

# Archaeology and Anthropology

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF IRON WORKING IN YANKARI GAME RESERVE, BAUCHI TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA

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The paper examines the contributions of iron working in Yankari Game Reserve to the socio-economic life of the people of northeastern Nigeria. The study was conducted when the park was under the Federal Government, as a National Park, but it is now under the control of Bauchi State Government and, it had reversed to a Game Reserve. The methods of our study include ethnographic and reconnaissance survey, key informant interview, excavations and literature review. The significant role that iron working played within the life of the people of northeastern Nigeria is discussed in the text. In this part of northern Nigeria lies one of the world's most extensive concentrations of very early iron smelting sites. Intriguingly, the area lies at one end of an ancient trans-Saharan trade route which might account for a major marketing center located at Dukkey well where one hundred and thirty wells were discovered within the Game Reserve. Fuel and ore were the major locating factors for these sites. Interviews with the last generation of people with some good memories of iron smelting revealed a much wider range of smelting techniques comparable

to those observable in other accounts of iron working in other archaeological record in Nigeria. The text highlights the group of people who might have carried out iron working in this area. The smelting sites in the game reserve include Ampara, Delemiri, Shau Shau and Panguru. More than one hundred standing and based furnaces were discovered in the game reserve. The text illustrates some of the shaft furnaces still existing on the sites. The report of a written record gave an account of another eleven iron smelting sites in Bauchi, which had not been studied before. In the Yankari Game reserve are numerous iron-smelting sites, indicative of a large scale iron smelting industry during the early iron age. The text considers some contributions of iron working in Yankari to the socio-economic life of the people of northeast Nigeria. The conservation of this area in a game reserve for ecotourism, where a lot of wildlife and other natural resources are located, has prevented human destruction of the archaeological sites in the reserve .

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