

A Socio-Historical Survey of The Practice of Islam Among the Muslim Minorities In Ekitiland, Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper discusses the practice of Islam among the people of Ekiti State to show their faith in Allah and their way of worship. The discussion will be done in the following three stages: the period before 1940, the period between 1940 to 1996 and the period after 1996 until the present. For the purpose of this study, an oral source approach, written sources in the form of books from public and private libraries as well as materials from archives, museums and artifacts were used. The paper reveals that, in the period before 1940, the Muslims in Ekiti had to combine some non-Islamic beliefs with their faith for various reasons. Also, during the period between 1940 to 1996, the Muslims in Ekiti were heavily persecuted. The persecution of and challenges to Islam by the non-Muslims helped Muslims become steadfast and consolidate themselves in unison against their persecutors. The period after 1996 until the present is the stage when Ekiti State was created. In this period, the zeal for the spread of Islam as found in the two earlier stages began to dwindle. The paper recommends that the Muslims in Ekiti State should intensify their efforts to establish more schools. This would assist in accommodating the increasing population of the Muslim children of school age and would open up more opportunities for Muslim children to receive Islam-oriented Western education from childhood.

Introduction

As far as Islam is concerned, faith is a principle for action. It forms the foundation of Islamic tenets and practice. Its guiding light is *'Ibādah* (worship). Every act of Islamic worship mirrors a Muslim's life in all aspects of his life. Sincerity of faith and worship will enable the believer to achieve his goals in this world and in the hereafter. It makes him acceptable to Allāh and his fellow creatures. Faith is expressed in worship either in the devotional acts or in interaction with others. Therefore, this paper discusses the practice of Islam among the people of Ekiti State in order to show their faith in Allah and their way of worship.

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1 The First Stage

The period before 1940 was the time when Islam was only known or recognized in Ekiti by the efforts of the early Muslims in the area who, as foreigners or natives who, though they were devout, possessed little knowledge of Islām. Despite this, they were very pious and highly committed to the faith and its course. They laid the foundation of Islām in Ekiti. The Muslims practised Islam according to the level of their knowledge and faith as would be briefly explained below.

(i) Faith

The Muslims in Ekiti State believed in all the articles of faith but had to combine some non-Islamic beliefs with their own faith. For instance, in order to defend themselves and their religion from the attacks by non-Muslims, they had to involve themselves in acts of fetishism. For instance, Alfa Popoola Anowofegbe of Erinmope-Ekiti had a herbal pot which was believed to be able to ward off the power of thunder and other dangerous arts of the thunder worshippers who persecuted him whenever they came to the compound, whether or not he was present.¹ In Ado-Ekiti, Bello Egunjobi had to put on the masquerade regalia in order to drive away the masquerade worshippers and traditional police from their mosque so they could perform their daily prayers.² And at Efon-Alaaye, according to Agbetola, the people of Efon purchased amulets from Ilorin Muslim traders who dealt in amulets, which they used against the Ido-Irapa people. It was believed that the amulets made them victorious over their aggressors, as a result of which the traditional ruler, King Adeyelu Arusuboja and some of his chiefs became Muslims.³ At Otun-Ekiti, one of the Muslim non-indigenous people, Mallam Jimba, a seller of amulets, had to follow the instruction of the oracle diviner, Adifagbade, to sacrifice his clothes and a goat to propitiate the gods so that he might become famous in the future – which he did.⁴

The examples above demonstrate the early Ekiti Muslims' level of understanding of Islam with particular reference to the extent to which they allowed their faith to influence them. Despite that, they were able to sow the seed of the new religion, which later germinated and flourished to develop into what it is at present.

The essentials of devotion (prayer and other religious practices) in Islam are expressed in form of *ṣalāt* (prayer), *zakāt* (charity), *ṣawm* (fasting) and *ḥajj* (pilgrimage).

¹ A.R.I. Doi *Shari'ah: The Islāmic Law* (London, Ta Ha Publishers, 1984) p.468.

² Ibid.

³ M.H. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad* (Lagos, Islāmic Publications Bureau and North American Trust Publications, 1982), p. 264.

⁴ M.M. Khan, *The Translation ...*, p. 88; Ḥadīth 137.

(ii) Ṣalāt

Ṣalāt is the daily prayer of the Muslim, guiding him to Allah and to righteousness (Qur'ān 29:45).

The practice of ṣalāt among the people of Ekiti in the early stage was done with high commitment despite their very limited knowledge. Some early imams could not recite *Sūratul-fātiḥah* correctly while some did not know more than *Lā ilāha illa Allāhu Muhammadu Rasūlu-l-lāhi* ("There is no god but , and Muhammad is His messenger." And this is what they used in prayers (Ṣalāt) but they maintained the correct gene flexion in Ṣalāt .

The first imam of Ogotun-Ekiti was uneducated and did not know more than *Kalimatus-Shahādah*. ("There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger".¹ Again, at Igbara-Odo Ekiti, the first imam could not read the *Sūrat al-fātiḥah* correctly. He sought for the assistance of a certain Alfa from Ilorin, who lived in Ilawe-Ekiti, to assist him, especially in performing the *Jumu'at* services until his death, after which Alfa Tijani Omoologbonole became the imam. Baba Gidando from Ḍḷorin also assisted him and later Alfa Audu Bakī, also from Ilorin. Later, Alfa Aliyu Arogundade who had gone to study at the Qur'ānic school at Ḍḷorin, became the second indigenous imam of the town.²

At Ipao-Ekiti, despite the efforts of Alfa Tanimowò from Nupe land, the knowledge of early Muslims there about Islam was limited to the *Basmallāh*.

In many towns and villages, foreigners were either hired or accommodated to lead them in prayers. In Otun, for instance, the first imam to be formally appointed was a non-native. He was probably from Ilorin or from Hausa land. However, the second imam, was a native who was converted in Ilorin and was able to lead the congregation in prayers. At Ido-Ekiti, when Sadiku was appointed imam, he did not lead the Muslims in prayer at any time because he was not knowledgeable enough to do so. Rather, Adegbite who was considered to be more knowledgeable in the Qur'ān led them.³ In Ikoro- Ekiti, Alfa Bello, a native of Ibadan, led the Muslims in prayers first in an open-air mosque in front of Lawani's house of until his death.⁴

At that time, many Muslims could not call the *adhan* correctly and therefore resulted in the use of the local trumpet,⁵ as in the case of Ido-Ekiti. At Erinjiyan-Ekiti the only words known of the ṣalāt was *Looiloololo*.

During the 'Īdul-Aḏḥa, 'Īdul-ḥiṭri, and *Jumu'at* prayers, the *Khutbah* were always

¹ M.M. Khan, *The Translation ...*, pp. 77-78; Ḥadīth 121.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ F. Karim, *Al-Hadis: Book IV...*, p.244.

⁵ M.O.A. Abdul, *The Selected Traditions ...*, pp.39-40.

delivered in Arabic without any translation or explanation at this stage. This is common in all the towns and villages where they were delivered.

The “*Īdul-Fiṭri* and *Īdul-Aḍḥa* were celebrated with pomp and pageantry. After each of the ‘*Id* prayers, the Muslim community would leave the praying ground to pay homage to the traditional ruler who usually presented gifts to them. On the occasion of *Īdul-Aḍḥa*, it was the king who usually provided the ram to be slaughtered at the praying ground.¹ This might have been because the people regarded the king as belonging to all religions in his domain or an appreciation of the Muslims’ contributions to the peaceful co-existence in the towns or villages.

The celebration of *Īdul-Aḍḥa* in some towns took up to between seven days and three months. For example, in Erinmope-Ekiti, it used to take up to three months, during which Muslims used to rotate the *Īdul-Aḍḥa*, the annual supplicatory prayer, among them.²

At Ogotun-Ekiti the dancing tray was held for a period of seven days when food and drinks were given to friends, both Muslims and non-Muslims. In some towns, both Muslims and non-Muslims partook in the celebrations.³

Generally, the *Īdul-Aḍḥa* ram was always killed on the ‘*Id* day, but it would be tied or hung till the following day or two days before the flesh was cut into pieces and served to neighbours and well-wishers. In dividing the meat, the neck belonged to the slaughterer, the thighs to their in-laws, and the remaining part distributed as desired. This differs from the Islamic prescription that the meat should be divided into three, one part for the family of the celebrant, another part for the neighbours, and the remaining part for the poor and those who ask for it.

In relation to prayer, the paragraphs above give a distinctive feature of the Ekiti Muslim practices. The other point to note is the participation of women in the prayer. The wives of the Muslims at that period were Muslims because of their husbands. They followed their husbands to the mosque to pray, although, when the *Zumuratu-l-Mu’min* came in the middle of 1960s, the women were not allowed to participate in the congregational prayers.⁴ They initially excluded their women from the congregational prayers using some *Ḥadīth* such as the ones related by Ahmad and *Ṭabarani* from

¹ K.O Sulaiman, “A Critical Assessment of *Da’wah* Activities of Shaykh Jamiu Larubawa Dandawi,” in *Fountain Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 2007, pp. 44-48.

² Ajibade Bakare, “The Advent and impact of Islam in Ado- Ekiti,” *Long Essay*, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, 1979, pp 1 – 2.

³ K.O. Sulaiman, “The Roles of Muslim Organizations to the Spread and Propagation of Islam in Ekiti State of Nigeria: An Historical Perspectives,” *African Journal of Local Societies Initiative (LOSI)*, Benue-State University, Makurdi, Nigeria, 2015, Volume 4, 138-147.

⁴ B.A Ajibade, “The Role and Contribution of Islamic Organization to the Development of Education in Ado-Ekiti,” B.A project, Department of History, Ondo-State, University, Ado-Ekiti, 1988, pp 22 – 26.

Ummu Salamah from the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) that:

The best of all mosques for women is inside their homes. Ahmad related this. The *ṣalāt* of a woman in her inner apartment is better than her *ṣalāt* in the sitting room; her *ṣalāt* in her sitting room is better than her *ṣalāt* in her compound and her *ṣalāt* in her compound is better than her *ṣalāt* in the *rātibi* (local) mosque. Related by Tabarani.¹

A study of the above *Ahadīth* shows that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has not forbidden women from congregational prayers or from attending the mosques. He was only showing that it is preferable for women to remain modest. In fact, the Holy Qur'ān forbids anybody from preventing anyone from participating in congregational prayers when it says:

Have you seen him who prevents a slave when he prays?

Many traditions afford overwhelming evidence of the fact that women, in precisely the same way as men, used to go to mosque for congregational prayers during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). One such tradition in the chapter "Women Going to the Mosque at Night and in Darkness" says:

Women who had children to nurse would come to the mosque and when the Prophet heard a baby crying, he would shorten his prayer lest the mother should feel inconvenienced.²

The realization of this Islamic injunction has now made the *Zumurat-ul-Mu'min* allow their women to participate in congregational prayers in Ekitiland.

(iii) *Zakāt*

Zakāt is the practice of taking a certain percentage of on possessions on an annual basis, except on certain materials, and giving it to the less privileged members of the society as an obligatory act for the well-being of society (Qur'ān 9:60). This is payable when the wealth reaches a certain minimum level, *Niṣāb*, and the rate is one fortieth ($1/40$) or two and half percent (2.5 %) of the wealth calculated over a year.³ It is organized by the *Ummah* and paid out of one's wealth, such as money, precious materials, like gold, silver, diamond, animals, farm products, and articles of trade. The *Niṣāb* varies according to the nature of the material wealth. *Zakāt* is slightly different from *ṣadaqah* (charity) which is a voluntary act in which the giver determines what, how, and when to give it. What is to be given must be good, useful, and lawful because

¹ M. D. Khamees, *Fiqun-Nisa'fil 'Ibadat*, Vol. 2, Muslim Women and *Ṣalāt* (Egypt, Darul-Ansar, 1978), p. 111.

² M. M. Khan, *The Translation of the Meaning of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English Vol. VIII* (Al-Medina Al-Munawwara, Islāmic University, n.d.) Vol. I, Chapter 80, Ḥadīth 823 – 828, pp. 546 – 548.

³ As-Sayyid Sabiq, *An English Translation of Faqh-Us-Sunnah*, Vol. V (New York, American Trust Publications, n.d.), p. 3.

the Holy Prophet has said that: "Verily God, may He be exalted, is good. He will not accept anything save what is good."¹ The payment of *zakāt* was not done properly among the Muslims in Ekiti. As the *Niṣāb*, that is the minimum amount of the property should reach before the *Zakāt* could be deducted was not adhered to. Instead, the *Zakātul-Fitri* was paid in place of the *Zakāt*. Some Muslims in doing this will measure some grains and throw them around the streets for birds and cattle to devour.

(iv) *Ṣawm*

Another aspect of the practice of Islam is the observance of *Ṣawm*, fasting. The Muslims abstain from food, drinks and sexual enjoyment from dawn to sunset for the purpose of worshipping Allah. The obligatory fasting is for 29 or 30 days in the month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. This is mandatory except for those with valid excuses such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, those on journeys, the aged etc. Muslims are encouraged to observe voluntary fasts on Mondays, Thursdays, and at least three days in every month Muslims also fast on the day of 'Arafāt and so on. Individual Muslims choose when or which of the voluntary *ṣiyām* (fasts) to observe *ṣawm* (fasting) could, also, be *takfīr* (expiation), that is, to make up for certain deficiencies. They fast in order to imbibe the spirit of the consciousness of Allah, for self-discipline, forbearance and for rewards due to anyone who fasts (*sāim*). The greatest of the reward is *Al-Jannat* (paradise). It also promotes love, justice, equity, and promotes the spirit of brotherhood among Muslims. It promotes charity, kindness, and sympathy for the less privileged members of society.²

Fasting in the month of Ramadan was celebrative. Starting from the *Āsāmu* (*Tarāwih*) prayers of the first night of Ramadan, Muslims attend the mosque en masse in this period. However, many people did withdraw after the first three days and waited till the middle or end of the month before they resumed coming to the mosque for prayers. The voluntary break by observers was apparently the result of feeling tired after fasting during the day for the whole month. Hence, the saying: worrisome is the fasting for thirty days. Some Muslims who were not sincere observe the fasts contrary to injunctions. They ate and drank secretly to quench their hunger and thirst, believing only fools would subject themselves to the pangs of hunger and thirst during the fast. This is corroborated by their saying "Ẹni tí kò gbón làwè n gbò".

It is the fool who the fast makes uncomfortable. Another peculiar practice of Islam in Ekiti was the announcement of the sighting of the crescent moon of Ramadan with gunshots as done in Awo-Ekiti in 1870.³ This was an adoption of the traditional method

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Zumuratul Hujjaj, *Ondo State, A Short Outline of Introduction of Islam in Ondo State Nigeria*, Part I (1988), p. 14.

of announcement of important events in the community. It was done to usher in this important event at the initial stage of Islam. This practice was repeated in some of the towns, but was later replaced by the *'adhān* (call to prayer).

(v) *Ḥajj*

Ḥajj, which means paying a visit to the Ka'bah, the Sacred House in Mecca and observing other pilgrimage rites, such as *Ṭawaf*, *Sa'y*, *Wuqūf bil 'Arafāt*, *Ramy* and wearing *Iḥrām*, to mention a few. A Muslim performs the *Ḥajj* in obedience to Allah apart from the rigour and huge expenses it involves. It is to be performed only by those who can afford it without causing any unnecessary hardship to other members of his family or his dependents. Its major rites are performed during the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, *Dhul-Ḥijjah*. It is mandatory for every Muslim who is financially and physically fit to perform it at least once in his lifetime. The reward for him whose *ḥajj* is accepted by Allah, *Al-Ḥajj al-Mabrūr*, is that his past sins will be forgiven and its greatest reward is paradise.¹

But *ḥajj*, that is, pilgrimage to Mecca, was regarded as a risky journey. Therefore, the preparation for the journey has always been accompanied by prayer and weeping at departure. On return, the pilgrims were given a heroic welcome with drumming, singing, and the shooting of guns. The entire community, including Muslims and non-Muslims shared in the joy.²

At that time, it was rare to find people going to Mecca because of the difficulties involved. As of today, people perform the *ḥajj* to Mecca from Ekiti in hundreds because of the improved system introduced by governments and their commitment to the injunctions of Islam.

2 The Second Stage

Between 1940 and 1996 the zeal to spread Islam and consolidate it in the land continued. This period witnessed the emergence of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, the Nawair-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, the *Zumuratu-l-Mu'minin*, the Surajudeen Society, and others. At this stage, Muslims in Ekiti were persecuted heavily. For instance, at Ijero-Ekiti, the traditionalists regarded the *'adhān* as an invocation of the spirit of thunder and considered it disturbing to their native gods. Consequently, them *Muadhhdhin*, was stoned and attacked many times and was forced to abandoned

¹ Ayoub, op. cit., p. 113.

² K. O. Sulaiman. 2011. "A Study of *Da'wah* Activities of Selected Islamic Clerics and their Contributions to the Development of Islam in Ekitiland, 1947-2000 C.E." PhD Thesis, Department of Religions, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, p. 57.

the '*adhān*.'¹

Furthermore, the coming of Christianity with Western/formal education and conversion to Christianity, threatened the existence of Islam since many Muslim children were converted in schools to Christianity. The persecution and challenges against Islam and Muslims by the non-Muslims notwithstanding helped the few devoted Muslims to consolidate themselves and their faith. Over the course of time, Muslims came together to form minor groups, though they still were a formidable force and were subjected to certain exclusions, discrimination, and other discriminatory treatments by non-Muslims. Thus, as of 1920, in various localities, Muslims formed associations with the common purpose of consolidating and promoting Islam and encouraging cooperation among them as a means to sustain their faith in the hostile environment. Such associations were formed in Ibadan land of Oyo State in the 18th century.² For instance, the Muslims association at Erinmope-Ekiti was formed to fight the thunder worshippers in the town, who were a threat to Muslims and their new faith. One's friends colleagues and associates were encouraged to join the group. They prayed for one other in rotation in their homes, especially, after the '*Id al-Adha*', which usually lasted for about three months.

At Emure-Ekiti the first group of Muslims grouped themselves into an association of Muslim ex-slaves from Oyo-speaking areas. They formed the association in order to be able to get a plot of land from the then *elemure* to build their mosque. He gave them a plot of land in Oke-Emure for the purpose.³

The association of *Iyaniwura*, Ido-Ekiti, was formed to maintain social interactions and for cultural identities among the Oyo immigrants in the town and to attract non-Muslims to Islam. At Omuo-Oke, Shitu Ajongbolo formed a musical association (musical band) with some early Muslims. They did this to entice non-Muslims during the '*Ids*' period.⁴

The association of *Arikewuyo* in Otun-Ekiti made Islam attractive and popular by the remarkable display of association uniforms during '*Ids*' prayers and such

¹ K.O Sulaiman, "A Study of *Da'wah* Activities of Late Shaykh Musa Ibrahim Ajagbemokeferi in Ekitiland of South Western Nigeria," *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization*, IDOSI Publications L.L.C, Deira, Dubai, UAE, 2014, Volume 4, No.1, 10-19.

² T.B. Yusuf, "The Impact of Muslim Organisations on the People of Ibarapaland," B.A. Project, University of Ḍbādān, 1991.

³ K.O. Sulaiman, "The Educational Achievements of Shaykh Yusuf Akorede in Ekitiland, Nigeria," *Journal of Muslim Education Quarterly (MEQ)*, The Islamic Academy, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2012, Volume 25, Number 3 & 4, 65-82.

⁴ K.O. Sulaiman, "A History of Islam and the Emergence of A Muslim Minority in Ado-Ekiti Kingdom, Southwestern Nigeria," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS)*, Association of Muslim Social Scientists of North America (AMSS) and International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), USA, 2013, Volume 30, Number 2, 132-147.

ceremonies, usually accompanied by drumming and dancing. *Mallams* utilized the occasions to preach Islam to non-Muslims and the members of the associations of the need to be Muslims.¹ Later, in many parts of Ekiti, there were various *Idunu Anobi* associations at Ipoti,² *Anobi lonigba* and *Esinlola Anobi* at Iworoko,³ *Alasalatu* associations in various mosques, an *Isoji Anobi* association at Ikere⁴ and the association of *Ihinrere Anobi* at Ikole,⁵ to mention a few of such associations.

These associations prepared the foundation for other, more important societies that came into being in 1940s, such as those mentioned earlier, that is, the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria (A.U.D) and others. The associations did not remove their precursors but took advantage of the foundation already laid to emerge and stabilize.

3 The Third Stage

This stage is the period after 1996 when Ekiti State was created. During this period, the zeal for the spread of Islam present in the two earlier stages began to dwindle with the creation of Ekiti State in 1996 because of the desire for personal gain and egoism. To resolve the problems, some Muslim elites in the state formed the Ekiti Muslim Forum. Despite this arrangement, individual interests have jeopardized the desired unity and progress within the *Ummah* in Ekiti. The leader of the Muslims, however, lacked the appropriate educational background to pursue the cause of Islam at the high administrative level of the state. Hence, Muslims were deprived of many opportunities at the government levels in Ekiti State. Eventually, the forum was changed to the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs to serve as the mouthpiece for all Muslims in the state.⁶

¹ K.O. Sulaiman, "A Critical Assessment of *Da'wah* Activities of Shaykh Jamiu Larubawa Dandawi in Ekiti Land," *Journal of Islamic Law Review*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, India, 2013, 89-101.

² K.O. Sulaiman, "The Impact of Islam on Socio-Cultural Practice of Funeral Rites among the People of Yorubaland in Nigeria" *Jalingo Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies (JJ AIS)*, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria, 2014, Volume 2, Number 1, 23-35.

³ K.O. Sulaiman, "Chieftaincy Institutions among Yoruba Muslims in Nigeria: Between the Present and Past," *IJUC Studies*, Journal of International Islamic University, Chittagong, 2011, Volume 8, 161-174.

⁴ L.O. Abbas, "Imāmship in Islām: its Concept and Practice among the Yoruba of Òyó and Osun State," Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ḍbādàn, 2003, p. 312, & T.K. Hamzat, "Imāmship Institution in Iwo Central Mosque, Iwo, Osun State," B.A. Project, University of Ḍbādàn, 1991, p. 23.

⁵ K.O. Sulaiman, "Management Techniques of Muslim/ Traditionalist Conflicts in Ancient Ekiti Communities," *ORISUN: Journal of Religion and Human Values*. Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria, 2010, Volume 9, Number 9, 60-80.

⁶ M.A Kareem "Advent and Spread of Islam in Ekiti-State, 1840-2000 C.E," PhD Thesis, Department of Religious, University of Ado Ekiti, 2009, Pp. 14-20.

After a lot of scheming and agreement, the *Ummah* agreed that they should be led by elites so as to be able to situate Islam and the Muslims in the right position in the state. Consequently, the Ekiti State Council of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs was launched on 7 September, 2002 with Alhaji King Abdul-Azeez Olu Adeyemi, a retired permanent secretary of the old Ondo State, as president while Alhaji Sulaiman Afolabi Ogunlayi, a former commissioner of commerce and industry in the same old Ondo State and the pioneer commissioner for finance in Ekiti State, as the general secretary.¹ So far, the council is making efforts at uniting the various Muslim groups in Ekiti by settling chieftaincy quarrels among the *'Ummah*. Not only that, they usually organize meetings, conferences and seminars for the enlightenment of the Muslims.

Another problem affecting the unity of the Muslims in Ekiti State, is the controversy over the appointment of Muslims for chieftaincy titles.² The appointment of the president of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State, a contest between the Chief Imam of Ado Ekiti, and the Chief Missioner of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, generated some controversies. There were claims and counter-claims to who was more qualified for the position. The central mosque in Ekiti State claimed that it had the right to the position because the central mosque is for Muslims in general while other Muslim societies should be under the central mosque. On the other hand, the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society claimed that almost all the towns and villages in Ekiti belong to the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society and that they, therefore, control the largest population of Muslims in the state. As a result, they claimed that the presidency of the League of Imams and Alfas in the state should go to them. This struggle for the post nearly tore the Muslim community apart into warring camps. This jeopardized the progress of Islam then because schools were abandoned and many other activities that could aid the spread of Islam were neglected.³

With the effort of some concerned Muslim Youths, there is, now, what could be regarded as a resurgence of Islam in that area. Muslims are now establishing private pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools in the state.

The Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria took the lead by establishing and registering At-Tawheed Model Schools in 1999. The establishment of more nursery and primary schools by individuals and organizations followed suit. The prominent ones are: Al-Amanah Nursery and Primary School in Ɖkârâ and Ado-Ekiti, Al-Hudah Academy at Oke-Ila, Ado-Ekiti, FOMWAN Nursery and Primary School, Ado-Ekiti, the

¹ Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Programme for the Inauguration of the Ekiti State Council, NSCIA and Launching of N50 Million Ultra-Modern Islâmic Centre, on 7/9/02 at Oluayemi Kayode Stadium Complex, p. 1.

² K.O. Sulaiman, "Impact of Islam on the People of Ekitiland," *Ife Journal of Religions*, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 2013, Volume 9, 89-109.

³ A.R Mustapha, "The Position of Islam in Nigeria since Independence in 1960 the experience in Ekiti-State," in *Journal of University Scholars in Nigeria*, pp. 176-180.

Ansar-Ud-Deen Nursery and Primary School, Odo-Otu, Ado-Ekiti, Fadl-I-Omar International Nursery and Primary School of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jama'at at their Central Mosque, Ijigbo, Ado-Ekiti. There are also developments in the area of modern Arabic schools, including: Baraka'at Arabic School, Ori-Apata, Ado-Ekiti, established in 1999;¹ the Al-Kamaliyyah al-Adabiyyah Arabic School, Omisanjana, Ado-Ekiti, established in 2004; Ma'had Al-Adabiyyah Al-Kamaliyyah Arazaqiyyah, established in 1993 by Alhaji Shaykh Abdul Rasaki Ali; Al-Madrasatul-l-Adabiyyah Azezyah, established in 1991 by Alhaji Shaykh Jamiu Ola anabi; Modrasatul Adabiyatul Kamaliyyah Hassaniyat, established in 1994 by Alhaji Shaykh Mudashir Osioyemi and Zumratal Solihina li Ta'lim Logaut Arabiyya Wa dirasatul Islamiyyah in the year 2000 by Shykh Ibraheem Abubakar, among numerous others. These schools have turned out graduates with well-organized pomp and pageantry and award certificates to graduates.

These efforts are being complemented by virile academic organizations, such as the Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies (NATAIS). The Association has been responsible for the upgrading of the status of many Arabic and Islamic Religious Knowledge teachers in the primary schools and the employment of the products of universities and colleges of education in the twin subjects to teach in the state primary and secondary schools.²

In addition, many prayer groups are emerging to complement the efforts of organizations in the propagation of Islam. They include: (FEMCON) Federation of Muslim Colleagues, YOUMBAS, *Nasir-ullahi-l-fātihi* (NASFAT), OMU Organization of Muslim Unity, *Tawabu Raheem*, *Deenul Haq*, Leagues of *Iman* and *Alfas*, *Istijabati* Brothers of Nigeria (ISBON) and the *Fath-al Qareeb* Islamic Society (*Al-Qareeb*), to mention a few. With this development, one can notice the spread of Islam in Ekiti.

These groups have their specific programmes. The most common ones include the monthly *As-Ṣalāt* prayers when Christians are attending their Sunday church services. This curbs the influx of Muslim children, especially women, to churches.

Recommendations

, The following recommendations from the above to enhance the development of Islam in Ekitiland in particular and Yorubaland as a whole.

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- ¹ K.M, Raji, "Da'wah activities of Shaykh Jamiu Ademuakun Ogunrinde A.K.A. Larubawa and Dandawi in Ado Ekiti. Ekiti-State," M.A Dissertation, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, 2001, p. 47.
 - ² K.O. Sulaiman, "The Problems of Teaching/Learning of Islamic Studies in Public Primary Schools in Ekiti-State" in M.A Abdul-Raheem (Eds), *Arabic/Islamic Studies and Challenges of Quality Control in the Nigerian Educational System*, Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic & Islamic Studies, 2013, 61-71.

1. It is true that Islam was introduced to Ekitiland in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, its growth in the area of study depends on the commitment of its adherents. One of the ways Islam could be sustained in the area and elsewhere is for Muslims to allow their children and wards to attend Qur'anic schools regularly and punctually. The education acquired in the Qur'anic school would fortify them against non-Islamic doctrines they might come across during the process of acquiring Western education.

2. The various Muslim organizations in Ekitiland should rise up to the enlightenment of people about Islam. Printing of pamphlets, magazines, journals, and books to be distributed to people free of charge or at reduced prices would be of help in the propagation of Islam in Ekitiland.

3. Keeping records is a modern way of preserving the heritage for future generations. The old method of oral dissemination of information from the old to the young is no more in vogue due to life span and memory loss. As a remedy, it is hereby recommended that scholars and researchers in Ekitiland should engage in more research works to retrieve all necessary information from old people. Such information thus collected should be properly recorded and kept, using both print and electronic devices.

4. Various Islamic religious organizations and individuals should endeavor to establish standard Arabic and Islamic schools in Ekitiland to complement the few existing ones that are too small to provide adequate Arabic and Islamic learning for Muslim children in the areas. Such schools should be children-friendly. The environment should be conducive and qualified teachers should be employed to teach in such schools. The proprietors of such schools could solicit financial and material supports from Islamic countries through their embassies in Nigeria. They could liaise with the managements of some renowned Islamic institutions like the *Al-Azhar* Institute of Arabic and Islamic studies, Ogidi, Ilorin in Kwara State, *Markaz Ta'alim al-Islamiyy*, Agege Lagos, and others. Some had enjoyed such benefits in the past. Government should encourage the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in all public schools as is done for Christian Religious Knowledge. Qualified Islamic Studies teachers should be employed to teach the subject. More opportunities should also be given to Arabic and Islamic teachers with lower qualifications to go for further learning/training. Relevant Arabic and Islamic studies materials such as books and other instructional materials should be adequately provided in school libraries. Assistance of the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) of various schools is very necessary in this regard.

5. To check the continued conversion of Muslim youth to Christianity, youth organizations should be promoted by parent bodies and Muslim philanthropists in Ekitiland. This could be done by earmarking a certain percentage of their annual budgetary allocation to aid youth activities. In addition to this, parents should cultivate the attitude of attending the occasions organized by the youth and be ready to

contribute financially on such occasions. This would go a long way to encouraging young people and to build confidence in them in their task of propagating Islam.

6. As a corollary to the above, Muslims in Ekitiland should intensify their efforts at the establishment of more Muslim primary and secondary schools. This would assist in accommodating the increasing population of Muslim children of school age. Emphasis should also be laid on the establishment of Muslim nursery and primary schools. This would open more opportunities for Muslim children to receive Islam-oriented Western education from childhood.

7. There is a need for individual, personal *da'wah*, that is, Muslims who intend to engage in *da'wah* activities should try to live transparently. He must put Allah first in his speech and activities, and the spirit of *taqwa* (the piety that comes from the awe of Allah). The Muslim *da'wah* must acquire the basic and necessary knowledge of Islam and the right approach to *da'wah* and apply them judiciously. He must also be abreast of developments especially on current issues that affect Islam in his local, national, or international environment.

8. The home is the nucleus of the society; hence the Muslim home should revolve around the ideals of Islam. Hence, Muslim children should be exposed to proper training in both secular and religious education to avoid confusion and chaos in society. Muslims should also learn how to offer *ṣalāt* properly in order to solve their problems through their direct link to the creator.

9 The sermons at mosque and speeches at Islamic functions should be made in a way that attract people to Islam. As an effective means of communication, Muslims, especially in Ekitiland should make use of the radio and television stations and the print media properly, to be able to reach the grassroots effectively. Tracts, books, journals, and articles should be written to educate Muslims and non-Muslims about Islam. And there should be frequent workshops, seminars, and conferences where issues relating to *da'wah* activities could be effectively discussed.

Conclusion

In this paper we showed that, in the period before 1940, the Muslims in Ekiti State believed in all articles of faith but had to combine some unIslamic beliefs with their faith for some reasons. For instance, in Adó-Ekiti, Bello Egunjobi had to put on the masquerade regalia so he could drive away the *Egúngún* worshippers and Efas from their *muṣalla* so the Muslims could perform their daily prayers. Similar things happened in almost the towns and villages in Ekiti State. Also, during the period 1940 to 1996, Muslims in Ekiti were severely persecuted. For instance, at Djerò-Ekiti, the traditionalists regarded the call to prayer *'adhān* as an invocation of the spirit of *Sanponna* and viewed it as disturbing to their native gods. Consequently, the *muadhhdhin* was stoned and attacked many times and was forced to abandon the practice.

Furthermore, the coming of Christianity with its attendant Western/formal education and the conversion to Christianity threatened the existence of Islam. Many Muslim children in large numbers were invariably converted in schools to Christianity. The persecution and challenges to Islam by non-Muslims helped the few devoted Muslims to consolidate their faith. Over the course of time, the Muslims came together to form minor groups leading to the formation of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, the Nawair-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, the *Zumuratu-l-Mu'minin*, the Surajudeen Society and others. The period after 1996 to date is the stage when Ekiti State was created. In this period, the zeal for the spread of Islam as discovered in the two earlier stages began to dwindle with the creation of Ekiti State in 1996. Also, with the efforts of some concerned Muslim youth, there is now what could be regarded as a resurgence of Islam in the area. Muslims are now, establishing private pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools in the state. The paper recommends that Muslims in Ekiti State intensify their efforts to establish more Muslim primary and secondary schools. This would assist in accommodating the increasing population of Muslim children of school age and would open more opportunities to Muslim children to receive Islam-oriented Western education from childhood on.

Recommendations were also made in the hope that the problems identified in this study can be solved. It is the belief that the recommendations above would be of help to all stakeholders in *da'wah* activities, Arabic, and Islamic learning, as well as the government and the governed, towards building a virile society and turning Ekiti State in particular and Nigeria as a whole into an society worthy of emulation.