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BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION, DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN A NON-MUSLIM SOCIETY: THE BENIN DIVISION (NIGERIA) EXPERIENCE 1897-1960.[1]

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ABSTRACT

British policy towards religion in colonial Africa was influenced by its intrinsic value to the maintenance of a very strong administration over the continent and achieving the socio-economic objectives Britain set itself at the beginning of its colonization. The Benin Kingdom had been largely untouched by any world religion before the British conquered the Kingdom in 1897 and this conquest facilitated the penetration of Christianity and Islam therein. The failure of Christian missionaries to provide educational services compelled the government to establish a government school in 1901 for the production of its requisite personnel. The services provided by the Government School and the reliance on indigenous institutions under the indirect rule system of administration made missionaries and their education superfluous to the operation of the colonial government. Nevertheless, both Christians and Muslims introduced their own educational services. Though Islamic education was of less value to the colonial Administration and Muslims were an insignificant minority in Benin society, a policy had to be adopted towards the emergent Muslim population. This paper examines

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colonial state policy towards Muslims and its impact on Islamic education in the non-Muslim society of Benin.

L'ADMINISTRATION COLONIALE BRITANNIQUE. DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'ISLAM ET ÉDUCATION ISLAMIQUE DANS UNE SOCIÉTÉ NON-MUSULMANE: L'EXPÉRIENCE DE LA DIVISION DU BÉNIN (NIGERIA), 1897-1960.

RÉSUMÉ

En matière de religion, la politique britannique dans l'Afrique coloniale fut influencée par sa volonté intrinsèque de maintenir une très forte administration sur le continent et de réaliser les objectifs socio-économiques que la Grande-Bretagne s'était fixés au début de la colonisation. Le royaume du Bénin avait été en grande partie épargné par l'ensemble des religions avant la conquête des Britanniques en 1897, et cette conquête y a facilité la pénétration du christianisme et de l'islam. L'échec des missionnaires chrétiens à fournir des services éducatifs contraignit le gouvernement à mettre en place une école publique en 1901 pour la formation du personnel dont il avait besoin. Les services fournis par l'École gouvernementale et le recours à des institutions autochtones dans le cadre du système d'administration indirecte rendirent les missionnaires ainsi que leur système éducatif superflus pour le fonctionnement de l'administration coloniale. Néanmoins, les musulmans et les chrétiens introduisirent leurs propres services éducatifs. Bien que l'éducation islamique fût de moindre valeur pour l'administration coloniale et que les musulmans fussent minoritaires dans la société béninoise, une politique devait être adoptée à l'égard de la population musulmane émergente. Cet article examine la politique coloniale vis-à-vis des musulmans et son impact sur l'éducation islamique dans la société non-musulmane du Bénin.

INTRODUCTION

The spread of Islam from North Africa into West Africa was a gradual and uneven process. In spite of the concomitant benefits of literacy and trade, Islam's march into the forest and coastal regions was much slower. Islam was yet to be embraced by many communities in the forest and coastal regions when Europeans colonized Africa in the nineteenth century. Trimingham's study of Islam in West Africa shows that in spite of over eight centuries of Islamic proselytization in West Africa, there were fewer Muslims than indigenous religion adherents in the West Africa and the forests communities were only penetrated under colonial rule because of improved communication facilitating more trade and unimpeded migrations, European privileging of Muslim rulers and the lesser gulf between African and Islamic culture than European Christian culture.[2] Even this Islamic expansion into the forest regions, according to Parrinder, was concentrated in the urban-based communities associated with trade and left most farming village based communities largely untouched.[3] In spite of this generalized knowledge on the expansion of Islam into the forest regions under colonial rule, most studies concentrate on societies that have been partially penetrated by Islam prior to the colonization by Europeans and not on those that had no contact with Islam like Benin Kingdom. Similarly, there seem to be no studies of relations between European colonial administration like the British and Muslims in societies that were penetrated by Muslims under colonization.

Studies on relationship between the British colonial administration and Muslims in Africa show that the maintenance of law and order largely guided British administrative policies and this influenced the attitude and policies of the British officials towards Islam and Muslims. In addition, the British officials in Africa were guided by their long experience of dealing with Muslims elsewhere, their own racist beliefs which associated Islam with the alleged lower level of African intellectual development and spirituality and the fear of fanatical rebellions.[4] These attitudes played a role in their formulation of policies that resulted in the pragmatic utilization and integration of selected Islamic institutions into the colonial administrative structures. The implementation of policies was however, affected by the individual

[2] Trimingham, 1962: 224-231.
[3] Parrinder, 1959: 131-5.
[4] Lugard, 1965: 78, Prasch, 1989, Reynolds, 2001:601-604, and Weiss, 2004:1-5.

disposition of the "man on the spot"— the British colonial officials located in particular territories across the continent, and varied from hostility to mere tolerance towards Islam. Implementation of policies also depended on how much they furthered the achievement of British socio-economic and political objectives in Africa. In societies under Muslim rulers, like parts of Northern Nigeria, the government employed aspects of pre-existing Islamic institutions and personnel for the administration of that part of Nigeria. Whereas in territories with large Muslim populations under non-Muslim rulers, like some parts of Yoruba land, the British colonial administration formulated special education policies to facilitate the incorporation of Muslims into the administration.[5] But in territories which colonialism was inadvertently opening up for Islamic penetration,[6] the British were faced with a policy dilemma, which they seem not to have been able to address. Benin is an example of one such territory that was penetrated by Islam under colonial rule. This paper therefore seeks to extend the frontiers of previous studies by examining the relations between the British colonial officials and groups of peoples that embraced Islam under colonial rule in Nigeria. This study uses the core area of Benin Kingdom (constituted as Benin Division under colonial rule) as a case study to examine British policies towards newly converted Muslims in non-Muslim societies and their effects on the Muslim *Ummah*.

It is probably because of the belated spread and development of Islam in Benin Division and the relatively small population of Muslims therein that Islam has not received much attention in the historical study of Benin. References to Islam are scattered in some of the works of Jacob Egharevba.[7] On the other hand, Balogun's study focused largely on the documentation of the Imams and Mosques in Benin City.[8] Subsequent studies on Benin touch on Islam only in passing,[9] just as works on Islam among the Edo treat Benin peripherally[10] and are completely silent on the development of formal Islamic Education.

This article looks at the relationship between the British administration and the growing but marginal Muslim group in Benin through the prism of education. It

[5]Gbadamosi, 1967: 102-109.
[6] Levtzion and Pouwels, 2000: 14.
[7] Egharevba, 1953, Egharevba, 1969 and Egharevba, 1974.
[8] Balogun,1972.
[9] Aisien, 2001 and Usuanlele, 2002.
[10] Fishers, 1963, Oseni, 1987; Oseni, 1996, Oseni, 1999 and Audu, 1997.

contends that Islam penetrated Benin under British colonialism and that Muslims gained the attention of the administration in the 1940s only after they asserted themselves as a distinct group which deserved to be treated fairly and placed on an equal footing with other religious groups. It further argues that Muslim formal Education in Benin was championed and established by the representative of the *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha at Islam*, from Lahore, India, (rather than *Ahmadiyya Anjuman 'at-e-Islam* of Qadian [India] or its Nigerian affiliate, Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam Nigeria), and that its later affiliation with the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Nigeria, in the mid-1940s was characterized by intermittent conflicts over ownership and control of the schools.

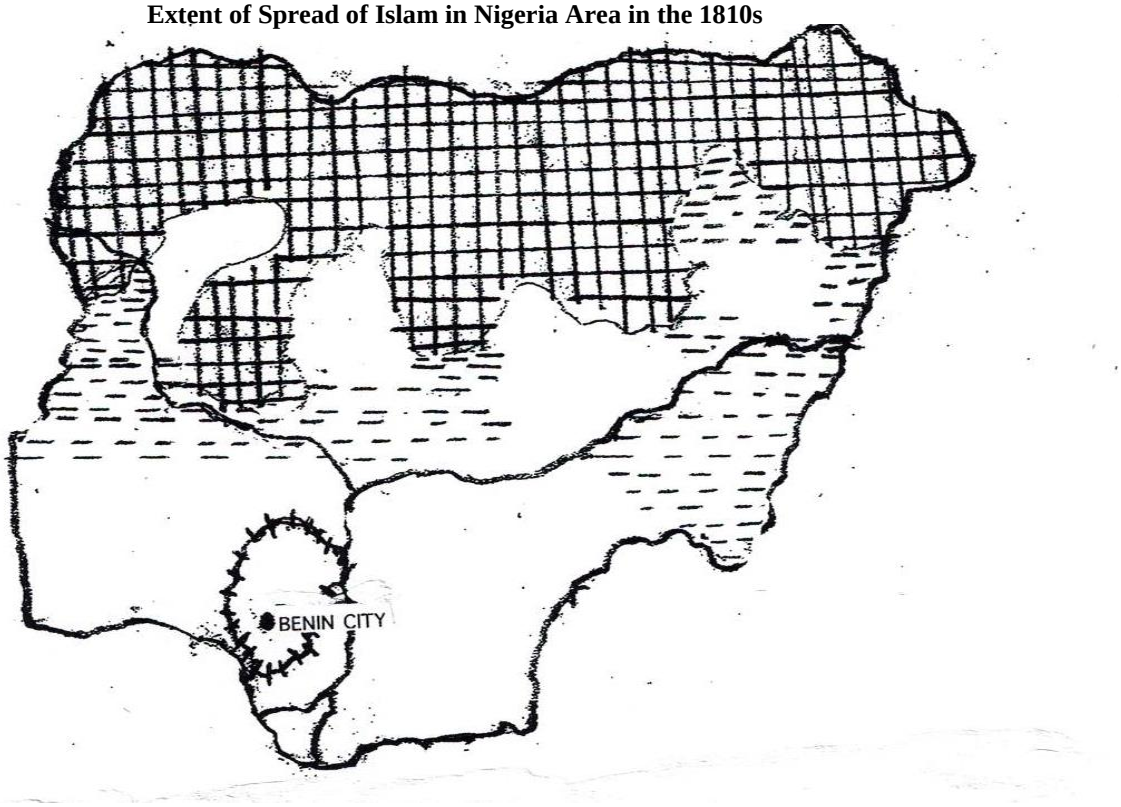
Unlike previous studies on Islam in Benin, which relied mainly on oral sources,[11] this present study combines archival and oral sources as well as other written materials to reconstruct the history of Islam in Benin, development of formal Islamic education, and the colonial administration policies on Islamic education in Benin. The paper is divided into seven sections starting with an introduction and the subsequent section revisiting the introduction and spread of among the Benin people. This is followed by an examination of the British colonial administration's policy towards Islam in Benin. The fourth section looks at the British administration's policy on Muslim education, while the fifth focuses on the emergent Muslim communities' responses to British colonial administrative policies of exclusion and neglect. The sixth examines the political changes and their effects on Muslim representation in education policy implementation in the post-Second World War period and the last section is the conclusion.

Revisiting the Introduction of Islam to Benin Kingdom

Benin Kingdom is one of the old Kingdoms of the Forest region of West Africa, which held sway over a large area of Southern Nigeria since the fifteenth century. Though continuously visited by European traders and Christian Missionaries, the Kingdom resisted Christian and other foreign religious proselytization and maintained its independence till late 19th Century. The attempt of a British Consular party to force their way into the capital, Benin City, in later 1896 was met with a defensive ambush

[11]Balogun, (1977), Oseni " (1996), and Audu, 1997

Extent of Spread of Islam in Nigeria Area in the 1810s



and the killing of some of the officials. The British government sent an expeditionary force which destroyed the capital, looted its religious and art treasures, deposed and exiled the Oba (the king) and imposed British Colonial administration in February 1897. This incident brought for the first time, an influx of people, particularly Africans of various ethnicities and religions into the Kingdom.[12]

[12] Oba Akenzua II, 1937.

The prevailing view on the introduction of Islam to Benin is that it was brought by a Lagos Prince and Muslim trader named Olojo Kosoko who had settled in Benin City along with his followers before the British conquest of Benin in 1897. This narrative was first documented by Jacob Egharevba.[13] This story seemed to have been re-echoed by Balogun when he claimed that "By the end of the 19th century, some Yoruba Muslims had settled in Benin City as traders and artisans."[14] Balogun however does not specify the date of arrival and the event that brought the Yoruba Muslims to Benin, nor does he explain the forces and factors that facilitated the penetration of Islam into Benin Society. Other scholars have simply accepted Egharevba's and Balogun's claims of pre-colonial settlement of Prince Olojo and his Muslim followers and the penetration of Islam into Benin City.[15]

However, what can be discerned from other available evidence, particularly a recent court ruling in the case between the Igiehon and Olojo families is that Prince Olojo had come with the British conquerors for whom he was working to Benin City and settled along with other Yoruba Muslims.[16] Egharevba even corroborated Igiehon family's claim of ownership of the land on which Olojo built his house when he stated that

> He [Igiehon] left Benin City to Obadan, Benin Division after the deportation of Oba [Ovonramwen] to old Calabar. He…returned to Benin City in 1907. He met a part of his father's house in Iguisi or now Lagos Street being occupied by Olojo Kosoko of Lagos, and therefore now built his own house at Ibiwe Street, Benin City.[17]

This statement buttressed the point that Prince Olojo Kosoko was not a settled resident of Benin City before the British conquest as he took up residence at a homestead that had been deserted following British occupation when he came with the British conquerors.

Another important evidence which supports the view that there were no resident Muslims in Benin City before the British conquest is that collected by the late Dr Robert Elwin Bradbury. He was told by the late Chief Eghobamien, the *Osuma* of

[13] Egharevba, 1969: 39-40.
[14] Balogun,1972 18.
[15] Oseni, 1996: 72 and Aisien, 2001:204.
[16] Igiehon, 1996: 56-7 and 64-5.
[17] Egharevba, 1969: 78.

Benin, an adult who resided in Benin City before British invasion, that there were no Muslims in Benin before the 1897 conquest and that any Benin person who converted to Islam and returned to the City to live would have been killed.[18] Oba Akenzua II also informed the British that there was no non-indigene resident in Benin City before conquest.[19] Given this evidence, it can be inferred that Olojo might have visited the city before conquest, but only settled with his fellow Muslim after 1897.

It was only after the British conquest that migrants of other ethnicities started to work, trade and settle in Benin. The British consular administration had brought and stationed Hausa, Yoruba and Nupe soldiers during and immediately after the British invasion of Benin. In addition, the colonial administration under Turner recruited twenty Accra men from the Gold Coast to teach rubber tapping. The government employed stranger population was simultaneously swelled by the influx of voluntary migrants of other ethnicities as well. Captain Roupell, reported the migration of an estimated nine hundred Lagos Yoruba rubber gatherers to Ikoha river market area alone in April 1897, while Alfred Turner, the Resident, corroborated the daily influx of strangers whose ethnicities he identified as Hausa, Yoruba, Nupe and Jekri (Itsekiri) into Benin a month later.[20] The 1921 Census recorded 7,310 Yoruba and 2,780 other Sudanese (representing Hausa, Nupe and other Northern Nigerian immigrants) in Benin Province.[21] It was through these immigrants that Muslims penetrated Benin. Egharevba corroborated the role of these soldiers and traders in a later work when he stated that

> Islamism or Mohammedanism was introduced to Benin during the punitive expedition in 1897 by the soldiers; Hausas and Yorubas of the British troops. At the same time Chief Olojo Kosoko was worshipping with them together."[22]

In addition to the new religion, the conquest opened Benin, for the first time, to non-indigenous traders.

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[18] The University of Birmingham Library, Birmingham (UK) R.E. Bradbury Papers, Manuscript BS 20 Benin, Nupe, Kukuruku and Islam by Chief Osuma, 15/5/57.
[19] National Archives, Ibadan (henceforth referred to as N.A.I.), BP 929, Water Rates, Benin City, Vol. I: Oba Akenzua II to Water Rate Assessment Officer, 27/03/1935.
[20] Roupell, 1897 (CalProf 8/2, ii to Turner 22/4) and Turner, 1897 (to CG 26/5).
[21] Talbot, 1968: 26.
[22] Egharevba, 1974: 20.

The Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba Muslims constituted a Muslim community in Benin City and were settled largely near the town centre, especially the Iguisi and Ibiwe quarters (from which a new street called Lagos Street was carved out), while the Ada n'Ode area of Ugbague quarters was renamed Okemole (Edo corruption of Yoruba word — Oke Imole, meaning "Hill sanctuary of Muslims").[23] The area settled in by the Muslims was bounded by the family homestead of the Iyase Ohenmwen lineage, whose member, Ibrahim Elaiho Guobadia, became one of the first Benin indigenes to embrace Islam. This geographical proximity consolidated the Muslims into a self-contained community whose population continued to increase through immigration and conversions.

The conversion of Benins to both Christianity and Islam occurred after 1897 and mostly outside Benin kingdom's territory.[24] This development was largely facilitated by the deposition and deportation of the Oba Ovonramwen (the King of Benin) in 1897 and the seventeen years interregnum characterized by the absence of the monarchy that followed. During this period, Benin's indigenous political titles, which had religious and ritual functions and were dispensed by the Oba along with political patronage, became obsolete and less materially rewarding. It was the Benin long distance traders in North Eastern Yoruba land who first converted to Islam. They were not affected by the economic dislocation in Benin and were no longer restricted in their religious and political identity by the Oba whose political authority, protection and patronage had sustained their activities in North East Yorubaland. A few of them embraced Islam during their trading forays to Ilorin in the period after 1897.[25] According to Egharevba, the first Benin convert was his uncle Elaiho Guobadia, who was renamed 'Ibrahim' after conversion. He further stated that Ibrahim Elaiho proselytization among the Benins

> drawn (sic) many citizens of Benin into it from 1899…Those who joined him are the following:- Naibi Yesufu Otokiti, Balogun Bello Osagie, Sarumi Lawal, Aguebor Osula, Lawani Borokini Edo, Yesufu Eke, Obasuyi, Giwa

[23] Aisien, 2001: 205-6.

[24] The first Benins who embraced Christianity were members of the entourage of exiled Oba Ovonramwen to Calabar, amongst whom was one of his Oloi (Queen) Arokun a.k.a Ayosere. See Aisien, 2001: 204.

[25] The University of Birmingham Library, Birmingham (UK) R.E. Bradbury Papers, Manuscript BS 20 Benin, Nupe, Kukuruku and Islam by Chief Osuma, 15/5/57 and BS 21 Benin and Ilorin, by Chief Osuma, and Egharevba, 1974: 20.

> Osagie, Okunzuwa Uzamere, Chief Omokaro Ighama, Aminu Ugo, Ginadu Idehen, Ibrahim Obasuyi, Mustapha Udo, Ibrahim Asa, Jimoh Idukpaye, Jegede, Salawu Guobadia, Jimoh Edo, Oyiboke, Adam Osunde, Bakare Akpata and many others.[26]

The Benin Muslim community waxed stronger after the turn of the century and concentrated their efforts on *da'wa* (propagation) of their religion and building of mosques. The policy of Lugardian indirect rule policy introduced in the second decade of twentieth century by the colonial government and which increasingly emphasized ethnic segregation, soon dispersed the Muslim community and settled some in the newly created Yoruba Street and Hausa Quarters. The long distance between the only existing Lagos Street Mosque (built by Olojo Kosoko in 1911) and the new segregated quarters of the Yoruba street and Hausa Quarters and the settlement of Benin indigenous Muslims in new locations outside Okemole area consequently spurred Muslims to demonstrate their zeal by building mosque within their residences (Ibrahim Gbadamasi Elaiho Guobadia 1916, Edobor Lawani Borokini 1920 and Yesufu Otokiti 1925).[27] Alongside the building of mosques, these men along with other Muslims organized *Kewu* – traditional Islamic schools or what Gbadamosi described as "Piazza School"[28] in the mosques and private houses for teaching Islam to their children, dependants and converts.

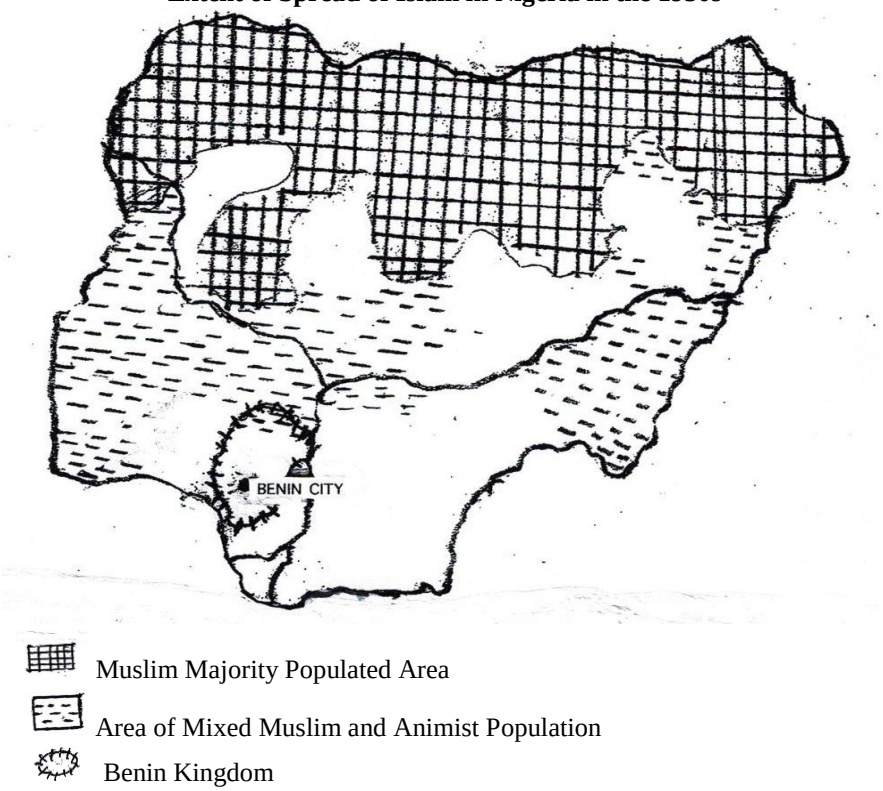
British Policy Towards Islam in Benin

British official policies towards religious groups in Benin can be described as wavering between tolerance and intolerance depending on perceived British interests at any given time and the disposition of the colonial officials on the spot. Both Christianity and Indigenous religions received favourable treatment because most colonial officials and British home government espoused Christianity, while at the same time it tolerated the indigenous ruling aristocracy's ideological and spiritual dispositions (derived from indigenous religion) just simply to facilitate the indirect

[26] Egharevba,1974 :20.
[27] Balogun, 1972: 23.
[28] Gbadamosi, 1967: 89-91.

rule system of governance in the protectorate. Islam had no such ideological precedence and so had neither usefulness nor ties with the administration. This is in spite of the emergence of a Muslim community in Benin City shortly after British conquest.

Extent of Spread of Islam in Nigeria in the 1930s



The population of Muslims at this time was small and composed mostly of non-Benin immigrants. This situation was different from those in parts of Yorubaland and some Edo areas of Kukuruku Division where there were sizeable indigenous Muslim populations mixed with indigenous religious practitioners and a continuously growing Christian community.

The small population and immigrant status of most Muslims in Benin meant that they were not important in the colonial administration's political objectives and could easily be repatriated for any political misdemeanor. But this did not mean that the Colonial Officers did not care about the community and as a potential source of future political problems. As a result, the administration's policy was one of preemptive avoidance of any religious and ideological issues with conflict potentials. This was even more so because in a British official's mind, Islam had a conflict potential that could easily degenerate into fanaticism. For instance, in 1927 in the neighbouring Kukuruku division of Benin Province (with a relatively larger Muslim population), when it was reported that a person calling himself 'son of King of Mecca' passed through the Northern part of the Division with about forty men and women canvassing for Islam, when he was invited by the District Officer, he absconded and "his followers were intimidated into submission." [29] The invitation of these Muslim proselytizers was obviously to compel them to subordinate themselves and accept the Islamic doctrines upheld by the local rulers and conform to prevailing laws. The British did not tolerate Muslims whose doctrines differed from those of the local rulers who were used under their indirect rule system. The activities of Muslims were closely watched by the administration in the mold of differentiating between what Reynolds had called the "good and bad" Muslims.

In the case of Benin, the Muslim community included offspring of the overthrown aristocracy. They were a minority and could not be used to carry out colonial administration functions because they shunned taking traditional chieftaincy titles, which was a prerequisite for inclusion in the indirect rule administration. For example, Ibrahim Elaiho who later became an *Imam* is documented to have "entirely refused to become a warrant and titled chief when he was asked by late Oba Eweka II, his great friend, to do so on several occasions"[30] Of the ten Benin Muslims, whose lives were documented by Egharevba, only one Okungbowa II renounced Islam in 1918 and took a chieftaincy title (the *Edogun*) and was charged with the administration of a city ward before returning to Islam in 1933.[31] The reason for not taking titles was because this act would have subordinated them to the Oba who was not a Muslim and it entailed performing indigenous rituals prohibited by Islam. In spite of their exclusion from the

[29] N. A.I, CSO 26/2 File 14617 Vol. IV, Annual Report on Benin Province, 1927, 51.
[30] Egharevba, 1969: 77.
[31] Egharevba, 1969: 94.

administration of the community on account of their faith, Muslims maintained good relationship with and courted the indigenous title holders who dominated Native Administration, especially for their influence; a relationship which was also reciprocated and thus ensured peaceful relations.

Colonial Administration and the Education of Muslims

When Benin was conquered in 1897, the territory was put under Niger Coast Protectorate administration, one of the three administrative organs that the British set up between 1850 and 1880s to facilitate British colonization activities in the area that became known as Nigeria.[32] The Niger Coast Protectorate administration had expected the Christian Missionaries to rush into Benin territory and establish schools, which they would later assist financially and morally.[33] Only the Society of African Missionaries (SMA), a part of the Roman Catholic Mission, which secured land in 1899 seized the initiative, but failed to move in because of personality conflicts among its top clergy.[34] Partly because of disagreements and funding problems in some of the Missions, no mission entered Benin territory till 1900 and none built schools till 1902. The high cost of sending and maintaining children of Benin Chiefs in schools in faraway Calabar at the expense of the colonial administration and the reluctance of chiefs to acquiesce to the demand of the administration[35] forced the Colonial administration to direct Benin City Chiefs to impose a levy which was used to build the Government School in Benin City in 1901. The school was for "a purely secular education as there is no mission in the Benin City territories."[36]

The secular character of the only Government School conflicted with the interest and obligations of Muslims. Islam obliges its adherents to study and acquire

[32] Two of the administrations namely the Niger Coast Protectorate and Royal Niger Company were merged in 1900 to from the Southern Nigeria Protectorate. The Yoruba territories under Lagos colony were also further merged with the Southern Nigeria Protectorate in 1906 and in 1914 it was amalgamated with Northern Nigeria Protectorate to form present day Nigeria.
[33] N.A.I.,CSO 1/13 Vol. 7 Despatch 159 Annual Report for the year 1896-1897, Moor to Foreign Office, 10/12/1897, 376.
[34] Gantly, 2000: 241.
[35] Usuanlele, 2002: 50-51
[36] N.A.I. CSO1/13 Vol.14, Despatch 29 Sir Ralph Moor, High Commissioner, Southern Nigeria Protectorate, to Secretary of State for Colonies, 6/2/1901, 69.

knowledge of their religion and the school was the means to fulfilling this obligation. But since this school did not fulfill this end, such schools largely attracted the antipathy of the Muslims who were therefore not too disposed to sending their children to them.

Even one of the early Governors appointed shortly after the establishment of Government School was not too comfortable with the secular character of the school. Governor Frederick Lugard (1914-1918) had expressed concern about the "morals" (more a euphemism for loyalty to and respect for the British) of educated Africans; and in 1915 directed that the colonial administration should investigate how to promote morality and loyalty to the British and change the negative attitude of Africans against British presence in Nigeria, through the teaching of religious subjects in Government Schools. An official report in Benin Province, however, showed that "The majority of the parents of the pupils are not in favour of religious instruction" and "… pupils… would not attend without their parents' consent."[37] Though the schools taught moral instructions, Mr. James Watt, the District Commissioner of Benin Province opined that moral instruction "as taught at present are of no value whatever".[38] The school, and later Native Authority (NA) Schools, remained secular and taught no religious subjects. It was not until 1942 that the Central administration directed "that a period of religious instruction should be included in the normal time-table of all government and NA schools, and that there should be freedom of entry to all such schools for duly accredited representatives of approved missionary societies."[39]

The Christian mission schools on the other hand taught Christian religious knowledge and catechisms; and they were the instruments for the conversion of pupils to their denominations. This was confirmed by the Provincial Commissioner, Mr. James Watt, who accused the mission schools in the province of giving less attention to education.[40] One of the missions, the CMS in 1928

[37] NAI BP 220/1915 Mr. James Watt, Commissioner, Benin Province to Secretary Southern Nigeria Protectorate, 21/6/1915.
[38] NAI BP 553/1915 Mr. James Watt, Commissioner, Benin Province to Director of Education, Lagos, 23/05/1916.
[39] NAI, BP 2126 S.G. Morris, Director of Education to Secretary, Western Provinces, 27/3/1942, 3.
[40]N. A. I., BP 553/1915 Mr. James Watt, Commissioner, Benin Province to Secretary Southern Nigeria Protectorate, 24/12/1915.

> …made a rule that all children who attend our Day Schools must attend one of the C.M.S. Churches on Sundays at least once a day. Tickets are given out each Friday and are collected on Sunday and the attendance is recorded in a register. A few children have had to be sent away from school because they have not attended church.[41]

Similar practices obtained in the schools established and run by other Christian denominations. The Christian mission schools were, because of their conversion objective, largely resented by the Muslim population who declined exposing their children to the danger of Christian conversion.

To worsen matters for the Muslims, the colonial administration virtually excluded Muslims from participation in formulating and implementing educational policies in the province. For instance, the Provincial School Committee, which was established in 1917, had representatives of both the CMS and RCM and traditional title holders, but none from the Muslims.[42] This exclusion disregarded the fact of the increasing population of Muslims in one of the divisions of the Province. Kukuruku Division had some local Muslim rulers and the government even employed and paid teachers to teach Islamic religious knowledge in Government schools in Agbede and Auchi.[43] Even as late as 1943 after the establishment of a Muslim school in Benin City, Muslims were still not represented in the Benin Division School Committee.[44] The policy of exclusion forced the Muslims to look for alternative ways of attending to the religious education needs of their children.

The Muslim Community's Responses to Exclusion and Neglect

The colonial administration largely neglected the peculiar welfare needs of Muslims, just as it generally neglected the welfare of Africans. Many African groups and communities were therefore forced to form their own civil associations to cater to and serve their ethnic or nationality or social group needs. Muslims also formed such

[41] N. A. I., CMS Y 2/1/1 Rev. W.J. Payne, Report from the Benin District, 30/4/1928.
[42] N. A.I, BP 86/1917, Resident, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Protectorate, 16/08/1917,15.
[43] N. A. I., BP 62/1922 District Officer, Kukuruku Division to Resident, Benin Province, 10,07/1922, 7.
[44] N. A. I., BP 2247 Minutes of Meeting 4th September 1943, 1.

associations in Yoruba land where young and educated Yoruba Muslims in such places as Abeokuta, Ibadan and Ijebu-Ode used such associations to build Muslim schools in the 1920s.[45] Since the development and spread of Islam in Benin was largely influenced by Yoruba Muslims, similar developments were replicated among Benin Muslims. Alongside the formation of Muslim societies was the inflow of literature on Islam, particularly through the Ahmadiyya Movement and its two factions namely the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya of Qadian, India (whose headquarters was later relocated to Rabwah, Pakistan) and Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore, then in India (now Pakistan). Adherents were quickly won in Benin City by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore.

The impact of imported literature on young people in Benin City is best exemplified by the life of Mr. Sulaiman Bamijoko Adeyemi who became a follower of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore and was to play a leading role in the Muslim Brotherhood Society and the development of formal Muslim education in Benin Division. Mr. Adeyemi was an indigene of Odogbolu in Ijebu Province who worked as a photographer in Benin City. He claimed that he was a Christian up till 1927 when he "accepted Islam through our [Ahmadiyya Lahore] literature."[46] He saw himself as a missionary of Islam and tried to embark on preaching tours of Benin Province on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore section, but did not get the letter of introduction he had requested from the Resident of Benin Province. Adeyemi also focused on establishing a school for Muslim children, a feat he achieved and managed in Benin Division.

Shortly after Adeyemi's conversion, young Muslims formed the Moslem Brotherhood Society in Benin City in 1929 for the purpose of educating young Muslims in their faith.[47] The founder of the Moslem Brotherhood Society is not established, as Balogun credits its formation to Alhaji Momoh Ibrahim, the Chief

[45] Gbadamosi, 1967:113-114.
[46] *World-wide Religious Revolution: Achievements of the Lahore Section of the Ahmadiyya – Movement, Conquest of Islam in Different Countries: Fruits of Islamic Propaganda*, 18. www//aaiii.org/textbooks/others.aaiii/worldwidereligious revolution/worldwidereligiousrevolution.pdf and Sulaiman,1952: 38.
[47] [47] *World-wide Religious Revolution: Achievements of the Lahore Section of the Ahmadiyya – Movement, Conquest of Islam in Different Countries: Fruits of Islamic Propaganda*, 24. www//aaiii.org/textbooks/others.aaiii/worldwidereligious revolution/worldwidereligiousrevolution.pdf.

Imam's son, while the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore credits Mr. Sulaiman Bamijoko Adeyemi as the founder of "a Muslim Brotherhood Society at Benin City (Nigeria)."[48] The Moslem Brotherhood Society seemed to have started as a non-denominational organization, which embraced all Muslims irrespective of sect and tendencies and ethnicity. But for still unclear reasons, the Society quickly broke into factions and some reconciliation was later achieved[49] with Adeyemi as the main moving force behind the Society.

Adeyemi claimed that at the society's inauguration in 1929, they were advised by Oba Eweka II (1914-1933), the King of Benin, "to propagate (sic) by building our own School like other Missionaries in Benin."[50] Also Oba Eweka II promised a donation of 240 sheets of corrugated Iron sheet and £60 towards the building. The approval of the Society's application for the Native Administration's financial assistance for the school was made conditional upon the commencement of the building of the institution. The building of the latter was yet to commence when Oba Eweka II passed on in 1933. His son and successor, as the Edaiken (Crown Prince) and subsequently Oba Akenzua II, had to honor his father's pledge by donating 326 corrugated iron sheets, an increase on the number pledged by his father and also made a personal donation of £10.[51] Oba Akenzua II, like his father, was enthusiastic about any development that would bring modernization to his subjects and the community. Like his father, he stuck to the indigenous religion, but became an appointed Patron of the Moslem Brotherhood Society. To further honour the Crown Prince for his contributions, the Moslem Brotherhood Society named their school Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood School, after the title of the Benin Crown Prince - *Edaiken.*

The Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood School began in a building on Forestry Road in 1929 with the Moslem Brotherhood Society (Proprietor) and Mr. Adeyemi (leader of Society) as Manager of the School. Like most mission schools of the period, it lacked the qualified staff and finance to meet the requisite standards set for accessing government grant-in-aid. According to the District Officer

[48] Ibid, 18.
[49]N.A.I., BP 924 Comments of Mr. Pullen, District Officer, Benin Division on Petition from the Moslem Brotherhood Society to the Resident, Benin, 14/11/1935, 5.
[50]N. A.I, BP 924, B.A. Suleiman, Leader and Manager, Moslem Brotherhood Society to Resident, Benin Province, 6/11/1935, 7.
[51] Ibid

> the Society is more concerned with the question of religious propaganda than with education. The school is not at present very successful from an educational point of view, and certainly not sufficiently successful or promising to justify a special capital grant on educational grounds. [52]

By 1934, the school's building on Forestry Road was sold to raise money to buy a bigger place. On the other hand, Adeyemi, the manager was frantically struggling with the Benin Divisional Administration to release a grant that was purportedly pledged by the late Oba Eweka II to enable the school to relocate to a new site given to the Society by Oba Akenzua II. The pledge, however, was not honoured for lack of documented record of the pledge. [53] Also the colonial administration was guided by the Lieutenant General's ruling against Native Authorities funding of Mission Schools, a policy which had earlier been given when the Late Oba Eweka II donated £100 to support the newly established and only Roman Catholic School in Benin City.[54]

With the colonial administration's refusal to redeem Oba Eweka II's pledge to the society (in spite of numerous petitions and representations), Adeyemi consequently invited the public to the foundation laying ceremony of the school to raise funds. Donations were received from Oba Akenzua II who gave an undisclosed amount along with 326 corrugated Iron sheets; Mr. J.E. Obaseki £5:5s:0d; Mr C.O. Olowu, President of Yoruba Union £2:2s:0d; the Post Master £1:1s:0d; the Inspector of Police £1:1s:0d; the Resident of Benin Province 10s:0d; Mr. A. P. Pullen, District Officer, 5s:0d; Assistant District Officers 2d:0d each and Mr. J.S. Amadasun 6d.[55] The donors were all Christians. The presence and personal contributions of the British Colonial officials at the foundation laying ceremony seems indicative of the local administration's toleration of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore Movement. The Resident of Benin Province had earlier received a letter from Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore, which introduced Mr. Adeyemi as a

[52] Ibid, Petition from the Moslem Brotherhood Society to the Resident Benin: Comments by D.O. 14/11/1935, 5.
[53] Ibid, B.A. Adeyemi, Leader and Manager of Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood School, Benin City to Resident, Benin Province, 6/11/1935, 7.
[54] N. A. I, BP 762, Secretary (Southern Provinces) to Resident (Benin Province), 11/4/ 1934, and 13/4/1934.
[55] Ilahi, 1935: 6.

missionary representing them in the Province and might have influenced the colonial officers' participation at the event. It should however be noted that the Ahmadiyya have had good working relations with the British in the past and abhorred the use of violent Jihad to propagate Islam,[56]while the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore was well known and established in Woking, England.

The non-listing of prominent Muslim as donors at the school fund raising event is indicative of their dissociation from the activities of the Society. It also signified a rift in the Benin Muslim community over relations with the Ahmadiyya. Such rifts between the Ahmadiyya and traditional or Orthodox Muslims were common and had earlier happened in Lagos in the 1920s.[57] The rift between the Society and the Orthodox Muslims blew open with the relocation of the school in 1936 to a new site (given by the Oba) and the conversion of a classroom into a mosque for the exclusive use of Society members or Ahmadiyya Lahore affiliates. The conversion of a classroom into a Mosque is suggestive of either the traditional Ahmadiyya rejection of non-Ahmadiyya leadership at prayers[58] or the expulsion or prohibition of the Ahmadiyya sect from the Central Mosque. This meant that differences had arisen because of Adeyemi's Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Isha'at-i-Islam of Lahore, India connection and membership. The rejection and disagreements worsened and in 1937 Adeyemi notified the colonial administration that "the above Mission (Moslem Brotherhood Mission, Benin City Branch, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha at Islam, Lahore) in Benin is now functioning separately and in independence of Orthodox illiterate Moslems."[59] The cause of these problems was largely because of the doctrinal differences with Adeyemi's affiliation with Ahmadiyya. Moreover, Adeyemi was a young man and did not seem to have subordinated himself to the leadership and counsel of the older and wealthier Muslims who were more entrenched and established in Benin society. He nonetheless referred to them derogatorily as "illiterate," a euphemism for conservative and backward. These were in contrast to the Ahmadiyya's tendency to espouse the idea of modernization of societal institutions.

[56] Beck, 2005: 219.
[57] Reichmuth, 1996: 371-2.
[58] Reichmuth, 1996: 372.
[59] N. A. I., BP 924 B.A. Suleiman, The Founder and President to Resident, BP 24/03/1937, 16.

Lacking the support of the larger Muslim community, Adeyemi changed his view of the school as a means "to expand our religion in Benin City area."[60] Rather, he henceforth came to view the school as a business venture; converting the school into his private property, though the school still gave attention to Islamic knowledge catering to the needs of Muslim children. He confirmed this private property and business status of the school in a later stage of his life when he stated that

> I built the school through the help of Allah the most high, while I was still an authodox (sic) Moslem. I started the building of the School from 1933 to December 1934, *and I had run the School for good ten years as my private property*.[61] (My emphasis)

Set against this backdrop, the school could only make slow progress and could not qualify for government's grant. Nonetheless, it remained the only Muslim school and served the needs of some Muslim and non-Muslim children.

The Orthodox Muslims on the other hand introduced another organization, the Ansar Ud Deen Society, an idea borrowed from Yoruba land. The Ansar Ud Deen was established in Lagos in 1923 with orientation and focus on modernization. This would appear to have been in deference to the indigenous centres of Islamic learning and the Arab world rather than the seeming innovations of the Ahmadiyya and control from India.[62] The Ansar Ud Deen Society got a land donation from Bello Osagie in the 1940s on which they built the Ansar Ud Deen Moslem School in Benin City 1953.[63] This development set the stage for competition and rivalry between the Ansar Ud Deen and the Adeyemi led Ahmadiyya.

With the competition and rivalry to win over Muslim children to their schools, Adeyemi became desperate to give his school an edge over the up-coming Ansar Ud Deen Moslem School. As a result, he was willing to exploit and associate with any organization that would help his school to succeed. He quickly affiliated his Edaiken Moslem School with the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in Nigeria based in Lagos

[60] Benin Traditional Council Archives, Benin City (henceforth BTCA), LEA 520 B. A. Suleiman (Founder and Manager, Ahmadiyya School, Benin City to Jibril Martin, The Proprietor, Ahmadiyya Schools, Lagos, 02/01/1958, 7.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Reichmuth, 1996: 372-3.
[63] Personal Communication with Alhaji Abdul Lateef Enabulele, Chief Imam of Benin City at Benin City Central Mosque, on 18th July 2011

which was formerly affiliated with the rival Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya of Qadian. Even then, Adeyemi was not straight forward in his dealings with the Jubril Martins led Ahmadiyya Movement in lslam in Nigeria. In his 1950s letters to Jubril Martins, he claimed to have been an Orthodox Muslim in the 1930s.[64] This claim of Adeyemi was not true because in the 1930s, he had submitted a letter of introduction of himself by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Isha'at-i-Islam of Lahore, India to the Resident of Benin Province in which he even requested for an official letter of introduction from the Resident to various government officials, so that he could be allowed to embark on missionary work in the Province on behalf of the same Lahore group.[65] This denial of being an Ahmadi in the 1930s in his communications with Martins was obviously motivated by the sharp differences between Ahmadiyya Movement of Qadian (to which Martins formerly aligned)[66] and Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore. Adeyemi did not want Martins to know about his past connection with Lahore and wanted to be seen as a convert to Martins's sect. This was in order to secure desperately needed assistance for his Moslem School. In the end he affiliated the school with Martin's Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in Nigeria in 1944/5, and changed the name of the School to *Edaiken Ahmadiyya Muslim School*.

The affiliation to the Ahmadiyya in Islam in Nigeria transformed the competition and rivalry with Ansar Ud Deen Society into full blown conflict. To raise the stakes, Adeyemi claimed that there were no Ahmadi (meaning subscribers and former subscribers to Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya of Qadian) in Benin City and that it was with his latest affiliation that the Ahmadiyya in Islam in Nigeria Mission was introduced to Benin City. He further claimed that

> "for that purpose [introducing Ahmadiyya in Islam in Nigeria to Benin City], the Authodox (sic) Moslems persecuted me and I was taken to the court and fined fifty pounds sterling, and I paid the money from my personal Accounts"[67]

[64] B. T. C. A., LEA 468 B.A. Suleiman, Retired School Master, Ahmadiyya School, Benin City to Ministry of Education, Ibadan, 30/6/1958, 22.
[65]N. A. I., BP 924 B.A. Suleiman, Manager, Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood Mission School to Resident, Benin Province, 31/01/1936, 12.
[66] Fisher 1963: 113.
[67]B. T. C. A., LEA 468 B.A. Suleiman, Retired School Master, Ahmadiyya School, Benin City to Ministry of Education, Ibadan, 30/06/1958, 22.

However, there must have been other unstated reasons for this conviction and not primarily because of doctrinal differences, as he claimed. The colonial courts could not have convicted him because of his adherence to Ahmadiyya doctrine, which was neither an offence nor a crime in colonial law. He must have been convicted for some other offences punishable by law, which would have been brought to light by his opponents because of their doctrinal conflicts. For instance, as late as 1959, one Mr. P.O. Odutola petitioned the Local Education Officer in Benin City to the effect that the Ahmadiyya founder, Ahmad Gullam, blasphemed against the Muhammed, the Prophet of Islam and that an illegal levy was being collected by the Adeyemi owned Ahmadiyya School in the name of their founder without approval.[68] The purpose of such petitions was obviously to find fault and make the Government investigate Adeyemi and the Ahmadiyya mission with the objective of disturbing their peace and progress. It was such petitions (which might have exposed Adeyemi's breaches of the law) that Adeyemi viewed and claimed as persecution of himself and the Ahmadiyya adherents for their beliefs. This buttresses the claims of persecution of Adeyemi by his adherence to Ahmadiyya beliefs.

These doctrinal disputes and rivalry in some ways helped the cause of Islam as they led to the establishment of an additional Muslim school and greater access to schools teaching Islamic religious knowledge for Muslim children across the city. In1938 the Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood Society School boasted of one hundred and fifty pupils. This school even had more pupils than some of the earlier established Christian denominational mission schools like that of the Salvation Army, Apostolic schools, and so forth.[69] The school's financial problems continued to persist and affected the standard of the institution, a situation that had forced Adeyemi in 1945 to quickly affiliate his school with the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in Nigeria. Though he claimed to have received no assistance from Jubril Martins Ahmadiyya Movement in Islarn, he admitted that "through the Affiliation [with Ahmadiyya in Islam in Nigeria], the …school became an assisted school like other Schools in Benin City."[70] The assistance or grant-in-aid from government enabled the school to improve its standard.

[68] Ibid, P.O. Odutola to L.E.O., Benin City, 18/4/1959, 30.
[69] N A. I., BD 27 Vol. VI Education in Benin Division, Annual Report 1938, 530.
[70]B. T. C. A., LEA 520 B.A. Suleiman, School Master, Ahmadiyya School, Benin City to Jubril Martins Esq., Lagos, Ibadan, 02/01/1958, 19-20.

The Edaiken Ahmadiyya Moslem School at Uzebu, Benin City, attracted more pupils because of its proximity to the area of Muslim concentration than the Ansar Ud Deen Moslem School, which was situated in the eastern outskirts of the city. Not all the Muslims resented Adeyemi's Ahmadiyya affiliation or connection. Retired Colonel Umar Otokiti, the grandson of a former Chief Imam Otokiti of Benin City (1934-1962), was a pupil and later teacher at the Ahmadiyya Secondary School and many non-Muslim children also attended the school because of its central location.[71] It was the only other school in the densely populated location near the city centre and so could easily attract many pupils because of its proximity. The large population meant that more money was being realized from school fees, which were in turn invested in facilities and personnel that qualified the school for government grant-in-aid.

The Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood Society, or later Edaiken Ahmadiyya School, was from the beginning committed to religious propagation and competition with the Christian missionaries in Benin City. This was stated by Adeyemi when he wrote that

> There is necessity for our Mission School in Benin like other Mission Schools, as we have different Religious Books to impart. Christians have Bible as their Religious Book. We Moslems have Alkoran as Our Religious Book to be imparted in our Schools in addition to Secular Subjects[72]

The school taught the Quran and Islamic Knowledge in addition to secular subjects. One of the earliest pupils and converts was late Alhaji Habibullahi Enabulele (the father of Alhaji Abdul Fatah Enabulele, present Chief Imam of Benin) who became a pupil teacher and later attended Ahmadiyya School in Lagos for further education.[73] He returned in 1945 to continue teaching Quranic and Islamic Knowledge in the school. Enabulele was later joined by Mallam Z. Momo (an Etsako — Kukuruku Division Muslim) in 1956 at Edaiken Ahmadiyya Moslem School, Benin City. The Ansar Ud Deen Moslem School, Benin City, had Mallam A.R. Sakariya as its Arabic teacher.[74] The teaching of Arabic started in the late 1940s, after the return of

[71] Personal Communication with Retired Colonel Umar Otokiti, aged 62 years, former Imam, Directorate of Islamic Affairs, Nigerian Army at his office, University of Benin, Benin City on 11th July 2011.
[72] N.A.I., BP 924 B.A. Sulaiman, Leader of the Above Society and Manager, Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood School, Benin City to Resident, BP 6/11/1935, 8.
[73] Personal Communication with Alhaji Abdul fatah Ikponmwosa Enabulele
[74] B. T. C. A., LEA 628 Arabic Teachers in Benin Division, 13/04/1960, 13

Enabulele from Lagos. Reports on the Muslims Schools indicate that the Edaiken Ahmadiyya Moslem Brotherhood School was better organized. This is because of its earlier establishment and better funding as a recipient of government grant-in-aid. In contrast, it was reported that between 1958 and 1962 that the Ansar Ud Deen Moslem School was in poor condition.[75]

The Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood Society was very conscious of its rivalry with Christian Missions to win converts and the support of the government. To this end, it demanded equal treatment of all missions irrespective of religion. The Society wrote to the Resident that "Your Honour! Mission is Mission… Roman Catholic Mission has no superiority Over Moslem Mission."[76] Apart from seeking fair treatment of missions irrespective of religion by government, the society also tried to show that they were equal to the Christian missions in all things. This they demonstrated by running similar programmes with the Christian mission schools like harvest/ bazaar. But this similarity or adoption of programmes served other purposes of attracting pupils to their school. To this end, they copied some of the practices of the Christian Missionary schools. Similar copying of practices of Christian Missionary schools has also been found with the Ahmadiyya and Ansar Ur Deen Muslim Schools in Lagos.[77] One of the practices, they adopted from the Christian Missions was the annual Harvest, which was a big attraction for children because of the food, games, and entertainment activities that were basic components of the harvest programme. The harvest celebration would seem to have attracted and established a hold on the minds of the children in Benin who might have been tempted to go to Christian Mission schools to enjoy these activities, had the Muslims not seized the initiative and introduced Harvest programmes. In one of the Edaiken Brotherhood Society Moslem School harvest programmes held in November 1936, they had songs, poetry recitation (some were secular and western), sermons, addresses, prayers and lectures; a procession of Edaiken Brotherhood Society Moslem school pupils to the Oba's Palace, Bazaar and the sale of harvest products and fund raising for a new school.[78] They also invited Christians to participate in their Harvest programme. This was not

[75]B. T. C. A., LEA 520 Inspection Report of Benin City AUD Moslem School, 64.
[76] N. A. I., BP 924 B.A. Sulaiman, Leader of the Above Society and Manager, Edaiken Moslem Brotherhood School, Benin City to Resident, BP 6/11/1935, 8.
[77] Reichmuth , 1996: 381-2.
[78] N. A.I., BP 924 Harvest Programme and Notice 14-15.

unexpected as the Muslim school manager was a recipient of financial donations from some Christians. Thus the harvest programme was another fund raising event as far as the Muslims were concerned.

Political Changes and Representation of Muslims in Education Policy Implementation in Benin Division

The post-World War II period witnessed the gradual incorporation of the Muslim minority into the politics of Benin division. Oba Akenzua II pursued a policy of inclusiveness and patronized all groups, but there was also increasing democratization of the Benin Native administration as a result of colonial retreat from the indirect ru1e system. A Benin Muslim in the person of Usman Lawal Osula, who was also a member of the Royal family and a journalist, was appointed to the Benin Divisional Administrative Committee in 1948. He became the first Muslim to serve in the colonial administration of the Division. During this period, Muslims secured recognition and were appointed members of some of the committees appointed by the colonial officials. Their recognition was based largely on the educational qualification of these Muslims. Also they had established and developed the Edaiken Moslem Ahmadiyya School with improved standards (employment of certificated teachers, award of scholarships to Middle Schools, well maintained buildings, recreation facilities and so on) that qualified the school for government grant-in-aid and demanded for equality of representation. Since Oba Akenzua II pursued a policy of inclusiveness and had contributed to the funding and the establishment of Moslem Schools, it was only imperative to accede to some of the Muslim demands.

By 1948 two Muslims Y.A. Johnson and S.A. Lawani were members of Benin City Education Committee representing Muslim interests.[79] The Muslims were also represented on the Local Examination Board by B.A. Sulaiman.[80] With these developments, the Muslims began to assert themselves in the educational affairs of the Division. When the Western Regional Government proposed the introduction of free primary education in 1955, 180 new primary schools were earmarked for Benin division with 60 per cent of the schools allocated to the Native Authority and 40 per

[79] N A.I.,BD 1448/1 Minutes of Meeting of 24 December 1948, 4.
[80] N. A.I., BD 1750/II - List of Members of Local Examination Board, Benin Province, 258.

cent to voluntary agencies including missions. In deciding how to share the allocation to voluntary agencies, the representatives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Schools had, during a meeting of Benin Division Education Committee, demanded the allocation of 10 per cent of the schools to their mission. But the committee directed them to take up the matter with the Native Administration.[81] Eventually, the Ahmadiyya's effort yielded two new schools in Amagba and Iguogho villages of Benin division.[82] These developments increased the number of Ahmadiyya controlled primary schools to three. In addition, they applied to open a secondary Modern school. This was approved and established as Edaiken Ahmadiyya Modern School (and later upgraded to a Grammar School) in Okhuaihe in 1964.

Another issue addressed was the teaching of Arabic in schools, especially in public schools. The Local Education Adviser, probably acting on complaints from Muslims, had reported that Arabic was not being taught in the Local Education Board owned schools in spite of the attendance of such schools by Muslim pupils[83] who were obliged by Islam to study and were entitled by a 1942 Memorandum to receive Islamic religious education. Pressure was stepped up by the Council on Muslim Education in Nigeria to introduce and enforce the teaching of Arabic in public schools.[84] Arabic became one of the subjects taught in some selected Benin Native Authority Primary Schools, Government Primary School, Benin City, Benin Divisional Council Secondary Modern School, Benin City, Benin/Delta Teachers Training College, Benin City, and Edo College, Benin City, in 1960.[85] However, there were few Arabic teachers with government approved certification. Out of the 476 Arabic teachers in the Western Region of colonial Nigeria, only three were trained Arabic teachers with government approved certification in Benin Division.[86] These three spent their time working in the eight schools requiring their services. One

[81] N. A.I., BD 1448/2 Benin Division Education Committee, Correspondence- Minutes of Meeting of 11th September, 1954, 58.
[82] B. T. C. A. LEA 628 Loca1 Education Officer, Benin, to Local Education Adviser, 25/7/1959, 4.
[83] Ibid, Local Education Adviser, Benin Province, to Local Education Officer, Benin City, 21/1/1960,27
[84] Ibid, 28.
[85] Ibid, Local Education Authority Office, Benin City, to Local Education Adviser, Benin Province, 13/04/1960, 31.
[86] Ibid, Enclosure 22/06/1960

teacher, Mr. Z. Momo, who got his Western Region Arabic Examination Certificate in 1959, taught in one primary and three secondary schools, while another, Habeebullahi Enabulele (WR Arabic Examination Certificate, 1959), taught in two primary schools, and Mallam A.R. Zakariya (Ansar Ud Deen Moslem Examination Certificate 1941) who taught in one primary school.[87] The issue then was how to increase the number of Arabic teachers in public schools; and without these facilitators the infusion of Islamic studies into the school curriculum would prove impossible.

In spite of the problems and shortcomings, the schools gradually provided education to both Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the division. They also assisted the cause of Islam in sustaining the minority Muslim population and preventing their drifting to Christianity. These schools also played a role in converting a few indigenes to the faith. Although the number of conversions is not known, the figure must have been low and was mostly confined to Benin City. According to an Amagba indigene who was converted in Benin City, conversion through the Muslim school in Amagba was nil.[88] It is not known if there were any conversions in Iguogho and Okhuaihe.

Conclusion

The paper examined the development and spread of Islam in Benin society during the colonial period and the policy of the colonial administration towards Muslim Education in the non-Islamic Benin society. It showed that Islam only reached Benin with British conquest of Benin in 1897 and was brought by the Hausa and Yoruba soldiers and functionaries in the expeditionary force. But the first conversion of Benin indigenes to Islam was made outside Benin, specifically in Ilorin. These indigenous Benins helped to spread Islam in Benin resulting in the development of a small Muslim population among the Benins. These Benin converts, along with some migrant Etsako, Hausa, Nupe, Yoruba and other later Muslim migrants, formed a Muslim community in Benin. It also showed that the peculiar education needs of Muslims were for a long time treated with benign neglect by the British colonial

[87] Ibid, Local Education Authority Office, Benin City, to Local Education Adviser, Benin Province, 13/04/1960, 31.

[88] Personal Communication with Alhaji Prince Bashir Erese, aged 78 years at his Benin City residence on 19th July 2011 and Abdul fatah Enabulele

administration. This was because the Muslims lacked ideological precedence in the pre-colonial administration in this part of Nigeria and on which the indirect rule system depended. Another factor was their minority and largely immigrant status. These made Muslims in Benin seemingly of least value to the administration. The Muslim community members unwittingly reinforced their own exclusion by shunning indigenous titles (some of which admittedly had ritual functions) on account of their faith. Invariably, such outright rejection debarred them from public offices and participation in policy implementation. This in turn resulted in the neglect of formal Islamic education at a time when Christian Missionary education was growing and strengthened as an instrument of conversion.

These policies and developments that threatened the faith of Muslim children compelled young Muslims in Benin to form associations to promote formal Islamic education. Though the development of formal Islamic education was affected by sectarian conflicts between the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam members led by Mr. Adeyemi and other Muslim groups including Orthodox Muslims, it had the effect of forcing the feuding groups to establish their own schools. This provided more formal Muslim educational opportunities, which benefited Muslim children. In addition, it boosted Islam as well, as some non-Muslim children were converted through these schools. The Muslim community also secured representation in the Education Committees and asserted their rights to more schools and the teaching of Arabic and Islamic education in Government and Native Authority Schools from the 1940s onwards. These developments helped the cause and spread of Islam among the Benins. The paper concludes that contrary to the colonial government policy of privileging Islam and education of Muslims in communities penetrated by Islam before colonial rule, Islam and education of Muslims suffered benign neglect and exclusion in policy formulation in Benin, which had no presence of Islam before colonial rule. Studies of similar communities should be undertaken to see if the same policies were adopted.

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INFORMANTS

Alhaji Colonel (Rtd.) Umar Otokiti, aged 62 years, former Imam, Directorate of Islamic Affairs, Nigerian Army interviewed at his office, University of Benin, Benin City on 11th July 2011

Alhaji Abdul Fatah Ikponmwonsa Enabulele, aged 41 years, Chief Imam of Benin City interviewed at Central Mosque, Benin City on18th July 2011.

Alhaji Prince Bashir Erese, aged 78 years, retired Civil Servant interviewed at his Benin City Residence on 19th July 2011.

Barrister Rizwan Mohammed aged 60 years at Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Mosque, Benin City on 22nd July 2011.

Pa Momojimeah Iluede, aged 78 years, retired Civil Servant at Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Mosque, Benin City on 22nd July 2011.

Alhaji Elias Esaba Abhukhegbe, aged 72 years, retired Civil Servant at Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Mosque, Benin City on 22nd July 2011.