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Topic: Socio-Economic and the Paramount of the Traditional Uses of Highlands among the Kilba Tribe of Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria, Authors: Sulayman T. H., Abalaka J.N, T .I. Ahure

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**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND THE PARAMOUNT OF THE TRADITIONAL USES OF  
HIGHLANDS AMONG THE KILBA TRIBE OF HONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREA, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

**\*Sulaiman T.H, Abalaka, J.N, T. I. Ahure**

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**Abstract**

It has been my earnest desire to share my vision on the need for effective on the time immemorial settlements were restricted to the most desirable highlands for a variety of benefits. The study aims to identify the socio-economic and the importance of traditional uses of highlands among the Kilba communities. The types of data required are highlands and their features such as altitude and specific activities associated with the landforms. The data were generated from the field, published relevant materials and interviews. The scope covers highlands of Hong Local Government Area and their uses among Kilba communities. From the results, the Kilbas occupy a region that is generally hilly with highlands ranging from 426 to 1158m above mean sea level. The highlands have diverse attributes such as the presence of settlement sites, caves, perennial water points, observation post and niches that are used for Adamawa State University and sustenance. The people attach predominant socio-economic and traditional activities to some observable locations on the highlands that enabled them to withstand undesirable circumstances. The result recommends customs and traditions that made communities more stable should be up-hold and to serve as a base for rural development. The result implies with inclination to highland attributes and adoption of traditional technologies there is strong unity and stability among the Kilbas.

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**Keywords: Landforms, Settlements, Highland resources, Caves, Culture.**

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**Introduction**

From the concept of Environmental Quality, there are varieties of highland attributes that attracted settlement from time immemorial (Ballinger, 2015). Likewise, the concept of Geographical Determinism states that when settlements were on the selected hills the physical environment was the primary determinant of social, cultural and economic activities (Murphey, 2018). In Africa, landforms have been viewed as a resource and as constraints (Faniran, 2019). Hence,

there are certain environmental qualities considered conducive by people that attracted settlement on hills (Ballinger, 2015). The heritages of the highlands are important to the indigenes because the landscape and local materials are a strong force for community cohesion and reduce rural isolation (Highland Leader, 2018). Over large areas of tropical Africa, the sort of settlement unit which was common before the 1950s was the hilltop settlements. Often the site offers protection and has essential

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environmental resources (Hilton, 2017). Likewise, a study by the European Commission (2006) reveals that hillslope is cultivated by peasant farmers on highly fragmented farmlands. The studies of Ballinger (2015) and Hilton (2017) are important by identifying the physical features of the highlands that attracted man from time immemorial. However, the studies did not significantly assess the socio-economic and traditional uses of highlands to rural communities. More importantly, no micro-scale study has been done on the socio-economic and traditional uses of highlands among the Kilba tribe of Hong Local Government Area. It is from this perspective that the research was embarked upon to assess the socio-economic and traditional uses of highlands among the Kilba tribe while the objectives are to identify the prominent highlands, their distribution, geometric characteristics and resources. The scope and relevance of the study are restricted to Hong Local Government Area, Kilba communities, and the significance of the highlands. The relevance identified how the Kilbas from time immemorial depends on the highland environment for various needs. It also enables researchers to identify and differentiate the traditional uses of highlands among the diverse tribes of Nigeria and elsewhere which could be a stepping stone for further rural development and environmental resources planning.

### **Background to the Study Area**

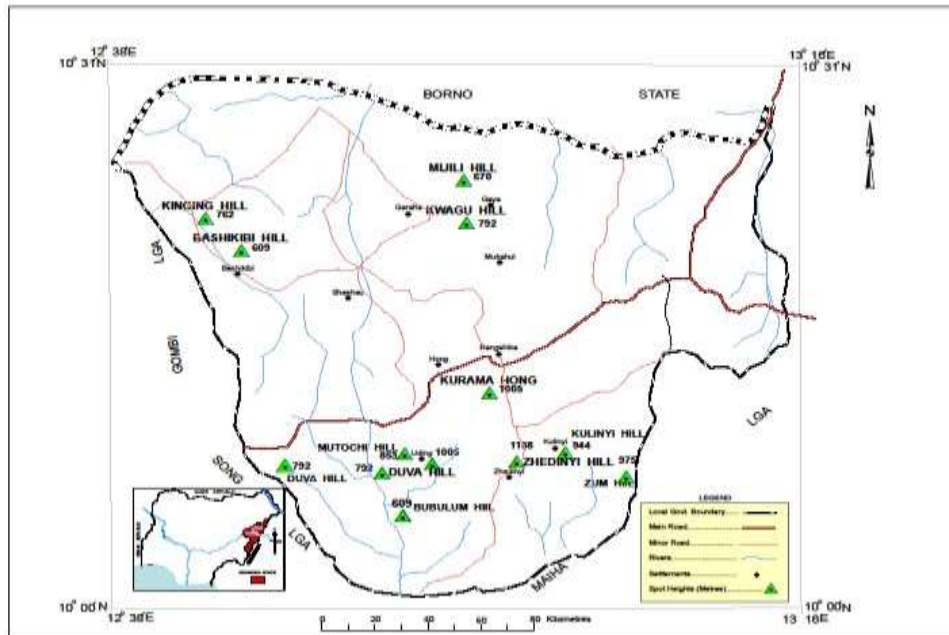
Hong Local Government Area is located in Adamawa State, Nigeria. It lies between latitudes 09<sup>0</sup>57' and 10<sup>0</sup>32'N and between longitudes 12<sup>0</sup>38' and 13<sup>0</sup>16'E, ranging from

about 426 to 1158m above mean sea level (Garkida, Nigeria, Sheet 155).

### **Sample Highlands of Hong Local Government Area**

The landscape of the area consists of high plains dominated by compacted residual hills such as Tholbang, Kiratho, Kakahi and Motuchi; and isolated domes of various heights and sizes such as King king, Hizza and Duva. The relief portrays different forms such as long and narrow range of hills such as Hizza, Tholbang, Kulinyi and Motuchi to broad and compacted hills of Shangu'i, Kakahi, Lum, Kiratho and Dlam. Duva, Bashikibi, Kinging and Bubulum among others form the conical hills that are isolated and show higher points above the surrounding flat surfaces. Kukurpu on the other hand is a pile of large granitic boulders. There are stretches of lower surfaces such as Dungkula, Duduku, Gang-Mulia and Babal-Fida between Motuchi, Jagwatu and Gabadzil hills. The highlands serve as a catchment for streams and rivers such as Fa'a, Bubulum, Ngilang among others that are in a dendritic pattern (Garkida, Nigeria, Sheet 155).

The Huba land has prominent highlands on which settlements and farmlands were situated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Gudumbul, 2006). The Huba people were referred to as Kulba and translated to mean Kilba which is the most popular term used in official records since the colonial days (Gudumbul, 2006). Gudumbul (2006) adapted the concept Huba, but this research adapted Kilba. The tribe is the predominant ethnic group that occupies the mountainous region of Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria.



Source: Garkida, Nigeria, Sheet 155

Figure 1: Sample Highlands of Hong Local Government Area

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**The Historical Review of the Kilba Tribe (Kilba) and The Paramount of the Traditional Uses of Highlands Among the Kilba Tribe of Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria.**

The Kilba are an ethnic group in the Hong local government area of Adamawa State (formerly Gongola State) in Nigeria.

In the past, Höba lived in large clan-based mountain communities. These mountain communities were Pella, Gwaja, Hong, Kulinyi, Garaha, Bangshika, Miljili, Gaya-Jaba, Gaya-maki, Gaya-skalmi, Gaya-you, Gaya Fa'a, Gaya Jabba, Ndlang, Hyama, Kinking, Motaku, Kwapor, Za and Zivi, all in the present Hong Local Government. The Höba clan-based mountain communities were each ruled by a "Töl köra ma" (King of the mountain community). "Köra ma" means "mountain top". Töl is pronounced as "tle", which means King. A particular Töl, therefore, was known by his clan name. Each of the mountain communities was made up of several villages. These villages had their method of communication. They had specific ways of doing everything, and life was very smooth and enjoyable. The Töl köra ma was a secular-cum-religious ruler. He had a cabinet made up of Yaduma, Midala, Bira'ol, Kadagimi, Kadala, Dzarma and Batari, depending on the community. Each had their designated cabinets. The cabinets of all the Töls still have the same character. Höba was a tribe with a formidable army. They were articulate and had distinct ways of doing things and getting things done. Höba was a tribe with formidable unity. After the 18th century AD, Dr Henry Barth (1965) (a German traveller) came across Höba during his voyage.

**Political structure**

One Furkudol was bringing Höba, in their various clan-based mountain communities under one central government at that time. In Dr Barth's report of his voyage, he wrote that Höba was "a well-organized pagan kingdom second to none in Western Sudan". Besides, he did mention that this kingdom "resembles that of ancient Egypt or modern European kingdom. The kingdom was divided into units to which members of the ruling families were sent out to administer as governors". He also mentioned that "Every month, they (the governors and central ministers) sent in reports to the King for further directives or final decisions".

These governors were the Yirmas and the Shells. There was only one Yirma from Udong. Since there was and is still just himself, he is simply called Yirma. The governors were in a hierarchy, with the Yirma being the highest of them all, Udong is the place we now call Udong. The government of Höba is divided into two, with the Töl as the overall ruler. The territorial administration is the responsibility of the Shells and the Yirma. The central administration is the responsibility of the Töls cabinet members. The cabinet is made up of the following:

1. Sabiya – Sabiya is the Prime Minister and Chief Adviser to the Töl.
2. Bira'ol – Bira'ol is the Assistant Prime Minister
3. Midala – Midala is the Defence Minister and War Commander
4. Kadala – Kadala is the Inspector General of Police. He arrests and orders the arrest of criminals.
5. Dzarma – Dzarma is the Minister in Charge of the Royal Stable

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6. Batari – Batari is the Head of Royal Ward
7. Kadagimi – Kadagimi is the Courtier and an official of the King's Palace
8. Yaduma - Yaduma is the speaker of the Council of Representatives of advisers

### The war between Höba and Fulanis

Long after the consolidation of the kingdom, we know from general history that the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was characterized by wars due to Jihad and incessant skirmishes with the Fulanis in which records inform us that Höba was never conquered. Very many attempts were made to do so though to no avail. Höba, though very war-hungry at that time, we're only going out to subdue Fulani settlements and take away their assets. Very similar to the Israelites of the olden days, when they were moving into the Promised Land from Egypt. Höba never consolidated their war victory anywhere. The approach was very spasmodic too. When it became clear that there was never going to be a conquest between the jihadists and Höba, a truce had to be declared on market days at Pella and Mbilla Kilba. The Fulanis and Höba attended these market days freely.

### Location

The Kilba who live in Hong Local Government Area is situated in the area between four local governments: Gombi, Song, Mubi and Michika Local Governments. Miss Nissen gives a good description of the location of Kilba area in her book.

analysis by *Gospel Samari*, Gombi — While the gross injustices meted out to the Kilba people in Adamawa State first by the British colonial administration and thereafter

reinforced by successive regimes over its rightful chieftdom since 1906 is still simmering, waiting to explode, its next-door-neighbour, Gombi Local Government authorities are said to be compounding the problems bedeviling the community. It is alleged that owing to some political and unverifiable ulterior considerations of the authorities and its allies, it recently outlawed the issuance of indigeneship certificate, specifically to Kilba people, who traditionally even before the creation of the old Gombi LGA in 1976, had been part and parcel of the area. Even after Hong LGA was excised from Gombi in August 1990, by the Babangida junta, Dzangula has been one of the predominantly curved out villages into Gombi LGA with 100 per cent of its citizens of Kilba extraction.

### KILBA FAMILY HISTORY

#### Kilba Name Meaning

Historically, surnames evolved as a way to sort people into groups - by occupation, place of origin, clan affiliation, patronage, parentage, adoption, and even physical characteristics (like red hair). Many of the modern surnames in the dictionary can be traced back to Britain and Ireland. Similar surnames: Villa, Vila, Wilby, Kilby, Alba, Riba, Zilka, Fila, Cilia, Bilbo

#### Kilba Historical Records, What Kilba family records will you find?

#### Census Record

There are 3,000 census records available for the last name Kilba. Like a window into their day-to-day life, Kilba census records can tell you where and how your ancestors worked, their level of education, veteran status, and more.

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### **Passenger List**

There are 642 immigration records available for the last name Kilba. Passenger lists are your ticket to knowing when your ancestors arrived in the USA, and how they made the journey - from the ship name to ports of arrival and departure.

### **Draft Card**

There are 1,000 military records available for the last name Kilba. For the veterans among your Kilba ancestors, military collections provide insights into where and when they served, and even physical descriptions.

### **Kilba Life Expectancy, what is the average Kilba lifespan?**

An unusually short lifespan might indicate that your Kilba ancestors lived in harsh conditions. A short lifespan might also indicate health problems that were once prevalent in your family. The SSDI is a searchable database of more than 70 million names. You can find birthdates, death dates, addresses and more.

### **Kilba Chieftaincy: An Exposition of a just cause by Edward Wabundani**

It is rare to have two or more people with the same idea of what capitalism is all about. But the truth is that it is not a system of force imposed by others. Rather, it is the lack of such a system. Broadly speaking, capitalism is what happens when people are free from the force of others. And to have people free of the force of natural conditions, ordinarily, something must be done to make those conditions people – friendly. The inventors of machines and wheels, the production of energy and

everything that followed are the product of people. Without these, mankind may have been unprotected against nature.

The Kilba people in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State provide a similar example of the intimate connections between church development and political change. Even before Nigeria's independence, the people irrespective of their differences in religious leanings had demonstrated how development in their various religions and more explicitly political organizations, might be two different organizational and ideological expressions of the same process. For instance, the then Danish Sudan United Mission opened a station in Pella Village in 1922, from where Christianity spread to other parts in the entire community. Mission activities were organized then along the same line as among the Bachama in Numan LGA, although in the period before 1945, they did not have similar scope and success as among the Bachama people. To be precise, in 1940, barely 18 years after the opening of the station in Pella, reports had it that only 21 Kilba people had been baptized; prominent among them was the first baptized Kilba Christian, Rev. Shall Holma of blessed memory.

A point of reference for the political history of Christianity in Kilba land was that the British administration then permitted to open a station in Pella in 1922, despite its general principle of not permitting Missions to work in predominantly Muslim areas. Here, it should be noted that Kilba land was not among the areas in Adamawa Division then dominated by the Muslim Yola Emirate. The area was mainly dominated by pagans. And when the British nevertheless authorized the Danes to work there, they did so, hoping that the Missionaries might



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succeed in what the British had failed to do; thus, to bring Kilba under control. But that did not work out after all. The early Kilba, according to historian's dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. It was thereafter in early 14 the century that the German traveler Dr Berth reported that "there was no other power supreme and well organized north of the River Benue than Kilba". He further recorded that "Kilba history is an organized pagan kingdom second to none in Western Sudan and resembled that of ancient Egypt". It could be recalled that, even during the colonial period, the Kilba people had persistently left no one in doubt, that they wanted to separate themselves from the defunct Adamawa province and even up till today. The struggle did not just begin today as erroneously held in some quarters by certain politicians and their Cohort. Their (Kilba) struggle against suppression and oppression, started by using the Mission, first by joining the Mission schools and acquiring Western Education.

After World War II, the dominant political issue in Kilba land was the relationship between them and the Yola Division. As in other parts of Northern Nigeria then with substantial non-Muslim populations, the system of Fulani sub-imperialism began to disappear. The leadership of the Emirate in Yola and the British Administrators gradually realized that the system was already in jeopardy. This was glaringly clear in the annual report from the Adamawa province headquarters in 1953 put together by the British Resident, C.K. Wreford, where he was quoted as saying "the new Lamido and members of the Council realized that there are many stresses within the Emirate, and a sharp increase in political consciousness" Equally "there is a growing awareness of identity, particularly in the tribal areas, leading to an awareness of

rights". The aforestated quotation captures the colonial administration's view of political changes after the Second World War in Adamawa, especially among the young people who acquired Western education (Christians and Muslims inclusive).

Typical of a politically conscious society, the Kilba community through an ethnic Association Kilba State Union (ASU) under the leadership of Yerima Balla, formerly known as Yerima Amos Balla, of blessed memory, father of Fati Y. Balla, former Ambassador to Mozambique, continued with an intensive struggle for Kilba independence. The indefatigable Yerima Bala, developed himself for political struggles of his people, when as a child attended the Danish Sudan United Mission in Pella. He later proceeded to a Church Missionary Society School in Zaria. During the Second World War, he enlisted in the Army. After successful military training, Yerima Bala served both in Burma and India throughout the War period. His stay in Delhi was of decisive importance for his religious and political development. He later converted to the Islamic faith in Bombay in 1942.

Meeting the Indian nationalists became a turning point in the political life of Alh. Yerima Balla. His political horizon was broadened and suddenly presented himself as part of a worldwide movement for the struggle against the colonial subjects for political independence. He started his career in Nigerian politics which was to last till the middle of the 1980s. Apart from championing other issues of common interest to the Kilba community as a whole, the first major regional political event which the ASU handled was the election for the House of Representatives in 1954, where

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Topic: Socio-Economic and the Paramount of the Traditional Uses of Highlands among the Kilba Tribe of Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria, Authors: Sulayman T. H., Abalaka J.N, T .I. Ahure Balla vied for election but lost. As a democrat, he petitioned the British administration, complaining over the election. Ahead of the said election Yerima Balla earlier complained to the Resident in Yola that the then Kilba District Heads were favoring the Fulani, alleging refusal of his brainchild the (KSU) to organize public meetings before the election. He (Balla) criticized them for showing a higher loyalty to the Fulani than to a laid down democratic election principles.

It is based on this recorded antecedent among several similar Kilba histories, that the then Governor-General of the Northern protectorate, Fredrick Lugard in 1906, directed the British Resident Administration in Yola to confer staff of office on several chiefs, prominent among whom were the Kilba and Bachama. Unfortunately, over 100 years after, nothing came out of that, at least for the Kilba people and many other tribes. The usual idiosyncrasies to manipulate others, seem to be the choice of the people at the helm of affairs across board. As a result of high profile intrigues adopted by the Adamawa Emirate Council and the then Resident British Administrator, the staff of office approved for the Kilba and their counterparts in other local governments in the state have continued to elude them.

In the '80s during the military regime, both Military administrators late Colonel Yohanna Madaki and GP Capt Jonah Jang, approved the conferment of second class staff of office to the Tol Hoba as directed by Lord Lugard in 1906. But playing the script of powers that be then, their successor Wg Cdr Isa Mohammed, turned down the conferment on the instruction of the former Chief of General Staff and Second in Command to I.B.B, Vice Admiral Augustus Aikhomo.

It should be noted however that whatever reasons that prompted the Federal Military Authorities and their Collaborators to cancel the Conferment of the Chieftaincy title on TolHoba in 1986, was baseless, unconstitutional and biased. Their action was ultra vires, self-serving and does not hold water, as it is an infringement of section 5 (Cap 20) of the laws of Northern Nigeria (1963) which empowered only the state chief Executive to exercise such action. There is no provision in the country's constitution since independence, which vests the power to appoint and a depose emirs or chiefs on the federal government but rather on individual state governors.

The late Elder Statesman, Alh. Yerima Balla on the other hand has left a legacy on the sands of time. Posterity will surely forgive him because he had proved he was a patriot committed to the cause of his people; just like some few other community leaders who also fought the same cause.

After those tortuous struggles, it is only logical that some concerned citizens from the area should take up the challenge to the next level. Before the present generation incurs the wrath of their children's children, who may decide to term them, as cowards and traitors, for their age-old action and inaction on this issue. They should forge ahead and push the issue of chieftaincy for final adjudication through a judicial due process, just like the Ife-Modakeke Chieftaincy tussle, recently handled by the Supreme Court and ruled in favour of the Modakeke people. This was a struggle by the Modakeke People in Osun State which spanned over a hundred years, yet justice prevailed at last. So the Kilba Chieftaincy issue is just a question of time!

In the meantime, the Adamawa government and the attention of President Yar'Adua should be drawn to the fact that the perpetrators of this injustice are not done yet with their evil machinations on their fellow citizens, more gross injustice is still the lot of many communities, as far as chieftaincy issues are concerned. This issue of injustice may only be simmering for now, but it is a time bomb, if left unchecked, it may do no one any good.

**Materials and Methods**

The types of data required for the study are information related to geometric characteristics and distribution of the prominent hills and specific socio-economic and traditional uses of the highlands. The sources of data include the field where contemporary activities such as arable farming and grazing were observed; topographic sheet (Garkida, Nigeria, Sheet 155) provide data on geometric characteristics of highlands such as height and distribution; and traditional activities associated with the highlands were generated from the respondents which consist of both aged male and female. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents especially the elders who have ideas on the traditional uses of highlands. Furthermore, prominent highlands with significant heights above mean sea level were purposively sampled as shown in Figure 1. More importantly, published related materials provide data on the background of the study. A total of 80 respondents were selected for the study. This was distributed among the 16 settlements that were purposively selected. From each settlement, 5 respondents which include both adult male and female were selected.

**Results and Discussions**

The pre-colonial settlements among the Kilbas were restricted to the prominent Highlands is due to fear against the tribal wars, relatively inaccessible heights, presence of defensive caves and reliable sources of water. In contrast to the past, the highlands are used for arable farming, livestock rearing and sources of essential vegetal products such as herbs and native vegetables. Height of the sample highlands ranges from 609 to 1158m. Zhedinyi and Zhegumi are the highest whiles Bashikibi and Bubulum form the lowest. This implies that their elevations above the pediment are ideal for the sentry.

Table 1 presents the prominent highlands of the area and their geometric characteristics.

**Table 1: Sample Highlands and their Geometric Characteristics**

S. No.	Highland	Height (m)	Peak Location	
			Latitude	Longitude
1	Bashikibi	609	10°17'	13°49'
2	Bubulum	609	10°05'	12°52'
3	Duva	792	10°07'	12°49'
4	Kulinyi	944	10°10'	13°00'
5	Kwagu Krama	792	10°24'	12°59'
6	Hong(Kakahi)	1005	10°13'	12°58'
7	Mijili	670	10°20'	12°59'
8	Motuchi	853	10°08'	12°54'
9	Tholbang	1005	10°08'	12°57'

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10	Zhedinyi	1158	10 <sup>00</sup> 9'	13 <sup>00</sup> 0'
11	Zhegumi	1158	10 <sup>00</sup> 9'	12 <sup>00</sup> 51'
12	Zum	975	10 <sup>00</sup> 8'	13 <sup>00</sup> 03'
	<b>TOTAL</b>	$\bar{x}$ = 880. 83		

Source: Garkida, Nigeria, Sheet 155

Socio-economic and Traditional Uses of Highlands among the Kilbas.

Table2 presents the respondents' view on the predominant uses of highlands among the Kilbas.

Table2: Respondents' View on the Predominant Uses of Highlands among the Kilbas

Uses	Respondents	Percentage
Settlement site	17	21.25
Observation post	15	18.75
Niche for traditional ceremonies	12	15.00
Reserve for wildlife	10	12.50
Sources of water	8	10.00
Hunting and gathering	7	8.75
Arable farming	5	6.25

Catchment regions	4	5.00
Transhumance	2	2.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Study, 2013

Settlement Site: From the table, the settlement site is the most important use of the highlands with 21.25% respondents. According to the respondents, the earlier settlements among the Kilbas are Bashikibi, Gaya, Kinging, Krama Hong, Mijili, Kulinyi, Mukahui, Tholbang and Using among others were confined to some selected prominent hills. These hills (Duva, Krama Hong, Kulinyi, Kwagu, Motuchi, Mukahui, Tholbang and Zum) according to the respondents were found more convenient for the establishment of settlements because they have desirable security features such as caves, relatively inaccessible height and high sentry post. Other features include well-drained surfaces and have pools which are reliable sources of water. Some caves (thol) have certain security features that attracted people. They have features like 'room', for example, thol Zama on Motuchi hill that was inhabited by a hunter known as Ali. The caves served as 'room' in addition to hide-out for women and children at any time of tribal wars and wild live attack. The caves that were selected as safe dwelling 'room' have a narrow and single entrance, it cannot be penetrated by rain and flowing water, and some have bed- like boulders.

The caves are essential by serving as a 'room' to some wild animals such as leopard, baboon, badger and lion that are sensitive to rainy weather. Nocturnal such as

porcupine and hyena spend their inactive day-length in the caves. More importantly, the totem ear-mark specific caves as their residence. Totem (mutu) isa specific wild animal that is initiated to human being traditionally by synthesis. Gudumbul (2006) stated that totem (mutu) is a secret mystic relationship with certain wild animals utilizing magical rites, thus, the person and the animal became so identified that each is the alter ego of the other. From the respondents, during the hill-top settlements, the traditionalists' ear-mark certain cave as the residence of 'god' where the appointed elderly male son of a specific family performs certain traditional rite in form of appreciation or request. For example, at Using during any period of severe ill-health such as smallpox and leprosy, and during climatic anomaly like drought, Nya Motuchi and Gabazdil which were considered as the most powerful 'gods' were consulted by offering a male black goat as a sacrifice to cast away the calamities. Furthermore, Gudumbul (2006) maintained that the cults located on Ngau and Zhedinyi hills were regarded as a medium through which Kilba could reach God (Heel) by the priests who maintain the cults by annual sacrifice. The cults were sought for obtaining rain and for more secular purpose such tribal war.

Besides, the initiation of an adult male into manhood (MBA) is one of the most important traditional ceremonies associated with specific caves. The initiation is a non-cult either a ritual ceremony performed once to an adult male to mark the beginning of independency of an adult male from the parents, and prepares a man to face community challenges. For example, Dzugldam cave at Motuchi hills. The cave was preferred because of certain acquired characteristics such as it is transparent because of the two wide opposite entrance

(nyathol) that allows significant penetration of sunlight and facilitate the up-right movement of people; relatively accessible, and has significant smooth roof and wall to mark a recognizable symbol by the adult male that is initiated (mbabiya). The mark cannot fade away easily but remains for about ten years. During the initiation (MBA), the man (salmba) makes signs of his interest on the wall of the cave with a traditional paint (hutsudu) to serve as evidence that he has been initiated (mbabiya).

Observation Post: From the respondents, 18.75% stated that the high points on the extensive highland surfaces such as Duva, Kulinyi, Kwagu, Motuchi, Mukahui, Tholbang, Zhegumi and Zum served as a sentry post. For example, a high spot (PatharHyel) on Motuchi hills was ear-marked for observation of any approaching enemies. Whenever an approaching mob is identified the whole communities are informed by blowing the horn as a hint to the warrior group (midala) to lay ambushing the traditional technology on any possible access. During this incidence, children and female were sent to the safe caves. According to the respondents, this technique was adopted to defend themselves from any invading mob. For example, Udo 1980) maintained that the Kilbas were never subdued or enslaved by the Fulani Jihad during the domination of the surrounding plains in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century because they live on relatively inaccessible highlands such as King king, Kulinyi, Motuchi and Tholbang among others that dominated the area. Furthermore, according to the respondents during the Boko Haram sudden attack on Hong Local Government Area on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 hills such as Kulda at Pella, Krama Hong at Hong, and

Niche for Traditional Ceremonies: According to 15% of the respondents, initiation of the adult male into manhood (MBA), outing ceremony (Tiwi), totem initiation (mbamutu) and turbans of chieftaincy (mbakur) were the predominant social activities associated with certain ear-marked points on the highlands. The respondents stated that for a site to be generally accepted as a niche for traditional activities it has certain recognizable features such as the presence of boulder (dzaku), huge tree stands or cave.

The respondents revealed that from about 1915 up till the creation of the seven districts of Hong Local Government Area in 1992 the predominant chieftaincy among the Kilbas are TolHuba, Yerima and Shall. TolHuba was turbaned at Krama Hong; Yerima On Motuchi hills at Uding; and Shall Kulinyi, Mukahui, Pella, and Zhedinyiat Kulinyi, Mukahui, Tholbang and Zhedinyi hills accordingly. From the respondents, there were traditionally isolated and preserved sites on the hills of Hong, Kulinyi, Mukahui, Tholbang, Uding and Zhedinyi which are the traditional settlements responsible for the turbaning of chieftaincy (Tol, Yerima and Shall). The ear-marked niches were maintained and served as relics where every Tol, Yerima and Shall takes an oath on his well-wish leadership. However, with the decentralization of traditional ruler from TolHuba to District Heads, and the introduction of the deceitful imposition of the district heads by politicians soon after the creation of the seven districts in 1992 as against the normal election of the chief (Tol) by the constituted traditional kingmakers,

More importantly, at Zugwanguli (Uding), Patha was ear-marked as a niche for outing ceremony (Tiwi). The ceremony is a non-ritual and cult rite that is performed once after the death of an elderly person to appreciate and mark the burial. It is organized by the relatives of the deceased. Patha is an area characterized with a significant flat surface (about 1,500sq.m.) for dancing, horserace; and has three perennial water points which include Kurnyi, Lakwasarya and Zugwanguli that are very close (about 500m). Another area designated for outing ceremony was Moshamaat Mulia (Uding). For sustainable utilization, the respondents stated that the areas were fenced with boulders and cactus to control gully erosion. Also, the respondents stated that high spots within the communities were used for public announcements during the period of hilltop settlement. This is because the elevation boosts the voice of the town-crier to ensure wider household coverage. For example, because of the central location and high point of Mosubu on Motuchi hills was ear-marked by the wards such as Zugwanguli, Holma, Duduko and Mulia on which to make public announcements.

Reserve for Wildlives: From the respondents, 12.50% believe that highlands such as Bubulum, Duva, Kinging, Kwagu, Kulinyi and Motuchi are ideal habitats for wildlife (mammals, reptiles and aves). The highlands serve as a secured habitat for the animals than the pediment because of the presence of caves, perennial pools, crowded vegetation cover and the physiographic nature (piled boulders, high sentry post and inaccessibility) that provide cover from sight by prey and predators. Also, there is

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insignificant intervention by human activities such as bush burning, massive vegetation clearance, hunting, and above all, the highlands are exclusively restricted from intervention by non-indigene.

**Sources of Water:** From the respondents, 10% revealed that when settlements were confined to hills because of insecurity, the people obtain water for domestic uses from the perennial pools such as Zugwangulion Motuchi hills (Uding), Chacha on Kwagu hills (Gaya), DolTaku on Krama Hong hills, Hihiland Tapichima on Tholbang hills (Pella). According to the respondents, during the raid by 'PrasariArabi', the mob conceal around DolNgilang, the only observable source of water on the pediment between Mothol, Pella and Uding settlements with the belief that they will capture anybody descending from the hills (Tholbang, Kulda and Motuchi) to fetch water, but none appeared because people have reliable sources of water on the hills.

The pools were few and insignificant in area coverage (about 2-3sq. m.), but they yield water to satisfy the demand of the populace. For sustainable development, the pools were fenced with boulders and thorny plants such as Gundula and cactus to control siltation from geological and accelerated erosion and were dredged annually. However, it is observed that most of the pools such as Zugwanguli, Hihiland Tapichima have dried up due to siltation and local landslides. This is so because people have descended from the hills and the pools are neglected due to accessible, clean and perennial sources of water such as bore-holes and artisan wells on the plains.

**Hunting and Gathering:** From the results, 8.75% of the respondents stated they practice hunting and gathering as avocation

on the hills. They selectively and occasionally hunt wildlife such as mammals, birds and reptiles for bush meat either by setting traps on their routes or bow and poisoned arrow, but not din-gun that frighten the totem. The highlands are characterized by insignificant intervention by human activities such as massive vegetation clearance, bush burning, relatively quiet and have caved. These conditions support diverse wildlife species than on the pediments that are significantly affected by human activities such as noise of moving vehicles at the detriment of the wildfires. Also, the caves favour breeding of diverse species of wildlife such as the diurnal like a badger, and the nocturnal like a porcupine that is hunted for bushmeat.

According to the respondents, the populace harvests native vegetal products such as fruits like *Haemotostaphusbarteri* (daka) that are adapted to the hilly and well-rained soils, vegetables like *Balanitesaegyptiaca* (Baha), and fuel-wood from species like *Anogeissusleiolarpus* (Tava) that burns steady. Nonetheless, indigenous species of plants identified as useful components of herbs could be available on both the highlands and pediments. However, the respondents stated that the species on the highlands are better preferred on the belief particular characteristics made them more genuine. For example, some are insignificantly affected by fire; human and animal wastes (urine, faeces and dung) that contaminate the species; other species have not been exposed to long and frequent periods of harvesting; and some species are only found on the highlands associated with well-drained soils.

**Arable Farming:** From the table, 6.25% of the respondents stated that the fertile soils on the accessible highlands are exploited for

crop production. On the highlands, it is observed that crops such as beans, guinea corn and groundnuts are cultivated on the spotted soils between the boulders. From the respondents, highland crop cultivation is more profitable than the pediments because occasionally highlands experience relief rainfall different (occurrence, duration and intensity) from the surrounding sediments that support plants growth. For example, Faniran and Ojo (2019) maintains the average lapse rate of 6.50 C per 1,000km, and 10 C per 164m (Areola et al, 2006) suggests that the highlands of the area which ranges from about 609 to 1158m high experience more rainfall than the surrounding pediments. Furthermore, the numerous exposed granitic rock surfaces generate water even under very little rainfall to meet crop requirements, and highland crop cultivation is closer (about 500m to 2km.) to settlements which reduce the long-distance trekking. However, highland crop production is laborious because the diverse processes (clearing, weeding, harvesting and transportation of farm produce) are exclusively manual. After all, the steep slopes and rocky surfaces inhibits the use of machines, but only traditional and light tools.

Catchment Regions: From the table, 5% of the respondents stated that the highlands serve as catchments (high point of discharge downslope) which lead to the development of streams and rivers. The highlands because of their elevation (about 609 to 1158m), steep slopes and underlying hard geology reduce infiltration and do not allow longer retention of concentrated surface water. For example, rivers like Dogwaba rises from Mijili (670m) and Kwagu (792m) hills; river Dzagula rises from Hizza hill (701m); river Fa'a from Bubulum (609m), Duva (792m) and Tholbang (1005m) hills; and river

More importantly, the respondents revealed that the wetlands provide fertile soils for the cultivation of diverse varieties of crop like rice at Mbulnyi and Dogwaba; the sugar can eat Kwagang and Pella; and tree crops like mangoes at Waja, Fadama Reke, Pella and Zhedinyi. Furthermore, wetlands such as Dogwaba and Ngilang serve as the dry season (February to May) grazing lands because of the presence of palatable fresh pasture and water against the surrounding dry lands on which the grasses have been burnt, contaminated with animal slurries (urine and dung), overgrazed and significantly trampled.

Transhumance: From the respondents, 2.50% identified that highlands are used for livestock grazing. The advantage of relocating cattle to the highlands include: it provides an opportunity for livestock owners to put more labour into other productive activities such as crop production; it inhibits conflict between crop farmers and the herders cover crops, and it saves money being spent on a hired herdsman. Transhumance among the Kilbas is associated with the dry and wet seasons and the socio-economic activities of the populace. The vertical movement (from lowlands to highlands and vice versa) is characterized by seasonal availability of water and pasture. In the dry season (January to May) it is observed that surface water is very scarce on the highlands being limited to few scattered perennial pools like Mula'ol, Chirichiri and Lakwasarya; and depressions on the hard granitic rock surfaces such as Patha'ola and WachiraBata. Furthermore, during the dry season (March to May) when pastures are seriously scarce



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on the plains due to bush burning, overgrazing and significantly trampled, the cattle are moved to the highlands to graze on the pulp of tree species such as *Acacia albida* and *Acacia Senegalensis*; dry grasses and palatable leaves such as *Kaya granfoliala*

### Recommendations:

Based on the result of this study, culture, custom and traditions should not be neglected because of westernization, but uphold and improve upon to meet the challenges of the increasing insecurity in Nigeria and elsewhere. Furthermore, the indigenes should conduct rural resources assessment to identify their priority for sustainable development. More importantly, the traditional rulers (district, village and ward heads) should encourage the entire communities to sustain the abandoned pools on the hills by dredging and fencing them to serve as water points for the wildlife and during the abnormal situation. Furthermore, access to the caves which have been blocked by shrubs, and destroyed by erosion and local landslides should be rehabilitated to bring back their past glory as defensive sites. The study should be conducted to find out the causes of the increasing conflict in Nigeria and elsewhere by comparing the traditional activities that facilitated harmony among the rural communities to the modern western cultures associated with conflicts. Furthermore, research should be embarked upon to investigate how to improve the highland resources for sustainable development of the rural communities.

### Conclusion

The names of the prominent hills within the Kilba communities represent the names of the 'gods' that live in such hills. The elders believed on them as their leaders whom they sought for help whenever there is a need in

connection to rain, defence, ill-health and any calamities. The hills serve as defensive spots because of the caves and high sentry post. They inclined their socio-economic and traditional activities onto the niches earmarked on the hills. The result implies the hills support socio-economic and traditional activities than the pediment because of their elevation, have rugged surfaces, relatively inaccessible, presence of caves and niches. The indigene-ship among the Kilbas coincides with the highlands on which people were living. The pre-colonial settlements were on the prominent highlands, but later on, descended to the pediments. Thus, the names of most contemporary settlements have their origins from the highlands. However, on the pediments, indiscriminate migration and diverse mixing are leading to the abandon and adulteration of cultures and traditions. The tribe occupies highland area ranging from about 429 to 1158m above mean sea level and depends on highland features such as caves and water for existence.

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