sup>50</sup> Most of the subjects being taught in the Islamiyya School were almost the same with that of Themarul Qur'an mentioned above. The books that contained these subjects were *Hayatul Islam*, *Qawa'id*, *Ahdhari*, *Arba'un Hadith* and so on. The school had graduated more than one thousand students and most of them were females.<sup>51</sup>

There were some Islamiyya Schools in Fagge local government area that Shehu Aliyu was sponsoring. Almost all the financial expenses were under him. He did not delay in settling the bills whenever presented to him. The schools that benefitted more from him were Maikwaru Islamiyya and Asiyya Islamiyya Fagge.<sup>52</sup>

In terms of western education, Shehu Aliyu was committed to ensure that the children of poor Muslims and orphans did attend school. He left his door open to receive requests for educational assistance from the needy. In his response, he assigned one of his special assistants with the responsibility of visiting various secondary schools in order to pay school fees. He also provided the students with necessary materials such as books and uniforms. Some of the Secondary schools he collaborated with included Rumfa College, School for Arabic Studies, Gwale Secondary School, Kawaji School and so on. He also had a special package for the students with special needs. He collaborated with three wheel bicycle makers of Katsina Road in this regard. Whenever a person with leg disability forwards his request for assistance, after verification, Shehu Aliyu used to send him to Katsina Road to collect three wheeled bicycles constructed for the people with leg disability. Many students with special needs benefitted from the programme.<sup>53</sup>

He also directed his bus drivers that wherever they meet a student or group of students in uniform, they should offer them free services by taking them to any school they attend. During fuel scarcity which occurred from time to time the commercial buses operating in Kano City were too inadequate and their services became costly. In his philanthropic response, he used to release his buses to various places in order to carry students to their respective schools free of charge.<sup>54</sup> The programme helped address the problem of shortage of commercial buses which students encountered in the Kano metropolis at that time. These philanthropic interventions helped in motivating secondary school students to continue with their studies even without transport fare.

Due to the proximity of his Office with the School of Technology and School for Management Studies of Kano State Polytechnic, he partnered with some staff of these schools who helped him identify students who were unable to pay registration fees for their National Diploma and Higher National Diploma Programme. After identifying those in need of registration fees, he then assigns someone to go and make the payment on his behalf. Through this tremendous effort, many students have been able to achieve their educational goals. He also initiated a feeding programme whereby students of these schools were given food for breakfast. He employed women who daily used to fry a dish made from flour and distributed it freely to the students. He also provided free cool water for the students particularly during the dry season. In their response, the students called the programme "scholarship". As a result of the programme many students were not worried about breakfast, particularly those who did not have money buy food at canteen or restaurant.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Ubali Ibrahim on 08/12/2022 at Dorayi, age 55

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Ubali Ibrahim on 08/12/2022 at Dorayi, age 55

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Ubali Ibrahim on 08/12/2022 at Dorayi, age 55

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Alh. ABubakar Isah Fagge on 07/12/2022 at Fagge, age 64

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Alh. ABubakar Isah Fagge on 07/12/2022 at Fagge, age 64

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Alh. ABubakar Isah Fagge on 07/12/2022 at Fagge, age 64

Free Provision and distribution of portable water supply to various places in the Muslim community is another philanthropic activities of Shehu Aliyu Hadejia whose contribution helped a number Muslims consumed portable water particularly people of Sauna Kawaji, Dakata, Kurna, Kwakwaci and Fagge. Shehu Aliyu Hadejia dug water reservoirs in Dakata, Sauna Kawaji whereby his Water Tank Vehicles were used on a daily basis to supply clean water to these reservoirs for the free consumption of the people of the areas.<sup>56</sup> In the areas where there was no reservoir like Fagge and Kurna, the Drivers of the Water Tank Vehicles used to go and stop at a specific location so that people would be coming out along with buckets from their respective houses in order to fetch water for their personal uses free of charge. Moreover, he warned all his staff to avoid collecting from the beneficiaries. He was the one who shouldered all the expenses of the vehicles renting programme and contributed enormously in overcoming the problem of shortage of portable water supply in these areas.<sup>57</sup>

He also used his Water Tank Vehicles to supply free of charge to the rehabilitation centers, hospitals and Boarding Schools that had been suffering from lack of or shortage of portable water. To ensure that they coped with the situations, He decided to use his Water Tank Vehicles to convey water to these places free of charge. It was said to have spent more than two decades supplying free portable water to the Orphanage Home of Kano located at Nassarawa GRA, Shekara Boarding Girls Secondary Schools, Yakasai, Abdullahi Wase Hospital, Nassarawa and Murtala Muhammad Specialist Hospitals.<sup>58</sup>

The philanthropic works of Shehu Aliyu were extended to fire-fighting activities. In collaboration with Kano State Fire Service in which his Water Tank Vehicles were used to supply water wherever there was a severe fire outbreak in Kano. The collaboration was initiated in 2001 when a fire incident occurred in Kwari Market. Luckily, one of the Water Tank Vehicles of Shehu Aliyu Hadejia was passing by, the Kano State Fire Brigades stopped him and sought for his assistance to use the water of his tank to bring the fire under control. In his response, the Driver agreed to assist with the condition that they would follow him to report to the Office that the water assigned to convey to a certain destination was used up for another purpose so that he would not be accused of any wrong doing. When the fire was brought under control, the fire Brigades first reported the development to their Director Mallam Hamisu. In his further action, the Director Fire Service and his team visited Shehu Aliyu Hadejia in his Office and reported to him that one of his staff driving a Water Tank Vehicle had assisted them with water to bring the fire incident of Kwari Market under control. On his part, Aliyu Hadejia also expressed his delight to the extent that he pledged to honour the Driver for a wonderful job done. He also assured the Fire Service Director that he was ready to assist the Fire Service whenever the need arises.<sup>59</sup> Since then, the Water Tank Vehicles of Shehu Aliyu were used by Kano State Fire Service in supplying water for fire-fighting.<sup>60</sup>

In the area of bus transportation, Shehu Aliyu commercial buses were being operated with fare subsidies. By the time he engaged in the business he made sure that 30 or 20 percent discount of the normal was applied on each and every passenger. In order to ensure that the owners of other commercial of transport operators in the 'Yankaba Motor Park were not downgraded, the commercial buses of Shehu Aliyu operating with discount were given specific time in which all the passengers traveling to Gumel, Hadejia, Yobe, Gashua and Maiduguri must arrive at the Park so that they could benefit from the programme. When the time was over, every passenger traveling to these towns would go for other commercial buses with

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<sup>56</sup>Interview with Mallam Dahiru Saminu on 17/09/2022 at Bayero University, Old Campus, age 57

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Mallam Dahiru Saminu on 17/09/2022 at Bayero University, Old Campus, age 57

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2022 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2022 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2022 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

normal fare.<sup>61</sup> The passengers, transport workers and drivers were pretty much appreciated with the philanthropic programme of Shehu Aliyu in the area of transportation.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of Health Care services, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia left his door open to receive requests for medical assistance for the patients who could not afford medical expenses. For instance, those who had an eye and related illness were sent to Makkah Eye Hospital, Gadon Kaya. He assigned one of his special assistants to the hospital in order to pay or settle the bills for surgeries and medicine. Similarly, those suffering from other illnesses in Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital and Murtala Muhammad Specialist Hospital were taken care of financially. He also used to give donations to many patients who were referred to hospitals abroad.<sup>63</sup>

As many philanthropists of Kano, Shehu Aliyu Hadejia had sponsored a number of Muslims to perform their Umra ( lesser Hajj.) and pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia. It was said that he used to sponsor more than ten Muslims annually to perform Hajj and many more to perform Umra (lesser pilgrimage). Most of his neighbours, relatives and his business assistants benefitted from this philanthropic gesture. Alhaji Hamza Ahmad benefitted Hajj and Umra.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Tijjani Abdullahi who happened to be his friend, neighbour and in-law has been one of the beneficiaries of pilgrimage sponsorship of Aliyu Hadejia. This philanthropic gesture contributed to the spiritual development of Muslim.<sup>65</sup>

In appreciation of his philanthropic activities, Shehu Aliyu received numerous Awards of Merit and Excellence from various Governmental and Nongovernmental organizations, some of them include Themarul Qur'an Islamiyya School, Hasiya Islamiyya, Fagge, Shekara Government Girls Secondary School, The Inuwar Jama'ar Kano (Kano State Forum) gave him Merit Award in 2001 and the Management of Gwale Secondary School also awarded him with certificate of Excellence in 2003 and more. His life came to an end on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2018. He survived with one wife and no biological offspring but many adopted Ones.<sup>66</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article has examined the life, business career, and philanthropic activities of Shehu Aliyu Hadejia, demonstrating that he was not only a successful businessman but also an outstanding philanthropist whose contributions significantly influenced the socio-economic and religious development of Kano society. Beginning his career with modest commercial ventures, he displayed remarkable entrepreneurial ability, determination, and innovation, which enabled him to establish one of the prominent transport companies in Northern Nigeria. Through prudent management, technical expertise and commitments, he expanded his business into a large enterprise that generated job opportunities and facilitated the movement of goods and passengers across different parts of Nigeria. It reveals that he was a distinguished philanthropist who devoted his personal resources to projects and programmes that addressed the educational, religious, and social problems of the Muslim community. His construction and support of mosques, establishment of Islamiyya and Tahfiz schools, contributions to healthcare services, provision of potable water, assistance to the poor and persons with special needs, and sponsorship of religious and educational programmes reflected a comprehensive understanding of philanthropy as a means of promoting both spiritual and socio-economic development. The study, therefore, concludes that Shehu Aliyu Hadejia occupies a vital place in the commercial and philanthropic history of not only Kano State but also Northern Nigeria. His

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2022 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Alh. Ahmad Hamza on 24/01/2022 at Abdullahi Bayero Road, age 67

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Tijjani on 07/12/202 at Fagge D1, age 45

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Tijjani on 07/12/202 at Fagge D1, age 45

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Mallam Tijjani Abdullahi on 07/12/2022 at Fagge D1, age 80

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Tijjani on 07/12/202 at Fagge D1, age 45

life demonstrates how business success was transformed effectively to promote social welfare, educational advancement, and religious development. Shehu's lasting legacy remains an enduring source of inspiration for contemporary entrepreneurs, philanthropists, policymakers, and scholars interested in the relationship between commerce, philanthropy, and sustainable community development.



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