



## Origin and Development of Western Education in Gombe Emirate, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Education whether in its traditional or modern form which is termed western education is a tool for socio-economic and political development of any society. Western education was therefore, introduced in Gombe Emirate, in the present Gombe State in 1925, by the colonial administration to serve the efficient running of the colonial government. Since the evolution of western education in the emirate, and the exit of colonialism, it has thrived on, the government and other stakeholders have continued to invest in western education in the emirate. The puzzle that arises is that to what extent has the education transformed over time. Is it still stuck to the colonial thought or ideology of it serving colonial interest? The problems this paper intends to address lie in the fact that it explores to find out if the colonial legacy of western education has transformed over time: from when it evolved up to 1960 in Gombe emirate, the drivers of such transformations, the impacts of the transformation and the challenges faced by the transformation processes. The paper found that the colonial legacy has indeed transformed and created impacts beyond the colonial targets and thought. It is well established that the transformation process has been impinged by some of the factors such as the bookish nature of the education and lack of practical orientation etc. Practical vocational skills and entrepreneurial knowledge needs to be emphasized in the educational system. The information and data for analysis in the reconstruction of this paper was obtained from primary sources including archival materials and secondary sources such as published and unpublished materials*

**Keywords:** Origin, Development, Western Education, Gombe Emirate

### Introduction

Education is as old as human societies and has been practiced in Gombe region long before the formal colonization of the Northern Nigeria and the subsequent introduction of western education. Prior to the advent of western education in Gombe Emirate, traditional and Islamic Qur'anic education were the forms of education that were in practice, parents, elder people, relatives and other stakeholders impacted and inculcated knowledge to younger people, through which knowledge of traditions, values and skills were learned (Lugard, 1922). Under traditional form of education, teaching and instructions were carried out un-programmed in undesignated spots including during farm work, hunting expedition, play time, ceremonial rites etc. Children learned through, observation, experience and instructions from their parents as they grew in the society. Following the 1804 Jihad movements in Hausa land and the subsequent establishment of Gombe Emirate, Islamic

education which's tenets were based on Qur'anic teaching was introduced. One of the caliphate's priorities was the development of education and economy. This was indicated in the popular slogan of Uthman Ibn Fodio; *Deme, Dure, Jange* meaning farming, animal husbandry and education respectively (Baba, 2003). Seeking Islamic knowledge, therefore, became one of the cardinal principles of the Emirates, including Gombe. Since the location of Gombe was between the two dominant centers of learning at the time; Borno and Kano, she became of advantage as concerned Islamic/Quranic education. Islam entered into Northern Nigeria and Nigeria at large through Borno by the Arabs and Kano by the Wangarawa (Liman, 2022). However, during the reign of Haruna, the Emir of Gombe (1922-1935), Islamic education was encouraged and got a boost as he appealed to the visiting Qur'anic malams to stay in Gombe. He further called on well-to-do individuals to support the malams and the students. This led to the spread of



Islamic Qur'anic education in Gombe Emirate and the graduates of these schools were the first sets of colonial administrative staff, particularly, native court judges and their scribes in the Emirate.

Gombe Emirate at the time was very vast geographically, covering the areas of the present eight local governments that constituted the present Gombe State. Within this area under Harunas' administration more than 11 different Almajiri Trangaya schools were established in the Emirate.

### **Roots of Western Education in Gombe Emirate**

It is generally acceptable that any nation seeking for socio-economic advancement must raise the literacy level of her citizens. Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. The introduction of the western type of education was a combined work of Lugard, the first High-Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate and Dr. W. R. S. Miller of the Christian Missionary Society (C. M. S). For Lugard, he wanted secular education introduced to the Northern Region, while Miller wanted religious education for converts into Christianity.

The two forms of education continued, however, Lugard restricted the mission from spreading the ideals of Christianity into Muslims areas of the North, following Miller's attempt to introduce western education in Yola in 1902, but failed as a result of the people's resistance to the effort. The people were skeptical about the education as they associated it with Christianity. Another attempt was made in 1906 in Kano by Miller which also failed.

Eventually, Lugard succeeded in persuading the crown government in replacing Miller with Hans Visser, who had similar idea of education with Lugard. When Visser was appointed as Director of education for the Northern Protectorate in 1909, he began the reorganization of the system of education to a more acceptable level by the people of the protectorate. It was at this time that the British made it known to the people that the goals of the education was not to undermine their existing social structure including their religion but rather it was to produce the workforce for the colonial administration.

Visser was appointed, owed to the fact that he prior opportunities to have visited other Muslims countries such as Egypt and Sudan, where he studied their educational systems; upon which he developed his principles of Education for the Northern Nigeria. Visser was more secular than Lugard in his approach to Education in the Muslim populations and he adopted the policy of non-interference to religious matters in the Emirates.

He then succeeded in establishing the first government elementary school at Nasarawa Kano in 1909, for the sons of Emirs and other title holders of the Northern Emirates. From 1900 to 1919 when Lugard ended his governorship in Nigeria, only four elementary schools were in existence in the whole of Northern Nigeria and no clear curriculum on education was designed for the North till 1925 (Fafunwa, 1974).

These elementary schools were also known as village schools and they operated strictly as day-schools and the medium of instructions in the lower classes was vernacular; Hausa in the north.

Basically the aim of the education was to cause improvement in artisan and craftsmanship in trade such as agriculture, carpentry, blacksmithing, elementary hygiene, that would lead to improve standard of living. Part of the curriculum also include; English, writing, arithmetic and religious instructions which was aimed at freeing the natives from superstitious beliefs and practices.

### **Growth of Western Education in Gombe Emirate**

Gombe population had experienced western education, long before introduction of the western education school system in the emirate. Evidence indicated that during the reign of Emir of Gombe Umaru (1898-1922), the Divisional Officer of Gombe Mr. T.F Carlyle advised on the need to send Gombe indigenes to Kano to acquire western education, this was succumbed to and the Emir selected Yerima Jibril, Maina Maigari Hassan, Malam Baba Madaki and Malam Ahmadu all of whom were from royal families to be sent to Kano for western education in 1910 (Carlyle, 1914).



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By 1912, another development in education took place, when informal adult classes were opened at Nafada, under Malam Jibril Abuja who was persuaded by the Emir of Gombe to come to the Emirate of Gombe and open a school in the area for adults. The adult class was then opened in 1913 when the Emirate and British administrative headquarters were transferred to the town. The first sets of the students of the adult classes were trained on simple arithmetic, writing and Hausa (Carlyle, 1914).

The informal classes got a boost in 1919, as a result of the transfer of the British and Emirate headquarters to a more central location, Gombe Doma, and the return of the graduates of Kano school to Gombe, two of whom were then and employed to teach in Gombe Emirate first elementary school. These then taught the second set of students of the Gombe adult classes.

By 1925, the first elementary school was established in Gombe Doma, and had an enrollment of 20 students and the major subjects taught in the school were agriculture, hygiene, writing, reading and arithmetic (Sani, 2005).

In 1930, the development of western education experienced new trends as was introduced by Mr. E.R.J Hussey, who took over from Hans Visser as the Director of Education. Hussey brought new modifications in his approach to the education of the Northern populaces as he ordered for the introduction of new subjects (Fafunwa, 1974). The subjects he introduced included weaving, mat-making, bee-keeping, blacksmithing and rope-making, were all entrepreneurship inclined.

In 1940, five new elementary schools were established and cited in each of the following towns, in Bajoga, Deba, Dukku and Kumo and the fifth; Tudun-wada primary school was cited in the capital, Gombe Doma to supplement the high demands for western education in the area.

In 1943, two more elementary schools were established in the Emirate at Gwani and Hinna respectively. While in 1944, two others were established at Bojude and Nafada each. These brought to a total number of elementary schools in the emirate to ten. The turning point in the development of western education in Gombe Emirate during the colonial period was in 1954,

when fifteen elementary schools were established at Jekadafari, Dadinkowa, Akko central, Pindiga, Doho, Daban Fulani, Dukul, Tongo, Malam sidi, Kwadom, Garko, and kalshingi primary school. Others includes Bolari, Herwagana, Karangada and Bubayero primary school to accommodate the large number of elementary school aged pupils and the large number of teachers produced from different teachers training institutions in the province.

In 1952, the colonial government created a senior elementary school in Gombe Doma at the present location of Government Science Senior Secondary School Gombe with the total number of 19 students.

This senior elementary school remained the only educational institutions in the Emirate of Gombe up to the period that Nigeria secured her independence in 1960, and throughout the first decade of the post independence era. However, during the first quarter of the post-independence period and particularly in 1974, Gombe emirate experienced the establishment of more primary schools in the area.

### Conclusion

The development of education in Gombe local government Area is a subject of academic discussions, some areas benefitted from early colonial educational system, while some did not, particularly, communities of the northern Gombe Emirate. Areas in the present Kwami, Nafada, Dukku and Funakaye Local Governments did not fully benefit from Governments educational policies during both colonial and post-colonial periods in terms of education, however, some communities resolved to the establishment of community schools to accommodate their children of school age. Even in the areas where western school system was established the development of the education was very slow and gradual hence the northern parts of Gombe Emirate were regarded as educationally backward areas. These areas continue to be educationally backward even with the post-independence transformations of education sector in Gombe State. They are poorly represented in almost all the tertiary institutions in the state and also in other sectors of the economy.



**List of informants**

S/N	Name	Position	Age	Place of Interview	Date	Time
1	Ibrahim Abubakar Difa	2 <sup>st</sup> Head of Nomadic Education Programme, SUPEB	58 Years	At his Office in Gombe State University, Gombe State	3 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	12:30 am
2	Abdullahi Abubakar Kumo	4 <sup>th</sup> Director School Services of SUPEB	52 Years	At his Office in Gombe State Universal Primary Education Board SUPEB Gombe	11 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	10:00 am
3	Alh Hamma Sale	PTA Chairman Jauro Tudun-wada, pri sch Gombe a retired civil servant	78 Years	At Dukku Town	15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	1:20 pm
4	Babaji Waziri	Retired Educationists	71 Years	At Kagarawal Village Gombe	15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2015	2;11 pm
5	Ahmed Pantami	School Teacher Education	38 Years	Kwami Local Government	18 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021s	11;30 am
6	Bappah Muhammad	Secretary Dukku L.G.A	43 Years	At Dukku Local Government Secretariat	15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	3;00 pm
7	Kabiru Musa Biri	Education Secretary Nafada LGA	42 Years	At Nafada Local Government Secretariat	20 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	10:30 am
8	Alh Muhammad Usman Tela	Former Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education Gombe State	68 Years	At his Residence in Tudun-wada Gombe, Police Barrack	21 <sup>st</sup> July, 2021	4:30 pm
9	Abdullahi Sale	Former E. S. Gombe LEA	66 Years	At his Residence	3 <sup>rd</sup> August, 2021	11;30am
10	Liman Maiunguwa	Former Assistant Director Education Ministry of Education Bauchi State	55 Years	At his Residence	7 <sup>th</sup> August, 2021	10;00am

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