

Muslim Education In Oyo Alaafin: Challenges And Developments Analysis^{1*}

Pendidikan Islam Di Oyo Alaafin: Pembangunan Dan Cabaran Suatu Analisis

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Abstract

Islam as a (*dīn*) religion and a perfect way of life was the first vehicle that conveyed education to the people of Oyo Alaafin, as it has done so in many parts of the country (Nigeria). This form of education is termed here as Arabic/Islamic education. Later on, Christianity came in with another system known as Western education. Generally, education is seen as a catalyst for knowledge acquisition as well as an instrument of growth, development, transformation and civilization. Be that as it may, the paper depicts the geographical location of Oyo Alaafin on the map, discusses the emergence of Islam in Oyo and talks about what is meant by education. It analyses how the Oyo people were acquainted with the Arabic/Islamic system of education before other forms of education. The study also exposes the challenges that the Western type of education posed on the Arabic/Islamic form and the resistance from the latter. It also sheds light on the gradual development(s) that led to the harmonization and amalgamation of the two educational systems. The research provides some suggestions for further enhancement of Muslim education not only in Oyo Alaafin, but also in Nigeria as a whole. This paper is essentially a library-oriented research, which involved acquisition of materials and data from books, journals, online journal articles and magazines. Furthermore, some interviews were also conducted.

^{1*}An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Intentional Conference on Islam in Africa: Historical, Cultural and Global Perspectives, co-organized by International Institute of Muslim Unity (IIMU), International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), and The Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW). On 19-21 July 2011 at Banquet hall, ISTAC, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Keywords: Arabic/Islamic, Challenges, Developments, Education, Muslim, Oyo Alaafin, Western.

Abstrak

Islam sebagai agama dan cara hidup yang lengkap menjadi penerak kepada pembangunan pendidikan dalam kalangan penduduk Oyo Alaafin, dan tersebar di banyak kawasan di Nigeria. Pendidikan yang sebegini dikenali sebagai pendidikan Arab-Islam. Setelah itu agama Kristian masuk dengan membawa sistem pendidikan Barat. Pada umumnya, pendidikan dilihat sebagai pemangkin kepada penghasilan ilmu pengetahuan dan pada masa yang sama menjadi penerak kepada pertumbuhan, pembangunan, transformasi dan tamadun. Walau apa keadaan sekalipun, kertas kerja ini akan menyatakan kedudukan geografi Oyo Alaafin. Kertas kerja ini membincangkan sejarah kedatangan Islam ke Oyo serta menghuraikan apa yang dimaksudkan dengan pendidikan serta menganalisis bagaimana penduduk Oyo mengenali sistem pendidikan Arab-Islam pada peringkat awal sebelum ketibaan sistem-sistem yang lain. Kajian ini juga cuba mendedahkan cabaran-cabaran daripada sistem pendidikan Barat terhadap sistem pendidikan Arab-Islam dan usaha yang dilakukan orang Islam bagi menyekat pengaruh sistem pendidikan Barat. Kajian ini turut menyatakan secara berperingkat proses pembangunan ke arah mengharmoni dan mencantumkan kedua-dua sistem berkenaan. Kajian ini turut mengemukakan beberapa cadangan ke arah penambahbaikan pendidikan Islam, bukan sahaja di Oyo Alaafin tetapi juga di Nigeria secara amnya. Kajian ini banyak menggunakan bahan-bahan perpustakaan bagi mendapatkan data-data kajian menerusi buku, jurnal dan majalah di samping wawancara dan temubual.

Kata Kunci: Arab-Islam, cabaran, pembangunan, pendidikan, orang Islam, Oyo Alaafin, Barat.

Introduction

Oyo Alaafin is a modern city, the seat of Alaafin² that lies on the site previously known as Ago-Oja. It is situated in the southwest of Nigeria, 32 miles (51 km) north of Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo state³. It is located in undulating plains of savannah land, beyond the fringes of the rainforest which lies between latitude 7° 47' 26" N and longitude 3° 56' 15" E.⁴

Prior to the 1930s, or to say, centuries ago, Oyo-Ile (Old Oyo) (also called Oyo-Oro or Katunga) was the capital city of the ancient Oyo Empire, a large West African empire founded in approximately 1300

² Alaafin is the title of the King of Oyo, the paramount king of Yoruba land in Nigeria.

³ Britannica Online Encyclopedia. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/437047/Oyo>. (accessed 2 June, 2011).

⁴ Collins Maps. <http://www.collinsmaps.com/maps/Nigeria/Oyo/Oyo/P480314.00.aspx>. (accessed 6 June, 2011).

CE.⁵ After the death of Alaafin Oluewu and the collapse of Oyo-Ile, the crown was offered to the powerful aspirant Prince Atiba who was by then living at Ago-Oja. On his accession to the throne, Alaafin Atiba shifted the capital to where he was living. “Thus Ago passed out of the hands of Oja’s family and became the royal city of Yoruba and as such, it was no longer called Ago-Oja but Oyo as the Alaafin now resides there”.⁶ This Oyo Alaafin (New Oyo) is somehow sarcastically called Ago-d’Oyo (Ago that became Oyo).⁷

The new seat of Alaafin was very small compared to the old capital. Therefore, Alaafin used all that he had at his disposal to expand the city and made it wear the look of a capital city. He re-conferred the old title of those who came to him from Kishi, Saki and Igboho. He also coerced the inhabitants of the neighboring towns and villages such as Akeitan, Aparara, Idode, Ajagba, Gudugbu, Jabata, Opapa and a host of others to migrate to New Oyo.⁸

Presently, the city has three local governments, namely, Atiba, Oyo East and Oyo West, with an estimated population of about 601,000.⁹ The emblem of Oyo includes the *Sekere* (traditional percussion instrument) that originated from Oyo, the *Kinihun* (The Lion) that symbolizes the fearless nature of the Oyos, and *Ijapa* (The Tortoise) that is the royal pet symbolizing longevity and resilience. Other symbols on the emblem are *Ilu Bata* (a kind of drum) that is associated with Sango, the 4th Alaafin of Old Oyo, who is known as the god of thunder and lightning, and *Jagunjagun lori esin* (the warrior on horseback), who is the equestrian figure that signifies powerful military expansion of the Oyo Empire using cavalry from the 14th to the 17th century.¹⁰

Introduction of Islam in Oyo

Aye laba Ifa,
Aye laba Imole

⁵ Oyo Empire, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Oyo_Empire. (accessed 13 November 2017).

⁶ Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos: CSS Press, 1921, reprinted ed. 2001), 279-80.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 280-1.

⁹ <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA031>. (accessed 31 July, 2017).

¹⁰ <http://www.alaafin-oyo-org/main>. (accessed 6-June, 2011).

Osan gangan ni'gbagbo wole de¹¹

Ifa has existed before us
Islam has existed before us
It was later (in the day) that Christianity arrived.

There is no doubt that Islam in Oyo Alaafin is as old as the city itself. In other words, Islam has existed in Oyo Alaafin since its creation or establishment. This statement is reinforced by the above folksong. The song connotatively testifies to the fact that Oyo citizens were born into Islam. Oyo Alaafin is considered as one of the predominant Muslim cities in the southwestern region of Nigeria. One of the factors responsible for the predomination of Oyo Alaafin by Muslims could be easily linked to the fact that all the Alaafins that had ruled Oyo since the creation of the city were Muslims. Habitually, people would embrace the religion of their rulers or kings. This fact is also echoed by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah* where he says:

The widely accepted reason for changes in institutions and customs is the fact that the customs of each race depend on the customs of its ruler, as the proverb says: "The common people follow the religion of the ruler."¹²

Where the problem lies is in the question — when did Islam come to Oyo-Ile? This question can be re-interpreted as when was Islam introduced to Yoruba land? It is very arduous to answer this question with precision. Gbadamosi observes that the date "was unannounced and unplanned; and, for the most part, the first Yoruba Muslims had to worship privately and secretly."¹³ Doi traces the coming of Islam to Yoruba land to the seventeenth century. He gives the description of Yoruba land in the word of Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu (d.1627 AD) in his "*Al-kashāf wal-bayān li asnāf majilūb al-sudan*" as "an area where unbelief predomi-

¹¹ Another version of this folk song which implies the same notion is endnoted in Gbadamosi's book pg 16. Ile laba Ifa. ile laba Imale, Osangangan ni ti Igbagbo. Meaning, we met (presence of) Ifa at home, we met (presence of) Imale (Islam) at home but it is in the afternoon (lately) that we had Christianity.

¹² Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Translated by Franz Rosenthal (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 1:58.

¹³ Tajudeen Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among Yoruba, 1841-1908*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1978), 4.

nates and Islam is rarely found.”¹⁴ Apparently, it could be extrapolated from the account that Islam had existed at that particular epoch, but very few people were actually institutionalized in the religion at the time he wrote his book (before 1627 AD).

Al-Alūri maintains that it was during the time of Emperor Mansa Musa of Mali (d1337), that the Yoruba’s came to know Islam from the Mali traders and ambassadors who were living in Oyo-Ile or Katunga, the capital of the Old Oyo Empire.¹⁵ The scholar also asserts somewhere else that the Yoruba people (in Oyo-Ile) had known of Islam since the 15th century and that a mosque was first built in Oyo-Ile in 1550 AD.¹⁶ There had also been Islamic influence in Oyo-Ile since the reign of Alaafin Ajiboyede,¹⁷ who is said to have ruled before 1570 AD. It is reported that a Muslim clergy sent his emissary to the Alaafin to “remonstrate with him for his unjust and cruel acts avenging his son’s death on innocent people.”¹⁸

Clinging to those facts, the present researcher joins the cluster of scholars¹⁹ who have refuted the claim that Islam came to Yoruba land towards the end of the eighteenth century.²⁰ The writer also disagrees with the false theory that the Yoruba’s first encountered Islam during the *Fulani Jihād* of 1804. However, it might be agreed that the *Fulani jihād* enhanced the presence of Islam in the Yoruba land, and what is known today as Nigeria.

¹⁴ Abdur Rahman I. Doi, *Islam in Multi-Religious...* 109. See also Abdur rahman I. Doi, “Islamic Education in Nigeria 11th century-20th Century,” *Muslim Education Quarterly* Vol.2, Issue No.2: (1985). pp. 71-72. Also Ahamad Faosiy Ogunbado, “Islam and its Impact in Yoruba land,” *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 57, Issue No1. (2013): pp.6-7

¹⁵ Ādam ‘Abdallah Al-Alūri, *Mujiz Tarikh Nigeria*, (Beirut: n.p.1965), 147.

¹⁶ Ādam ‘Abdallah Al-Alūri, *Nasimu al-soba fi Akhbār al-Islam wa ‘ulamāh Bilād Yoruba*, (Cairo: Maktaba Wahaba.1990), 54.

¹⁷ Alaafin Ajiboyede was the 12th Alaafin of Oyo. It was mentioned that he was the most successful and long serving Alaafin, but also the most tyrannical. He celebrated *Bebe*, a celebration that is similar to a jubilee or the golden age of a king on the throne. It used to last for three years, but few of such celebrations were actually staged in history. Ajiboyede lost his first-son a short time after the celebration and accused his sympathizers as mockers, mocking him and subsequently authorized their execution. It is believed that he reigned before 1570 AD because his successor, Alaafin Abipa reigned between 1570-80. Johnson, 164 and <http://www.alaafin-oyo.org/main/alaafin/genealogy>. (accessed 6 June 2011).

¹⁸ Johnson, 164.

¹⁹ Such as Ādam ‘Abdallah Al-Alūri, Mustapha Al-Zaglūl, Abdur Rahman I. Doi, Tajudeen, G.O. Gbadamosi, R.O. Lasisi, Razaq D. Abūbakre and host of others.

²⁰ Johnson, 26 and 38.

Definition, Aims and Objectives of Education in Islam

Education is defined as “the process of teaching or learning in a school or college, or the knowledge that you get from this.”²¹ It is also referred to “as a process of learning and acquiring information.”²² Education in the largest scope, according to Wikipedia, “is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual”, but in a technical sense, it “is the process by which society deliberately transmit its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.”²³ It is generally referred to as “a process of transmitting the cultural heritage, stabilizing the present and improving or changing the future of the people.”²⁴ Al-Attas defines education as recognition and acknowledgement, progressively instilled into man of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence.²⁵

The committee on Definition and Aims of Education, at the first World Conference on Muslim Education, organized in Makkah by King Abdul-Aziz University in 1977, agreed that the meaning of education in its totality in the Islamic context is inherent in the connotations of the three terms *Tarribyyah*, *Ta’līm* and *T’adīb*. They assert further, “what each of the three terms conveys concerning man, his society and environment in relation to God is related to the others, and together they represent the scope of education.”²⁶ Therefore, Education is defined “as a process through which human beings are trained and prepared in a concerted way to do their creator’s bidding in this life (*Duniyāh*) and to be rewarded in the life after the death (*Akhirah*).”²⁷

²¹ Cambridge Advance Learner’s Dictionary.

²² <http://www.wisegreek.com/what-is-education.htm> (accessed 7 June, 2011).

²³ <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Education>. (accessed 7 June, 2011).

²⁴ Isreal Osokoya, “Teachers Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future Challenges”. *Academic Leadership* Vol.8, no. 4 (2010). www.academicleadership.org/article/print/teachers-education-in-nigeria-past-present-and-future-challenges. (accessed 14-June-2011).

²⁵ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*. (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1999), 21.

²⁶ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Ed. *Aims and Objective of Islamic Education*. (Jeddah: King Abdul-Aziz University 1979), 157.

²⁷ Gulam Sarwar, “Islamic Education: its meaning, problems and prospect?” in *Issues in Islamic Education*, Edited by the Muslim Education (London: The Muslim Education Trust, 1996), 9.

It is glaring that the definitions are both born out of conventional and Islamic notions of education. Both show that education is an act of teaching and learning that are beneficial in this world. But the conventional definition is silent about the hereafter because it has nothing to do with the notion. On the contrary, the hereafter is as important as this world, from the Islamic point of view.

The mentioned committee summarized the aim of education in Islam as below:²⁸

1. "Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality and Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses."²⁹
2. Planning for education should be based on two categories, Perennial and Acquired knowledge, with the former being the knowledge derived from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and their related items. The latter is innovated knowledge, which is influenced by quantitative and qualitative growth and multiplication as well as cross-cultural borrowings, but without divorcing *Shar'iah*.
3. Education should aim to inculcate piety, encourage self-purification as a means of penetrating the deep mysteries of the world, and prepare the mind for fear and love of Allāh.
4. Education should aim to instill in man the creative impulse to rule himself and the universe as a true servant of Allāh. To enable man to develop the required skills to utilize natural resources without conflicts.
5. "To seek knowledge is compulsory on every Muslim male and female"³⁰. Based on this fact, the committee asserts that contemporary knowledge in the field of science, social development and information should be instilled in every Muslim regardless of their gender and age.
6. Education is a lost property of Muslims that should be taken or retrieved wherever it is found. Therefore, the committee agreed that the Education system must be shaped in order to facilitate social mobility.

²⁸ Al-Attas, Ed. *Aims and Objective...*158-9.

²⁹ Ibid, 158.

³⁰ Abū Hāmid Al-Ghazālī, *Ihya ulum-id-din*. Trans. Fazlul Karim (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service.2005), vol. 1:22.

Introduction of Arabic/Islamic Education

The Arabic/Islamic education has been a part of the values of Oyo Alaafin since its formation. This is because the people who brought Islam from Oyo-Ile came with an Arabic/Islamic system of education. The system is known to them as *kewu*.³¹ Learning is very important and essential to the Muslims of any age and location. Muslims need to pray and learn about their religion; prayer requires recitation of at least a verse of the Holy Qur'an, which is written in the Arabic Language. Besides, Muslims considered the acquisition of knowledge as a religious obligation based on the Prophetic Hadith that says, "To seek knowledge is compulsory on every Muslim male and female."³² Likewise, the learned people (Alfa) considered teaching as a noble profession, as mentioned in Hadith, "Verily as for the scholar, Allah, His Angel, the dwellers of Heavens and on the Earth, even an ant in its hole and fish (in the depth of the sea), invoke blessing on he who teaches people goodness."³³ And, "the best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."³⁴

Therefore, there is a need to establish where to learn the Holy Qur'an. The Muslims then started learning it in the mosque, in the residence of the teachers or under the shade of big trees in the compound. It is also necessary to point out here that this is not an innovation in Oyo-Ile. The Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Madinah was the first school in Islamic civilization and several notable institutions in the Muslim World such as al-Azhar in Cairo were established in mosques.³⁵

Some of such Scholars were judges, secretaries and counsellors while all of them were teachers of Arabic texts to their host. Such erudite scholars include 'Abdulkarim i-Maghili from Tilmisan in modern Algeria, Jalalu'd-Dini 's-Suyuti who was in correspondence with this area from Egypt and Aidah Ahmad at-Tazakiti, pupil of al-Maghili. Others were Ahmad 'Aqit, grandfather of Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu as well as

³¹ Abūbākr, explains that *Kewu* means Arabic or literary in Arabic modern standard Yoruba. He continues, if the word is used as a verb it means "to read Arabic" or "to be literate in Arabic". To learn more about the word, see Razaq D. Abūbākre, *Interplay of Arabic and Yoruba Cultures in South-western Nigeria*. (Iwo: Dāru 'i-'ilm Publishers, 2004), 143.

³² Al-Ghazali, *Ihya...* vol. 1:22

³³ Muhammad al-Tabrizi, *The Light of Lamps* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1985), 74. Hadith 213.

³⁴ Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 6, Vol.61 Hadith 545.

³⁵ Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers Ltd, reprinted 2002), 53.

Ahmad Baba himself and Muhammad Ibn Masanih of Katsina. They moved about with their knowledge through Niani, Jenne, Timbuktu, Kawkaw (Gao) to Katsina, Kano, Kanem-Borno and Yorubaland, especially at its old capital Oyo-Ile, where there were Arabic Scholars and a mosque around 957 AH/1550 CE.³⁶

It can be deduced from the above statement that there were some great scholars who were propagating their religion (Islam) and simultaneously imparting their knowledge among their host in Oyo-Ile. Gbadamosi describes the situation in Oyo in the 1790s as such:

The northern section of this empire and indeed, the capital itself witnessed an intensive amount of Muslim evangelisation and reformist preaching. In Oyo there were no less than five holy men, two or three of whom were Arab Emirs...spread[ing] the dogmas of their faith amongst the inhabitants, publicly teaching their children to read the Qur'an. Two of these active preachers were particularly notable. The first was an Arab, Muhammad Ben Haja Gumso, who stayed in the palace of Alaafin. The second mallam had a more crucial significance. By name al-Salih, he was popularly known as Alimi.³⁷

Some people in Oyo-Ile were very deep in their education and recorded their documents in Arabic while some were writing the Yoruba language in Arabic letters known as *Ajami*. Be that as it may, the Muslims brought the religion as well as education from Oyo-Ile to Oyo Alaafin from the first day, as mentioned earlier.

At the inception of Oyo Alaafin, the mosques were serving as Quranic schools (Ile-kewu), which was the tradition brought down from Oyo-Ile in particular, and in early days of Islamic civilization (in general). Likewise, many of such schools were established all over the city, especially the Oke Oja area. You will find at least one of such schools in every eight to ten houses in the Imam and Parakoyi's quarters. Interestingly, there is not much difference in other quarters of the city. This is what Rev. G. Burton noticed in 1910 and wrote in the missionary news that, "There are several Mohammedan Schools in Oyo now, and it is by no means an uncommon sight to see children carrying their 'slate' of Arabic texts, which they learn to repeat parrot-fashion."³⁸

On completion of studying the Qur'an, pupils would proceed to learn subjects such as *Fiqh, Hadith, Mantiq, Sarf, Nahw* and so on. Pu-

³⁶ Abūbakre, 15.

³⁷ Gbadamosi, 7-8.

³⁸ *The Muslim World*, Vol. 1, No.3 July 1911. pg.351.

pils moved from one teacher to another, as some teachers were specialists in *Fiqh* and *Hadith*, but not so versed in language related subjects like *Nahw* and *Sarf*. Some even sought further education in cities like Ibadan, Lagos and Ilorin.

There were many improvements in the late 40s to 60s in Arabic/Islamic education in Oyo Alaafin. Late Shaykh Abdul Azeez Abdul Salam (d.2005) established his school at Iso-elu and later moved to its present location at Odo-Aro in 1971. It was around the same period that the Late Shaykh Sanusi Adeyemi of Ode-Omu stayed in Oyo and imparted Knowledge.³⁹ The new era of modernization started by the establishment of *Markaz al-Talim al-Arabiy* at Agunpopo by late Shaykh Solaudeen Kolade (d.2005), a prominent disciple of the renowned scholar Ādam Abdullah al-Alūri. In 1982, Alhaji Dhikirullah Yahyah Akeugberu, a prominent disciple of Shaykh Abdul Hadi Akorede established his school, at Imam Akeugberu's compound, and later in 1989 moved to Kolobo. The metaphorically called twin brothers, Alhaji Muftau Oloyin and Alhaji Abdul Latif Jum'ah, the alumni of *Markaz* Agege also established another *Markaz al-Talim al-Arabiy* at Lagbodoko in 1984 and moved to Boro boro in 1999. Shaykh Jamiu Abdul-Salam on his arrival from further studies in Kuwait also established his Arabic/Islamic school at Isokun, methodologically built on the Kuwaiti post-primary school syllabus.

Since its establishment, *Markaz al-Ta'lim al-Arabiy* of Agege has been a major Arabic School, which Oyo people prefer for their children to acquire Arabic/Islamic education. There are, at least, three major factors that might have been responsible for this: (1) the fact that the great grandfather of the proprietor came from Oyo-Ile, making parents feel as though their children were in safe hands, (2) Oyo Alaafin was one of the major cities that the proprietor toured at the early years of the establishment of the *Markaz*, requesting Muslims for enrollment of their children in his school for sound Arabic and Islamic education, and (3) some of the proprietors who were themselves alumni of a *Markaz* preferred their pupils, after the completion of *ibtidai* or *idady* (primary and junior secondary school), to proceed to the *Markaz* at Agege for further studies. Among the notable Oyos who were/are alumni of the great school are

³⁹ Ahamad Faosiy Ogunbado, (2016). Historical Development of Muslim Education in Yoruba Land, Southwest Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. Vol4, Issue8 July 2016. Pp.13-21.

late Shaykh Solaudeen Kolade, the proprietor of *Markas al-Ta'lim al-Arabiyy* Agunpopo Oyo; Shaykh Mas'ud 'Abdul Ganiy Adebayo, the current Chief Imam of Oyo; Shaykh Qosim, the Imam of Owode Mosque; Alh. Muftau Oloyin, Alh. Abdul Latif Jum'ah and a host of others.

Ma'had al-Arabi of Ibadan also attracted Oyo pupils. Imam Mukail Bolaji, the current Chief Imam of Ansar-ud-deen society, Oyo branch, is one of the prominent products of the School. Furthermore, *Ma'had al-Azhar* and *Ma'had Al-adabiy* both in Ilorin, were also favorite schools for Oyos. *Ma'had Talim lugatil- Arabiyat* of Ode-omu also accommodated a substantial number of Oyos. Beside those mentioned local institutions, Oyo Muslims have preference for furthering their Arabic/Islamic education in some of the reputable universities in Arabian countries, such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt, Islamic University in Medina, Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah, Kuwait University, lately at the International Islamic University Malaysia in Malaysia, and in Niger and Uganda to mention but a few.

Introduction of Western Education

The Western education System came into Nigeria through Christian missionaries and colonial rulers. Missionaries first arrived in Nigeria through Portuguese merchants in the 15th century. In about 1472 to 1477, they landed at Benin City, and established a school in 1515 in the Oba's palace.⁴⁰ However, their efforts proved fruitless and their mission was abandoned.

In 1842, Christian missionaries re-introduced the Western type of education to Nigeria through Badagry and Abeokuta. This was successful and had a lasting impact on the country as a whole. Education introduced at these early stages was interwoven with Christian evangelism. The missionaries established, managed and designed the curriculum for the schools. However, the main objective was to use schools as a tool of conversion.⁴¹ Between 1842 and 1914, about ten different Christian missions had arrived and begun intensive missionary and educational works in different parts of the country. It was said in an educational plan that school is the Church and Church is the School; likewise, the teachers are the Evangelists. Coleman quotes:

⁴⁰ Osokoya, *Teachers Education in Nigeria*...See also Fafunwa, *History of Edu*...71-2.

⁴¹ Ibid, 80. See also Omenka, Nicholas Ibeawuchi, *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

To all intents and purposes, the school is the Church. Right away in the bush or in the forest two are one, and the village teacher is also the village evangelist. An appreciation of this fact is cardinal in all consideration of African education.⁴²

In 1843, Mr. and Mrs. de Graft of the Methodist Church established a Nursery of the Infant Church as the first missionary school in Nigeria along the coast of Badagry. A year later, Reverend Samuel Annear and his wife replaced de Grafts. Similarly, the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), otherwise known as the Anglican contingent, arrived in the same city, in January 1845. The society established a mission house and two schools before they relocated to Abeokuta in August 1846. Thomas J. Bowen an American Baptist fellow also came to Badagry in August 1850. He later established the first Baptist mission in Ijaye-Orile, in 1853.⁴³

In Oyo Alaafin, Catholic missionaries established their first school in the heart of the city, at Asogo in 1888. As such, St. Mary Catholic School is considered as the first primary school in Oyo.⁴⁴ In March 1896, the Anglican Communion transplanted St. Andrew's College on Oyo soil. The institution was first established in Abeokuta in 1853, later relocated to Lagos in 1868 and remained there till 1896, before it was finally transferred to Oyo. The school, as at January 2005 has been operated as a private University with the name Ajayi Crowther University (ACU), Oyo.⁴⁵ Iyalamu Anglican Primary school was also established in 1928.

The Baptist Mission in Oyo is one of the oldest missions in Yoruba land. It was established in 1858 at Isokun with Pioneer work traceable to Rev. T.A. Reid.⁴⁶ The mission established what could be regarded as the first High school in Oyo, on 29th of January 1945, with the name Baptist Boys High School. The school's name was later changed to

⁴² Coleman James S, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). 113.

⁴³ Fafunwa, 78-9

⁴⁴ Interviewed with Alh Abdul Ganiy Adewuyi, Missioner Ansar-ud-deen Society, Asiawu Ashaleye Branch Oyo. On 4th –May-2011.

⁴⁵ <http://www.acu.edu.ng/academics.asp>. (accessed 15 May, 2011).

⁴⁶ <http://firstbaptistchurchoyo.com> (accessed 16 May, 2011).

Olivet Baptists High School in 1961. The second high school was established in 1956, called St. Bernard Grammar School.⁴⁷

Challenges

There was peace and tranquility in Oyo Alaafin when the first resident and traveling Commissioner for the interior of Yoruba land, Captain Robert Lister Bower arrived in 1893. While the Alaafin was exercising his role as paramount ruler in his domain, he and his people strongly opposed the colonial domination. On the other hand, British and other European powers in Africa had developed a goal, which was “to deal with African monarchs who did not readily collaborate with them or co-operate in accepting British authority in their domain through the naked use of force.”⁴⁸ This aim was fully implemented in Oyo. Between 1894 and 1895, Captain Bower adopted an unfriendly stance towards Alaafin on several occasions and treated him with contempt as a result of his opposition to imperialism. Opportunity came when the news reached Bower that Alaafin ordered to castrate a man that had intercourse with a wife of the Aseyin (King of Iseyin). Bower rejected Alaafin’s judgment. He slapped the Aseyin and ordered that the latter should be chained and whipped in public. He scorned Alaafin and asked him and his chiefs to prostrate before him (Bower) publicly at the Akesan market. Alaafin refused, as it was an insult to his personality and the institution. Consequently, Bower took the opportunity, and commanded his troops to bombard Oyo.⁴⁹

It should be taken into consideration that British occupation was synonymous with Christian evangelism. Missionaries who carried their mission with the official permission of the British, controlled the schools.⁵⁰ Therefore, Education in those days meant “Bible knowledge, Christian Ethics, Christian moral instruction, Christian literature, some arithmetic, language and craft - all geared to produce Christians who could read the Bible.”⁵¹ Be that as it may, the schools were converting the pupils and those who had acquired the Arabic/Islamic form of education into Christianity. Therefore, The Oyo Muslims who were the majority then barred their students from attending the schools.

⁴⁷ Interview with Alh. Abdul Ganiy Adewuyi.

⁴⁸ S. Ademola Ajayi, “Bower Tower: A Historical Monument in Ibadan, Southwestern Nigeria.” *The Social Science* Vol. 3. Issue No. 1 (2008): 47.

⁴⁹ Ibid.,

⁵⁰ Fafunwa, 67.

⁵¹ Ibid, 68.

The challenges were aggravated and reached its climax in the early 40s and 50s, as Western education and socioeconomic development were given priority. The Oyo Muslims were disfavored in this regard. The first elected councilors in Oyo were all Christians and belonged to the Action Group political party. The notable ones among them were Chief Bode Thomas, Mr. A. Akerele, Rev. Gesinde and Rev. Taiwo.⁵² There is no doubt that those councilors worked in favor of Christianity and Western education on the one hand, and relegated Muslims and Arabic/Islamic systems of education on the other hand. Administrative and other public positions were assigned to Christians on the pretext of their Western education.

The introduction of the free primary education scheme in 1955 coupled with the realization of the importance of Western education at that period posed another challenge to the Arabic/Islamic system of education. Therefore, some pupils withdrew from Arabic schools only to join the free education program in hope for a brighter future.

Developments

The developments of Muslim education in Oyo Alaafin were slow but steady. When the missionaries started their schools, they provided all possible means to attract the pupils whom they converted into Christianity as soon as they were admitted. When the Muslims in Oyo Alaafin as well as in other cities in Yoruba land found out that the Missionary teachers were converting their children into Christianity, they started withdrawing the children who had been enrolled and denying new pupils from joining the school. As a result, the *Ile-kewu* (Quranic schools) soon gained more ground. The *Alfas* (Quranic teachers) kept Muslims strong in their *'aqidah* belief and practice. They continued their *da'wah* (propagation) and precluded wholesale conversion from Islam. This is similar to what a missionary teacher, working in Ibadan, wrote down in her diary on the 1st of October 1853 — in a city where the situation was the same as in Oyo Alaafin:

Our School does not increase at present, people are afraid to send their children; they think “book” will make them cowards, but those we have are going on nicely.⁵³

⁵² R.O Lasisi, “Muslim Traditional Rulers in Nigeria: The Alaafin of Oyo during the Last Phase of British Colonialism, 1945-1960.” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol 17, No. 1, 1997. pg. 34.

⁵³ Quoted in Fafunwa, 61 and 85.

Rev. G. Burton of Oyo on 5th December 1910 also wrote: In the Western section of the Yoruba mission Mohammedanism is gaining ground rapidly. In Oyo, Ogbomoso, Iseyin Christianity is making very little progress, but everywhere Mohammedanism mosques are to be found. It is no comfort to reflect that this Mohammedanism is of a very crude nature. The very ignorance of its followers makes work amongst them exceptionally hard and discouraging.⁵⁴

In Lagos, the Colonial government later had a look into the Muslim grievances concerning the attitude of the mission schools, and established the colonial government primary school in 1899.⁵⁵ A similar case occurred in Oyo Alaafin, where the Native authority also paid heed to the Oyo Muslims and non-Christians; as a result, they established the Native Administrative Primary School in Durbar Oyo in 1925. Although some Muslims were still skeptical, they felt that there was no difference between the school and that of the missionaries. Unfortunately, children of chiefs, native administrative officials and privileged people were admitted into the school.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it served as a kind of relief for Muslims. Later, L.A Town Primary School was founded at Idiope and Koso in 1937 and 1951 respectively. Afterwards, in the 50s the Oyo Muslims felt the impact of the Western education, with the few Western educated ones among them meeting to proffer solution to the status quo. The situation here is perfectly described as in Fafunwa's book where he says: The Muslim intellectuals realised the importance of the Western type of Education, especially in the age of industrialisation and scientific and technological advances. They felt that they were not participating enough in administration of government. They also needed Muslim lawyers, doctors, engineers and educationist. They wanted to achieve these aims without changing their religion and culture. They felt a need to combine a sound Muslim education with an equal sound education along western lines. This caused renewed enthusiasm in Muslim circle. Within the rank of the orthodox Muslims, a number of organisations sprang up at the turn of the century to develop Western-derived education within a Muslim

⁵⁴ *The Muslim World*, Vol. 1, No.3 July 1911. pg.351. "Ignorance" in Burton statement does not necessarily mean "lack of knowledge or education" in general. To him, whoever lacks Western education and is unable to read the Bible is ignorant. Whereas the then Oyos were well educated in Arabic/Islamic knowledge, with some even writing their documents in Arabic, while other wrote in *ajami* (Yoruba in Arabic alphabets).

⁵⁵ Fafunwa, 69.

⁵⁶ Interview with Alh Abdul Ganiyy.

context. One of the most dynamic and the largest of these organisations was the *Ansar-ud-Deen Society*.⁵⁷

The Ansar-ud-Deen Society in Oyo Alaafin was inaugurated in July 1945. The society established its first primary school at Oke Balogun in 1953.⁵⁸ A year later, that is in 1954, Ansar-ud-Deen primary school in Alagbon was founded. The society in Oyo was very serious with its aims and objectives. It further established the Ansar-ud-Deen modern school, Opapa, in 1954. The school was one of the earliest modern schools founded in the city. It was later upgraded to a secondary school in 1982 after it had been acquired by the government. In order to cover most parts of Oyo, Ansar-ud-Deen primary school, Agunpopo, was established the following year in 1955.⁵⁹ All these schools made Arabic and Islamic studies core subjects, alongside other subjects such as English, Yoruba, Mathematics, Science, Social studies and so on. The society achieved its aim in the sense that the pupils were receiving sound Western education without losing their religious and social identity. Likewise, the environments were kept Islamic.

Since then, the Muslims in Oyo Alaafin have been acquiring Western education without losing their religion. After they have completed primary and secondary education, some of the students further their education along the Western system and become engineers, medical doctors, lawyers, and so on. Some go back to *Madaris* and receive higher Arabic/Islamic education in Arabian Universities to become religious clergies and teachers. Others learn different trades, gaining apprenticeships in areas such as carpentry. It is pertinent to mention here that the fear of Christianizing the pupils was totally forgotten in the 70s when the government took over the administration of the schools.

Modernisation and Integration of Both Systems

There were two trends towards the modernization of Muslim Education in Oyo Alaafin and the following quotation vividly enumerates both:

Two measures were adopted by the Muslims in West Africa to ensure the continuity of Qur'an and Arabic education as the result of this, competi-

⁵⁷ Fafunwa, 64-5.

⁵⁸ The society used to conduct its Friday congregation prayer (Jum'at) and other religious activities at this school premises under the pioneer missionary, Alh. Imam Ishaq S. Ogunbado (who later became the Chief Imam of Oyo land and its environs), before the construction of its Mosque at Arowona area.

⁵⁹ Interview with Alh. Abdul Ganiyy.

tion between Arabic and European languages on the one hand, and Islam and Christianity, or even atheism on the other. One step taken at this desperate period was to establish western types of Muslim schools where secular subjects are taught *pari passu* with Arabic and Islamic religious knowledge...The second step...was modernization of Qur'an and Arabic Schools which enable the institution to boycott what was boycottable in Western Education and to adopt from managerial expertise from their attractive and enviable opponents - the West.⁶⁰

Modernization in Muslim education started in the 40s and 60s. The first measure was taken by the Ansar-ud-Deen society, which established Western oriented Muslim schools where Western subjects were taught along with Arabic and Islamic religious knowledge. However, priority was given to Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK), which was being taught in the English language, over the teaching of it in the Arabic language. There were two possible reasons responsible for this: (1) lack of competent Arabic Teachers and (2) pupils' inclination towards English and its related subjects.

The second trend or measure occurred when some Qur'anic schools were no longer based in the mosques or teachers' houses but in the concrete buildings designed as schools and having school uniforms. They introduced the use of textbooks, syllabus, and various teaching aids and even introduced payment of tuition fees. This is what is being termed here as *Madrasah* (Arabic School). The vanguards in this trend in Oyo Alaafin included *Mah'ad 'Abdul Azeez* (Isoelu/Odoaro) and *Markaz Ta'lim Arabiy* Agunpopo. Other Islamic Schools subsequently joined the race. The modernization continued, as some of those *Madaris* did not only offer teaching at the level of *ibtidahi* and *idady* but also at *Thanawiy* level.⁶¹ Before the adoption of *thanawi* in some schools, the pupils used to go to *Markaz Ta'lim Arabiy* in Agege, *Mah'ad l-Arabiy* in Ibadan, *Mah'ad Adabiy* and *Mah'ad l-Azhar* in Ilorin, as mentioned earlier to complete their studies.

The modernization reached its climax in the 70s and 80s when Arabian countries such as the Arab Republic of Egypt sent some delegates to teach in Arabic schools in Oyo, with their salary being paid by the donor country. Upon the completion of their studies in those *ma-*

⁶⁰ Abūbakre, 156.

⁶¹ *Madaris* is the Plural form of *Madrasah*. *Ibtidahi*, *Idady* and *Thanawiy* are equivalent to primary, junior secondary and senior secondary in the western education system respectively.

daris, some students were given scholarships, while others were sponsored by their parents or self sponsored to further their studies in different Universities in Arabian countries.

The unemployment problems that the graduates of this system faced, necessitated the call for integration; they needed to know at least the English language, which was not taught in their schools' curriculum in order to secure public jobs or to be qualified to teach in Arabic and Islamic subjects in secular schools.

The integration door was opened in 1961 when the University of Ibadan established the department of Arabic and Islamic studies. The department was established to meet the growing needs and desires of Nigerian students to learn the Arabic language and Islamic Civilization. Thus, it was an opportunity for the Oyo students of Arabic to combine their knowledge of Arabic/Islam with Western subjects such as the English language, economics, geography, history, sociology, political science and so on. In 1963, the department offered a year certificate program for Arabic teachers who had years of experience in teaching. It also offered a diploma course in Arabic and Islamic studies.⁶² Some products of the traditional Arabic schools were gaining admission into secondary school in order to prepare them for WASC/NECO exams. Arabic and Islamic Studies are a parts of the core subjects taken for the exams, with successful candidates furthering their studies through University. Some years back, the products of Arabic schools in Oyo did attempt examination under "Joint Examination Boards for Arabic and Islamic Schools" (JEBAIS), which gave the successful candidates an opportunity to join the Federal College of Education (Special), in Oyo.

Presently, Many Arabic Schools in Oyo Alaafin have introduced the English language and other secular subjects into their curricula. Some of them have obtained government licenses to enable them to operate Nursery/primary schools where they are combining the two systems right from the beginning. *Markaz Ta'lim Arabiy* established by Alhaji Muftau Oloyin and Abdul Latif Jum'ah, as well as *Markaz al-'ulum l-Islamiy al-thaqofi* (which was established by Alfa Lukman Buseri) are a few examples amongst many where both systems are offered concurrently.⁶³ Years

⁶²http://www.uiartsfaculty.net/arabicdept_history. accessed 20-June-2011. Doi, 326-9, and Fafunwa, 61.

⁶³ Interview with Lukman Opeyemi Buseri, the proprietor of *Markaz al-'ulum l-Islamiy al-thaqofi oyo* on 23-June-2011.

ago, Imam Mas'ud Adebayo also established a very modern equipped school where students are obtaining diplomas.⁶⁴

Recommendations

1. Muslims should not confine themselves to religious studies or social sciences only; they should explore the pure sciences as well. There is the need for well-trained Muslim doctors, nurses, engineers, astronauts, pilots, *etcetera*.
2. Muslims must try to excel in whatever field they are (Arabic/Islamic or Western systems of education), in order to be able to face formidable challenges.
3. Proprietors of Arabic schools should try to upgrade their schools and be prepared for positive and healthy competition, for the betterment of Muslims and the Ummah in general.
4. The parents should give their children comparative education. However, they should make sure that their children receive adequate Islamic knowledge as that combination will equip them with a spiritual inclination alongside quality knowledge that can help them and be relevant in contributing to nation building.

Summary and Conclusion

The paper clarifies what is Oyo Alaafin, how and when the city was formed as well as explains its location on the map. It discusses the spread of Islam in the city. It emphasizes that Islam came to Oyo Alaafin from Oyo-Ile. The date of penetration of Islam into Oyo-Ile was not precisely mentioned, but history shows that it existed as far back as the 15th century. The study also discusses the definition, aims and objectives of education in Islam and demonstrates that education is obligatory. It examines the introduction of Arabic/Islamic education in Oyo Alaafin and stresses that it preceded the Western type of education. The research also elucidates the coming of Christianity, which was a pretense for spreading Christian/Western education. It discusses the challenges, which the Christians and Western type of education inflicted on Muslims and Arabic/Islamic education. It also explicates the resistance from the latter. The paper deliberates the modernization of Muslim education in Oyo Alaafin which appeared in two trends: establishment of a Muslim Western type of education and modernization of *Ile-kewu* and the transition of Quranic

⁶⁴Interview with Imam Mas'ud A. Abdul Ganiy, Ajokidero, the Chief Imam of Oyo on 10-June-2011.

schools to *Madaris* modern schools. It also explains the integration and harmonization of the two systems.

At this juncture, it is concluded that modernization on one side and integration on the other side are the best solution to the Muslims' education problems. Secondly, there are minimal issues in teaching Islamic studies in the English language, but one should bear in mind that having access to the original text is more preferable and suitable. That is to say, learning it in its original language (Arabic) is the best. Most of the available textbooks in English were translated or authored by the orientalist who translated the original Arabic books according to their lust and speculations. Allah has warned Muslims against this. He says: Therefore, let not such as believe not therein but follow their own lust divert thee therefrom lest thou perish!⁶⁵

Also Know that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah? Verily! Allah guides not the people who are Zalimun (wrongdoers, disobedient to Allah, and polytheists).⁶⁶

Also, But they have no knowledge, therein. They follow nothing but conjecture; and conjecture avails nothing against the truth.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Al-Qur'an Surah Ta Ha (20):16.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Surah al-Qasas (28):50.

⁶⁷ Ibid Surah al-Najm (53): 28

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