

The Impact of Hausa-Fulani Traditional Medicine and Healing Method on the Indigenous Peoples of the Bamenda Grassfields

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ABSTRACT

Traditional medicine was and still remains a very important method of treating diseases in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon. Before the late 19th and early 20th centuries the indigenous population of the Bamenda Grassfields relied so much on traditional medicine in healing themselves. Local herbalists with the use of natural materials and other instruments carried out diagnosis and prescribed treatment to their patients. With the arrival of the Hausa and Fulani people into the Bamenda Grassfields along side their tradi-practitioners; things started taking a different turn. Most of the indigenous people started adopting the Hausa-Fulani healing methods to the detriment of their own traditional method of treatment. Even the arrival of the colonial masters to the area in the 19th Century and their introduction of conventional medicine or hospitals did not affect the popularity already gained by the Hausa-Fulani healing method. As a result, the Hausa-Fulani healing and medicine greatly influenced the health sector in the Bamenda Grassfields. To carry out this study, primary and secondary sources were used. At the end of the study, we were able to come out with the following conclusions: That the indigenous people of the Bamenda Grassfields had their own traditional method of treatment before the coming of the Hausa-Fulani traditional healers to the area. That, the Hausa-Fulani healing methods had a great impact on the local population and health sector in the Bamenda Grassfields. That, the Hausa-Fulani traditional medicine and healing methods gradually replaced the indigenous methods of treatment in the Bamenda Grassfields. Finally that, the Hausa-Fulani herbalists or traditional healers help in eradicating so many diseases in the Bamenda Grassfields.

Key Words: *Traditional Medicine, Bamenda Grassfields, Traditional Healers, Diagnoses, Hausa, Fulani.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Geographical Location of the Bamenda Grassfields

The Bamenda Grassfields cover what is today refers to as the North West region of Cameroon. It is carpeted for the most part by grassy highlands with peaks rising over 2000 meters. It is a fairly distinct geographic unit lying between five and seven degrees north of the equator. It extends from upper cross river basin to the middle basin of the Katsina Ala River meandering among the range of hills running from North West to Gayama Gap. The Mbam River to the east. [1] As a specific ecotype, the Bamenda Grassfields is rich in natural resources and posses a healthy climate which certainly had always favoured human settlement. Average is 258m a year. The average temperature is 21°C. The rainy season lasts from the end of March to early November while the dry season lasts from December to March. [2]

1.2 Historical Presentation of Hausa-Fulani and Indigenous People of the Bamenda Grassfields.

During the 19th century when the jihads wars were being under taken by Uthman Dan Fodio, the Hausa were also involved. In the course of spreading the Islamic faith, the Hausa migrated to Adamawa. Another motivating factor that led to the influx of the Hausa population to Adamawa was trade. Many of them from Nigeria and other areas entered Adamawa to

trade in ivory, Kola nuts and slaves. While in Adamawa, many of the migrant traders continued their southwards march to the Bamenda Grassfields. They arrived the Bamenda Grassfields in the late 19th century. [3]

The Fulani on their part are predominantly nomadic people located almost exclusively within the savanna zone of west Senegambia region. From Senegal, the Fulani continued their movement along side their cattle and headed to northern Nigeria. The 19th century Jihad movement and epidemic outbreaks forced them to move from northern Nigeria to Northern Cameroon. From northern Cameroon, they moved south and started penetrating the Bamenda Grassfields in the early 20th century. [4]

The ethnic groups of the Bamenda Grassfields apart from the Hausa and Fulani include: the Nso, Bafut, Bali, Mankon, Kom, Aghem, Meta, Widikum, Ngembas among others. These are mostly the semi-Bantu groups otherwise referred to as the Tikars. The Tikars originated from Northern Cameroon more precisely from Banyo, Bankim, Tibati, Upper Mbam and the Adamawa region of Cameroon. [5]

This study set out to explore the impact of Hausa-Fulani traditional Medicine and healing method on the indigenous people of the Bamenda Grassfields. In other words, how the Hausa-Fulani traditional healing method influenced those of the Bamenda Grassfields Region of Cameroon. The chronological and thematic approaches have been used. In terms of sources, written and oral sources had been used.

We will first of all begin by presenting traditional healing or medicine in pre-colonial Bamenda before the coming of the Hausa-Fulani into the area. We will then proceed to show how the arrival of the Hausa-Fulani in to the Bamenda Grassfields along side their method of treatment greatly influenced the indigenous method of treatment and help in treating and why not eradicating so many diseases in the area.

2. BODY

2.1 Indigenous Methods of Treatment in the Bamenda Grassfields before the Coming of the Hausa-Fulani.

Before the coming of the Hausa-Fulani into the Bamenda Grassfields, the indigenous people relied so much on traditional healers for the treatment of patients suffering from particular diseases or illnesses. These healers used herbs to treat illnesses like eye trouble, stomach ache, gonorrhoea, joint pains, back pains, gastritis, tooth pains, bloody urine, side pains, chest pains, sterility in women, cough, leprosy, diarrhoea, dysentery, madness, impotence, and so on. [6]

Majority of the indigenous healers used traditional instruments like the cowries, palm wine, shrines, stems of trees, calabashes to determine the diagnosis and prognosis of a particular disease or case. Other healers equally used antelope horn with content, porcupine quill, prayers, water in open calabash, elephant grass stem, water in a bottle and so on as a special instrument or oracle to the determination of diagnosis and prognosis of a particular case. [7]

The reward of these healers after treating a patient varied. Some received only material things like salt, palm wine, goats, sheep, cloth and so on while others received money. In almost every village or quarter of the Grassfields, at least two or more herbalists could be attending to patients. Delivery and circumcision were mostly done at home by special birth attendance. [8]

Before the advent of colonisation, there were no modern health facilities in Cameroon, talk less of the Bamenda Grassfields. The indigenous population depended solely on traditional medicine for healing, for it was inextricably tied to their culture and tradition without any alternative or competing medicinal system. Traditional Health practitioners in the Bamenda Grassfields included herbalist, divine healers, soothsayers, midwives, spiritualists, bone setters; mental health therapists and surgeons'. [9] They were aware of one another's specialities and readily referred cases they could not treat to the appropriate quarters.

2.2 General Medical Concepts of Traditional Medicine

A traditional healer in the Bamenda Grassfields in general and in Nso' in particular was called *ngga shiv* (plural *angga shiv* which literally means man of medicine) [10]. In the pre-colonial era, the Bamenda Grassfields was already highly developed in what is now called traditional medicine. The healing art consisted of two major elements that were often used in combination: the application of natural products and an appeal to spiritual forces. Natural products include extracts or decoctions from leaves, roots, oil, fats, animal parts or insects. Appeals to spiritual forces involved incantations, symbols and sacrifices among other rituals. [11]

There were a lot of traditional doctors or local healers (herbal healers, divine healers, and priests), most of whom had residential areas for patients. The traditional healer, whom the Europeans called "witch doctor", was trusted for his healing powers. In fact, people believed greatly in magic and witchcraft and put their faith in amulets, omens and fetishes as means of protection. Ancestors were regarded as "the custodians of the law and customs" who punished offenders with sickness and misfortune. Ancestral worship was therefore regarded as a preventive health service to prevent the wrath of the ancestors. [12]

However, the arrival of the Europeans marked a significant turning point in the history of this age-long tradition and culture. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 80% of Africans relied on traditional medicine and indigenous knowledge to meet their health needs. This was due to the fact that traditional medicine was accessible, affordable, culturally and socially acceptable, and most people preferred it to the ‘exorbitantly priced’ conventional Western medicine. [13] In fact traditional medicine used to be the dominant medical system available to millions of people in Africa in both rural and urban communities. Traditional medicine had existed as long as man has lived on earth because man has always sought to preserve life by any means compatible with his civilization and culture. [14]

After all, traditional medicine in the Bamenda Grassfields is considered as a gift of land from God *nyuy mbom* and it was highly respected. Due to the importance of the traditional medicine, the healers were normally blessed by the Fons and Chiefs of the Bamenda Grassfields before they operated in the society. [15] This blessing had a psychological effect on the healers as it served as a source of inspiration and guide. The blessing also gave confidence and was considered by the public as a sign of approval of the healer by the Fon. [16]

According to the local population of the Bamenda Grassfields, disease is anything that causes death or mental, physical and spiritual illness, and is seen as both natural and unnatural. Natural illnesses were those that resulted from natural causes such as bad eating and sleeping habits, mental and physical overstrain and simple accidents. When the natural cause happens to take precedence, illnesses such as stomach ache, general body pains and wounds were often experienced. Unnatural causes of illnesses were those which were perceived to be the work (or result) of angry spirits and ancestors, witchcraft and outright wickedness (poisoning), or retribution for wrong doing and serious breaches of tradition and laws of the land. [17]

Natural illnesses were expected to respond to treatment within a very short period of time whereas unnatural illnesses were said to take much longer to treat because their causes first are divined and controlled before the actual treatment of the disease began. From the outset, illness was assumed to be natural until its resistance to treatment subsequently proved otherwise. When the patient did not respond to natural treatment, the illness was assumed to be unnatural and its causes were divined and controlled before treatment was continued. [18]

Despite this apparent dichotomy, the Bamenda Grassfields people still associated certain diseases with specific causes. Barrenness was associated to witchcraft, the work of creation, abominable flow of menses, menopause, anger of ancestors and unfulfilled obligations. Leprosy was said to be the work of witchcraft, sexual intercourse during menstruation and an affliction for an abominable offence against the earth, or against laws of the land. Insanity was variably associated with witchcraft, superfluous intelligence, brain damage and extreme anger and hatred. Epidemics such as small pox and influenza were also attributed to witchcraft. [19]

Illnesses that prevailed in the Bamenda Grassfields area included: stomach ache, scabies, dysentery, impotence, gastritis, epilepsy, madness, hiccup, fainting fits, small pox, leprosy, asthma, convulsion, waist pain, mumps, cardiac thrill, tooth ache, paralysis, and eye disease. [20] In order to find solutions to these illnesses and diseases, patients had to consult traditional medical practitioners for treatment. In carrying these services, three main aspects were involved; initiation processes of traditional healers, traditional methods diagnosis and traditional methods in treating diseases.

2.3 Initiation of traditional practitioners

The initiation of traditional medicine in the Bamenda Grassfields observably falls into three categories. According to Lantum, one dimension of assessing the contribution of traditional healers in the Bamenda Grassfields to health care was the estimation of the years of inputs into their professional practice. This category began training in their adulthood and usually treated a large number of diseases. There were also those who inherited their medical knowledge through training by their parents or their relatives. They began their training during childhood and specialized in the treatment of a few diseases. The third were those initiated without having any training. They claimed that their initial knowledge came as a “gift from God”. [21] Some of them were orientated and trained for short periods. It should be noted here that, while some traditional healing in this last category specialized in the treatment of only a few diseases, others treated a large variety of conditions of diseases.

In training process, the traditional healing made everything possible to guide the trainee on how medicines should be harvested and prepared. As a result, the trainee was always around to accompany the traditional healing to the bush where medicines were to be harvested. [22] The trainee learned by imitating what was observed from the traditional healing. For example, the measurements of medicine were carried out using the hand for powdered medicine as well as traditional cups made out of cow horn or calabash for liquid concoction. This was a guide against overdose for it was commonly believed that traditional practitioners either did not know the strength of their own medicines or did not bother to tailor doses to the size or body weight of the patients. [23] In fact, the above training served as a form of traditional medical education.

It should be noted that the initiation process of traditional healers in Nso’ was done by a traditional healer who was famous and advanced in age. One striking aspect of the initiation of these traditional medicines was that, parents initiated their children after training either with them or elsewhere. This suggests the trend of traditional medicine by which parents usually pass on knowledge and special powers and skills to their children or other kith or kin. [24] It was also strong evidence that knowledge and

secrets of traditional medicines were generally guarded within the family or lineage, passing the skills from one generation to the next succession. The traditional healing has as obligation to diagnose the nature of the disease, discover the causes of the sickness, and apply the right treatment, together with the means of preventing its re-occurrence. Here, both physical and spiritual methods were applied to assure the sufferer of good health.

2.4 Traditional Methods in Diagnosing Diseases

Healing to a Bamenda Grassfields man was always considered as the act of diagnosing the cause of any human disequilibrium, preventing and eliminating it, whether the individual was in the physical or spiritual, or moral sphere. Unlike a doctor trained in Western biomedicine, the healer looks for the causes of the patient's misfortune in the relationship between the patient and his social and spiritual environment. The diagnosis of disease by a traditional healer was based on the understanding of the concepts that, it was not limited to direct observation tests. Before beginning treatment, most traditional healers resorted to some kind of divination (incantations) which helped them to diagnose the problem as well as tell whether or not they can successfully treat the disease problem before them.

These healers used techniques or special instruments in carrying out their diagnosis. Traditional medical practice was characterized by the use of rudimentary equipment in diagnosing ailments. In Nso' for example some traditional healers used the antelope horn with contents *nlong ngay*, porcupine quill *ntum, fu*, prayer *kinka* (this helped the healer to communicate with the spirit world where resides the spirit knowledge), water in open calabash, cowries (the sets ranged from 5 to 12, the commonest being 7 cowries), elephant grass *vikaai*, iron bangle, eggs, dreams, juju bag. [25]

In some areas, healers were largely animists who used fowls precisely a cock, goats and even spider divination *ngam*. The spider acted by giving directives from the ancestors in the earth, who spoke for God. T. H. Mbuy describes how the consultation of the spider divination was done and how knowledge was gotten from it in the following words:

When a case is brought to him of a sick person, for example he goes to his area where scorpions are hibernating. He places his various sticks over the burrow and blows in hot air. This provokes the spider to come out and scatter the sticks. It may cover some with soil but it certainly displaces the sticks and places them in positions that may be symbolic to the *Ngambe* man. If the stick collected from a disaster area is covered with soil, the conclusion is that tragedy will befall the sick man and that he will die and be buried. And if it were just a client who wanted to find out about his future, he could be told to take care because a catastrophe looms in the background of him. [26]

Here, the spider divination was used both for diagnosis of diseases and for telling the future. Clay pots, wooden spoons, stone blades, skull of animals, and snail shells were also used. Others carried out their diagnosis and prognosis through the invocation of spirits of their fore fathers or some relied on dreams.

The use of kola nuts divination *njo'* was also very common amongst the Nso' traditional healers. This method of diagnosing and knowing its cause entailed the breaking of equal sized kola nuts peelings and casting it on the ground. After the casting, the traditional healer gave an interpretation according to the placement of the kola nut peeling on the ground. The kola nut peeling used ranged from five to seven pieces depending on the healer. In the absence of the kola nuts peelings, the traditional healer used a variable number of cowries.

The commonest oracle used by the Bamenda Grassfields traditional healers were cowries and the *fu* instrument. There was quite a wide variety of the *fu* instrument in use. One type consists of 9 tops dressed with feathers. When in use, they were placed lying down and covered with a basket; the patient is then asked to lift up the basket. The number of tops found standing on their broad base suggests the prognosis for the case. Another *fu* consisted of a folded mat. When held in certain position, the two leaves of the mat moves freely and the principal one eventually fixes in a certain direction to identify the object or person or phenomenon wanted. An artificial bird was also used as part of the *fu* instrument. When asked to tell the diagnosis, it dances round prospecting and eventually fixes itself facing a certain direction. It was there that the object in question was to be found. [27]

Commonly, a diviner casted on many occasions for the same person or situation and multiple diviners could be engaged on behalf of a person or situation. The patient was present; he/she touched the objects prior to casting. In a case where the patient was absent, a piece of cloth from the patient, or an object with the patient's spittle was brought and occasionally, only the patient's name needed to be called. [28]

It should be noted that, in pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields society, diagnosing was not done by diviners only. Non-practitioners and healers had different ways of diagnosing illnesses. This could be done through physical examination by smelling, listening, feeling, and looking or questioning the patient. The healers who had studied well the manifestation of diseases or their symptoms were able to question patients and to identify the real disease. For example, if the patient came complaining of stomach ache, the healer questioned the rumbling of the stomach, the nature of stool, urine and other related signs. After successful diagnosing the disease, the next step was treatment.

2.5 Traditional Method in Treating Diseases

Traditional medicine in Africa typically views sickness as the failure of complex social and spiritual relationships, and begins diagnosis with an examination of both human and supernatural interactions. Unlike conventional doctors, who are expected to restore their patient's physical health only, traditional practitioners are also responsible for re-establishing social and emotional equilibrium based on traditional community rules and relationships.

Some traditional healers in the Bamenda Grassfields knew how to treat only one or two diseases. It was possible that they could learn how to treat many more subsequently. Usually, whenever the healer stated that they could treat a given number of diseases, it meant they were specialized in the management of those specific problems, and were prepared to receive cases referred to them. When people fell sick, they mostly went to the traditional healers whom they trusted or believed was a specialist. These included diseases like epilepsy, gonorrhea, stomach complications, madness, measles, scabies, and pile. The medicine administered depended on the type of illness, age and state of the patient.

The mode of administering medication included oral ingestion, steaming, sniffing of substances, cuts or body piercing, which consisted of concoctions of different herbs *kikwiyy*, roots, seeds, backs of tress, and other substances. A majority of traditional healers in the Bamenda Grassfields had herbal gardens with a variety of medicinal plants. The *kikiyy* to the Nso people was considered to be the most important elements in the treatment of diseases. That is why it was believed that, "God has provided a remedy for every disease that might afflict man. Every part of the world has its herbs which are peculiar to that particular area to be used with wisdom in treating diseases". [29]

Herbs used for treatment were prepared using different methods depending on the kind of illness that afflicted the patient. The commonly used methods were boiling, drying, frying, and squeezing of herbs. The choice and method of preparation depended much on the type of disease that afflicted the patient. Through boiling, the healer carefully arranged the harvested leaves, seeds, roots, tree barks in a clay pot *-lang* and boiled them with water or with sweet palm wine until it produces the desired colour. The boiled medicine was used to treat diseases such as filarial, stomach problems, headache, and infertility. As earlier mentioned, traditional medicine was administered depending on the type of illness. It could be drunk or used to bathe a patient suffering from filarial or rashes.

Dried herbs were also used by the traditional healers. This type was produced using a combination of traditional medical substances which were chopped into pieces and dried on the ground. Ground medications were carefully sifted to give fine powder and mixed with palm or kernel oil. These were used for cuts, wit-low, boils, massaging fractures or camps. This method also applied with medicines that were fried or burnt. It should be noted that, a healer's power was not determine by the number of medicinal plants he knew but the ability to apply an understanding of the intricate relationship between the patient and the world around him.

Another method used by the Bamenda Grassfields traditional healers was rituals. The treatment of incautiousness regarded as an abomination disease, required rituals, sacrifice and the taking of an oath. It should be noted here that not all rituals carried out in the Bamenda Grassfields acted as a method of healing. Those that acted as a method of healing included; the ritual of erasing incense referred to as *ntseela* and rituals of cleansing also referred to as *kiman*. Both the ritual of erasing incense and the ritual of cleansing were performed at the road junction. The choice of the road junction was to let the disease or misfortune that accompanied such an act to be thrown out of the compound. In some cases, the ritual of cleansing could be carried out in areas where black ants could be found spotted as places where they lived. The traditional healers were "general practitioners" in their job, for one healer could claim to be able to cure a whole range of diseases like stomach problems, fever, cough, pile, general body pains, and rheumatism. [30] At the moment, traditional healers still play a major role as modern medicine cannot cure some of the diseases.

The reward or consultation and payment of these healers after treating a patient varied, some received only material things like salt, a calabash of palm wine, palm oil, and fowl for a complete treatment of a simple illness. In the case of more complex illness, these items may be doubled but were hardly ever tripled. However, in severe cases such as fainting, epilepsy and insanity, a goat or two may be added to the list. Sometimes a native knife, spear, basket, salt, cam wood, castor oil, palm and kernel oils and firewood singly or in combination, formed part of payment. According to Hillenbrand, an authentic traditional practitioner was obliged to treat a sick person whether or not he/she can pay and the patient reciprocates by giving whatever thing through which he can show his gratitude. Many of the traditional healers who obtained their knowledge through training have gone commercial in urban areas and are exacting high payment in cash. On the other hand, those who received their medical knowledge as "a gift from God", happily receive free gifts in appreciation for the treatment. Some after consultations demanded certain items to prepare for treatment. They considered themselves mainly as instruments which God used to guide men, to alleviate man's suffering and to prevent death. [31]

The Bamenda Grassfields indigenes also trusted on amulets, omens fetishes and talisman as means of preventing diseases. Amulets and talisman were believed to be the protection against evil spirits. These evil spirits were believed to move in the night in search of preys. Apart from the healing aspects of traditional medicine, some people use it for sorcery, witchcraft, inherited woes, curses and effects of ordeals. These skills were awaited during the initiation process. Other occult practices

included sending thunder, stopping rain, detecting thieves, exorcisms, calming storms, and protection against snake bites. This was evident as the traditional medicine covered quite a vast dimension of the human individual and the corporate personality of the Nso' people. From the above aspects of traditional medicine, the traditional health system can be divided into two components, Diviners and Herbalists shown in figure 1.

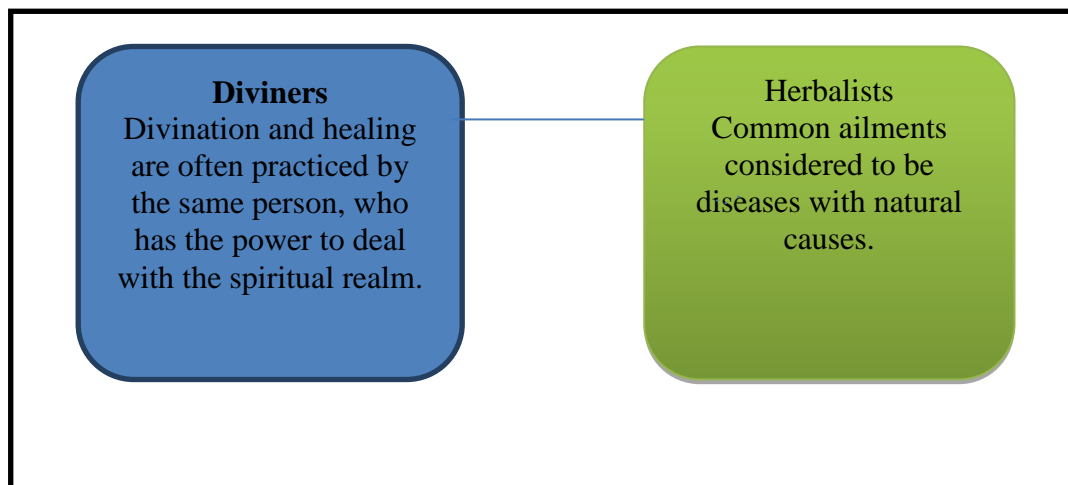


Figure 1: Traditional Health system in Nso'

Source: N. V. Emmanuel, "Health Services in the Nso' Fondom", pp. 30-38

Even though majority of them are herbalists, Dr. Peter Krafczyk in an evaluation of traditional medicine in Cameroon using a therapeutic approach holds that:

It is true that in Cameroon, all traditional healers are herbalist, that is, for every disease they administer among other medicaments, herbs and tree barks which they prepare in different ways. According to the traditional healers themselves, the plants do not act through the specific substances found within them, but through the power which are conferred by God of the spirits. The conservation of the curative power of plants is linked to the regular sacrifices and for, most of the time also, on the observance of special individual standing laws. [32]

Traditional medicine in the Bamenda Grassfields during the pre-colonial period enjoyed the monopoly of healthcare because the indigenes depended solely on traditional healing for their health and survival. However, this monopoly was interrupted during the colonial period following the introduction of Hausa/Fulani traditional medicine by the Mallams and Conventional Western Medicine by the missionaries in the Bamenda Grassfields. This former played a very important role in treating and eradicating several diseases in the area so much so that most of the Bamenda Grassfields indigenes develop much liking for the Hausa/Fulani Traditional method of treating patients.

2.6 The Coming of the Hausa-Fulani into the Bamenda Grassfields and their Impact on the Indigenous Traditional Healing Methods.

The arrival and settlement of the Hausa-Fulani into the Bamenda Grassfields in the early 20th century greatly influence the indigenous healing method. As a matter of fact the impact of the Hausa-Fulani in the health domain can therefore be clearly justified by the new methods of diagnosing and treatment of diseases which they brought to the area.

When the Hausa-Fulani arrived the Bamenda Grassfields there were no modern hospitals or health centers. But the contingent of the new comers had among them some traditional healers. These traditional healers commonly referred to as Mallams or *Marabout* came to the division with the aim of selling their herbs to the local population. Those herbs were made out of leaves and roots of trees. Others used some Quranic verses which they wrote on a board and wash for the patient to drink. Most often when somebody was ill in the Bamenda Grassfields, he consulted a Hausa-Fulani traditional herbalist who gave him some herbs and he got well. Even non grassfielders bought herbs from these healers which they used when ever they were sick. Some of these Hausa-Fulani healers also played the role of fortune tellers. The Hausa-Fulani also knew some concoctions which they had to prepare and even help to increase delivery and cattle fertility. [33]

The Hausa-Fulani introduced new methods of treating diseases in the Bamenda Grassfields. Their healers were of two types or categories. The Mallams, who used only the Holy Quran to heal patients and the *Boka* herbalists who used herbs and material instruments in diagnosing and treatment of patients. The Mallams do not consult oracles as the grassfielders used to

do in the treatment of patients. They simply read verses in the Quran and pray for the healing powers to come from God (Allah). A patient can be healed instantly or later after prayer. Others wrote verses of the Quran and gave patients to drink and bathe with. There were also some categories of Mallams who cut bark and leaves of trees, grind and dried and after doing some mixture or concoction gave to their patients. [34]

They were many mallams in the different villages of the Bamenda Grassfields who healed using only the Holy Quran. Prominent ones included: Mallam Umaru, Mallam Iliasu, Mallam Isiyaku and Mallam Kakah. They were specialized in a branch of healing referred to in Arabic as *Rukiya* (Demonic or Spiritual attacks). With the use of the Quran, these mallams could treat diseases caused by evil coming after the collapsed, paralyses or depression of a person, illnesses and diseases caused by bad spirit as well as diseases caused by external agents. They also treated madness.

On the other hand, the Hausa-Fulani traditional practitioners (*Boka*) used medical elements such as plants, animals, material and organic elements. These healers were very unstable as they keep moving from town to town and from village to village in order to cure illnesses and equally sell their medicines. They sometimes made appointments with patients. They sell medicines for the treatment of cough, stomach ache, gastritis, malaria and fever, epilepsy, pneumonia, tooth ache, paralysis, chest pain, convulsion, goiter and so on. There were however few who were stable and they confine themselves and wait for patients to come for consultation. Prominent ones were: Mallam Umaru, Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Ali. [35]

Mallam Umaru received at least ten to twenty patients each day. Some Hausa-Fulani healers used cowry shells to find out the cause/causes of an illness, a disease or any problem presented to them by patients. Some Hausa-Fulani healers used only their hands to locate or diagnose the trouble part or organ in the body of a patient. For example, eye, ear, stomach or brain problems were detected only with the use of the hand. In this light, the healer places his palm on the forehead of the patient. While with his hand on the forehead, the trouble zone was quickly detected spiritually. This was confirmed by opening the mouth of the patient and looking inside. The inflamed part was then removed with the aid of an instrument.

Much indigenous population of the Bamenda Grassfields relied so much on those Mallams and herbalists for healing. Also appendicitis which was found difficult to be treated by many indigenous healers was treated easily by the Hausa-Fulani. It is also detected with hands as earlier described. The patient suffering from this illness was made to lie flat on a specially made mat. A hot iron from fire is brought closer to the affected zone of the stomach and three straight lines were marked on the spot. With this activity, the disease was believed to have been burnt, the patient was then given some concoction to drink morning and evening for three days. The patient was expected to have running stomach on the third day of his treatment. The running stomach was an indication that the disease was being release.

The Hausa-Fulani also protected people from evil spirits, aggression and ill fate. They prepare amulets which were held in secret by those who went for them. These amulets were generally known as *Lahya*. Many grassfielders went behind the Hausa-Fulani for these amulets particularly the one warned on children's necks. Some received those amulets for business (quick sell), protection from all dangers and enemies and others for charms mostly demanded by young men. These amulets were warned in secret. Men fasten theirs inside their trousers around their waists or put them in jacket pockets. Women equally hide theirs inside their breast wears, wrappers or inside their hand bags. [36]

Although some health centers were established in the Bamenda Grassfields during the British Colonial period, very few Hausa-Fulani attended such health centers. Many prefer their traditional herbs. So too were the indigenous population who so much trust the Hausa-Fulani way or method of treatment. They preferred to go to the Hausa-Fulani healers for treatment than to go to the newly founded British and missionaries' health centers. This was probably because of the effectiveness of the Hausa-Fulani medicine. And most especially because they were some illnesses which were hardly well treated in the hospital, but which the Hausa-Fulani herbalists treated with ease. Here we are referring to illnesses such as epilepsy, asthma, madness, pile and even convulsion. Most of the indigenous people of the grassfields adopted the Hausa-Fulani method of treatment. Some even went on apprenticeship with the Hausa-Fulani Mallams. Most often when a sick person went to the hospital and was not well treated he was immediately taken to the Hausa-Fulani herbalists or tradi-practitioners. As a matter of fact majority of the grassfielders were amaze and delighted to see most of their illnesses well taken care of by the Hausa-Fulani healers. The presence of the Hausa-Fulani herbalists and Mallams in the Bamenda Grassfields went a long way to eradicate so many diseases in the area. As a result, it helps in the development of the area.

There was also a popular Hausa-Fulani traditional healer, Mallam Ahmad Umar in the Hausa quarters in Bamenda who treated different types of diseases including malaria, yellow fever, typhoid, menstrual pains, abdominal pains and bareness. Consultation at Mallam Umar's clinic was daily from Monday to Saturday. [37] What is remarkable about Mallam Umar's clinic was that all the patients were usually out-patients. After consultation, the patient bought his/her medicine and only come back on rendez-vous for medical check-up. [38]

3. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the above analysis that the Hausa-Fulani herbalists and Mallams left a lot of impact on the health situation in the Bamenda Grassfields. They played a very important role in the treatment and eradication of so many diseases in the area. As a matter of fact the impact of the Hausa-Fulani traditional healing in the Bamenda Grassfields cannot be

over emphasized. The indigenous people of the grassfields were introduced to new ways and method of treatment different from what they use to practice. Due to the fact that those new method of treatment were effective, the grassfielders adopted and greatly adhere to it. As such, it will not be an over statement to say that the presence of the Hausa-Fulani herbalists in the Bamenda Grassfields greatly improved the health situation of the area and in turn contributed enormously in the development of the region.

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