

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Islam is a religion of peace; it means peace; and it enjoins peaceful co-existence among different creatures.¹ To make peace with God, one has to give absolute submission to His will; and to make peace with man, one has to do good and behave well always, and do to others as one would want them to do to one. The Glorious Qur'an confirms this when it says thus:

Nay – whoever submits himself entirely to God and he is the doer of good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord; there shall be no fear for such nor shall they be grieved².

From the very beginning, man has been enjoying some basic rights and some corresponding duties. The same has been the case with the modern men. The rights which are so basic and applicable to all human beings are known as human rights (*Al-huquq al-insaniyyah*).

The basic concepts and principles of human rights have, from the beginning, been embodied in Islamic law,³ and Islamic concepts of fundamental rights are so practical, which more than 1,400 years ago Islam gave to men... and to the citizens of its state.⁴

In Islam, human rights are fundamental, they are derived from *Shari'ah* (the Islamic Law), and are regarded as one of the most important necessities of human beings. The *Shari'ah* enunciates the basic fundamental rights of man.

Allah is the Originator and Creator of everything. He is the one to know and tell the human beings what the right is. The origin of rights therefore, is to be found in the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah* and practice of true Islamic rulers. Once the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet approve any human actions as his right, there is no law or authority to change it or

disapprove it. Among all human rights, the right of freedom of religion is the most important one.⁵ This fact is established when one fully understands that human beings and jinns were created for the purpose of worshipping Him [Allah] alone. [Q. 51:56].

The people of the west have attributed every beneficial development in the world to themselves to the extent that they see themselves as custodians of processes for the implementation of human rights. But in truth, the west has no concept of human rights and civil rights before the seventeenth century when the idea of *habeas corpus* (right to refuse prison) was evolved. And it was not until the end of eighteenth century when human rights as a concept took on practices which have meanings in the constitutions of Britain and Europe.⁶

Certainly, the constitutions of the various countries of the world are not without provisions for basic human rights. For example, the Nigerian 1999 constitution deals with the issue of human rights in its chapter four. But more often than not, these rights exist only in the law courts. They are not given practical demonstrations by the high and the low in the society. The poor cannot claim their rights in the law courts because there is no money to sue, no money to pay lawyers and no money to further their case.

It could be surprising to non-Muslims that human rights are not only categorically mentioned in the *Qur'an* but also successfully practiced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and his honourable companions more than 1,400 years ago when it was promulgated under the *Shari'ah*.

The entire mankind is one nation and Muslims should think of the rights of all human beings. All the human rights granted by the *Shari'ah* are meant for the welfare of mankind. When one looks at Articles 1-30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it seems as if they are the reflections of the aims and objectives of the *Shari'ah*.⁷

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Quite a number of researches have been conducted on the Nigerian constitution and human rights in Islam. It appears that none has been written on Islam and freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria. This is a vacuum which needs to be filled. Hence, this study fills the gap by investigating attitudes of Islam to the freedom of religious beliefs and practices as applicable to the people of Osun State. This study therefore, attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a. Is there freedom of religion in Osun State?

- b. Is there freedom of religion in the public and private secondary schools in Osun State?
- c. Has any religious crisis been witnessed in this State, of recent?
- d. Is there any religious discrimination in governmental establishments of Osun State?
- e. Is there religious tolerance in this State?
- f. Can the relationship between the Muslims and Christians of this State be regarded as cordial and peaceful?
- g. Have there been interactive sessions between the Muslim and Christian clerics in Osun State?
- h. What are the problems of and solutions to the abuse of freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria? etc.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research work attempts to examine the following:

- a. comprehensive meaning of freedom of religion.
- b. relationship between the Muslims and the adherents of other religions in Osun State as regards freedom of religion.
- c. freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria.
- d. concept and practice of freedom of religion in the Islamic Law (*Shari`ah*) and the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and how it has been implemented.
- e. Problems of and solutions to the abuse of freedom of religion in Osun State, if there is any.

1.4 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study is focused on the freedom of religion as applicable to the people of Osun State. The study, because of time and financial constraints, is limited to Osun State of Nigeria. It discusses the advent and growth of Islam in the State, using purposive sampling method by selecting some big and small towns, cutting across the State. Freedom of religion in Osun State is also discussed, showing the relationship between the Muslims and adherents of other religions. The attitudes of Islam to religious beliefs and practice of the people of Osun State are also investigated. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted with selected people in the State, the results of which have shown the real situation and implementation of freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it:

1. examines comprehensive meaning of freedom of religion with regard to Islam and the common Law.
2. shows the relationship between Muslims and adherents of other religions in Osun State of Nigeria.
3. investigates attitudes of Islam to the freedom of religious beliefs and practices as applicable to the people of Osun State.
4. evaluates the implementation of freedom of religion as applicable to the people of Osun State.

1.6 Research Methodology

This section has to do with collection of data and their analysis. Therefore, survey research method was used in the collection of data. Survey method requires systematic collection of data or information from population or sample of the population through the use of personal interview and or questionnaire both of which were used by the researcher.

1.6.1 Sampling Technique

Considering the size of the entire population of Osun State which is difficult for the researcher to have contact with, not to be easily manageable by the researcher, the material resources and time constraints, a purposive sampling technique was used. This was employed to select a target population having the characteristics under investigation. Hence, the respondents to the questionnaire were selected from some educated and enlightened public individuals in Osun State to feel their pulse about freedom of religion in the State of Osun.

1.6.2 Instrumentation

Before the administration and distribution of the questionnaire to the respective respondents, it needs to be mentioned here that the questionnaire, after it was constructed and developed by the researcher, was validated by questionnaire experts as well as the researcher's supervisor.

1.6.3 Research Procedure

The study adopted John Burton's theory of human needs which states that social conflicts stem from unsatisfied human needs. One thousand and fifty copies of a questionnaire were distributed to 350 Muslim leaders, 350 Christian leaders and 350

adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR) within 10 Local Government Areas of Osun State, namely Ede North, Ejigbo, Iwo, Ola-Oluwa, Ifelodun, Ife Central, Ilesa West, Irepodun, Ila and Osogbo which were purposively selected based on geographical spread. Key-informant interviews were also conducted with 10 religious leaders from each religion aged between 40 and 78. Scriptural data were sourced from the Qur'an and *Hadith*. Data were subjected to descriptive and content analysis.

1.6.4 Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

After the copies of the questionnaire have been filled and completed by the respondents, they were collected from them, collated and analysed on the simple percentage basis. In the analysis, respondents' choice of options to each of the questions or items of the questionnaire was considered and scored accordingly. The scores were computed and indicated against the number of every item sampled. This approach helped to confirm or indicate against the attitudes of Muslims and Christians of Osun State to freedom of religion. In the data, simple percentage was used and the findings were reflected in a series of tables. The following tables show the major findings of the study.

Question 1: Is there freedom of religion in Osun State?

Table 1: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	65	65%
NO	35	35%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 1 above shows that 65% of the total respondents claim that there is freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria.

Question 2: Is there freedom of religion in the Private Secondary Schools in Osun State?

Table 2: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	59	59%
NO	41	41%
TOTAL	100	100%

As shown above in Table 2, 59% of the total respondents claim that there is freedom of religion in the private secondary schools in Osun State while the remaining 41% disagree with them.

Question 3: Has any religious crisis been witnessed in this State, of recent?

Table 3:

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	18	18%
NO	82	82%
TOTAL	100	100%

Only 18% of the total respondents say that they have witnessed religious crisis in the State, just of recent, while the remaining 82% say no; they have not witnessed any religious crisis.

Question 4: Is there freedom of religion in the Public Secondary Schools in Osun State?

Table 4: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	76	76%
NO	24	24%
TOTAL	100	100%

In Table 4 above, 76% of the total respondents claim that there is freedom of religion in the Public Secondary Schools in Osun State while the remaining 24% disagree with them.

Question 5: Have you experienced any religious discrimination in governmental establishments of Osun State?

Table 5: Major Findings of the Study.

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	24	24%
NO	76	76%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 5 above shows that only 24% of the total respondents claim that they have experienced religious discrimination in governmental establishments of Osun State while the remaining 76% say no to this claim.

Question 6: Can the relationship between the Muslims and Christians of this State be regarded as cordial and peaceful?

Table 6: Major Findings of the Study.

Variable	No of Respondents	Percentage
YES	82	82%
NO	18	18%
TOTAL	100	100%

As shown in Table 6 above, 82% of the total respondents confirm that the relationship between the Muslims and Christians of this State is cordial and peaceful while the remaining 18% disagree with them.

Question 7: Do the governments, both local and state, encourage freedom of religion?

Table 7: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	88	88%
NO	12	12%
TOTAL	100	100%

In Table 7 above, we can see that 88% of the total respondents claim that the governments - both local and state - encourage freedom of religion while the remaining 12% say no to the claim.

Question 8: Can the level of understanding between the Muslims and Christians be regarded as being high?

Table 8: Major Findings of the Study.

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	76	76%
NO	24	24%
TOTAL	100	100%

As we can clearly see in Table 8 above, 76% of the total respondents agree that the level of understanding between the Muslims and Christians can be regarded as being high while the remaining 24% disagree with them.

Question 9: Have there been interactive sessions between the Muslim and Christian clerics in Osun State?

Table 9: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	88	88%
NO	12	12%
TOTAL	100	100%

In this Table 9 above, 88% of the total respondents claim that there have been interactive sessions between the Muslim and Christian clerics in Osun State while the remaining 12% debunk the claim.

Question 10: Does the State government consider religion as one of the criteria when giving appointments and posts?

Table 10: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	18	18%
NO	82	82%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 10 above shows clearly that only 18% of the total respondents claim that the State government considers religion as one of the criteria when giving appointments and post while the remaining 82% say no to the claim.

Question 11: Is there religious tolerance in this State?

Table 11: Major Findings of the Study

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	88	88%
NO	12	12%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 11 above clearly shows that 88% of the total respondents indicate that there is religious tolerance in this State, while the remaining 12% disagree with them.

Question 12: Is there inter-marriage between the Christians and Muslims of this State?

Table 12: Major Findings of the Study.

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	69	69%
NO	31	31%
TOTAL	100	100%

As we can see in Table 12 above, 69% of the total respondents claim that there is inter-marriage between the Christians and Muslims of this State, while the remaining 31% debunk the claim.

Question 13: Have there been cases of Religious imposition on Muslim students by the Christian School Authority?

Table 13: Major Findings of the Study.

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	59	59%
NO	41	41%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 13 above clearly shows that 59% of the total respondents claim that there have been cases of religious imposition on Muslim students by the Christian school authority, while the remaining 41 disagree with them.

Question 14: Have there been cases of religious imposition on Christian students attending Muslim Secondary Schools?

Table 14: Major Findings of the Study.

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
YES	12	12%
NO	88	88%
TOTAL	100	100%

In Table 14 above, it is clearly shown that only 12% of the total respondents claim that there have been cases of religious imposition on Christian students attending Muslim secondary schools, while the remaining 88% disagree with them.

ENDNOTES

1. M.O.A. Abdul. 1976. *Islam as a religion*. Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau. 15.
2. A.Y.Ali. 1998. *The Holy Qur'an, text, translation and commentary*. Lebanon: Dar al-Arabia. 241.
3. A.B.M. Mahbubul-Islam. 2002. *Freedom of religion in Shari`ah: a comparative analysis*. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen Publication. 1.
4. Mahbubul-Islam. 2002. *Freedom of religion in Shari`ah... 1*
5. Mahbubul-Islam. 2002. *Freedom of religion in Shari`ah... 1*
6. A.A. Mawdudi. 1986. *Human rights in Islam*. London: The Islamic Foundation. 33.
7. A.R.I. Doi. 1990. *Shari`ah: the Islamic law*. Ibadan: IKSAN Publisher. 422-423.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quite a number of works have been conducted on Islam and human rights. Some of the available materials will be reviewed. Hussain's work, *The Teachings of Islam*¹ discusses how Islam, from its inception, has been very concerned with issues of human rights. The work also establishes that the lives, property and privacy of all citizens in an Islamic State are considered sacred, whether or not the person is a Muslim; that non-Muslims have freedom of worship and practice of their religions, including their own family and religion courts; that they are obliged to pay a different tax [*Jizyah*] instead of *Zakah*, and state is obliged to provide protection and government services. This work does not discuss Islam and freedom religion in Osun State.

Abdul in his work, *Islam as a Religion*² defines Islam as a religion of peace. Siyan Oyeweso edited a book titled *Crowns and Turbans*³ in the Promotion of Islam in Osun State. The book is a historical treatise on the contributions of traditional rulers, Imams and Muslim scholars as regards the introduction, spread and consolidation of Islam in Osun State from inception to date. Another book edited by Siyan Oyeweso is *Islam and Society in Osun State*⁴. The book details the history of the evolution, growth, development and impact of Islam, Islamic institutions and Muslims on the development of Osun State in particular and Yorubaland in general. The works mentioned above do not discuss Islam and freedom of religion in Osun State.

Mahbubul-Islam's work, *Freedom of Religion in Shari`ah: A Comparative Analysis*⁵ examines that freedom of religion has been one of the hottest topics of discussion on fundamental rights in contemporary Common Law and human rights in international law. The work establishes that there has been no disagreement among the Muslim scholars about the freedom of religion in the sense that each and everyone is entitled to profess, practice and propagate his own religion. But freedom of religion does not confer a right on a Muslim to change his religion on the pretext of freedom of religion. However, some contemporary scholars, human rights lawyers, political experts as well as secular politicians began to differ on that point. The book addresses issues very academically, analytically, logically and proves that a non-Muslim is free to profess, practise and propagate his own religion without any interference from any quarter. But a Muslim possesses no freedom to profess, practise and propagate any religion other than

Islam. Intentional failure to conform with the tenets of Islam shall lead him to become an apostate and consequence of such apostasy is capital punishment with death in this world and severe punishment in the hereafter. This work fundamentally fails to discuss Islam and freedom of religion in Osun State.

Makinde's *Institution of Shari`ah in Oyo and Osun States of Nigeria, 1890 – 2005*⁶ discusses the institution of *Shari`ah* in Ede, Iwo and Ikirun, including the introduction and growth of Islam in the places mentioned above. The work also mentions the *Shari`ah* panel or committee established by Osun State Muslim Community, not officially constituted by the government, but to play advisory, not penal role, in the settlement of cases among the Muslims of Osun State. This work is fundamentally different from my study in that it does not discuss Islam and freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria.

Federal Republic of Nigeria's *1999 Constitution and Fundamental Rules*⁷ deals with the issue of human rights in its chapter four. For instance, section 38 [1] of the 1999 constitution, provides for right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Doi in his work, *Shari`ah: the Islamic Law*⁸ asserts that according to *Shari`ah*, the entire mankind is one nation and Muslims should think of the rights of all human beings, and that all the human rights granted by the *Shari`ah* are meant for the welfare of mankind.

Osun State presents Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme [OYES], First Anniversary Parade and Inauguration of Six New Cadre Corps⁹. Then, it tells brief history of Osun State. Mawdudi's *Human Rights in Islam*¹⁰ establishes that the West has no concept of human and civil rights before the seventeenth century when the idea of *habeas corpus* [right to refuse prison] was evolved, and that it was not until the end of eighteenth century when human rights as a concept took on practices which have meanings in the constitutions of Britain and Europe.

Jinadu in his *Human Rights and US/African Policy Under President Carter*¹¹ asserts that the so-called civil and political rights have made their appearance in Europe long before the nineteenth century, and that economic, social and cultural rights followed much later and was traced to philosophical thoughts such that it was embodied in Karl Marx's critique of nineteenth century capitalism and in the Roman Catholic Encyclicals [return novarum of Leo xiii, 1891 subsequently modified several times] to close the gap between the church and the ever-changing world. In contrast to the Marxist position, the Papal Encyclicals defended private property and were not concerned with social reforms. They favoured the promotion of interest of workers by advocating that the state should

assume just wages and adequate conditions of labour, encourage formation of trade unions and take responsibility for the welfare of all members of the community.

Osita's *Human Rights in Africa*¹² establishes that the natural law approach led, in fact, to a distinction being made between "rights of man" and "rights of citizens". Rights of man are supposed to be those which one has as a member of the human race while the right of the citizen – political, economic and social rights appertains to individuals as members of a particular civil society. With the renaissance, the reformation and the decline of the roles played by the church in state affairs there was a corresponding demise of the natural law theories. The positive school of law which followed in the wake of all these changes secularized the notion of law by removing it from the realm of the supernatural or of metaphysics.

Redmond in his *Microsoft Corporation, DVD*¹³ establishes that it was in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly declared Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is legally binding on member states. The member states also included the rights in their constitutions. The states which voluntarily signed the covenant would be legally obliged to abide by its provisions. In recent times, we have seen some states which have signed the covenant but have not implemented all of its provisions.

Da`wah Institute of Nigeria's *Relations with non-Muslims*¹⁴ discusses the position of Islam towards relationship with non-Muslims based on the authoritative and authentic teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It emphasizes that the relationship should be cordial and peaceful to promote freedom of religion as preached and practised by the Noble Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W]. It also debunks the erroneous opinions being held by some Muslims and non-Muslims that Islam is inherently against any form of friendliness with those who do not subscribe to the faith.

Muhammad Hamidullah's work, *The First Written Constitution of the World*¹⁵ examines that soon after the migration of the Prophet [S.A.W] from *Makkah* to *Madinah* the first official function he did was to promulgate a charter which comprises of the rights, duties and obligations of the people or citizens of the newly established state. The documented implemented was known as "Sahifah al-Madinah" [the charter or constitution of *Madinah*].

Al-Tabari's *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*¹⁶ establishes that the *Khulafa' Rashidun* or Rightly Guided Caliphs upheld the cause of Islam and had further developed the rights and obligations of the people particularly the right to freedom of religion as initiated by

the Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W]. During their 30 years' rule, they accentuated and amplified it in letter and spirit.

Qutb's work, *Islam and Universal Peace*¹⁷ remarks how Muhammad [S. A, W] before revelation at the age of twenty- five years, participated in the Pact of *Hilful-Fudul* [Emancipation League]. The main clause in the pact was to repulse repression, to help the oppressed restore their rights. It would be recalled that the barbaric nature of the Arabs of pre-Islamic era was almost unparalleled in the world history. This pact was concluded between some tribes in *Makkah* in order to foster justice and repel oppression in the city of *Makkah* and it was concluded immediately after the battle of *Fijar*, a battle so named due to the fact that it was marked by the highest act of violation of human rights and desecration.

All the works of the writers reviewed above fundamentally fail to discuss Islam and freedom of religion in Osun State of Nigeria. This is a vacuum which needs to be filled. Hence, the present effort being made in this study will help fill the gap that is missing in the existing works in order to make contribution to knowledge.

2.1 Historical Survey of Human Rights

Prophet Muhammad and his honourable companions successfully practised human rights as enshrined in the Glorious Qur'an before and after his demise in 632 C.E. Hussain established that:

Islam has been from its inception very concerned with issues of human rights. And there are no reliable reports to confirm the old accusation that when the Muslim army were advancing and expanding into Asia, Africa and Europe, the people were put to the sword if they failed to convert to Islam. The best proof is that not only did the Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Hindus in those areas not perish or otherwise disappear, they actually flourished as protected minority communities, and many individuals rose to prominent positions in the arts, science even in government!¹⁸

Hussain explained further:

The lives, property and privacy of all citizens in an Islamic state are considered sacred; whether or not the person is a Muslim. Non-Muslims have freedom of worship and practices of their religions, including their own family laws and religion courts. They are obliged to pay a different tax [*Jizyah*] instead of *Zakat* and the state is obliged to provide both protection and government services. Before the modern era, it was extremely rare to find a state or government any-where in the world that was solicitous of its minorities and their civil rights as the Islamic states. In no other religion did

women receive such a degree of legal and moral equality and personal respect, moreover, racism and tribalism are incompatible with Islam.¹⁹

Doi asserted: “According to *Shari`ah* the entire mankind is one nation and Muslims should think of the rights of all human beings. All the human rights granted by the *Shari`ah* are meant for the welfare of mankind. When one looks at articles 1 – 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it seems as if they are the reflections of the aims and objectives of the *Shari`ah*.”²⁰ According to Mawdudi, “the West has no concept of human and civil rights before the seventeenth century when the idea of *habeas corpus* [right to refuse prison] was evolved. And it was not until the end of eighteenth century when human rights as a concept took on practices which have meanings in the constitutions of Britain and Europe”.²¹ According to Jinadu, “the so-called civil and political rights made their appearance in Europe long before the nineteenth century. Economic, social and cultural rights followed much later and to be traced to philosophical thoughts such that embody in Karl Marx’s critique of nineteenth century capitalism and in Roman Catholic Encyclicals [Return Novarum of Leo xiii, 1891 subsequently modified several times] to close the gap between the church and ever-changing world”.²²

In contrast to the Marxist position, the Papal Encyclicals defended private property and were more concerned with social reforms. They favoured the promotion of interests of workers by advocating that the state should assure just wages and adequate conditions of labour, encourage formation of trade unions and take responsibility for welfare of all members of community.

Osita established:

The natural law approach led, in fact, to a distinction being made between “rights of man” and “rights of citizen”. Rights of man are supposed to be those which one has as a member of the human race while the rights of the citizen – political, economic and social rights – appertain to an individual as a member of a particular civil society. With the renaissance, the reformation and the decline of the roles played by the church in the affairs was corresponding demise of the natural law theories. The positive school of law which followed in the wake of all these changes secularized the notion of law by re-moving it from the realm of the supernatural or of metaphysics.²³

According to Redmond, “it was in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly declared Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is legally binding on the member-states. The member-states also included the rights in their constitutions”.²⁴

The states which voluntarily sign the covenant would be legally obliged to abide by its provisions. In recent times, we have seen some states which have signed the covenant but have not implemented all of its provisions. Doi established that “one of the purposes of the United Nations in line with article 1 of its charter is to provide and encourage respect for the human rights”.²⁵ After independence, Nigeria also included the fundamental human rights in its constitution, 1963, 1979 and 1999 constitutions respectively.

2.2 Human Rights in Islam

To study the issue of human rights in its proper perspective as far as human rights in Islam are concerned, it is proper to make a brief reference to the Western approach and notion of human rights. This will also enable us to avoid some of the confusions which normally happen during such a discussion. The people in the West has the habit of attributing every good things to themselves and try to prove that it is because of them that the world got this blessing, otherwise the world was steeped in ignorance and completely unaware of all the benefits.

The people in the West claimed that the world got the concept of basic human rights from the *Magna Carta* of Britain. The *Magna Carta* itself came into existence six hundred years after the advent of Islam. But the truth of the matter is that until the seventeenth century no one even knew that the *Magna Carta* contained the principles of Trial by Jury, *habeas corpus*, and the control of parliament on the Right of Taxation.

Mawdudi asserted:

If the people who had drafted the *Magna Carta* were living today, they would have been greatly surprised if they were told that their document also contained all these ideals and principles. They had no such intention, nor were they conscious of all these concepts which are now being attributed to them.

As my knowledge goes, the Westerners had no concepts of Human rights and civil rights before the seventeenth century. Even after the seventeenth century, the philosophers and the thinkers on jurisprudence though presented these ideas, the practical proof and demonstration of these concepts can only be found at the end of eighteenth century in the proclamations and constitutions of America and France.²⁶

After this, there appeared a reference to the basic human rights in the constitutions of different countries. But more often the rights which were given on paper were not actually given to the people in real life. In 1948, the United Nations made a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and passed a resolution against genocide and framed regulations to check it. It is surprising to know that there is not a single resolution or regulation of the United Nations which can be enforced. They are just an expression of a pious pope. They have no sanctions behind them, no force, physical or moral to enforce them.

Despite all the high-sounding ambitious resolutions of the United Nations, human rights have been violated and trampled upon at different places, and the United Nations has been a helpless spectator. She is not in a position to exercise an effective check on the violation of human rights. Even the heinous crime of genocide has been perpetrated despite all proclamation of the United Nations. Right in the neighbouring country of Pakistan, genocide of Muslims has taken place for the last twenty-eight years, but the United Nations does not have the power and strength to take any steps against India. No action has been even taken against any country guilty of this most serious and revolting crime.

At this juncture, I would like to discuss human rights in Islam. In Islam, human rights really mean that the rights have been granted by God; they have not been granted by any king or by any legislative assembly. The rights granted by the kings or the legislative assemblies, can be withdrawn in the same manner in which they are conferred. The same is the case with the rights accepted and recognized by dictators. They can confer them when they like and withdraw them when they wish. In Islam, since human rights have been conferred by God, no legislative assembly in the world or any government on earth, has the right or authority to make any amendment or change in the rights conferred by God. No one has the right to abrogate them or withdraw them. Nor are they the basic human rights which are conferred on paper for the sake of show and exhibition and denied in actual life when the show is over. Nor are they the philosophical concepts which have no sanctions behind them.

The charter, the proclamations and the resolutions of the United Nations cannot be compared with the rights sanctioned by God, because the former is not applicable to anybody while the latter is applicable to every believer. They are a part and parcel of Islamic faith. Every Muslim or administrators will have to accept, recognize and enforce

them. If they fail to enforce them, and start denying the rights that have been granted by God or make amendments or changes in them, or practically violate them while paying lip-service to them, the verdict of the Glorious Qur'an for such governments is clear and unequivocal: "Those who do not judge by what God has sent down are the disbelievers.". [Q. 5: 44]. Another verse also says: "They are the wrong-doers", [Q. 5:45] while the third verse in the same chapter says: "They are the evil-doers". [Q.5:47].

In other words, this means that if the temporal authorities regard their own words and decisions to be right, and those given by God as wrong, they are disbelievers. If on the other hand, they regard God's commands as right but wittingly reject them and enforce their own decisions against God's, then, they are the mischief-makers and wrong-doers. Thus, all those temporal authorities who claim to be Muslims and yet, violate the rights sanctioned by God are regarded as the disbelievers, wrong-doers and mischief-makers by God. The rights which have been sanctioned by God are permanent, perpetual and eternal. They are not subject to any alterations or modifications, and there is no room for any change or abrogation.

Mawdudi maintained:

The first thing that we find in Islam in this connection is that it lays down some rights for man as a human being. In other words, it means that every man whether he belongs to this country or whether he is a believer or unbeliever, whether he lives in some forest or is found in some forest, whatever be the case, he has some basic human rights simply because he is a human being, which should be recognized by every Muslim. In fact, it will be his duty to perform certain obligations as a human being.²⁷

Mawdudi summarily identified the following as some of the features of human rights in Islam: the right to life, the right to safety of life, respect to the safety of women, the right to the basic standards of life, the individual's right to freedom, the right to justice, the equality of human beings, and so on.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER THREE

ISLAM IN OSUN S TATE

3.1 Brief information about Osun State

3.1.1 Geographical Location of Osun State

Osun state was carved out of the former Oyo State. It is located in the tropical rain forest in the South West of Nigeria, covering an estimated area of 8,602 square kilometers. It was created on August, 1991 along with eight others by the regime of the former President Ibrahim Babangida.¹ The State was so named because of the importance the people attached to the Osun River, and founding of Osogbo was historically linked to the river.

3.1.2 Population and Occupation of the People of Osun State

According to the population census of 2006, Osun State has 3,418,532 people residing in it.² The state's indigenes are Yoruba comprising Ife, Ijesha and Oyo. Traditionally, agriculture is the mainstay of the people's economy. A great number of Osun State indigenes are educated. Many of them are teachers, lectures, civil servants, traders and artisans. The state has 30 local governments well linked with good roads.³ The successive governments encourage agriculture, education, trade and commerce.

3.1.3 Religious Beliefs of the People

There are three types of religion in the State, namely: Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion. While Islam and Christianity are the major religions in the State, African Traditional Religion is a minority religion. It needs to be mentioned here that some Muslims and Christians usually join with the Traditional Religionists and participate during their annual festival celebrations. An example of this is Osun Osogbo festival.

3.2 Islam in Osun State

Apart from Osogbo, the state capital, there are some other big towns in the State. They include Ede, Iwo, Ikirun, Ikire, Ejigbo, Ila, Ilesa, Ido-Osun, Ara, Ilobu, Ifon, Ipetu-Ijesa, and some others. Focus here is to discuss the growth of Islam and when it was actually introduced in the area now called Osun State. It is just to give an insight into the advent and growth of Islam in some of the communities without going into details, since this is not a research into the history of Islam in the State.

For this reason and for the purpose of this study, some principal towns and others are treated examples as brief as possible, showing the advent and growth of Islam in these

places. The principal towns include Ede, Iwo, Ikirun, Osogbo, Ile-Ife, Ilesa, and Ipetu-Ijesa. The less principal ones fall within Ijesaland, namely, Ijebu-Jesa, Otan-Ile, Ibokun, Erin-Oke, Esa-Oke and Esa-odo. It should be noted here that Islam had been introduced into the geographical entity now called Osun State before 1991 when the State was created.

The advent of Islam in the area now called Osun State cannot be mentioned in isolation from the advent of Islam in Yorubaland. Yorubaland has some contacts with the Islamised areas both in war and in peaceful time through the activities of soldiers, settlers, and above all, traders. This varied contact meant some intermingling of people and ideas, a situation which facilitated the infiltration in Yorubaland.⁴ Historians find it difficult to attach a specific date to the introduction of Islam in Yorubaland.

The introduction of Islam in Yorubaland was unannounced and unplanned, and the first Yoruba Muslims had to worship privately and secretly. What is fairly certain is that in the seventeenth century, mention was made of Muslims in Yorubaland. Ahmed Baba (d. 1610 C.E.) had mentioned Yorubaland as an area where “unbelief predominates and Islam is rarely found”. Hence, Islam was already introduced in Yorubaland in the early seventeenth century.⁵

Shaykh Adam Al-Ilori suggested that Islam was introduced to Yorubaland during the period of Mansa Musa of Mali (d. 1337 C.E.), and spread to most parts of Nigeria, including Yorubaland. It is likely that there were Muslim traders from Mali who came to Old Oyo and thus, Islam was introduced through them to many parts of Yorubaland.⁶ Some historians, particularly, the non-Muslims, like Samuel Johnson and others who suggested eighteenth century as the date of the spread of Islam to Yorubaland seemed to have drawn their conclusion from the impression that the spread of Islam in Yorubaland was based on the Fulani Jihad. Although, to some extent, the *Jihad* gave a boost to the spread of Islam, it is however, noted that the spread of Islam had already become a factor in Yorubaland before the Fulani Jihad of 1804. The Jihad and its aftermath obviously constituted a watershed. Rather than improving the position of Yoruba Muslims, the *Jihad* initially had rather tragic effects in some cases scattering the Muslims and threatening their position.⁷

Another important fact to stress in the introduction of Islam into Yorubaland was that it took a different form from that of its introduction in Hausa and Nupeland. Unlike in Hausa and Nupeland where the rulers first accepted Islam and encouraged or compelled

their followers to follow suit, the peasants were the first set of people to accept Islam in most Yoruba kingdoms, and where rulers accepted first, its practice was nominal and not pronounced until the 19th century when some Yoruba kings became publicly associated with Islam. In fact, flourishing Muslim communities were said to have been established in Yoruba kingdoms before the members of the ruling classes began to embrace the religion after several decades.

As a matter of historical fact, Islam was first identified with the long distance traders and commercial elite in Yorubaland popularly known as *Parakoyi* who probably had come into contact with Islam outside Yorubaland particularly in Northern Nigeria.⁸ Osun State strives well among the six South-Western States inhabited by Yoruba people in contemporary Nigeria in terms of Muslim population and Islamic influences. At this juncture, it is pertinent to discuss the advent and growth of Islam in some big towns of Osun State namely, Ede, Iwo and Ikirun. Those three towns are special in that the *Shari'ah* (the Islamic Law) was first established there, and they are monumental for Islamic activities, culture and civilization. They will be followed by places like Osogbo, Ife and Ijesaland.

3.2.1 The Growth of Islam in Ede

Islam was according to traditions, introduced into Ede during the reign of Timi Bamgbaiye Ajeniju (1816-1841), the second Timi in the new Ede.⁹ The emergence of Islam in the town was as a result of the Timi's search for a major power to aid the town in a battle against Ibadan forces. Although, Ede was a major ally of Ibadan, the reason for the battle was due to the decision of the newly appointed Balogun Oderinlo of Ibadan who had to prove his mettle as a military chief and had chosen Ede for his trial.¹⁰

Ede's military might was incomparable to that of Ibadan and it was sure that in the event of a war between the two, Ede's chance of victory was very slim. Hence, Timi Ajeniju sought for assistance from a more powerful source. Ojo arohanran (the Timi's younger brother) intimated Timi of a Muhammadan (sic) friend of his who told him that at the invocation of the name of certain god against the Ibadan forces, Ede was sure of a resounding victory without firing a shot. Timi Ajeniju decided to give it a trial and requested to see the Muhammadan (sic). Ojo Arohanran thus went to Nupeland to bring his friend called Buremo (Ibrahim) Owon-laa-rogo. After his arrival, Buremo prepared some concoctions which were taken to the battle ground and caused some rain for three successive days that declined the Ibadan forces without a single shot. For this victory,

Timi Ajeniju gave Buremo the permission to settle in Ede to continue to pray for the town in subsequent battles.¹¹

The people of Ede were aware of Buremo's supernatural powers. Apart from practising his religion, Buremo attracted a number of people to his house who requested for his assistance in attending to one ailment or the other. He used this opportunity to preach Islam to his visitors. Gradually, the Muslim population increased in Ede.

This was consolidated by Oba Abibu Lagunju who reigned between 1847 and 1900. It was during his reign that Islam reached its peak in Ede.¹² Lagunju was the first Muslim Timi and his reign was regarded as "the golden age" of Islam in Ede. However, prior to his reign, Islam was mixed with traditional Yoruba religion (syncretism) by the people of Ede. The few Muslims also faced stiff opposition from ardent traditionalists. However, with his ascension to the throne, Islam in Ede became greatly purified and Muslims began to enjoy freedom of worship. Indeed, he struggled for the progress of Islam and gave it a very solid foundation in Edeland. He was able to influence some of his subjects, including his chiefs to become Muslims.

It is important to note that because of his exemplary contributions, Timi Abibu Lagunju's reign achieved an epochal feat in making Ede a pseudo-Islamic state. This was due to the introduction of the *Shari'ah* legal code, among other Arabian cultures such as the wearing of the turban by the chiefs.¹³ Although there were oppositions during his rule in this period, Makinde¹⁴ notes that the *Shari'ah* was instituted in the post-Lagunju years during the reign of Timi Oyelekan (1899-1924). He refers to this period as the second phase of the *Shari'ah* application in Ede. The re-introduction of the *Shari'ah* in post-Lagunju years was championed by his eldest son named Ashiru Abibu Lagunju who returned from Ibadan. Ashiru lagunju appointed his eldest son, Mahmud Lagunju as the *Qadi* (Judge) but was supported by Jinadu Alabi who served as the representative of the king in the *Shari'ah* court. Abubakar Sindiku (Siddiq) Sobojeje from Ilorin was the registrar of the court. The *Shariah* court in Ede, according to Makinde, was a sort of a customary court located in Agbeni. This is where cases were brought to the judge for adjudication according to the *Shari'ah*. The Qur'an and the *Risalah* of Imam Malik were the major reference point of judgment in the court. This court remained in existence until the arrival of the Europeans who moved it to Onike-Olu in Agbongbe area of Ede.

The colonial period coincided with the third phase of *Shari'ah* application in Ede which was also in Timi Oyelekan's era. The *Sharia'ah* law was allowed for some years in

this period until its abrogation in 1918. The law was stopped by the colonial government because the non-Muslims were averse to it. Many of them hated Timi Lagunju who introduced it in the first instance. Secondly, the law was abolished because the Muslims in the town were not united on its application.¹⁵

In spite of this setback, the growth of Islam in Ede continued. This was well attended to in the socio-cultural reformation of its Muslim community over the year. In demonstration of their loyalty to Islam, the Muslim community built various mosques for the worship of Allah. Largely, the mosques could be divided into three categories namely: Central, *Ratibi* (Adjoining) and Private or Organizational Mosques. In spite of the challenges encountered from the traditionalists and that of finance in the early period of the growth of Islam in the town, a Central Mosque was built at Oja Timi. During the construction of this Mosque, donations were received from Muslims, including socio-religious association and guilds. Muslims citizens of Ede at home and abroad were requested to donate. However, unlike the Central Mosque which the whole Ede Muslim Community contributed to its construction, the building of *Ratibi* mosques was done by Muslim individuals living in the community.¹⁶

The Muslim community in Ede is headed by the Chief Imam of Ede. He is the head and protector of Islam in the town. He is appointed by the king, the Timi of Ede. All Islamic bodies in the town are collectively under the leadership of Ede Muslim Council whose leadership is reposed in the Chief Imam. Today, there are other Imams who lead in other Central Mosques (different from the Ede Central Mosque) and are referred to as chief Imams. These other Chief Imams are under the Chief Imam of Ede. The important duty of those Chief Imams is to lead the congregational prayers mostly on Fridays and on the two 'Id days of *Al-Fitri* and *Al-adha*. They also educate the members of their community and are usually on hand to conduct important ceremonies such as funeral, naming and marriages, etc. Also, the Muslim Community in Ede is sub-divided in such a way that each *Ratibi* Mosque is headed by its own Imam. Small towns and villages under Ede, have their own Muslim communities where an Imam leads them in prayers and other Islamic activities.

Mosques belonging to various organizations are established by Islamic societies. There are also private mosques by individuals. The two are similar in motives. Most of these mosques are established with the aim of providing places for worship and discuss issues relating to the welfare of Islam and Muslims. The system of appointing the Imam in

these mosques differs from the traditional Mosques. At inception, many of these Mosques had a constitution which spelt out the aims and objectives of the organization, system of appointment of Imams and other officers, among other things. The Ansar-ud-Deen, for instance has departments of religion and administration such that there are the positions of the National Missioner who heads the Mission's Board and the National President who is the Chief Executive of the Society.

Today, in Ede North Local Government Area, there are thirty-four Central Mosques where Friday *Jumu'at* prayer is observed, while in Ede South Local Government, there are thirty-seven central mosques.¹⁷

Muslims in Ede also embarked on the Holy pilgrimage to *Makkah* as part of their duty to fulfill the five pillars of Islam. Lawal Gbegile and Oluwin were the first people who made the trip to Mecca but died on their way. After their unsuccessful attempts, Alhaji Buhari (Bukhari) and his wife of Areja compound, weathered the storm and made the first successful trip to *Makkah* by trekking in the period around 1899 to 1924. Following suit, many other Muslims in the town such as Alhaji Safi of Akaje compound performed their Hajj also by trekking.

In the early period of Islam in Ede, many Muslims, because of their professions, were mixing Islam with traditional religion. For example, most of the hunters had accepted Islam but still continued to participate in the Ogun festival (the worship of god of iron). It is realized, for example, that a person who professed to be a Muslim could still be found visiting the traditional priest for solutions to certain problems.¹⁸ To this end, open air sermons were usually organized to educate the people and attack syncretism or ambivalence which was prevalent among the Muslims. This however, met a stiff opposition from the traditionalists.

The introduction of Christianity into Ede in the early part of the 20th century by Oyeboade Akerele of the Olosun compound¹⁹ brought another dimension to the conflict. He established a Baptist Church in Ede where he was the pastor. Because he was literate, Timi Oyelekan took interest in him and became his scribe. Akerele used this influence to spread Christianity in Ede. He organized literary classes for pupils who later embraced his religion. Other Christian denominations such as the Anglican and the Christ Apostolic Churches later found their way into Ede in 1911 and 1939 respectively. In spite of this, Christianity never became a potent rival of Islam in Ede. One of the factors responsible for this was the early presence of Islam in the town which afforded it the opportunity of

winning many converts before the emergence of Christianity. Another factor was the similarity in some of the cultures of Islam and traditional religion of the people. The policy of one man one wife of Christianity²⁰ for instance, did not appeal to the people. Although, Islam and Christianity had some similar things in common such as their claim to one God, the two conflicted on the issues such as polygamy, the trinity and the slaughtering and eating of certain animals like pig.

Also, the establishment of schools for the acquisition of western education in Ede by Christians caused some worry among Muslims in the town. There was the fear that pupils who attended these schools would be converted to Christianity. Many people, like in other Yorubaland were thus reluctant to send their wards to Christian Mission Schools. Many Muslim societies in Ede however, responded to this challenge with the establishment of schools where Western Islamic and Arabic Studies are being taught. The schools include Tajudeen School which started in 1947 and now known as Young Tajudeen Primary School, Ojoro (Ede). Young Tajudeen School, Agbangudu, Young Tajudeen, Ogbaagbaa and Tajudeen School, Araromi-Loogun. There are Ede Muslim Grammar School established in 1974, Islamic Nursery and Primary School, Agbangudu, Muslim Children School, Ilupeju-e, Muslim community Primary School, Sekona-Ede, Islamic Comprehensive College established in 1996, Al-Fareed Group of Schools (Nursery, Primary and Junior College in Ede), Senior College at Abere Road, Fadl-al-Omar Ahmadiyyah College established in 2005, and Ahmadiyyah Nursery and Primary School at Ede, Al-Huda Nursery and Primary Schools. Others are Olagunju Islamic Centre, the Islamic Institute Ede and Ede Islamic Vocational Centre. Pupils and students of these schools are encouraged to participate in all Islamic activities in schools so that their parents could now be rest assured that their children remain Muslims in future.

It is interesting to note that one of these schools, the Community Secondary School, was established with the financial donations of Ede Community. When the school was completed in 1963, Timi John Adetoyese Laoye invited Christian teachers who were members of the Baptist Church to be teaching in the School. The Muslims in Ede were not comfortable with this arrangement but could not oppose the king. Many of them started withdrawing their wards from the school. The Community Secondary School was remained as Baptist High School, Ede. Later, the Muslims in Ede contributed money to build a new school called Ede Muslim Grammar School 1974.²¹

The roles of Muslim leaders who continued to spread the Islamic religion in Ede in the post-Lagunju years is worth mentioning. In spite of the threats posed by Christianity, Muslim leaders, professional preachers and itinerant Islamic scholars continued to organize open-air preaching which became a strong weapon of promoting Islam and stemming the conversion of Muslims. One of the notable Muslim leaders and Imams of Ede in this period was Chief Imam Aminullah Talafia (1903-1936) who succeeded the late Chief Imam Shaykh Noah Adekilekun. There was also Imam Abdul-Qadir Adekilekun (1936-1947), who hailed from Imole's Compound. He was well-versed in Islamic knowledge and tradition. He was regarded as the most brilliant and luckiest of all the Chief Imams in Ede. He supported Islamic education for Muslim children and ensured that this admonition started from his household in line with the adage "charity begins at home."

Indeed, his children were well educated in Arabic and Islamic Studies. He also extended this knowledge to the community at large. While his father, Dhul-Qarany was the one who embraced and welcomed the Tijjaniyyah Tariqah to Ede. Imam Abdul-Qadir perfected his life in doing it for his spiritual elevation. In addition to these Imams, were Chief Muhammad Alimi Sadiku Talafia (1947-1969), Chief Imam Ahmad Tijjani Alabi Adekilekun (1969-1971), Chief Imam Kuranga Yunus (1971-1974), Chief Imam Zakariyyah Muhammad Thani (1974-1981), Chief Imam Sa'ad Adekilekun (1981-1987), Chief Imam Abdul-Hamid Bukhari Sekoni (1987-1997), Chief Imam Dhul-Qarnayn Uthman (Elesinmerindinlogun:1997-2000), Chief Imam Idris `Atiq Ejalonibu (Owonlaarogo: March 10, 2000-Nov. 30, 2004), and Chief Imam Mas'ud Hussayn Akajewole (2004 to date).²²

In addition to these *Ulama'*, were rich and notable businessmen who have used their wealth to encourage the growth of Islam in Ede. Among the notable businessmen was Alhaji Ahmad Akanbi Ejalonibu Siyanbade who was later turbaned as the first Aare Musulumi of Ede in 1983. While in this office, he led the Muslim Community in Ede in the modernization project of the township mosque which was launched in 1986. He was one of the founding fathers of the idea of an Islamic university which culminated in the proposed Hijrah University (later renamed: Unity University). He was also a benefactor of many Islamic associations and organizations in the town such as the Islamic Institute, Ede, Joint Association of Ede Muslim Council, and Ahbabud-Deenil-Islam Society.

There was also Alhaji Isa Yagboyaju, a business tycoon and patron of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria in Oyo State. He was a philanthropist who gave financial assistance for various development projects of the Muslim Youths, including the building of mosques. He was the Chairman of the Committee that established the Ansar-al-Islam Commercial Grammar School in Ede.²³

Many of the early Muslims were successful traders and professional businessmen. They played laudable roles in the spread of Islam. Also, many associations were formed such as the “Egbe Kila, Oredegbe, Ifelodun, Oba-ni-basiri, and Omonigbehin” that were used to promote cooperation among members. During naming ceremonies, marriages and funerals, they often put on the same dress and employ the services of drummers which added colour and grace to many social ceremonies.

Muslims do not encourage their ladies to marry traditionalists; likewise the traditionalists impose restriction on the affairs between their children and Muslims. In spite of this, many traditional ladies were encouraged to embrace Islam by their marriage to Muslim husbands.

In small towns like Sekona, Iragberi, Iwoye, Alajue, Ara, Aro, Ojo, Olodan and Loogun, Islam was the religion that held sway as more Muslim preachers spread across the nook and cranny of Ede Township. Among these preachers were Alhaji Raji Olele, Alhaji Shaykh Solahudeen Ade Olayiwola, and so on. Later, Shaykh Solahudeen came back home to establish an Arabic school known as the Islamic Institute, Ede from where many students got scholarships to Universities in Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, and so on.

The spread of Islam in Ede encouraged the emergence of Islamic sects and groups. Some of the religious groups in Ede are the Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jam’at, Zumratul-Mu’minin Society, Nasrullah al-Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), Ede branch, Fatih Qureeb, The Islamic Congress of Nigeria, The Tijjaniyyah and Quadriyyah Tariqahs. Together, these Muslim groups encouraged the spread and acceptance of Islam in Ede. These Islamic groups are mostly composed of the elites in the society who have refused to be misled by modernity and other religions.

In conclusion, the introduction and growth of Islam in Ede is full of sacrifice and patience, struggle and endurance on the part of the early Muslims. Their efforts yielded good results with the support given to the religion by kings and Muslim leaders. Today, Ede continues to be one of the leading centres of Islamic cultures and tradition, not only in

Osun State but in Yorubaland as a whole. The Muslim population is about 90% of the total population of the town.

3.2.2 Islam in Iwo

Iwo is a Yoruba town and one of the major cities in Osun State. It is about forty minutes' drive from Ibadan the current capital of Oyo State. The town occupies an area of 245km² and it has a population of 120,919 according to the 2006 Nigeria head count.²⁴

It is not known exactly when Iwo began to embrace Islam, but it is clear that it started to have Islamic connections from the 18th century when Islam was introduced into the town.

Today, Iwo is a predominantly Muslim town with about 80.9 percent of its total population being Muslims and with several Islamic societies, groups and associations. The town is now known with such appellations as: "Iwo, the town of Muslim scholars" (Iwo Ilu Aafaa)," Iwo, the owner of Qur'an (Iwo oni Kurani).

There are different oral accounts among the Iwo people concerning when Islam was introduced into Iwo. The most popular is that Islam was probably introduced into Iwo during the reign of Oluwo Ogunmakinde Ande who reigned between 1744 and 1816. The younger brother of Oluwo Ande being called Oluaji, shared his experiences with the king on his arrival from a distance from trade at Ikoyi near Ogbomosho. At Ikoyi, Oluaji came in contact with some itinerant Muslim preachers who had been summoned by Onikoyi to pray for him against the Fulani invasion of his town. Oluwo Ande heard this and because of his own peculiar marital problem of lack of child-bearing, he quickly ordered that the Muslim clerics be invited to Iwo to pray for him. The three Muslim clerics and their leader, Alfa Uthman arrived in Iwo and settled at Mogaji Oba's Compound.²⁵ The clerics succeeded in converting Oluwo Ande to Islam, changing his name to Idris. The king built the first mosque in Iwo with Alfa Uthman as the first Imam.

After a while, the king's wife became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy named Lamuye. The king also allowed the baby to be named according to Islamic rites and he was given a Muslim name Muhammad (corrupted to Momodu). The boy was handed over to the Muslim scholars who gave him thorough Islamic training and upbringing and later became the Oluwo and one of the most famous Muslim rulers in Iwo history.²⁶

The legacy which Lamuye bequeathed to Iwo was that he turned the town into virtually an Islamic town. He introduced *Shar'ah* to cater for the judicial aspects of

Islam²⁷. During his reign between 1858 and 1906, virtually each compound in Iwo had a mosque and today the Christian population in the town accounts less than ten percent. In the majority, they were non-natives.²⁸ Also, another important factor which contributes to the growth and expansion of Islam in Iwo is the efforts of the Imams of the town, including the Muslim scholars and eminent Muslim personalities. Today, the number of Arabic and Islamic schools in the town is fifteen.²⁹

In contemporary Iwo, there are many Islamic societies and groups. It suffices to mention that some of the prominent Islamic societies in Iwoland were founded as follows: Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria (1946), Nawair-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria (1953), Islahud-Deen Missionary Association of Nigeria (1955), Anwarul-Islam Society of Nigeria (1961) and Islahud-Deen Society of Nigeria (1961). All these societies were actually founded and had headquarters in different Yoruba towns but only have their branches in Iwo except the Islahud-Deen Missionary Association which was founded in Iwo.

The Ansar-ud-Deen Society is the first and one of the most prominent Islamic Societies in Iwoland. It began in Iwo in 1946 as a result of the influence of one Late Mofolorunsho Adiat Sanni (popularly known as Baba Sanni) who was well-versed in Arabic language and western education.³⁰ He understood the importance of societies in the propagation of religion and also held that western education could be acquired without losing one's Islamic religious faith. He joined forces with other like-minds to form the society.³¹ The Ansar-ud-Deen Society contributed immensely to the expansion of Islam in the town. Apart from the *Jumu'at* prayer begun on April 20, 1962, it also built a kindergarten school in Iwo in 1953. By 1955 the society has a total of nine primary schools at different places in Iwo. More significantly, the Ansar-ud-Deen society established the Ansar-ud-Deen Grammar School in Iwo in 1982.³²

Other Islamic Societies in Iwo include the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission established in 1949; Nasrullahi-al-Fathi Society (NASFAT), Al-Fathul-Quareeb Islamic Society (Quareeb), Zumratul-Mu'minin, Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Ahbabudeen Society, Tijjaniyyat Movement, Quadriyyah Movement, Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Deenul-Haq Society, Young Muslim Brothers and Sisters of Nigeria (YOUMBAS), Ibadur-Rahman Society, Islamic Redeemers, and a host of others. It is important to stress here that all these societies have common objectives which are aimed at propagating and promoting Islam. It is pertinent to

mention Tadamuni Muslim Organization (T.M.O) formerly known as Jam'at Ta'awuni-Muslimin which was established by some Iwo Muslim youths in 1992.

Iwo is one of the most Islamised towns in contemporary Yorubaland. This is due to the pioneering roles of some traditional rulers and Islamic scholars who strove day and night to ensure that Islam was firmly entrenched in the town. Also, the roles of the Islamic societies, business-tycoons and eminent politicians cannot be over-emphasized.

3.2.3 The Introduction and Growth of Islam in Ikirun

Ikirun is the headquarters of Ifelodun Local Government of Osun State, and situated in the north-eastern part of the State. It is said that the town was founded in the fifteenth century.³³ Agriculture is the traditional occupation of the people of Ikirun, and they engaged principally in kolanut tree planting, hence, the town is described as “onile obi” (the land of kolanut). The significance of kolanut trade in the introduction of Islam in Ikirun has been tremendous. It provided the people the opportunity of wider social and religious interaction between the Hausa Muslim traders from the North and the local traders in the town.³⁴

Through this interaction, new ideas and belief system were exchanged. The consumption of kolanut was generally associated with the northerners – the Hausa/Fulani who were the chief agents of spreading Islam in Nigeria. These traders were also missionaries and scholars. After each day's transaction, they used their period of relaxation to read the Qur'an and preach to the people.³⁵

The presence of Hausa Kolanut traders had been noticed in Ikirun long before the formal introduction of Islam to the town.³⁶ This shows that the town has witnessed some Islamic influences through commercial interactions prior to the reign of Oba Aliyu Oyewole (1795-1820) who was generally believed to have introduced Islam to the town.³⁷ The religion made a slow spread at the initial stage as it was not highly patronized by non-traders who constituted the majority of the inhabitants.

The formal introduction of Islam to Ikirun goes back to the second half of the eighteenth century during the reign of Oba Aliyu Oyewole, the Akinrun of Ikirun. Prince Oyewole left Ikirun to live in Ilorin during the reign of Oba Oyejola who was suspicious of the towering influence of Prince Oyewole and conceived this influence as a threat to him as well as an impending encroachment of his authority. The suspicion led to a chain of conspiracies and attempts to terminate the life of Oyewole. At Ilorin, Prince Oyewole

became a Muslim and started learning Arabic and Islamic Studies.³⁸ He adopted Aliyu as his Islamic name.

The reign of Oba Oyejola witnessed series of internecine wars and Ikirun was invaded during a war tagged *Ayapa* which preceded the popular *Jalumi war* by almost a century. The result of the war was very devastating and many of the people had to flee Ikirun to various parts of Yorubaland. Oba Oyejola himself fled to Offa. After the war had subsided, the exiled people of Ikirun came back but Oba Oyejola considered it an act of shame and disgrace to his dignity to return home. Prince Oyewole who had been in exile at Ilorin took the advantage of the situation to lead the returning Ikirun people back home. He sought the advice of Islamic scholars at Ilorin for his ambition to become the Akinrun and he was so assisted. He later came back and was installed the Akinrun.³⁹ He preferred wearing turban to royal crown. The subsequent Akinrun also preferred the turban after him. The situation remained unchanged till 1978 when Oba Lawani (Muhammad Al-Awwal) Adeyemi Oyejola II, reintroduced the wearing of crown by accepting a beaded crown presented by Oba Lamidi (Abdul-Hamid) Adeyemi III, the Alaafin of Oyo at a colourful ceremony on 29th August, 1978.⁴⁰

Disregarding the fact that traders had brought Islam to Ikirun before his arrival, Oba Aliyu Oyewole consolidated Islam consequent upon his ascension to the throne, and traditional Islam was ascribed to him. He used his position to attract many people to Islam as he made acceptance of the religion a pre-condition for the conferment of any chieftaincy title.⁴¹ Apart from being a political leader, he was also the Imam and *Qadi* (judge) in a *Shari'ah* court introduced by him.⁴²

Oba Aliyu Oyewole had a child named Akadiri (Abdul-Qadir) who was sent to Ilorin to acquire Arabic and Islamic education. He returned to Ikirun as an erudite scholar. Subsequent to the death of Oba Oyewole, Islamic practice and propagation witnessed a systematic decline. The succeeding Obas preferred the arch-divinity of Ikirun, Irele, to Islam, disregarding the fact even if they were not Muslims, the turban they adopted was not a mere symbol of authority but an Islamic identity. This gradual decline continued until Akadiri Oyinlola Oyewole II, ascended the throne (1887-1914). He was the 13th Akinrun of Ikirun. His ascendance re-established Islam as an acceptable religion to the people of Ikirun. This was made easy for him through the assistance he got from some Muslim scholars from Ilorin who accompanied him to Ikirun; prominent among them

was Shaykh Salahudeen Muhammad “al-Awwal,⁴³ popularly known as Alfa Agba. The solid foundation of Arabic and Islamic scholarship was credited to him.

Through the royal patronage and generosity of Akadir, the peripatetic scholars, especially from Ilorin and other parts of the northern Nigeria, frequented the town to the benefit of the local people who would gather to learn from them. Some indigenes even left with them for further studies, and stayed away for long periods in order to acquire advanced Islamic and Arabic education. Many became accomplished scholars before they returned home. The proselytizing activities of the itinerant scholars turned Ikirun to a great intellectual centre. Of such itinerant scholars was Salih b. Muhammad b. Junta, a Fulani from Sokoto who first settled in Oyo-Ile. Abubakre reports that this scholar travelled far and wide preaching Islam and teaching the rudiments of Islam in different Yoruba towns.⁴⁴ His itinerary actually served as stimulus to the subsequent influx of Arabic scholars to different parts of Yorubaland including Ikirun.

Oba Akadiri Oyewole constructed the first mosque, a feat that was not accomplished during the reign of his father. He equally established a Qur’anic centre for the royal household and the entire Muslims. He then thought the Muslims should be governed by *Shari’ah*, hence he re-introduced it in the town. He, unlike his father, did not serve as *Qadi* but invited Mallam Inda Salih, an erudite scholar from Oke -Suna quarter in Ilorin as *Qadi*.

The spread of Islam in Ikirun extended to the neighbouring towns, namely Iree, Obaagun, Eripa, Oba, Iragbiji and Inisa. Muslims in these towns regarded Oba Akadiri not only as a traditional but a spiritual leader. To curb his influence, traditional rulers in these towns conspired to wage a war against Ikirun in 1912 but they were defeated. The Eesa, and Odofin (second and third-in-command to the Akinrun respectively) were not Muslims, so they were not loyal to the Akinrun. The consequence of this betrayal on the part of his chiefs and protest from the people was his dethronement by the Colonial District Officer and subsequent banishment to Lade, a village near Inisa in the present Odo-Otin Local Government Area of Osun State, a place where he died and was buried in 1914.⁴⁵

Kusamotu Oyewole succeeded his father as Akinrun (1940-1945). During his reign, he patronized Islamic activities which helped a lot for the propagation of Islam and for mutual benefit of members of the societies. The formation of Islamic societies was a turning point in the history of Islam in Ikirun. People became attracted to these societies

by the songs composed in Arabic and drum beating which were used to accompany the rendition of songs. They did not stop joining these societies but they also trooped to the existing Qur'anic centres for deeper familiarity with the Arabic songs and programme of these societies. Prominent among these societies were Egbe Ilesanmi, (founded in 1931), Egbe Anabi-lo-nigba (founded in 1933), Egbe Asalatu (founded in 1938). These societies have been formed before the installation of Oba Akadiri as the Akinrun but their activities received royal boost from him. It was this patronage that really facilitated the springing up of more societies like Egbe Ajenifuja (founded in 1948) and Egbe Kila (founded in 1952) after his demise.⁴⁶

Of greater significance among the Muslim societies in Ikirun was Nawair-ul-Deen society founded in 1940 by Shaykh Ya'qub al-Muktar. This society had the honour of founding the first Muslim Primary School in Ikirun in 1948. The society was embraced by the reigning Akinrun Oba Kusamotu (Usamah) Oyewole (1940-1945). While Islam had gained sound footing in the town as early as 18th century, Gbadamosi traces the earliest incursion of Christianity into the town to the later part of the 19th century, precisely in 1887.⁴⁷ Our investigation reveals that though there were attempts to introduce Christianity to the town since the 19th century, success was only recorded in this regard in the 20th century. The first Christian denomination to appear in Ikirun was the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S), which built the first Church in Ikirun in 1909.⁴⁸

It is discovered that generosity is the major attribute of Ikirun rulers. The attribute facilitated the influx of itinerant Arabic scholars especially from Ilorin, to the town. Some of the scholars decided to stay permanently in the town, to teach and preach the message of Islam. Ikirun gradually developed into a rendezvous of '*ulama*' transiting from Ilorin to other parts of Yorubaland.

3.2.4 The Advent and Growth of Islam in Osogbo

Osogbo, sometimes called "*Ilu Aro*" (home of dyeing) is a city in Yorubaland of approximately 350,000 people. Legend has it that Osogbo was founded about 3000 years ago by two hunters. One of them Larooye, became the first Ataoja, assuming the royal title of the town's kingship. Apart from being the capital of Osun state, it is one of the foremost centres of Yorubaland arts and culture in Africa.⁴⁹

In Osogbo, a number of industries also began to spring up after independence, notably small scale establishments involved in textile, foam making and pencils. Osogbo was later made a major industrial development centre by the government of Nigeria during

the 1970s. Major companies were cited in the city, such as the Electricity Distribution Network to all parts of the country and Steel Rolling Mills. Yoruba tradition claims that many people fleeing the Fulani advancement settled at Osogbo following the fall of old Oyo. The Osogbo war between Ibadan and Fulani forces in 1840 did not negate this fact. As a result, Osogbo increased in population largely because of migration from other Yoruba towns.⁵⁰

There are many deities being worshipped in Osogbo. Among them are Osun (goddess of river), Egungun (masquerades: ancestral worship), Sango (god of thunder), Ogun (god of iron), Oro festival, Ifa deity, etc. The most prominent one being worshipped by the majority of the adherents of traditional religion is Osun river popularly known as “Osun Osogbo”. This is because of the historical linkage of the founding of Osogbo with the river. It is worshipped annually under the patronage of the Ataoja, the Oba of the town. It is believed to invoke the spirits of the ancestral fathers to ensure peace, love, progress and prosperity of the town.

Osun festival is one of the surviving traditional practices and ceremonies in Osogbo. This is with the belief that the Osun river goddess possesses mystical powers and could be appeased through sacrifice to prevent any devastating effect of the rainy season. Osun, in Yoruba tradition, is said to be one of the wives of Sango (god of thunder) who was an Alaafin of Oyo. She was believed to be the goddess of fertility; hence she was highly adored by her adherents who believed that the water from the river, more so, the one obtained after the rituals at the shrine (Ojubo) had a curative spiritual power. The water is believed to have curative powers to make barren women fertile, productive as well as to cure ailments; hence these attributes earned her the sobriquet of “Osun Osogbo, the one with very many children” (*Osun Osogbo Olomoyoyo*).

Osogobo was suggested by some historians to have got the wind of Islam in the early part of the 19th century. Their conclusion could have been based on the fact that the Fulani attack was halted in the town in the year 1840. However, historical records show that before the Fulani attack at Osogbo in that year, Islam had already existed in the town. It has therefore, been suggested that Islam might have been introduced to Osogbo in the 1820s by the Oyo Muslim traders.

The traders, preachers and migrant scholars who spread Islam into Yoruba communities through their activities assumed the duties of teachers demonstrating to their

converts cum students how to perform ablution, say the “*adhan*” (call to prayer) and observe ritual prayers. They also taught them how to recite verses of the Qur’an.

Between 1860 and 1895 C.E., Islamic learning was introduced into towns such as Saki, Iseyin, Osogbo, Ede, Iwo, Oyo, Ibadan, Ilaro, Abeokuta, Badagry, Epe and Lagos by Hausa traders cum scholars and scholars some of whom had entered the country by sea. The dissemination of knowledge was primarily through study at the feet of the informed scholars. They had elementary schools (*Ile-Keu*) where the *Qur’an* was memorized in well drawn-out stages. Some of the stages being enlivened by festivities when any pupil reached them. It was in this kind of schools that young and old pupils were taught about the simple tenets of their religion, some history of the Prophet and of Islam.

The first *Qur’an* school was established in Osogbo by Shaykh Ibrahim Uthman around 1850s. As people accepted Islam, they started to learn the Qur’an and the practice of Islam in the Qur’anic school. One of the early set of pupils of this school was Harun, son of Matanmi I who after receiving preliminary knowledge from the school later left Osogbo. The first school graduated many students who later became prominent scholars, and established *Qur’anic* schools in other parts of the town. Prominent among them were Abdul-Rahman and Alfa Gambari. The former established his mosque at Anisere’s compound while the latter established his own at Alarolese’s compound while Qur’anic schools were attached to the mosques. Thus, the level of acquisition of the knowledge of Islam began to grow. Other scholars also came from Ilorin and other places to teach people of Osogbo. Some people of Osogbo released their children to learn from these scholars in order to acquire advanced Islamic and Arabic education and became well-acclaimed scholars before they returned. Alfa Sanusi Olugun was one of these scholars. He used to come from Ilorin, whenever he came, he stayed at Olugun’s compound and henceforth called Alfa Sanusi Olugun.

The missionary fervours of ‘*ulama*’ contributed immensely to the growth and development of Arabic and Islamic learning in Osogbo. Many Qur’anic schools established in different parts and areas of the town received the patronage of many people. Through this, literary activities grew up in the town. Public sermons and open-air services were also organized by the ‘*ulama*’ for the generality of the people. They informed them of the need to accept Islam and learn about the religion. As a result of this, they gained many converts and followers whom they taught the recitation of the *Qur’an* and the fundamental principles of Islam.

Later, Arabic and Islamic institutions began to spring up through the effort of the '*ulama*'. Initially, it is started with the usual Qur'anic schools and they were located in the following places in Osogbo: Idi-Ako where the first mosque was built, Obate, Arikalamu, Borologo, Ile-Onigba and Abajaoro. Learning took place in the morning, evening and night. Students graduated from one stage to another until they were finally taught the reading of the whole *Qur'an* and some other Arabic books. This was the situation in those days until the learning system received improvement and modernization. Thus, formal Arabic and Islamic schools were established and organized under a school building like that of the government schools with syllabi, time-tables, prescribed Arabic text-books, rules and regulations, staffing, admissions, policies and standard examinations. Some of these schools are:

1. Osun Islamic Theological College, Osogbo.
2. Hajj Imam Yusuf Memorial Arabic Institute (popularly known as Mubarakah)
3. Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies (formerly situated at Oke-Osun but relocated to Madinat Estate, Oke-Ijetu).
4. Arabic and Islamic Study Centre, Osogbo.
5. Ansar-ud-Deen Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies.
6. Zumratu Kamaliyyah al-Adabiyyah, Owode, Osogbo.
7. Zumratu Salihin, Afonta, Aleku-wodo, Osogbo.

However, apart from the above modern Arabic schools, there are many evening Arabic schools in various zones and areas in Osogbo where many Muslim children attend after returning from the conventional schools. There are also early morning and night classes that are attended by elderly Muslims who are interested in having Qur'anic education in the houses of some prominent Islamic scholars in the town. This includes the Late Chief Imam of Osogbo, Shaykh Mustafa Olayiwola Ajisafe whose house is visited in the morning and night for Islamic learning. This happens because, as observed under Qur'anic school system found in Northern and Southern Nigeria, schools are located either in mosques, private houses or premises specially built for this purpose.⁵¹

In Osogbo, there are the Central Mosque buildings (Mosalasi Jimoh) which serve as mother mosques to other ratibi (adjoining) mosques in the town. The situation of Osogbo took the same two-level pattern at the initial stage but changed later with the expansion of the town and increase in the number of adherents. The organization of mosques in Osogbo now takes three levels having the Central Mosque as the mother

mosque; the *Jumu'at* mosques of various Islamic societies and organizations (where Friday prayers are also observed) and the *ratibi* mosques where five daily obligatory prayers are observed. Ansar-ud-Deen Society was the first of the Islamic societies to establish another *Jumu'at* mosque besides Osogbo Central Mosque in 1964 under the Imamship of Alhaji Yusuf Ashiru, the Iman of Abajaooro compound before others later followed suit. Presently, there are over 80 mosques in Osogbo where *Jum'at* services are observed every Friday.⁵²

The first *ratibi* mosque in Osogbo is Idi-Ako Mosque built by Shaykh Ibrahim Uthman, one of the scholars that visited Osogbo from Borno. Many *ratibi* mosques emerged thereafter and the number of the *ratibi* mosques increased tremendously. According to the secretary to the Central Mosque, Alhaji, G.O. Salahudeen, due to the difficulty in registering all *ratibi* mosques, only 134 were registered but they could be well over 150.⁵³

Imamship and its Practices in Osogbo

There were no laid-down rules for appointing an Imam in Yorubaland from inception and the case of Osogbo is not different. Hence, one of the three Muslim scholars from the North who brought Islam to Osogbo known as Imam Ibrahim Uthman was appointed the first *Imam* of the town. The subsequent Imams after him were chosen from *Omo or Omoomo* Imam (descendants of Imam) with the approval of the Ataoja of Osogbo.

The situation continued this way till the middle of 20th when some people felt that the tradition of *Omoomo* Imam should discontinue since there were some knowledgeable people who were qualified but were denied the position because they did not belong to *Omoomo* Imam. The contention of these people was that knowledge was the basic qualification for becoming an Imam, and not *Omoomo* Imam. Shaykh Muhammad Bello Arikalamu who contested for the Imamship position was denied because his father was never an Imam of Osogbo and he did not have the opportunity until he died.⁵⁴

The struggle for change did not stop. Alhaji Onilewura, a renowned scholar and student of Shaykh Muahammad Bello Arikalmu, occupied the position of *Mufassir* (the Qur'anic exegete) despite opposition from people, until the death of Imam Ashiru Ishola. The crisis that incessantly erupted at the death of an Imam while attempting to fill the vacancy led to a resolution that from that time, ascension to the position of Imam of Osogbo should be from *Mufassir* to Na'ib to Imam. Therefore, only three positions were

allowed to exist viz: Imam, *Naib* and *Mufassir*. These were later increased to four, namely: Imam, *Na'ib*, *Mufassir* and *Otun Mufassir* i.e. next to *Mufassir*.

In view of the foregoing, the number of Chief Imams produced in Osogbo up to date is sixteen as follows:

1. Imam Ismail Uthman (Idi-Ako) 1854
2. Imam Abubakar Busayri Agbagi (Alarolese)
3. Imam Abdur-Rahman Ajiferuke (Anisere)
4. Imam Kilani Olohungbo (Adekola)
5. Imam Uthman (Obatedo) 1936
6. Imam Muhammad al-Awwal (Olokuta) 1936-1946
7. Imam Muhammad Busayri Atofihan (Ogodu) 1939-1967
8. Imam Abibullahi Olohungbo (Adekola) 1946-1951
9. Imam Awesu (Uways) (Akorede) 1951-1958
10. Imam Abdus-Salam Bolarinwa Dolapo (Abajaoro) 1958-1964
11. Imam Muhammad Ashir Isola (Idi-Ako) 1964-1969
12. Imam Ahmad Tijanni Ajiferuke (Anisere) 1969-1981
13. Imam Salahudeen Bonuola Atofihan (Ogodu) 1981-1987
14. Imam Shittu Ayobami Onilewura (Oriaye) 1978-1994
15. Imam Jimoh Adumo Sanusi (Atanda) 1994-1997, and
16. Imam Mustafa Olayiwola Ajisafe (Owoope) 1997-2014
17. Imam Musa Animasahun 2014 to Date.

Islamic Organizations in Osogbo

Islamic activities in Osogbo were at the initial stage concentrated in the Central Mosque. It was the only place where the Friday prayers were observed and other religious activities were held. As Islam was growing and more adherents were coming into the fold, there came a time when the town began to witness the emergence of Islamic societies or organizations. Some of these organizations are discussed below.

Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria was the first Muslim Organization that was established in Osogbo in 1944. It was not until 1954 that Nawair-ud-Deen Society emerged in Osogbo. Islahu-ud-Deen society of Nigeria came to Osogbo in 1968. Sheriff-Deen Mission named after its founder Shaykh Sheriff was not established until 1969 in Osogbo, his home town. The history of Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jama'at, Osogbo, was said to

date back to 1967 when missionary Abdul-Ganiyi, an indigene of Ede, preached Ahmadiyyah to the people. However, being a visiting missionary the doctrine was not well accepted until 1970 when Brother Muheeb Ameen who resided in Okinni re-introduced the Jama'at to the people. Osogbo witnessed the proliferation of Muslim youth organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This seemed to be as a result of the ban on the Muslim Students' Society which was the first Muslim youth organization based in the schools by the then Oyo State Government of Bola Ige. In reaction to that, many Muslim youths felt that the only way out was to establish Islamic Organizations outside the school system that would take care of their religious yearnings and aspirations. Records show that the city recorded more than twenty different youth organizations at that period. It was as a result of this that an umbrella body for those organizations known as Osogbo Muslim Youth Organizations' Council (OMYOC) was founded in 1982. The council later metamorphosed to National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO) in order to ally with the umbrella body of all Muslim Youth Organization at the national headquarters in Ibadan.⁵⁵

There are two prominent "Alasalatu" prayer groups in the city of Osogbo. Nasrullahi al-Fathi Society of Nigeria, popularly known as NASFAT, Osogbo branch which came into existence in 2001, and it took off from Kosemani Mosque, Omo-West Area. The society has got its permanent site at the West Bye Pass, Iwo road, Osogbo from where it operates. It holds "Asalatu" prayer every Sunday and this is being attended by many Muslims of various callings and professions. Al-Fatih-ul-Quareeb Islamic Society of Nigeria popularly known as Quareeb is another Asalatu group. It was founded in the city in 2002 at Ode-Oga Mosque, Oke-Baale and Alhaji Tajudeen Omotoso Jamiu was made the missioner. The society has its permanent site at Quareeb Crescent, Opposite Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Oke-Baale, where it operates and holds its weekly prayers.

Shaykh and Sayyidah, Osogbo, these terms are used as titles for women leaders in Islam. These refer to Muslim women founding Islamic groups and missions under their leadership and are found in many parts of Yorubaland, Osogbo is not an exception. Shaykhah Fatimah Abdul-Aziz used to organize Muslim women for *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and also mobilize them for prayers which made many of them to attend her programmes. Hence, she gained the popularity of being addressed as *Shaykhah*. Sayyidah Mujidat Adeoye is the founder of Fadlullah Islamic Mission founded in 1997 when she

claimed to have received a message of Allah while selling rice and beans at the Oluode market. She has since then, left buying and selling and faced her mission of organizing “*asalatu*” and prayers for women. She has her mission house at Fadlullah Muslim Mission Street, Olutimehin Estate, Oke Ayepe where there is a mosque and her residential quarter. There are several other *Shaykhahs* in Osogbo and its environs.

Qaddriyyah order was said to have been brought to Osogbo by one Shaykh Murtala from Ilorin in the 1950s. Since then, it has played a laudable role in the spread of Islam in Osogbo. The Tijjaniyyah order was founded by Shaykh Ahmed B. Muhammad at-Tijjani (1737-1815).

As Doi observes, “the true factor of Islamization lies in the religion of Islam itself. Every Muslim has been asked to carry the message of the Prophet to others”. Hence, the advent of Islam in Osogbo was through the efforts of Muslim traders and Islamic scholars who visited the city. However, the arrival of Islam in the city made some significant impact on the life of the people. This could be observed through various activities that the people of Osogbo began to engage in since the inception of Islam.

3.2.5 The Advent and growth of Islam in Ile-Ife

Historically, Ile-Ife is an ancient African civilization. It is the source of the Yoruba people. Ile-Ife had contact with Islam before Christianity. There are several accounts on the penetration of Islam to Ile-Ife. There is an assertion that Islam surfaced in Ile-Ife after the invasion of Oyo-Ile in 1834 C.E. and subsequently the old Oyo. Some people who had already embraced Islam and dispersed down south to Ile-Ife to settle were later known as the Modakekes.⁵⁶

Another tradition has it that Islam entered Ile-Ife during the reign of Ooni Wunmonije (1835-1839) through an itinerant Ife trader, Awotinde Arobi of Jaojo’s Compound, Ile-Ife. Awotinde was a great merchant who used to travel as far as Dahomey. During one of his business trips, he had an encounter with an Ilorin scholar called Danialu. The scholar predicted that he (Awotinde) would be honoured with traditional chieftaincy title on his arraival back home. True to this prediction, Awotinde was appointed as Chief Orunto of Ile-Ife. For this reason, Chief Awotinde made up his mind to embrace Islam. He then invited his Muslim trading partner, Danialu to settle in Ile-Ife. On Danialu’s arrival in Ile-Ife he was lodged at Anikin’s compound. It is interesting to note that the two traditions traced Islam’s advent in Ile-Ife to a period in the first half of the 19th century.

At this juncture, it is note-worthy that Awotinde's conversion to Islam impressed the then people of Ile-Ife that many of them including his relatives embraced the religion and at their behest, Islam spread to other parts of the town.

One of the Alfa Danialu's lieutenants, Kasumu Adeosun, who later succeeded Danialu as the Chief Imam of Ife in 1922 after Imam Danialu's death, played a very significant role.⁵⁷ Modakeke was firstly used as the central mosque, but Imam Kasumu Adeosun influenced the building of the first central mosque in 1903 at Itakogun.⁵⁸ He spent his wealth, prestige and Islamic erudition towards the propagation of Islam in Ile-Ife. By 1928, Imam Adeosun secured the consent of Ooni Ademiluyi to build a new Central Mosque at Enuwa in 1928. It was located at the Oba's palace.

Alfa Raji Ayinde served as deputy (Noibi) to Imam Kasumu Adeosun, and consequently became his successor after his demise in 1935. It was during his time as Imam that Enuwa Central Mosque was first put into use, having been abandoned for years due to the evil spirit said to be humming around the Mosque. It was believed that the proximity of the mosque to Oduduwa Shrine was responsible for this. Imam Raji had to engage the service of a Nupe cleric to ward off the evil spirit. It was after the mosque was cleansed of the evil spirit that it was put into use for *Jumu'at* prayers.⁵⁹

Imam Raji, being an erudite scholar was engaged in imparting Arabic and Islamic education to the young Muslims of his time. His centre for Islamic learning was just one out of many that were in existence before and during his tenure promoting Arabic and Islamic scholarship. This is a clear indication that the growth of Islam in Ile-Ife at its initial stage was accompanied with the growth of Islamic scholarship, which was an index of a fairly qualitative growth. The growth can be easily measured by the growth rate of the mosques. Between 1903 when the first mosque was constructed and 1949 when Iman Raji died, virtually all parts of the traditional Ife already had standard mosques.

The efforts of the Muslim clerics in the propagation of Islam were complemented by the support from the Muslim Chieftains in the management of the Mosque affairs. Very prominent and influential members of the community were honoured with such title as Balogun Adini (Commander of Muslim community) Otun Balogun (Deputy in Command); others include: Seriki Adini, Bada, Sarumi, Asaju and Giwa, so arranged in order of importance. These early converts who became Muslim chieftains expended their wealth and used their influence to further the cause of Islam. Till today, Muslim chieftains continued to play significant roles in the affairs of the Muslim community in Ile-Ife.

The establishment of Ansar-ud-Deen Society in Ile-Ife in 1940 during the reign of Imam Raji was significant, as it led to the introduction of the Muslim mission schools established for the purpose of satisfying the needs for Western education Muslims. Ahmadiyyah Movement had been established much earlier in 1992, though could not establish any mission school. The missionaries did not pretend to see educational establishment as an avenue to convert Muslims to Christianity and Ile-Ife was not exempted from this trend. No sooner had Christianity found its footing in Ile-Ife in 1899 than the first missionary school, the Ethiopia Primary School, Iyekere was established in 1900.

Subsequently, other missionary schools with evangelistic missions sprang up in different parts of Ile-Ife. By the third decade of the century, many of such schools had been established. There is no gain-saying the fact that many Muslim parents whose children attended the schools lost their children to Christianity.

It is this trend that spurred the Muslims early in the 20th century, to form societies such as Ansar-ud-Deen Society, Ahmadiyyah Movement Jam'at al-Islamiyyah, among others to develop western derived education within a Muslim context, with a view to making Muslim children benefit from Western education without compromising their faith.⁶⁰

In 1944, Ansar-ud-Deen Society established Ansar-ud-Deen Primary School at Ogbon Agbara, another at Ogbondo in 1955 and yet another at Oke Atan in 1955. Ansar-ud-deen Modern School was established in 1959 and was upgraded to a secondary school in 1981. These schools played significant roles in stemming the rate of Muslim conversion to Christianity through the agency of schools.

The Muslims in Ile-Ife up to the end of Imam Raji Ayinde's reign in 1949 remained a strong and united community. However, the tussle over "who has legitimate claims to Imamship" engulfed the Muslim community and it lasted 28 years. The emergence of Yusuf Aderinlewo Balogun as the Chief Imam of Ifeland brought an end to the 28 years of Imamship tussle thus ushering in a new lease of life for the community.

There is no gain-saying the fact that the crisis period was a bitter experience for the Muslim community. The crisis consumed many members of the Muslim community who lost their lives through mysterious death.⁶¹ Without doubt, the crisis occasioned a serious set-back for the community.

Imam Yusuf Balogun (1978-1986) was an erudite scholar per excellence.⁶² Imam Balogun made very significant contribution to the growth of Islam in Ile-Ife especially in the aspect of Islamic teaching and knowledge dissemination to stem the low level of Islamic scholarship in the town. He was the first to teach Arabic and Islamic Studies in the western-oriented school in Ile-Ife and the manager of Ansar-ud-Deen School, Ogbondo, Ile-Ife till 1970. Being the first Ife indigene to perform the Holy pilgrimage to *Makkah* and *Madinah* he founded Zumratul Hujjaj (Society of the pilgrims to *Makkah*) in Ifeland with membership drawn from Ile-Ife, Modakeke, Ipetumodu, Ifetedo, and Ila-Orangun. It was an organization formed in 1961 to enlighten members about religious duties of a Muslim.

Imam Balogun was the first Ife Imam to deliver the *Jumu'at* Sermon (*Khutbah*) in Yoruba language understood by the congregation as a demonstration of his superb knowledge of Arabic. This enabled the congregation to appreciate the message of the sermon. He also eradicated the use of stereotyped sermon throughout the year. He brought about these remarkable innovations in 1957 when he was called upon to lead the two factions in *Jumu'at* prayers.

In view of Imam Balogun's special interest in Arabic education, he motivated Zumratul Hujjaj to establish a standard Arabic school in 1984, which served as a centre for acquisition of Arabic and Islamic learning. The school achieved the desired aim for its establishment as scores of students trained at the centre, mastered the reading of Qur'an and also acquired rudimentary knowledge of Islam. The greatest role played by Imam Balogun towards the growth of Islam in Ile-Ife for which he will forever be remembered was his contribution towards the settlement of the 28 years of Imamship dispute. He was one Imam who was highly respected by all and sundry due to his knowledge and charisma.

Alfa Yusuf Adebayo being the deputy (Noibi) to Imam Yusuf Balogun, was turbaned as the next Imam in 1986 and remained in office till 1994, the year he died. Imam Yusuf Adebayo was a gentle man per excellence. He demonstrated good knowledge of Qur'an and other branches of Islamic learning as evident in his Friday sermons. Before Imam Adebayo, the Muslim community had been planning to have a befitting Central Mosque. One of the strategies was to get some of the illustrious Ife Muslim sons involved in the affairs of the mosque. This informed the conferment of the prestigious honorary chieftaincy title of Aare Musulumi of Ife on Alhaji Muhib Ibikunle Lawal, an estate surveyor and valuer of note. This appointment turned out to be a blessing to Islam in Ile-Ife in view of the monumental contributions the Aare made towards the growth of Islam.

He was one person God used to superintend the successful construction of the new central mosque. Preparatory to the construction of the new mosque, the old one was demolished in 1989 while the new one started in 1992.

Imam Adebayo therefore, had the credit of witnessing laying the foundation stone of the Ultra-Modern Central Mosque. For the Muslim Community to embark on such a laudable project was a clear indication of the return of peace to the community. The eight year tenure of the Imam ushered in the golden era of Islam in Ile-Ife.

Islam in Ile-Ife in the last one half decades has undergone a remarkable transformation that would warrant tagging the period “golden era of Islam”. The installation of Sheikh Idris Gbadebo Opeloye in 1994 marked the commencement of the era. The installation ceremony was the first of its kind in the history of Islam in Ile-Ife especially because of the presence of his imperial Majesty, Oba Okunade Sijuwade, Olubuse II at the ceremony.

No sooner had Imam Opeloye was turbaned that signs started to manifest indicating the golden nature of his era. For example, the Ife elite, home and abroad, started to show unprecedented interest to participate in the activities of the Muslim community. Little wonder, the first major innovation made by Imam Opeloye on assumption of office was the engagement of Islamic scholars with background in Western education in conducting the Muslim community affairs which informed the appointment of Alhaji Abdul-Salam Abdul-Hameed Raji as the *Mufassir al-Qur'an* (Quranic Exegete) and Alhaji Bushra Balogun as the *Ajanasi* (interpreter of the text of Qur'an), both being degree holders in Arabic and Islamic Studies. This development not only brought about modernity in the conduct of Islamic programme (e.g. Marriage ceremony: Nikah), it projected the image of religion better than hitherto. Islam thus became a religion the Muslims could be proud of. Recently, the Muslim community was involved in the anniversary of Oduduwa College and 50th anniversary of St. John's Grammar School. The Muslim aspect which took place in the Central Mosque was impressively conducted to the satisfaction of the organizers of the event.

What could be described as the monumental achievements of Imam Opeloye was completion of the Ultra-Modern Central Mosque in the year 2002. The foundation stone of the Mosque was laid in June, 1992, by his Royal Majesty, Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano while it was officially commissioned in December, 2002, by his Eminence, Alhaji Mohammad Maccido, the Sultan of Sokoto, and President-General of the Nigerian

Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. The fact that the project of that magnitude could be completed within a decade by the Muslim community was a rare achievement. It was a sign of renewed dedication to Islam inspired by the love for the new Islamic regime.

The resources pooled together to finance the construction was in the main internally generated though not without the support of external philanthropists.⁶³ Credit cannot but be given to the man who got the dream of Ife Muslim community to have a befitting central mosque materialized in person of Alhaji Muhib Ibikunle lawal, the Aare Musulumi of Ifeland. With a dint of hard work and commitment to the cause of Islam, he was able to see the project through.

The success story of the growth of Islam during the Imamship of Sheikh Idris Opeloye derives not only from Muslim community's love for the Imam. It includes also the palace support. It is not in doubt that his imperial Majesty, Oba Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II, demonstrated his affection not only to Imam Opeloye but also to the Muslim Community. This accounts for his invaluable contribution in cash and kind towards the Central Mosque construction. Oba Okunade Sijuwade used his influence to invite the Emir of Kano for the laying of foundation stone and also facilitated the coming of Sultan of Sokoto for the official commissioning. His support for the project throughout the construction period inspired the Muslim community which contributed to the project's successful completion. Ile-Ife is thus reckoned with as one of the major Yoruba cities that can boast of an Ultra-Modern Central Mosque.

Seeing the Muslim community becoming well organized in the conduct of their affairs, Oba Okunade Sijuwade was encouraged to involve them in the palace official programmes. For instance, during honorary chieftaincy installation ceremonies involving the Northern Muslims, they were permitted to undergo Islamic rites rather than be subjected to the indigenous ritual observances.

Consequently, the Muslims from other parts of Nigeria discovered that there is strong Islamic presence in Ile-Ife contrary to the general belief that Ile-Ife is populated by the traditional worshippers. Opeloye's Imamship regime thus, has the credit for correcting the erroneous belief about Ile-Ife and its people's religious affiliations.

The close relationship between the Muslim community and the palace is also attested to by the appointment of members of the Muslim committee into public offices at Oba Okunade Sijuwade's instance. Each time the monarch had the opportunity to nominate people for Government appointments either at the Federal or State level, his

preference was not only for devout Muslims but also Muslims who enjoy the confidence of the Muslim Community and who have the capacity to perform.⁶⁴

Recently, the Ife Muslim community experiences youth agitation arising for what they tagged “inconsistence in the Mosque management policies” as it affects the office of deputy Imam. The crisis was of such a magnitude that was capable of subverting the Mosque management authorities. It was the timely intervention of the royal father, Oba Okunade Sijuwade who is a peace-loving and development-oriented monarch, whose influence and goodwill are enormous, whose religious tolerance is superb and who is a role model.⁶⁵ There are some ongoing projects which constitute an index of growth of Islam in Ile-Ife. One of them is the shopping complex which is a joint project by a larger Muslim community, Zumratul-Hujjaj. It is a venture designed to yield some income for the community to maintain the mosque. Another is the Eid-praying Ground Modernization Project fashioned and adopted by the committee in charge. The thinking is that Ile-Ife having got a befitting Central Mosque, there must be a progressive move towards having a befitting Eid-praying Ground.

If we must determine the rate of growth of Islam in Ile-Ife today, one readily available yard-stick for measurement is the statistics of the existing mosques in the city and its environment. For instance, Ile-Ife today has 70 locality (*ratibi*) Mosques as against 25 Mosques in 1967 as established by Justice Fakayode survey earlier mentioned. This represents 180% increase over 45 years and the growth rate is one new Mosque per year.⁶⁶

With regards to Mosques where *Jumu'at* prayer is observed on Fridays, the number is currently 12 unlike before when it was just the Central Mosque. They are *Jumu'at* mosques located within the metropolis. As for the mosques in Ife North Local Government Area, the number is 21, for Ife South Local Government Area, the number is 56, while the number for the Ife East (rural areas) is⁷⁶⁷

This study reveals that Islamic has been in Ile-Ife for close to two centuries. It easy to deduce from the study that despite the 28 year-Imamship tussle, Islam in Ile-Ife has experienced a sturdy growth, both in terms of strength and influence within the larger community. The role played by the successive Imams in this regard cannot be underestimated especially since the regime of Imam Yusuf Balogun.

3.2.6 The Growth of Islam in Ijesaland

Ijesaland is located in the Forest Zone of Nigeria, but adjacent to the Savannah. It lies in an area with a rich history of ancient human settlement. Most of Ijesaland today is

bounded by Ife and Osogbo to the West, Ondo area to the south, Ekiti to the east and Igbomina area to the north. On the surface, Ijesaland appears a highly Christianized society within Osun State when Islam does not seem to have many adherents. However, a closer scrutiny shows that Islam predates Christianity in this part of Osun State but the appealing nature of Christianity upon its introduction facilitated the in road into the hitherto Islamic spheres of influence.⁶⁸ Therefore, this study examines the introduction and impact of Islam in some towns within Ijesaland from the beginning to the present time, since Ijesa is a generic term for many towns that share close affinities in terms of dialects, customs and traditions.

The penetration of Islam into Ijesaland dates back to the period immediately after the end of Kiriji War in 1886 when Ijesa people, who had been converted to Islam in Lagos, and some in Ilorin, began to return to their homeland. It needs to be remarked that the possibility of existence of Islam in Ijesaland prior to this period is not in doubt. The emphasis here is the beginning of organized Islam in Ijesaland. A notable figure among the pioneer of Islam in the land was Sedu Ogun from Ilesa. He was said to have sojourned in Lagos, and another source claimed Epe, where he was converted to Islam before he returned to Ilesa in the 1860s. Even if Islam had existed in Ilesa prior to Sedu Ogun's arrival, it was probably restricted to a few persons. This is because Sedu Ogun himself was no more than a lone star among his people. He was practising his religion alone for a long period of time until the arrival of some other Ijesa people to Ilesa, some of whom had also been converted in the places they had visited.

It needs to be pointed out that Islam penetrated Ijesaland from both the Northern and Southern Yorubaland, and the factor of the Hausa traders cannot be discountenanced. Trade was an important element in the introduction and spread of Islam in Ijesa-land. Ijesa people are traditionally praised as the owner of the land of kolanut. Therefore, kolanut trade attracted the Hausa of the North who apart from being traders in Ijesaland also acted as agents of Islamic propagation.⁶⁹

The Yoruba civil wars of 19th century also contributed immensely to the spread of Islam in various towns in Ijesaland. The war with Ibadan especially had the consequence of indirectly introducing some of the Ijesa captives to Islam, while some of those who returned home among the captives significantly made contributions to the organization of Islamic communities in their various towns. As earlier noted, Sedu Ogun is usually credited with the introduction of Islam to Ilesa in the 1860s. In fact, he was regarded as the

father of Islam in Ilesa. His devotion to the cause of Islam in Ilesa was greatly assisted by certain Islamic scholars in the town, some of whom were Mallam Amodu Farise, Mallal Suaibu of Oke-Esa, Mallam Kanomodi Iwere and Mallam Salami Basorun of Egbe-Idi. The unrelenting efforts of these Muslims culminated in the building of the first two mosques in Ilesa, one at Oke-Ese under the leadership of Sedu Ogun, the other at Egbe-Idi presided over by Mallam Amodu Farise. Muslims were concentrated at Oke-Ese quarters of Sedu Ogun. In his bid to ensure that the new religion remained in existence, Sedu Ogun brought a learned Islamic cleric, Mallam Parakoyi, a native of Ilorin. The arrival of Mallam Parakoyi marked the beginning of an organized community of Muslims in Ilesa. He was credited with the responsibility of leading the Muslims in prayer, and all the Muslims at Egbe-Idi acknowledged his leadership, yet the Muslim community did not have a chief Imam for a long time.

In spite of growing population of the Muslims in Ilesa, they did not possess enough capacity to carry out certain activities in the town. For instance, the Muslim leadership had no power to build a mosque until they had the support of the generalissimo of Ijesaland, the veteran Ogedengbe, the Obanla of Ilesa. His consent and sympathy were major determinant of the construction of the two mosques at Oke Ese and Egbe-Idi. The Muslims did not have the right to hold *Jumu'at* prayers on Friday. They were therefore, restricted to five times daily prayers only until the return of certain princes with Islamic persuasion. They were princes Ajimoko and Abubakar Orimogunje who had been converted to Islam during their absence from Ilesa. They had been persuaded of the need for Islamic growth and development upon their return to town. Both of them were veritable factors in the further development of Islam in Ilesa. Through their effort, Islam assumed a new dimension in Ilesa. The religion had by then had a royal blessing and much of the law forbidding certain activities had been relaxed. Prince Abubakar was outstanding in his contribution to the development of Islam, both physically and financially.

Upon the ascension of Oba Ajimoko I in 1896, the order which had hitherto precluded the Muslims from holding the Friday congregation service (*Jumu'at*) was removed and Muslims enjoyed wider latitude within the town largely because of the influence and consistence of Prince Abubakar. The relatively small mosques at Oke-Ese and Egbe-Idi which had served the Muslims, paved the way for a bigger Central Mosque. By this period, Islam had attracted many adherents through the efforts of the Muslim clerics and committed Muslims like Abubakar Orimogunje. In fact, Islam had by this time

become popular among people that it was possible for a Muslim to publicly declare his faith unlike before when it was a fragile religion.

In a fashion similar to that of Sedu Ogun, Prince Abubakar enlisted the services of one non-Ijesa Muslim cleric known as Alfa Disu Kannike for further promotion of the religion among the people. As noted above, Islam was already making appreciable progress within Ilesa. It was not a surprise therefore, that the combined efforts of Disu Kannike and Parakoyi facilitated the emergence of a larger Islamic community in Ilesa by the last decade of the nineteenth century. The two Muslim leaders were credited with the establishment of Islamic and Arabic schools where both old and young converts learned more about Qur'an and the tenets of Islam.

It is observed that much as Alfa Parakoyi had devoted his energy to the cause of Islam, the Muslim community did not grow beyond the level of being minority group in the town. They did not even have the requisite power to appoint a chief Imam for themselves. However, when Prince Ajimoko and Abubakar lent their weight to the cause of the religion, Islam became pronounced. Later, Alfa Disu Kannike became the Chief Imam of the Central Mosque built during the reign of Oba Ajimoko I. This shows the level to which royal patronage had influenced the growth and spread of Islam in Ilesa. By the first decade of the 20th century when Ogendengbe died, Islam had become a major factor in the socio-political lives of the people.

In the meantime, the advent of Christianity in Ilesa affected the fortune of Islam adversely. A sizeable number of Muslims who became disenchanted with the strict prescription of Islam on certain traditional practices were said to have defected to Christianity upon its introduction. The untoward trend in the progress of Islam formed part of the reason why a group of enlightened Muslims in Ilesa joined the Nawair-ud-Deen Society with a view to redeeming the dwindling fortune of Islam. The efforts of the protagonists of Nawair-ud-Deen Society in Ilesa-namely, Alhaji Balogun, Alhaji Bello Arewa, Alhaji S.A. Olatunji among others, eventually yielded desired result when Nawair-ud-Deen Society was formally launched in 1948.⁷⁰

One of the major tasks the society set to address was the attractiveness of the Christianity mission schools to young Muslims that were being converted to Christianity. The society established primary schools in many parts of Ijesaland so that Western education could go side by side with Islamic religion. In the later period, some members of Nawair-ud-Deen society also made the move of establishing a Joint Secondary School.

The idea came to reality in 1971 when some other Islamic groups came together with Nawair-ud-Deen Society to establish Ilesa Muslim grammar School. It can therefore be said that the advent of Nawair-ud-Deen Society in Ilesa marked a resurgence of Islam and posed a threat to Christianity. Today, in spite of the high number of Christian population in Ilesa, Muslims are conspicuously visible in every facet of the society.

Islam in Ipetu Ijesa

Ipetu Ijesa is another important town in Ijesaland where Islam had registered its presence. There is no established link at the present state of knowledge to suggest that Islam spread from Ilesa to Ipetu Ijesa. The coming of Islam to Ipetu-Ijesa is woven around the person of Mallam Lawal Olowoniyi in the early part of the 20th century. The period coincided with the reign of Ajalaye Omoluyijokun Ariyeloye, whose reign spanned 51 years (1865-1916).⁷¹

Sources show that Lawal Olowoniyi was a victim of the war that ravaged his town but he later gained freedom and converted to Islam in Iwo. It is not known whether he was enslaved in Iwo or that he settled there after he had regained freedom. The home coming of Lawal Olowoniyi was the beginning of organized Islam in the community. This is as a result of the fact that his son, Kolawole, with whom he arrived at Ipetu-Ijesa acted as the *Mu'adhdhin* (one who calls people to prayer) upon their arrival. This could suggest that the people were not strange to Islam before the return of Lawal Olowoniyi and they quickly rallied round him. His coming from Iwo, the light-house of Islam, possibly impressed it on the people the depth of his knowledge. Secondly, the acceptance of Kolawole could mean lack of organization among the few Muslims in the town, hence the ready acceptance of the newly arrived people to lead them in prayer.

As soon as he arrived at Ipetu-Ijesa, the onus of leading the entire Muslim community fell on Lawal Olowoniyi. He served as the first Chief Imam for the expanding Muslim community and as a teacher of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Many converts were won into Islam as a result of his devotion to the progress of the religion. Even after his death in 1910, the influence of Islam in the community did not decline. Rather some of his followers carried on the activities of expanding the frontiers of Islam. Upon his death, the mantle of leadership fell on Imam Bakare Oloriojogbon Ogunwa who contributed his own quota to the growth of Islam. Ogunwa was succeeded by Imam Shamsudeen Kolawole and Imam Bakare Lawal came afterwards.

The year 1948 was a boost to the image of Islam in Ipetu Ijesa with the introduction of Ansar-ud-Deen Society. This Muslim society which began its activities in Lagos was out to promote Islam as well as western education among its members. Therefore, the organization made significant impact on the religious and educational life of Muslim community in Ipetu-Ijesa beginning from 1948. Coincidentally, it was in the same year that Nawair-ud-Deen Society had its foothold officially in Ilesa. In 1954, Ansar-ud-Deen Primary School was established to cater for the educational needs of young Muslim students some of whom have been influenced and converted to Christianity while attending Christian mission schools. Again, Ansar-ud-Deen Society completed the building of the Central Mosque in 1976 while the first secondary school of the society was founded in 1982.⁷²

While 1948 marked a turning point in the annals of Islam in Ipetu-Ijesa, its glorious year is said to have commenced under the leadership of Mallam Yusuf Kazeem as the Chief Imam of Ansar-ud-Deen Mosque in Ipetu Ijesa beginning from 1952. Yusuf Kazeem was an itinerant preacher who had preached in many parts of Yorubaland and up to Ghana before he was invited by his people in 1952 to lead the Muslim community after the demise of Imam Bakare Lawal. His exposure and wealth of experience and knowledge was brought to bear on Islam in his town. Most of the projects carried out by Ansar-ud-Deen society were initiated by him.⁷³ In conclusion, Islam which started as a relatively unknown religion and confined to few people has grown to become a well established religion that attracts large followers.

The Propagation of Islam in Ijebu-Jesa

The available records show that Islam was introduced to Ijebu-Jesa in 1910 during the reign of Oba Arojojoye I. It was reported that the Muslim community decided to build the first Mosque not long after the introduction of Islam. The first Mosque was located at Orita Okenisa, and it was there that all the Muslims in the town observed their five times daily prayers for many years. The growing population of the Muslim community necessitated the construction of a bigger and spacious mosque that reflected the influence of modernity among the Muslims.⁷⁴

While it can be said that the Muslim population was growing, relatively to the Christian community they were few. However, some influential members among the Muslims ensured the light of Islam was not put out. The first Imam of the town, Alfa Sadiku of Ogbon Ogbeje, was one of the staunch members who devoted much of his time

and energy to the cause of Islam. Other prominent champions of Islam in the town were Alhaji Sule of Odo-Ese and Alhaji Alubankudi of Odogbo. Alhaji Alubankudi is remembered to have made so much contribution in the cause of Islam, using his influence and resources. It was in recognition of his devotion to the survival of Islam that he was made the Chief Imam of Ijebu-Ijesa before his death in 1984.

The duo of Alhaji Sule and Alhaji Alubankudi had established a tradition championing the cause of Islam in their respective families before their death. This view is informed by the available evidence that members of their families with few others are those keeping the religion going till the present time.⁷⁵

Islam in Otan-Ile

The influence of Ilorin was a factor in the beginning of Islam in Otan-Ile in Obokun Local Government. The emergence of organized Islam is said to have commenced with the activities of a certain itinerant preacher from Ilorin but whose mother came from Otan-Ile. His name was Tijani. Alfa Tijani was schooled in Islamic and Arabic studies in Ilorin but deemed it necessary to entrench Islam in his maternal town, Otan-Ile, which was steeped in traditional practices especially *Egungun* festival. The Muslim preacher was reported to have patiently examined the lives of the people to know the best means of approaching the situation. Rather than outright condemnation of the practices, Alfa Tijani mixed with the core traditionalists of the town to the extent of accepting a traditional chieftaincy title as an indication of his support for them. Part of the subtle method of penetrating the people's heart was his reported participation in *Egungun* (Masquerade) festival of the town. I want to remark here that this is a case of syncretism in the practice and propagation of Islam in Yorubaland. By doing this, he gradually warmed himself into the hearts of people through preaching of the Islamic tenets in a persuasive manner.⁷⁶

The diplomatic approach to the conversation of Otan-Ile's traditionalists to Islam had a far reaching consequence on the town in the last years. It could be said that other preachers also adopted similar approach to the conversion of the people into Islam given the high population of Muslims in the town. In fact Islam compared to other religions in the town had a greater number of adherents in the present time. This is a sharp contrast to the greater number of Christians in many Ijesa towns today.

Islam in Ibokun

A source established that Ibokun was a tributary of Ilorin before the battle of Osogbo in 1840, and the town was free from the menace of the Fulani Jihadists after the

war.⁷⁷ What this implies is that while the town was under the suzerainty of Ilorin emirate, Islam must have registered its presence since the motive of the Jihadists was to Islamise the whole of Yorubaland. This view seems probable considering the impact of the Jihadist occupation of Ikirun before it was wrestled back from them by Ibadan forces.

Imam Itaji was the first Imam. The second Imam was Imam Bello Oke-Ese. In 1940, Alhaji Ahmed Akorede became the third Imam. In 2000, Alhaji Salahudeen Uthman Ogundipe was installed as the fourth Imam. Alhaji Abdul Rahim Fagbamila [Akorede II] was turbaned in 2008 as the fifth Imam. The current Chief Imam, Alhaji Ibrahim Ali was turbaned as the Chief Imam in 2014. His tenure and his predecessors' witnessed monumental achievements.⁷⁸

There are three (3) Central Mosques in the town as follows:

1. Central Mosque for the whole town
2. Zumratu Salihin Society Central Mosque
3. Jama'at al-Muslihin Central Mosque.

There are twenty-seven *Ratibi* mosques in the town where Arabic evening classes take place. In the mosques, there are constant Da`wah activities.

Muslim Societies in the town include the following: Nasrullahi al-Fathi [NASFAT], Fathul-Quareeb Islamic Society, Ansar-ud-Deen Society, Zumrat Salihin, Jama'at al-Muslihin, FOMWAN, Youth Forum for Islamic Awareness and Da`wah Tablig Movement. Zumrat Salihin Society established Arabic and Western education schools and has been producing graduands. Zumratu Salihin Muslim Grammar School was established and registered in 1999. Other Muslim schools in the town include the following: Zumratu Salihin Arabic School, Muslim Community Nursery and Primary School, FOMWAN Nursery and Primary School, 1st Step Nursery and Primary School.

In 1984, there was a religious conflict between Muslims and traditionalists because the traditionalists infringed on the fundamental human rights of the Muslims by beating Muslims in front of their mosques. But some steps were taken to resolve the issue. Christians used to disturb Muslims by making noise in front of mosques. We invited Akewugba-Jesu and Abdul Fatah Ajagunmolu, they are religious comparative analysts, to checkmate them (Christians).⁷⁹

But now there is cordial relationship between Muslims and adherents of other religions. Each religion is allowed to enjoy freedom of religion. There is cooperation and unity among the Muslim Societies in Ibokun.

Islam in Erin-Oke

Islam was already in Erin-Oke at the beginning of the 20th century. Based on the present state of knowledge, the year of its introduction or the initiators of the idea of Islam is difficult to establish. However, it is on record that a sizeable number of Muslims had existed in the town and they answered Islamic names before the third decade of the last century.

Evidence in this connection is the case of the prominent indigenes of the town, Alhaji Abdul Kareem Akintoye, who was born in 1930 to the family of Yahaya Akintoye, his father, Late Yahaya Akintoye was a devout Muslim. His devotion to Islam was manifested in the conversion of his Christian wife, Rebecca Akintoye, to Islam, although she returned to her former faith after the death of her husband. Her conversion also affected her children including Abdul Kareem Akintoye. The feeling of respect for the wish of his father made Abdul-Kareem to return to the religion of his father, Islam later in his adult life.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Islam had not waned in Erin-Oke ever after the conversion of Abdul-Kareem to Christianity. His return to the faith however, marked a new beginning in the annals of Islam in the town beginning from 1970s. He was credited with building of several mosques in different parts of the town for the needs of Muslims. In fact, Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Akintoye conspicuously stood out among many Muslims and represented a shining light of Islam in his town, Erin-Oke in Ijesaland.⁸¹

The Spread of Islam in Esa-Odo

One of the major attractions of an outsider to Esa-Odo is its connection with a very prominent Islamic cleric in Yorubaland, Shaykh Abdul-Azeez Arikewusola Lawal, popularly known as Ajagbemokeferi. He was born into the religion. It was reported that before he was born in 1937, his father was renowned for his great Islamic knowledge. Not only that when Ajagbemokeferi was grown up, his father sent him to another Islamic scholar to acquire Quranic education.⁸²

The implication of the above is that Islam has been well known in Esa-odo before the birth of Ajagbemokeferi in 1937. The level of its acceptance by people is not known but it is established that some people had in-depth knowledge of Islam; and the Quranic School had existed possibly before the third decade of the twentieth century. The Esa-Odo people were mostly farmers, cultivating kolanut which was a source of attraction to Muslim traders from Ilorin and Hausaland.⁸³

Another possible source through which Islam entered Esa-Odo could be one or some of the neighbouring towns where Islam had become entrenched. It is established that Ijesa people who had converted to Islam had started settling down in various Ijesa towns since the end of the Kiriji war. It is probable that Islamic influence had penetrated through one of these towns to Esa-Odo. What is certain is that a sizeable number of people in Esa-Odo had converted to Islam before the third decade of the 20th century.⁸⁴

Islam in Imesi-Ile, Otan-Ayegbaju and Others

Considering the entrenchment of Islam in Ijesa towns, Imesi-Ile remains peculiar. The polity seems impervious to Islam in spite of the several years of its existence in the town. The point here is that although Islam had gained foothold in many of the considered Ijesa towns, where Muslims like other religious groups, have held sway for several decades, Imesi-Ile Muslims still remain a minority to this day. An eloquent testimony to this is the inability of the Muslims in the town to produce a king. Their kings have always been produced by the Christian Community. The large population of the Christians notwithstanding, the religious groups have always co-existed peacefully in the town.⁸⁵

The situation in Imesi-Ile is highly different from that of Otan-Ayegbaju, another Ijesa town. While Imesi-Ile has never produced a Muslim king, Otan Ayegbaju has recently produced the first Muslim king upon the demise of the late Oba Anthony Oyinlola Adegbile Okeyode in 2008. Despite the recent feat by the Muslim community, Otan Ayegbaju seems to be relatively receptive to Islam with the existence of Islamic organizations and a Muslim Comprehensive High School.⁸⁶

Islam has also penetrated many towns in Ijesaland such as Ifewara, Itangunmodi, Esa-Oke, Ijeda, Osu, Iloko, Ikeji Arakeji and many others through the activities of individuals and Islamic organizations such as Ansar-ud-Deen Society, Zumratul-Islamiyyah, Ansar-ul-Islam, Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission, Deen-ul-Haq, Ibadur-Rahman Islamic Society, NASFAT and Alasalatu for female, among others.⁸⁷

Much as it appears that Ijesaland is synonymous with Christianity, the study has revealed that Islam is a force to reckon with in the social and religious life of the Ijesa people. It is a fact that Christianity and traditional religious practices exist, Islam has however, established itself in some of the selected towns discussed above.

3.3 Freedom of Religion in Islam.

The concept of people's rights appeared as one of the topics of international law in the secular West in 1625 C.E. only when Grotius, known to be the father of modern international law, published his work "Dejure Bell AC Pacis".⁸⁸ Contrary to this, the human right has always been coherent with Islamic law since its inception in the 7th century. Thus, Islamic concept of human rights and international laws had been at least, nine centuries ahead of the commencement of the western secular concept of human rights. Yet, the secular west is categorically denying the existence and role of Islamic laws by saying that:

Islamic had no system of international laws, no respect for treaties, no concept of neighbouring states because; it is only duty-oriented.⁸⁹

In fact, such a comment about Islam and Islamic concept of rights and international laws is the result of ignorance about Islam. However, secular accusations have been refuted by some of westerners themselves.

Hart wrote thus:

What western scholars call the dark or barbaric medieval age, it makes sense with regard to Europe, but not with regard to Islam and Muslim world. Because, when the Europe was under darkness of the ignorance, the Muslim world was witnessing, during the same period, the birth and development of brilliant civilization in which humanity and human rights were mostly honoured. And the Europe, that is, the west for the first time found the smell of civilization from Muslims in 7th century through Palenmo and Andalusia (Spain) at the time when the latter was in a state of ignorance and backwardness for a long period of time.⁹⁰

The supremacy and charismatic leadership of Muhammad (S.A.W.) was also recognized by the non-Muslims themselves with whom the Islamic civilization and Islamic concept of human rights commenced. Hart wrote: "Muhammad was the only man in the history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels". In fact, many unique concepts took place during prophetic periods from 610 C.E. to 632 C.E, more particularly, the last ten years of his rule from 622 C.E. to 632 C.E. These include establishment of Islamic State of *Madinah*, declaration of the first written constitution of the world or charter of *Madinah*, application of Islamic law in both civil and criminal matters, and so on.

There are some of the expert opinions of non-Muslims of the West and East. It is to show that the very presence of Islamic law with regard to people's rights is not only available and predominant in the Islamic law books alone but it is in the mind of everyone who studied it with an open mind.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to identify the sources of rights in Islamic law. The sources, firstly, is the divine revelation, that is, the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and secondly, human exertions, that is, the principles of the constitution or charter of *Madinah*, historic judgments of the Prophet (S.A.W), and practices of rightly guided caliphs, *Ijma'* and *Qiyas*. The Qur'an, as the last testament from Allah (S.A.W), is the foundation of human rights and duties which are beneficial to community and state.

The community is only out to enjoy those rights, duties and obligations that were determined and revealed to the Prophet (S.A.W). Therefore, the Qur'anic provisions are unavoidable and unchangeable beyond time and space. As regards freedom of religion, Allah (S.W.T), commanded that:

There is no compulsion in religion, (because) truth stands out clearly from error. Whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks.⁹¹

The Prophet (S.A.W) was proposed to follow the religion of non-Muslims and in exchange they would do the same. But that was rejected with command that:

To you be your religion and to me my own. And if it had been thy Lord's will they would all have believed, all who are on earth! Will thou then compel mankind against their will to believe? (Q. 10 9:6; 10:99)

Apart from the Qur'anic provisions, there are numerous sayings, statements and judicial decisions of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) on human or fundamental rights. But we are concerned here with right to freedom of religion. The Prophet (S.A.W) said:

In the day of judgment, Allah will accuse the children of Adam for not visiting Him while He was sick, for not giving Him food and drink while He was hungry and thirsty, for not giving Him clothes when He was without clothes. The accused would exclaim, O my Lord! How could it be possible to visit you, to give you food, drinks and clothes as you are independent of any need and want.

Allah would say, do you not know that Mr. so and so, (a neighbour) was sick, hungry and thirsty and in need of clothes, had you served them with food, drinks and clothes you would find me there.⁹²

This prophetic statement has made it very clear that the responsibility of an individual towards his fellow beings, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, is not less than an obligation. More importantly, helping destitute or less fortunate people of the society is synonymous to helping Allah (S.W.T). This is indeed, a unique feature of Islamic concept of human rights which has no similarity with any other law.

The charter or constitution of *Madinah* is a written covenant between Islamic State of *Madinah* and its citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims. The prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) promulgated it in 622 C.E. in his capacity as the head of the state soon after his arrival at *Madinah*. Muhammad Hamidullah considered it as the first written constitution of the world⁹³. The sole objectives of the promulgation were to guarantee the rights, duties and obligations of state and citizens toward each other.

Forest wrote: “The Messenger of Allah began to practise human rights, as early as 622 C.E. in fact, it was the first written *Magna Carta*⁹⁴ of the world after Qur’an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). It was to create religious and racial harmony among the immigrants (Muhajirun) of *Makkah* and host (*Ansar*) of *Madinah*, and among arch rivals namely Aws and Khazraj, between Jews and other communities within themselves and Islam. The signatories of the charter were declared a single nation (*Ummah*)”.

The provisions or the features of the charter were universal as well as transitional in nature. The former is to remain forever but the latter, such as relationship between tribes, already had ceased to exist when tribalism was prohibited in Islam. Among the universal provisions, the most important one is Art. 25 with regard to freedom of religion. It provides thus:

And verily, the Jews of Banu Awf shall be considered
As a community (*Ummah*) along with the believers, for
the Jews being their religion and for the Muslims their religion,
be one client or original member of the tribe, but whosoever shall be guilty of oppression or violation of the treaty,
shall put to trouble none but his own person and the members of his house.⁹⁵

In subsequent Articles, the same religious freedom was guaranteed for Jews of Banu Najjar, Banu Harith, Banu Sa'idah, Banu Jusham, Banu al-Aws, Banu Jafua, Banu Shatibah, Banu Tha'bah and all other sub-branches of the Jews as the principal members.⁹⁶ In addition to the above, the Messenger of Allah (S.W.T) in his capacity as the supreme judge, had pronounced judgments in many cases. Each and every of such judgments established a principle of Islamic law which built judicial precedents for the people during his time and time to come. The prophetic judgments covered both Muslims and non-Muslims.

In 622 C.E. seventy pagan defeated soldiers of the battle of *Badr* fell in the hands of the Prophet (S.A.W). Among them were almost all of their ring-leaders. They deserved capital punishment with death even under customary law existing during that time. But beyond expectation, the Prophet (S.A.W) released them with a minimum as well as honourable amount of ransom. The Prophet did not even put Islam as a condition for their release. Instead, the Prophet (S.A.W) and his followers rendered unprecedented good behaviour beyond the expectation of their die-hard bitter enemies. According to Al-Tabari:

The prisoners of war of Badr were given the best food to eat when their captors (the Muslims) themselves were taking only plain dates.⁹⁷

They were those people whom, for the last fourteen years had been the most cruel, unjust and who persecuted them and destroy their religion (Islam). They were those who blatantly forced Muslims to leave their beloved home for *Abyssinia* and *Madinah*, banished them from their ancestral homes, prevented provisions to get to them: prevented them from visiting the Holy *Ka'bah*, unjustly persecuted and killed many of them in *Makkah* and prevented Muslim family members to be visited by their relatives in *Madinah*. Such defeated religious and political persecutors came in the court of the prophet (S.A.W) as the prisoners of war. There was no vengeance, the Prophet declared magnanimity and pardon.

The prophetic treatment was acknowledged by the captives themselves; one of them said:

Blessing be on the people of *Madinah*, because they made us ride, while they themselves walked, they gave us wheat bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates.⁹⁸

The other judgment made with regard to a female prisoner of war, her name was Safiyyah, the wife of the head of Banu Nadri. She was arrested and charged with a punitive punishment for killing of a Muslim named Bishar. The Prophet (S.A.W) ordered her to be freed and released with possible choices. Firstly, she could remain with her Jewish faith and return to her own people at *Khaibar*, through all official arrangements. Secondly, she could accept Islam and be married with the Prophet (S.A.W). Safiyyah gave it a thought for a while and then accepted the second alternative, as she said: "I chose Allah and his Messenger".⁹⁹

In the third year of *Hijrah*, 700 Jews of Bani Qainuqa, were found guilty of blasphemy and other subversive activities in violation of the *Madinah* charter. They admitted defeat and agreed to abide by the decision of the Prophet (S.A.W) after fifteen days of siege of their forts. With regard to their offence, they deserved to be killed, but with the pleading of Abdullah bn Ubbay of the same tribe, a ring-leader of hypocrites, the Prophet (S.A.W) simply agreed to ex-communicate or expel them from *Madinah* without putting any condition of embracing Islam.¹⁰⁰

The most significant one was the judgment of the Prophet (S.A.W) with regard to the captives of *Makkah* in the 8th *Hijrah* when it fell in the hands of the Muslims. All veteran enemies of Islam were summoned in the courtyard of Ka`bah who were in deep thinking of their lives and religion. The Prophet (S.A.W) gave them general amnesty by saying, "Alright, all of you are as free as the day before yesterday. You can go back to your homes"¹⁰¹. It was indeed a surprise and unexpected decision for them. The Prophet (S.A.W) could have imposed any conditions for the security of their life, but he did not. This is really a unique example of freedom of religion in the history of mankind.

The *Khulafa' u ar-Rashidun* or rightly guided caliphs upheld the cause of Islam and has further developed the rights and obligations of the people particularly the right to freedom of religion as initiated by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). During their thirty years' rule, they kept it accentuated and amplified in letter and spirit. A brief account is as follows. Abu Bakr (R.A) was elected as the first caliph of the Muslim community in 632 C.E. soon after the death of the Prophet (S.A.W). His first inaugural address to the nation was excellently enriched with the concept of human rights and obligations. The caliph commanded:

O people Guide me if I am not in the right, set me right if I am wrong. This is a trust, falsehood is treason. The weak among you shall be strong with me till his rights have been vindicated and the

strong among you shall be weak with me till I have not encroached his rights. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and his Messenger, when I disobey Him and His Messenger, then obey me not.¹⁰²

In the above address, the caliph made obedience of the citizens for him conditional as such, that they were obliged to obey him and protect their rights and so long as he was in the services of Allah and His Messenger. The caliph proposed himself to be removed from the office if he did not protect the rights of the citizens.

When he commissioned Usamah bn Zaid as the commander of the army in an expedition against Byzantine army in Syrian frontier, following the instruction of the Prophet (S.A.W). The caliph said, among other things to Usamah's army thus:

....(a) Must not disturb monasteries, rather let them live their own life style, show their thanks to Allah for having provisions; (b) Must only attack combating enemies (that is, the fighters) and (j) Must protect their own selves from the attack of pestilence.¹⁰³

The most significant point of the above instructions with regard to our study is that: "do not disturb monasteries but let them live their own life style." The Muslim army was sent against a religious persecutor and an oppressive enemy ruler but the fighters were strictly instructed not to disturb their clergies, religious authorities and religious institutions. It was a rare and significant guarantee of freedom of religion, which was made as early as 633 C.E. However, the same caliph was very much serious against the apostates from Islam. Soon after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), many people denounced Islam and several false claimants of prophethood re-emerged. Having duly consulted the issues with proper persons i.e. the *shura* or consultative assembly, the caliph finally decided to repulse the attack and punish the apostates. In his address to the assembly he said:

Divine revelations had ceased and our faith had reached perfection. Now, it must not be allowed to be mutilated during my life. I swear by Allah, if they (apostates) refuse to give (as zakat) even as much as a camel which they used to give during the life time of the Prophet, I shall declare war against them.¹⁰⁴

The action of the caliph as agreed by the freedom of religion has different applications once it addresses Muslims. That is to say, non-Muslim freedom of religion under Islamic law is absolute but for Muslims, it is conditional.

‘Umar bn al-Khattab, the second orthodox caliph, like his predecessor, upheld the rights through his numerous judgments, decisions, issuance of instructions to Muslim generals and soldiers, ambassadors, judges and governors. His policy on freedom of religion for non-Muslim was well-expressed in the “Treaty of Jerusalem”. It provides thus

Umar, the commander of the believers, has given the assurance to the people of Jerusalem of the safety of themselves, for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and healthy people of the city and for all rituals belonging to their religion... their churches will not be inhibited and demolished, neither they nor their property damaged. Those of the people of Jerusalem, who want to leave voluntarily with Byzantine, want to take their property and abandon their churches and their crosses will be safe until they reach their place of safety.¹⁰⁵

They were also guaranteed the right to ring their bell in the church as religious practice and also right to take out cross in religious procession.¹⁰⁶ As regards the right of non-Muslims in general, the caliph issued official instructions to all provincial governors to ensure that: “A Muslim shall not do any injustice to non-Muslims (*dhimmi*), nor shall any harm be done to them in any way”. At his death bed, by knowing the identity of his killer, who was a *dhimmi*, the caliph said:

My bequest to my successors is that, covenants with the *dhimmi* should be observed faithfully. They should be defended against all invasions, no injustice be done to them. They should be treated as full-fledged citizens and should enjoy equality before law. Their *jizyah* should be fair and no burden should be imposed on them which they cannot bear.¹⁰⁷

The above instruction of the caliph to safeguard the rights of non-Muslims essentially covered the rights to freedom of religion.

The third orthodox caliph, ‘Uthman bn ‘Affan (R.A) was elected in 644 C.E. and remained in the office till his assassination in 658 C.E. The caliph followed the same policy like his predecessor, with regard to freedom of religion. The non-Muslims were free to follow their own religion like Muslims but the latter were not allowed to change their own religion of Islam except with risk of capital punishment. For instance, once some men of Banu Hanifah accepted Musailamah as their Prophet. They were arrested by the provincial government and sought the decision of the caliph on them. The caliph wrote to the governor of Kufa. Abdullah bn Mas’ud thus:

Invite them once again to Islam and ask to recite *Kalimah Shahadah*. If they accepted this recant and renounced the so-called prophesy of Musailamah, let them off, but whoever did not do so and persisted in believing in him, and put them to death.¹⁰⁸

As regards non-Muslims, the caliph in an instruction said:

Make Muslims understand that the *dhimmi* should be treated with sympathy because we are under covenant to show good conduct to them.¹⁰⁹

The caliph had this to say as regards the general rights of Muslims and non-Muslims while instructing his governors:

They should be benefited by the rights given by Islam; they should be paid what is due to them. After the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims, the governors should look into hostile enemies. He must do rightful conduct towards their enemies, conquer them through honest and honourable means and abide by promise.¹¹⁰

Ali bn Abu Talib (R.A) was elected as the fourth caliph of Muslim world in 658 C.E. after the assassination of ‘Uthman bn ‘Affan (R.A). Though his rule was short-lived and he was mostly busy in handling internal crisis and civil wars, he was one of the most important upholders of rights of the people. Here are few examples from his life, before and after becoming Caliph. The caliph instructed his governor designate to Egypt as regards right to freedom of religion thus:

Remember Malik, among the people there are two types of men, one who is brethren in faith and others who profess religion other than yours but they too, are human beings like you. Therefore, treat them kindly and compassionately. Do not forget the punishment of Allah for any negligence and injustice against them.¹¹¹

The Caliph Ali also commanded equity and justice:

Do not usurp the rights of human beings. Be cautious in matters concerning the rights of Allah and rights of mankind, if you fail to act with equity and justice you shall be considered as unjust and oppressor and you will suffer... you must always look into the welfare of the tax payers, not tax itself.¹¹²

After the rightly guided caliphs, the rule of ‘Umar bn Abdul-Aziz under Umayyad caliphate was very much significant. He, like other rightly-guided caliphs, diligently and faithfully executed his duties for the protection of the rights of his citizens. As regards

right to freedom of religion, the most significant action of the caliph was to hand over the portion of Damascus mosque to the Christians. During the time of Muawiyah, a portion of the church was annexed to a mosque. The dispute was unresolved until the decision of Umar bn 'Abdul-Aziz. However, the Christian community felt happy with his decision and settled the issue by accepting monetary compensation.¹¹³

With regard to the rights of non-Muslims, the Caliph wrote to his governor, Adib bn Arafat and said:

Thereafter, pay attention to the condition of protected people [*dhimmi*] and treat them tenderly, if any one of protectees reaches old age and has no means to support him till his death. Retaliate on who causes physical injury to him.¹¹⁴

The Caliph also ordered:

Relieve the requesters from the charge of obligations (taxes levied unjustly) and make study on previous records. If any proof of injustice is found against a Muslim or non-Muslim, restore his rights. If he passed away, remit his rights to his heirs.¹¹⁵

The other upright caliph in the Abbasid caliphate was Yazid III who was one of the true upholders of rights. Like other rightly guided caliphs, he said during his oath-taking ceremony in 126 A.H./744 C.E. thus:

If I keep my word in which I have promised here, you must obey me, but if I do not, you can remove me from the office unless you have invited me to repent. Obey a man so long as he obeys Allah and if he disobeys Allah and summons you to do the same, it is your rights to oppose him and kill him.¹¹⁶

At present, there are almost sixty independent Muslim countries. All of them including Malaysia and Bangladesh have guaranteed the right to freedom of religion to all, irrespective of Muslims and non-Muslims, as one of the basic fundamental human rights in their respective constitutions, although this guarantee has a conflict with the Islamic law. However, none of the Muslim countries expressly provides a right to a Muslim to change his religion as part of his freedom of religion¹¹⁷. In addition to that, the latest development of freedom of religion under Muslim dispensation is the promulgation of Universal Islamic Declaration (UID).¹¹⁸ As regard universal approach of Islam to religious, social and political life of the citizens the UID declared:

It (Islam) confers on all human beings the right to an honourable life, freedom of worship, expression, movement and thought.¹¹⁹ With regard to state policy it declared: The civil and religious rights of minorities shall be upheld and protected.¹²⁰

The foregoing analysis has vividly exposed the story of commencement and development of rights of human beings, more particularly the right to freedom of religion. As such, it is undoubtedly revealed that the freedom of religion for the non-Muslim has been taken care of by the Islamic law. One of the prominent non-Muslim scholars, Benjamin has admitted the truth when he wrote thus:

It is fair to say that the Muslim world, when judged by the standards of the day, generally showed far greater tolerance and humanity in the treatment of religious minorities than did by Christian west. And in particular, the treatment of Jewish minority in Muslim society stands out as fair and enlightened when compared to the dismal record of the Christian European persecution of Jews over the centuries.¹²¹

There are three basic dimensions of freedom of religion Islam such as, freedom to profess, practice and propagate. The constitutional laws of almost all nation states of the world including Muslim countries guarantee these aspects. However, in relation to religion, under the Common Law, profession is a right of a person or a citizen to freely declare that he is a Muslim, or not a Muslim, such as: he is a Jew, a Christian, a Hindu or he does not believe in any religion at all. It is to be affirmed that a non-Muslim is free to follow any religion and change it as he wishes, subject to the approval of his own religious law. But it is not a case with regard to a Muslim.

The religion of a Muslim is Islam. A Muslim believes that the Glorious Qur'an revealed to the Noble Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W.], is the word of God from the beginning to the end. The Qur'an establishes that the only true religion acceptable to God is Islam and that all prophets of God sent to this world, are Muslims. [Q. 3: 19 & 85]. Based on the facts mentioned in the verses of the Qur'an mentioned here, therefore, there is no need and reason for a Muslim to change his religion.

In fact, the term profession itself has no relation with change of religion even though it is authorized in the contemporary common law. None of the classic lexicons provides profession to mean right to change one's religion. Muslim is under obligation to profess his religion hence, Islamic position of profession of religion is as follows:

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was instructed by Allah (S.W.T) to call the people of the Book to agree on certain points common between both Muslims and the people of the book [*Ahl al-Kitab*] by saying:

O people of the book, come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partner with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah. If they turn back, say ye, bear witness that we are Muslims (bowing to Allah's will) Q. 3:64.

The concept of profession of religion is incorporated in the *Kalimatush-Shahadah*, which is the testimony of a Muslim to the unity of Allah and the messengership of Muhammad. A person becomes a Muslim after embracing or pronouncing the *Shahadah*: *Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulu Allah*:

Verily, I witness (declare) that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

This is a life long pledge and essential for one's Muslimhood. The first part of *Shahadah* is "There is no god but Allah" and the second part is "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

The two phrases when uttered makes one a Muslim. In addition to that, Allah (S.W.T), has directed Muslims to declare by saying that:

We believed in Allah and in the teachings which have been sent down to us, and to Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants and in the guidance that was given to Moses, Jesus and others because we are Muslims. (Q.3:84)

A Muslim does not only possess an absolute right to reject the offer of disbelief but obligated to proclaim that: "I am commanded to be the first among those who become Muslims, (*an akuna awwala man aslama*) and not be among those who associate partners with Allah" (Q.6:14).

And "I have been forbidden to obey those other than Allah, whom you call upon, therefore, I will not follow your vain desire. If I do, I would go astray from right path". The Qur'anic law, as mentioned above, has made a Muslim obliged not only to remain a Muslim constantly but to proclaim again and again that he is a Muslim.

It is to be stated that in the past, non-Muslims under Islamic rule were neither obliged nor compelled to profess the religion of Islam, nor their own religion unless it was so required by their own laws. It is not only the religion of Islam but also all revealed religions of the past made profession of their own religion obligatory. A Muslim has the right to invite non-Muslims to Islam.

If they refuse to accept it they must not be forced or compelled to do so, even though they offer to follow their own religion instead.

Practice of Religion

Practice of rituals and tenets are essential parts of a religion which includes both norms and customs of the religion. Practice literally means to do or perform frequently; to form a habit of acting any manner, to put the theoretical knowledge into practical use; a repeated mental or physical action for the purpose of going on with an activity, and to observe or pursue actively the teachings and duties of a religion.¹²²

This principle seems to be somehow close to the Islamic principle of practice of religion but the concept of religion is not the same. As such, an undivided part cannot be left aside at the mercy or at the liberty of its followers either to practise or not to practise. Because, under Islamic law a person cannot be called a religious person without practising the religion he/she professes. Such attitude is at variance with Islam. This can only be in secular concept of religion where religious practice is not of prime concern. Rather, it is secondary and optional. Some secularists even regard religion as useless or rubbish. But in Islam, practice of religion is as important as the belief *per se*.

This fact is corroborated by the Glorious Qur'an thus:

Whoever practises righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, he will be awarded with a new life that is good and pure and they will be rewarded also according to the best of their actions. (Q.16:97).¹²³

Practice is an integral part of religion. Faith without practice is incomplete. Non-practice of obligatory tenets of religion in Islamic Law, would lead its followers to the category of disbelievers. The Messenger of God (S.A.W), says as reported by Jabir (R.A) that: "indeed, difference between a Muslim and a disbeliever is negligence of prayer".¹²⁴

Propagation of Religion

Propagation is the third essential dimension of religion. Legally, it means a call in order to explain principles of religion with the objectives of explanation, extension and recruitment of new members. Allah says thus:

Ye are the best of peoples evolved for mankind, enjoying what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. (Q.3:110).

Propagation of religion is to be carried out not only by mouth but also by other legitimate means such as writing, drawing, designing, speaking, and so on. Preaching positive values and forbidding negative actions are also within the scope of propagation of religion. An individual or a state authority can by sanction, purge the society of corruption or lewdness.

At this juncture, for example, I want to cite the recent clash this year between the Nigerian Army and the Shi`ite sect in Kaduna State, to buttress my point. The Shi`ite sect members on the orders of their leader, Ibrahim Alzakzaky, attacked the convoy of Tukur Buratai, the Chief of Army Staff in Kaduna State. According to the official statement made by Colonel Sani Usman, the Director of Army Public Relations:

The attack took place while Buratai was on his way to pay Homage on the Emir of Zazzau and attend the Passing-out Parade of 73 Regular recruits Intake of Depot Nigerian Army In Zaria. The sect members numbering hundreds, carrying dangerous weapons, barricaded the roads with bonfires, heavy stones and tyres. They refused all entreaties to disperse and then started firing and pelting the convoy with dangerous objects.¹²⁵

Usman explained further:

The barricade was obviously a deliberate attempt to assassinate the Chief of Army Staff and members of his entourage while on a legitimate official Assignment as a Special Guest of Honour at the Passing-out Parade. Usman continued, “the troops responsible for the safety and security of the Chief of Army Staff, on hearing explosion and firing, left with no other choice than to defend him and the convoy at all cost as well as open up the barricaded road for law abiding citizens. This is in line with the Nigerian Army Rules of Engagement and Code of Conduct”. He stressed that such kind of behaviour would not be tolerated from any individual or groups and should not be allowed to repeat itself. The attack led to the death of many of the sect members.

The Shi`ite spokesman said that they were unarmed and gathered for a ceremony at their Hussainiyah base to change the flag on the dome of the building to herald the beginning of the month of Rabiul-Awwal, the birth month of the Prophet Muhammad. He said that the military report was a blatant lie. When interviewed on the incident, President Muhammad Buhari said that the action of the Shi`ite sect was wrong. They were behaving like a government and taking laws into their own hands. Reacting to the criticisms made against the killing of many of the Shi`ite sect members, the President promised that he would set up a panel to investigate the incident.

It is the duty and obligation of the government to ensure positive preaching and forbid negative one from an individual and religious groups in the society. It is the responsibility of the government to curb their excesses. If the government fails in its duty, this will surely leads to chaos and anarchy in the society.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was addressed in the Qur'an as a caller, preacher and propagator, thus:

O Prophet, indeed we have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and as one who invites people to Allah's (grace) by His permission, and as a lamp spreading light. (Q.33:45).

The foregoing discussions have shown that profession, practice and propagation of religion of Islam is an obligatory duty of a Muslim. Since Islam is the religion of the belief in only one God, therefore, any action or reaction in Islam must be recommended by the Originator of the religion, i.e. Allah (S.W.T). What Islamic law obliges its followers is to abide by the basic tenets of *Shari'ah* such as *fard* (obligation). But in the cases other than *fard* or *wajib*, he may enjoy a guided freedom; such as, in superegatory prayer and fasting, and so on.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION

4.1 Concept of Freedom of Religion

Freedom of religion means to have the right to perform obligations by the followers of a respective religion. Since modern concept of freedom of religion is a recent phenomenon of the west, therefore, they have given different meanings of it. Weaver, on behalf of a religious body, wrote:

Freedom of religion is the recognition, the establishment and the safe-guarding of the rights of the individual to the end that in all matters pertaining to religion, he may act freely in giving expression to his religious attitudes and conviction, that in associating himself with others, holding like belief, he shall neither be enjoined nor molested and that those so associated shall enjoy as their natural right the propagation of their religion and beliefs, unhindered by any civil authority.¹

Religious freedom was further defined in the biennial report, 1942 of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. For Example, it is:

- (a) To believe as reason and conscience dictate. The terms, “reason and conscience” are used as opposed to revelation but as denoting the human response to divine revelation, (b) to worship God in the ways which reasons and conscience dictate, (c) to live and act in accordance with such belief and worship, (d) to express religious belief in speech. This includes all forms of expression, art, journalism, books, the radio e.t.c. as well as oral speech, and (c) to express religious belief for the purpose of persuasion, to convince and convert others. This includes all forms of religious propaganda. It is the human side of Christian evangelism, (f) to educate his children in his religious faith including both belief and action, (g) to join with others in the organized life and work of a church, congregation or other religious fellowship, (h) to withdraw from such affiliation with religious organization/community and at the constraint of reason and conscience, to change belief, with corresponding changes in worship, action, speech, education and affiliation and (i) to believe God, to deny religion and to act, speak pursue, educate and affiliate with others with in ways appropriate to this disbelief or atheism.²

The definitions given above are from a non-Muslim perspective. They are generally applicable to non-Muslims alone but some of its recommendations are applicable to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike which Islam approved as early as 7th

century, long before above recent resolution. But some of its recommendations are not applicable to Muslims, such as to change religion or to practise disbelief.

4.2 Magna Carta and Freedom of Religion

On 9th June, 1215, King John of England conceded to declare the *Magna Carta* (MC) as demanded by the elite, particularly Barons of England. The king had to bow down to the demands of the people. Prior to this time, people of Europe were sinking in the blood pool of religious persecution. Amid that devastation, a demand arose in England for the establishment of other civil rights. It was claimed that the M.C. played a decisive role in the development of constitutional governments in Europe and in later centuries it became a model for those who wanted a democratic system of government and individual rights for all.¹²⁸ Myth is developed round it that all rights and liberties of English men had been created by *Magna Carta*.³

It is also said that:

The *Magna Carta* subsequently provided historical precedents for the powerful stream of thought emphasizing natural rights of the individual expressed in the United States and some other states' constitutions.⁴

Whatever is said of it, in fact, the M.C. has never been a charter of freedom of religion, because, instead of providing religious freedom, it had curtailed one of the aspects of practice of religion. The other shortcomings of the M.C. are that, it has not addressed the rights of all people equally, but to a one privileged group (race) like Barons. It was a deed of unequal and unjust rights as it exempted free men from the prosecution for small offences. The king was to accept it and he did so to safeguard his monarchy. Here is the example of some unequal rights as contained in the M.C. such as Art. 14 provides:

A free man shall not be amerced for small faults. Art 29 guaranteed freeholds, liberties or free custom of freemen, protected them of being outlawed, exiled, destroyed, condemned and imprisoned except with lawful judgment of their peers.⁵

It disqualified women of being a prosecutor. Art. 34 says: "No man shall be taken or imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman for the death of any other than her husband". In other words, even if her beloved children, parents and other close relatives are killed before her own eyes, yet the killers would go unpunished, because the witness is a

woman who has no legal capacity to prosecute a criminal; it was an illegal document because its approval was taken by force, threat, coercion, compulsion and under duress.⁶

4.3 Freedom of Religion in Nigerian 1999 Constitution

Section 38(1) of the 1999 constitution provides for right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the following terms:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience or religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.⁷

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is very important in a country like Nigeria where the level of enlightenment is very high. To have failed to assure freedom of thought would have created a lot of chaos in the society. The same could be said of the right to freedom of conscience. With respect to religion, it needs to be observed that this section is very important especially because of religious divide between the Christians and the Muslims or between various sects of the same faith. The constitution also allows anyone to change his religion. It would amount to apostasy under Islamic law for a Muslim to change his Islamic faith to another religion. The constitution also assures the right to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Section 38(2) provides thus:

No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own or a religion not approved by his parent or guardian.⁸

By this provision, a person cannot be compelled to take part in any religious worship, instruction, ceremony or observance where any of these have not been voluntarily acceded to on account only that he is attending a place of education. Thus, institutions of learning have no right to impose religious education or observance of any person on account of the fact that the person is attending that place of education. In like manner, under-aged student must not be compelled to observe or receive instruction or take part in any religious ceremony not approved by his parent or guardian.

The constitution, however, provides otherwise with respect to community schools. Section 38(3) of the 1999 constitution provides thus: "No religious community or

denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination”⁹. The constitution outlaws membership of secret societies. Section 38(4) provides thus: “Nothing in this section shall entitle any person to form, take part in the activity or be member of a secret society”¹⁰

4.4 Limitation of Freedom of Religion

This means the freedom of religion as given in the constitution is not absolute but restricted. In other words, to enjoy this right, an action of a bearer must not be contrary to other existing laws, public order, public health or morality. Imposition of conditions by itself may not be reprehensible, what would be reprehensible is that if it affects the genuine interest of any particular community or if it is interpreted wrongly.¹¹

Freedom of religion is subject to law means firstly, the government is empowered to promulgate to restrict any forms of unlimited or unethical or unacceptable practices of an individual or community by the name of religion and secondly, whatever the religious law is, it must be subjected to other existing law. Even though a particular religion allows the practice of widows burning themselves on their husband’s pyres, but existing law or law designate can prohibit such actions as immoral and inhuman.¹²

Public order is the second restriction. Maintenance of public order is one of the functions of government. Therefore, for the preservation of order in a society, a government can even restrict the given freedom of religion. As it was held in *Reg. V. Alexander Martin Suliran*¹³ that the first and most fundamental duty of every government is the preservation of order, since the order is the condition precedent to all civilization and the advance of human happiness. As such, though immolation of children was allowed in a particular religious sect but that was prohibited by the court.¹⁴ To prevent public disorder, a government can make laws or impose existing law on that regard to forbid any mishap. For example, in Nigeria, if *Egungun* [Masquerade] Festival and Muslim Festival like ‘Idul-Fitr coincide, to keep public order undisturbed, the government can guide them as to time, place, nature of function, e.t.c. as part of restrictions. As Lee wrote, Article 11(5) gives the government power to restrict pursuance of freedom of religion if the government perceives a threat to public order.

The third and fourth restrictions are subject to health and morality. It means whatever the religious law is, if it contradicts morality or health, the government is entitled to restrict such practice. If by the name of religion an ascetic mendicant walks naked in

public, or a woman claims to be a saint and appears unclothed, a government can restrict such action as immoral. If a self-declared saint or cult leader, orders his followers to slaughter their own sons for the pleasure of gods, for the sake of religion, a government can bar them from doing so. The above analysis has shown that the objective of restriction is to prohibit unholy and immoral practices in the name of religion.

In this chapter, we have seen that freedom of religion is very important in every society. It is inalienable and most essential of all human rights. We have also found that there is no absolute freedom of religion in any society hence, there is limitation of freedom of religion. The reason for this limitation is because human beings abuse the rights from time to time as they use the name of religion to perpetrate evils. This virtually happens in every country of the world.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND REMARKS

5.1 Summary of Findings and Remarks

Consequent upon the data analysis and results of our findings given above, we have been able to discover reactions and attitudes of the citizens of Osun State towards freedom of religions. Both questionnaire and oral interviews were used. The summary of the findings is hereby stated after proper arrangement of the issues raised in the questionnaire has been done. One of the results of the issues raised is that majority of the respondents in the State agree that there is freedom of religion in the State, including the private and public secondary schools.

Key-informant interviews were conducted with 30 religious leaders: 10 Muslims, 10 Christians and 10 Traditionalists (aged 40-78), the target individuals in the State. The target individuals are the people that matter that can give the correct information needed. They include the Muslim activists, Christian leaders from among the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Osun State Branch and the traditionalists in Osun State.

The Chief Imam of Osogbo, Shaykh Mustapha Ajisafe as a principal member of Osun State Muslim Council said this as regard freedom of religion:

Every adherent of each religion in Osun State practises his or her religion without hindrance or molestation. This is possible because Osun State government does not favour one religion at the expense of others; it provides opportunities for adherents of each religion to practise their religion.¹

According to Alhaji Kolawole Usamat, the coordinator of Joint Muskim Action Forum (JOMAF), Osun State:

There is freedom of religion in Osun State but it depends the way you look at it. If you look at it from official point of view, you will see that the incumbent Governor of the State of Osun, Mr. Rauf Aregbesola, is very liberal and makes freedom of religion as one of his policies. The third religion which has not been given official recognition is now officially organized. Even both the Muslims and Christians in the state frown at this. All adherents of religions in the State are given plain level ground to practise their religions. But in some private schools, some proprietors and principals ask Muslim students to offer Christian Religious Studies and attend Christian morning devotions.²

JOMAF is a Muslim organization in the State of Osun saddled with the responsibilities of fighting for the fundamental rights of Muslims and for their welfare.

General Most Senior Apostle S.I. Komolafe, a CAN representative, representing Idasa District, Ilesa, established the fact that there is freedom of religion in Osun State. But he frowned at the action of the State Government, sponsoring the traditional religionists and giving them public holidays. He said:

The Christians are not happy about it. It is like drawing us many years back after we have been preaching day and night against idol-worship. Now, the State Government is giving the more recognition by declaring public holidays for the traditionalists during their annual festivals. But Christian students in Muslim oriented government schools were disallowed from conducting morning devotions in Christian way, but allowed to offer CRS.³

A traditionalist, Chief Abiodun Olaore, Alias Agbon-bi Agba is the current chairman of herbalists in Osun State, and a native of Osogbo, of Akobiogun Isale Osogbo compound. When interviewed in his house as regards freedom of religion in Osun State, he said:

There is freedom of religion in Osun State, though there are three types of religion, namely, Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion. Osun State headed by Governor Rauf Aregbesola encourages freedom of religion. As he finances Christianity, so also he finances Islam and traditional religion, and he makes bond of relationship among adherents of religions very strong.⁴

All the people I interviewed agreed that there is freedom of religion in Osun State. Another traditionalist of Jagun Ilu's compound, Ede, called *Imomoran* the owner of Imomoran masquerade in Ede claimed that there is freedom of religion in Osun State. According to him, the Governor of the State of Osun, Mr. Rauf Aregbesola, usually invites all adherents of religions in Osun State to interactive sessions and meetings. One of such meetings was held at the Adeleke University, Ede.⁵

Reverend John Olatunde Adesuyi of Methodist Church, Erin Osun, Irepodun Local Government, and also Secretary of the Local Government, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), asserted that we have freedom of religion in Osun State. According to him, everybody is allowed to serve his Creator whether you are a Muslim, Christian or Traditionalist.⁶

The missionary, Nasrullahi al-Fathi Association of Nigeria (NASFAT), Ede Branch, Alhaji Tunde Aminullahi, in his own contribution, said that there is freedom of religion in

the State of Osun, and the State Governor is trying to practise it as entrenched in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.⁷ Abdul-Sabur Sulayman, Noib Al-Amir, Muslim Students Society of Nigeria established that:

To some extent, there is freedom of religion in the State of Osun. Muslim students in some Christian oriented government schools were disallowed from observing *Salat-Zuhr* (Early afternoon Prayer) while female Muslim Students were prevented wearing *hijab* in those schools, but female Christian students were allowed to wear berets. Likewise in Muslim oriented government schools, only Muslims were compelled to observe *Salat-Zuhr*.⁸

An active member of National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO). Mr. Muhammad Qasim Oloyede, as regards freedom of religion in the State of Osun, described the incumbent Governor of the State of Osun as a democrat, not a religious bigot; and that is why he gave adherents of every religion, freedom to practice their own religion.⁹ Alhaji Dawud Imran Malasan popularly called Abu Sayfullahi, the Amir of Jama'at Ta'awun, Iwo, in his own contribution said that the present State Government in an unprecedented way in the history of Osun State, promoted freedom of religion. Adherents of all religions in the State are given public holidays to celebrate their annual festivals.¹⁰

Oba Abdul-Rasheed Olabomi, the Secretary-General of the Osun State Muslim Community, when interviewed in his palace at Iragbiji, responded that there is freedom of religion in Osun State. According to him, the government of the day does not favour one religion at the expense of others, neither does he declare a religion as a state religion.¹¹

Moreover, we have been able to discover that majority of the people of Osun State claim that there are no cases of religious crisis in Osun State. Both questionnaire and interview results corroborate this fact. Chief Imam of Osogboland and President, League of Imams and Alfas for Yorubaland, Edo and Delta, Shaykh Mustapha Ajisafe, before his death, established that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. He said:

There is no wrangling or fight among adherents of religions in Osun State. Even, there are interactive sessions and good relationship among us. We have a forum where we meet for dialogue and discussions. There is no problem in matters of religion in the State.¹²

The Secretary General, Osun State Muslim Community, Oba Abdul Rasheed Olabomi, the Aragbiji of Iragbiji asserted that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. He further explained that the incident that happened at the Baptist High School, Iwo was not a religious crisis at all. It was religious fanatics among the teachers that caused that problem. They did not allow Muslim girls to wear *hijab* and to pray *Zuhr* afternoon prayer.¹³

Reverend John Olatunde Adesuyi, a CAN member, Erin-Osun, claimed that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. According to him, this is due to good relationship and religious tolerance that exist in Osun State.¹⁴

Baba Jagun Sango, Ede, also established that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. He cited an example about twelve years ago when Sango statue was erected, facing the Ede Central Mosque. The Muslims in Ede rose against it but not in a violent manner and the issue was resolved amicably in the palace of Timi of Ede.¹⁵

Another traditionalist, Chief Simeon Olaleye Orisagbemi Oginni, the Chief Priest of Obatala worshhiper, Ekun-Ijesa and their chairman, established that religious crisis does not exist in Osun State. The crisis which happened at Baptist High School, Iwo, was a planned work. It was not a religious crisis at all. It was a ploy by undesirable elements to stain the good image of the government.¹⁶

Pastor M.F. Adetokunbo, Christ Apostolic Church, and an active member of CAN, Aheso Area, Ilesa, asserted that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. That is why Osun State is unique from other States of the Federation¹⁷. All the people interviewed agreed that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. According to the Amir of Jama`at Ta`awun, Iwo, who was also a member of the panel set up by Osun State government to investigate the cause of the incident that happened at the Baptist High School, Iwo, Alhaji Abu Sayfullahi stated categorically that there is no religious crisis in Osun State. Even, the incident that happened at Baptist High School, Iwo, was not a religious crisis at all. It was the plot an evil-machination of the Christian missionaries at the Baptist High School, Iwo, in collaboration with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Osun State, to embarrass the State government on the case of hijab pending in court.

According to him, the whole thing was sponsored by the Christian missionaries. The secret behind it leaked out when the students involved were apprehended and tried before the panel of enquiry set up by the Osun State government. They confessed that it was the Christian missionaries that sponsored them to put on different dressings. Some dressed as Christians in their choir dressing, some in the way of Muslim dressing, and

others appeared as masquerades. The traditionalists too, confessed in front of the governor of the State of Osun that they did not know anything about it.¹⁷

To confirm what Alhaji Abu Sayfullahi said concerning the evil-machination of the Christian missionaries at Baptist High School, Iwo, the similar thing also happened at Ikonifin, Ola-Oluwa Local Government Area of Osun State on Sunday 18th May, 2014. The pastor of the Baptist Church, Ikonifin via Bode-Osi, attempted to launch fake Boko Haram in the State. According to reports, Pastor Olatoke, who is also the CAN president of Ola Oluwa Local Government, conspired with three members of the church; Emmanuel Atanda, Peter Oyedepo and Oguniyi Babatope, to launch a false Boko Haram attack in his church with the aim of blaming Muslims for the attack. They therefore, dressed like Muslims, wrapped their heads in turbans and covered their faces to avoid being recognized by members of the church. They stormed the church during the church service held on Sunday 18th May, 2014.

They threw *banga* which sounded like gunfire, thus scaring all the worshippers who thought they were Boko Haram insurgents. On seeing this, the worshippers took to their heels, running helter-skelter to save their lives. Many of them were injured. They (the attackers) then jumped on their getaway motorcycles and sped off into the dark night. Fortunately, the attackers were arrested by the youths of the community. The culprits later confessed that they were members of the same church which they came to attack. They also revealed that it was their pastor who planned the whole thing. When confronted, the pastor said it was just a “drama”.

The case was reported at Bode Osi Police Station area. Osun State Chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Oba of Ikonifin have been fingered as parties attempting to sweep the case under the carpet. The implications of a Boko Haram attack on a Church in Yorubaland is better imagined than experienced. Muslims generally would have been the ones to suffer if this grand conspiracy has succeeded. Security agents would have picked up many Muslim leaders.¹⁸

Engr. Alhaji Abdul-Hamid Tawfiq, the Chief Imam of the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, and a religious activist in Osun State, described the incident that happened at the Baptist High School, Iwo, as a religious colouration by the Christian Missionaries, but not a religious crisis per se.¹⁹ Alhaji Kolawole Usamat described it as a political gimmick and propaganda by the Christian missionaries to intimidate the state government over the issue of *hijab* pending in court. According to him, “there is no religious crisis in this State

because the Muslims and Christians are not fighting”.²⁰ In the Christian oriented schools, the Christian missionaries have constituted themselves into a sort of oligarchy, controlling the schools illegally even though they do not have financial obligation on the schools. They are controlling the schools illegally by not allowing the Muslim pupils to wear *hijab* and pray *Salat Zuhr* in the afternoon. This amounts to infringing on their fundamental human rights as entrenched in the constitution of this country.

Alhaji Usamat further explained:

On this issue, the officials from the Ministry of Education, too are not helping matters. That is why we are agitating for our rights. We do not want any religious crisis in this State. That is why we are seeking our rights through legal means. So, the Osun State Muslim Community have sued the Osun State Government to court and the case is pending in court. Presently, the judge hearing the case has been transferred to another judicial area, and the Christians are pressurizing him to drop the case. We have written the Chief Justice of the Federation regarding this issue. There is a fiat stipulating that the case will continue. We are now waiting for the Chief justice to declare who should hear the case.²¹

As regards religious tolerance in Osun State, the questionnaire result shows that majority of the respondents claim that it exists. The respondents interviewed on this issue were divided in their opinions depending on the angle they looked at it. Alhaji Kolawole Usamat talked at length on this, saying:

It is the Christians that are intolerant. According to him, the ownership of all schools in the federation came to the hand of government as far back as 1975, and all missionaries that initially owned the schools whether Muslims or Christians, were fully compensated for it. As from that time, the government has been responsible for financing the schools vis-à-vis payment of salaries and provision of infrastructural facilities etc. Despite that, the Christian Missionaries do not allow the Muslim pupils who are the majority to practise their religion in the Christian oriented government schools especially wearing *hijab* and observing *Salat Zuhr* in their schools. But in Muslim oriented government schools, Christian pupils are allowed to dress as they like and offer CRS. Some adherents of ATR too, are not tolerant as they use masquerades to disturb Muslims and Christians during their religious devotions.²²

Alhaji Abu Sayfullahi also supported the view expressed by Alhaji Kolawole Usamat, saying “Baptist High School” Iwo was formerly known as Iwo Boys High School. It was

the Christian missionaries who changed it to the name it is bearing today, even though the Muslim children are the majority.²³ Engr. Tawfiq Abdul-Hamid said to the contrary. According to him, “there is religious tolerance in Osun State. He also pointed out the fact that our culture, not only in Osun State but in the generality of Yorubaland, encourages it’’.²⁴ Rev. John Olatunde Adesuyi in his own contribution said:

There is religious tolerance in Osun State. Christians are tolerating many things. Western education came to Nigeria through Christianity. We tolerate government and adherents of other religions so that there can be no religious crisis in the State, so that there can be peace and harmony. We Christians are fighting against the use of *hijab* in Christian-named schools in order to maintain our legacy. The way western education is being handled now is not fair especially the issue of merging schools together by the government.²⁵

Alhaji Tunde Aminnullahi said that there is religious tolerance in Osun State. The action of the government which led to religious intolerance was the merging of schools together. Engr. Tawfiq Abdul-Hamid did not agree that the merging of schools was responsible because the State government invited well-meaning and notable educationists including the Nobel Prize Winner, Prof. Wole Soyinka, to the Education Summit in Osun State. At the summit, they agreed that to have quality education in the State, schools have to be merged together to have the following categories of schools: Elementary, Middle and High Schools. So, the State government is just trying to implement the decision reached at the Education Summit.²⁶

Mallam Muhammad Qasim Oloyede asserted that there is religious tolerance in Osun State. According to him, “we have imbibed it from our culture as contrary to what is happening in the northern part of the country where religious intolerance is a usual phenomenon leading to religious crisis especially on trivial issues because they are highly emotional.²⁷ Chief Simeon Olaleye Orisagbemi Oginni in his own response said that religious tolerance exists in Osun State but traditionalists are more tolerant than both Christians and Muslims. It is Muslims and Christians that usually quarrel with one another. The government of the day encourages religious tolerance. It is very rare to see traditionalists fighting.²⁸ Oba Abdul-Rasheed Olabomi established that there is religious tolerance in Osun State. The government of the day under Mr. Abdul Rauf Aregbesola, even his predecessor, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, encouraged religious tolerance. Even some Muslims and Christians did engage in inter-marriage in Osun State.²⁹

With regard to religious discrimination in governmental establishments in Osun State the questionnaire result reveals that majority of the people of Osun State claim that there are no cases of religious discrimination. One of the interviewees, Oba Abdul Rasheed Olabomi, responded that in governmental establishments, it is common among the Christians imposing morning devotion and prayer on others who are not Christians. Even, inside buses you will see Christians preaching. I see this as religious fanaticism or over-zealousness.³⁰

Mallam Oloyede established that the religious discrimination is very common among the Christians where they dominate, and it is age-long hatred as they inherited it from our colonial masters. They demonstrate it in time of employment opportunities, admission into higher institutions, award of contracts and appointments.³¹ Engr. Tawfiq Abdul-Hamid said: "In any organization, it is natural to have religious bigots who indulge in over-zealousness. But this is common among the Christians. They favour the people of their own faith at the expense of others. According to him, Islam does not enjoin us to discriminate against people of other faiths. But an average Muslim or Christian does not understand tenets of his religion.³² Alhaji Tunde Aminullahi remarked that religious discrimination in governmental establishments is not openly done but is done underneath. It is not official as the government of the day has officially declared religious freedom, religious tolerance and virtues (Iwa Omoluabi). This religious discrimination exists among the people of one faith favouring people of their own faith at the expense of others.³³

As regards religious imposition on Muslim Students by the Christian school authority and vice-versa, the questionnaire result reveals that such does not exist in Osun State. It is also discovered that not only is the level of understanding between the Muslims and Christians very high, the relationship between them is also cordial and peaceful. There have been interactive sessions between the Muslims and Christian clerics including the traditionalists. The interviews conducted corroborate the points raised above. Making assertion on the cordial and peaceful relationship between the Muslims and Christians in Osun State, Alhaji kolawole Usamat said: There is no family in Osun State where you will not find children of the Muslims and Christians living together. Otherwise we would have been killing ourselves like the northerners".³⁴

The Chief Imam of Osogboland, Shaykh Mustapha Ajisafe, established that:

There is a good relationship between adherents of religions in Osun State. There is no fight among us: Even there is interactive session. We have a forum where we meet for dialogue and discussion. There is no problem in matter of religion in Osun State.³⁵

General Most Senior Apostle Komolafe asserted that:

Cordial and peaceful relationship exists between the Muslims and Christians in Osun State. We do things together. There is inter-marriage between us. But with the advent of the administration of Governor Rauf Aregbesola and merging of schools including the recognition given to the traditionalists, these bring suspicion, and we frown at this as it does not go well with us.³⁶

The Chairman of traditionalists, Ekun ijesa, Chief Simeon Olaleye Orisagbemi Oginni, established that the relationship between adherents of religions in Osun State is peaceful and cordial. According to him, “it was our great grandfather who gave the land on which the Central Mosque, Ilesa, was built to the Muslim Community. We as descendants maintained the place for them. If there was no good relationship, this could not have been possible. The good relationship exists till today”.³⁷ Another notable traditionalist, Chief Imomoran remarked that “there is good relationship among adherents of different religions in Osun State. I have friends among the Muslims and Christians, and we celebrate together during our annual festivals. Some Christians, from time to time, come to me for spiritual assistance in order to make headway in their work”.³⁸

Agbajere Sango, another traditionalist in Ede, established that there is good relationship between adherents of religions in Osun. He said that before he became a bonafide traditionalist, he was once a Muslim and a pupil in a Qur’anic school.³⁹ Engr. Tawfiq Abdul-Hamid established that the relationship between the Muslims and Christians in Osun State has been so deep that there is inter-marriage between some Muslims and Christians, to the extent that Muslim children are being sponsored on education and taken care of by the Christians, and vice-versa.⁴⁰ Other interviewees also agreed on this point.

There is inter-marriage between some Christians and Muslims of the State. This fact, has been corroborated by the questionnaire result and interviews conducted. For the purpose of this study, I interviewed two women who were born Christians and have converted into Islam as a result of their marriage to Muslims.

One of them, Mrs. Deborah Rafiu Animasahun of Umoru Compound, Ilesa, was interviewed on how and why she married Mr. Rafiu Animasahun. She responded thus:

I was born into Christianity, and a native of Ifewara in Osun State of Nigeria. I was staying with my sister at Ilesa, learning fashion design when I met Rafiu. He approached me and said that he loved me for marriage. I loved him too, and agreed to marry him. This is not new in Osun State. Rafiu told me that two of his father's wives were Christians. I do not regret marrying him, and the marriage is blessed with children – male and female.⁴¹

The second woman interviewed, her name is Mrs. Elizabeth Jamiu Adeniran, living at Ola-iya Street, Oke Gada Area, Ede. She is a native of Imesi-Ile in Osun State. She shared her experienced with me on how she got married with Alhaji Jamiu Adeniran (a.k.a. Ola-iya). She was also a born Christian. The following is her response to the interview:

I love him because he loves me. I believe in destiny. When I informed my parents about this man, they agreed that I should marry him because of the mutual love between us. In my hometown, Imesi-Ile, Christians outnumber Muslims by far, but there is cordial relationship between the Muslims and Christians in the town. Now, I am happy that I am a practising Muslim. Honestly, I am convinced that Islam is a simple and true religion. There is no intermediary between me and God. I see my conversion as a favour from the Almighty God. I call Him day and night. I pray five times a day. Whenever I had a problem, I called on Him, and my prayers were answered. In the year 2012, I made the holy Pilgrimage to Makkah. This offered me opportunities to learn many things and visit many places. Our marriage is blessed with children. My husband married four wives, and I am the first wife.⁴²

Another woman I interviewed, was a born Muslim. Her name is Muslimat Bolanle Falomo. She married a Christian. His name is Ayoola Falomo, a native of Ilesa while his wife is a native of Osogbo. Though, she married a Christian, she maintained her religion as a Muslim, and the husband does not prevent her from practising her religion. When asked why she married a Christian, she narrated her story thus:

I am a native of Osogbo. My first husband was a Muslim. I divorced him because his behaviour was too bad to me, and I could no longer endure it. After ten years of our marriage, I married another man who happened to be a Christian. At this time, I told my mother about his proposal. My mother testified to his good character because we were living in the same compound. Though, he is not a rich man, he is not like my first husband. I

love him because he is a caring man, and he does not prevent me from practising Islam. During the month of Ramadan, he would wake me to observe my *sahur* (early breakfast) and remind me to observe my daily obligatory prayers. Our marriage is blessed with four children – two boys and two girls.⁴³

In Islam, an exception is made for Muslim men to marry chaste or pious Jewish and Christian women who are referred to as “people of the book”. The reason is that Jews and Christians share similar religious outlook, believing in revealed scriptures (Q. 5:5). The children of such a union are always to be raised in the faith of Islam. This should be discussed thoroughly by the couple before they decide to marry.

In this chapter, we have discussed the implementation of freedom of religion in Osun State. In Ede, a Muslim dominated town, 90% of its population are Muslims. There is freedom of religion in the town. Adherents of each religion, practise their religion without fear or molestation. The major religions in Ede are Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion. It is observed that some Muslims join with the traditionalists during their annual festivals, such as *Sango, Osun and Ipedi* festivals. The king of Ede, Timi, despite the fact that he is a Muslim, leads the chiefs and traditionalists to the shrines where the gods are worshipped. He regards doing this as his traditional function as the king of the town.⁴⁴

In Iwo, there is freedom of religion, too. Muslims practise their religion in their own way, while Christians go about their worship without interference and disturbance.⁴⁵ In Osogbo, there are three main religions namely, Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion. There is freedom of religion. It is discovered that some Muslims, like in Ede, join with traditional worshippers during their annual Osun Osogbo Festival. The King, Ataoja of Osogbo, though a Muslim, leads the chiefs and traditionalists to the Osun Shrine. This annual event has turned to tourism which attracts many people from all walks of life locally and internationally.⁴⁶

In Ife, there is freedom of religion. There are three main religions namely, Islam, Christianity and African Traditional religions. According to Dr. Olaniyi Hakeem Olawale, “the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Ile-Ife is more cordial than the relationship between Muslims and traditional worshippers. Christians join with Muslims during their naming and wedding ceremonies. Muslims get financial assistance from well-to-do Christians in the town, and vice versa. But it is observed that the traditionalists sometimes disturb Muslims and Christians during the day or night during their religious

devotions. Whenever, the traditionalists want to observe their religious rites, they usually publicly announce. In this way, the religious devotions of both Muslims and Christians are disturbed. This does not lead to inter-faith conflict because there is religious tolerance and mutual understanding among the people of the town".⁴⁷ In Ijesaland, there is also freedom of religion. Muslims, Christians and traditional worshippers go about their religious practices without fear or embarrassment.⁴⁸

Based on the findings of the study mentioned above, it is crystal-clear that there is freedom of religion in Osun State. This is one of the major reasons that accounts for the peaceful co-existence among the people of Osun State.

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CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

Islam has long been in existence in Osun State before the state creation in 1991. As regards the time and manner of introduction, Islam in Osun State is closely related to Islam in Yourbaland. Islam got to Yourubaland through the activities of Muslim merchants and clerics.¹ However, Islam was introduced to majority of places in Osun State in 19th century.² The roles which Muslim scholars, traditional rulers and Islamic societies played in the spread of Islam in Osun State cannot be over-emphasized, because of the stiff oppositions and persecutions to the Muslims at that time by the traditional religionists. Christianity came later to pose a threat to Islam. That notwithstanding, Islam strived and triumphed in Osun State and became a force to be reckoned with. This study is informed by the fact that, Osun State flourished well among the six South-Western States occupied by Yoruba people in contemporary Nigeria in terms of Muslim population and Islamic influences.

According to the findings of this research, there is freedom of religion in Osun State at present. People of Osun State have now begun to realize that Islam is a religion of peace. Muslims in Osun State are tolerant and adapt Islam to their way of life. Islam itself is a comprehensive way of life. No wonder, that there is peaceful and cordial relationship between the Muslims and adherents of other religions in the State.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made

1. Peaceful Inter-faith Relations: Muslims are enjoined to relate with non-Muslims amicably with kindness and justice. The Glorious *Qur'an* further reaffirms that Muslims should not even engage them in argument except in a most kindly manner. Qur'an 29:46:

Do not engage people of the Book in an argument except in a most kindly manner save those who are unjust among them. Say: we believe in the one revealed to us and to you; our God and your God is one, and to him we submit.³

The Qur'an and Hadith make the position of Islam on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims abundantly clear. This position is summarized in Qur'an 60:8-9 thus:

As for such (of the unbelievers) as do not fight against you on account of (your) faith, and neither drive you forth from your home lands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for verily, God loves those who act equitably. God only forbids you to turn in friendship towards such as fight against you because of (your) faith, and drive you forth from your homelands, or aid (others) in driving you forth: and as for those (from among you) who turn towards them in friendship, it is they who are truly wrong-doers.⁴

In his Tafsir (commentary) on Q.60:8, Imam Al-Qurtubi said:

The majority of commentators have agreed that this verse has not been abrogated. They cited the story reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim of Asma' bint Abu Bakr when she asked the Prophet (S.A.W) if she could receive and be kind to her non-Muslim mother who visited her in *Madinah*, and the Prophet said "Yes".⁵

It was said that this verse revealed in this specific incident. *Al-Mawardi and Abu Dawud* reported that *Amir Ibn Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubair* narrated that his father told him that before accepting Islam, *Abu Bakr* divorced his wife *Qatila*, the mother of *Asma'*. When truce was held between the Prophet and the traditional worshippers of the *Quraish*, the mother visited her daughter in *Madinah* and brought her a pair of ear-rings and other gifts. *Asma'* was reluctant to accept the gifts, and then asked the Prophet. In answer to her question, Allah revealed this verse i.e. Q. 60:8.

Al-Tabari further explains that "the most credible view is that the verse refers to people of all kinds of creeds and religions who should be shown kindness and treated equitably. Allah referred to all those who do not fight the Muslims or drive them out from their homes, without exception or qualification."⁶ "When it comes to social relationship, which fall under the category of *Mu`amalat* (social interaction) the principle of jurisprudence stand is that everything is permissible except where there is an explicit and decisive verse from the Qur'an or Sunnah stipulating otherwise."⁷

2. Another vital factor which can enhance improvement of freedom of religion is *Da'wah* and dialogue. *Da'wah* simply means any effort to communicate the message of surrender to God (Islam) to other people whether through words or examples.⁸ The most common method of communication is usually in the form of one-to-one dialogue making the best use of dialogue for *Da'wah* such as organizing public symposia, producing written, audio or visual materials for promotion, conducting courses, camps and mosque tours, and similar organized information-dissemination activities directed towards large groups are also useful.

Considering the complex nature of human beings and their communities, it is logical that there can be no single most effective method of *Da'wah* for all people of all times and places. However, a general procedure may be recommended to produce an effective *Da'wah* method to cater for unique features of a particular audience, community or individual. The general procedure consists of the following:

- i. **Rapport building or strengthening relationship:** This stage is where efforts are made to present yourself to others as honest, trustworthy and helpful, just as the Prophet (S.A.W) was known as *Al-Amin* (the Trustworthy one) even before he was called to prophethood.⁹ Such efforts must be done sincerely and developed as good habits for one's own personal development. Sincerity and good repute result in a high level of credibility when entering into discussions about matters of faith and reason.
- ii. **Diagnosis :** In order to perform *Da'wah* well, one needs to discover what a person already believes, whether any misconceptions exist, what these misconceptions are, and whether there may be any stumbling blocks that impede him/her from finding and accepting truth or understanding and applying certain aspects of Islam.

Da'wah involves correcting misconceptions about Islam and helping to find and embrace the truth. It also entails helping others to understand Islam and practise it better, thereby helping them to come closer to Allah.

Such a process of observation, learning, inquiry, analysis and discovery is termed "diagnosis". Appropriate diagnosis involves serious examination of all overt and subtle "symptoms" of misunderstanding, ignorance or difficulty in order to deliver an appropriate "prescription". *Da'wah* usually fails when inappropriate prescription has been applied due to faulty diagnosis or an absence of it together. In summary, diagnosis helps in deciding the best form of wisdom in calling to the way of Allah. This includes deciding what to say,

who should say it, to whom it should be said, how to say it, or even whether to say it or not!

iii. **Prescription:** Once misconception and difficulties in understanding Islam have become known, and the sources of such misconceptions deduced, an effective prescription to clarify issues may then follow. However, as with any prescription given by a practitioner, the problem can only be remedied if the client is willing to accept it.

It must be noted again that effective *Da'wah* does not always result in the targeted changing of the beliefs. Some may be convinced about truth once it is delivered to them. Others may be convinced only later on through more knowledge, reflection, or exposure while others may never become convinced. There is also difference between helping someone to understand, and helping someone to believe. That an argument has been understood may not mean that a person is convinced by it.

Different reasons may account for a person's refusal of an idea. Some may require stronger arguments or feel constrained by social considerations. Other are simply unwilling to make a spiritual commitment or accept the logical implications of conceding to an argument that they have become convinced about. Some people give little value to adherence to any faith and are unwilling to make any sacrifice or alter their beliefs or lifestyles in any significant ways.

The role of a Muslim preaching is only to convey the message clearly, not to compel anyone to accept it. (Q. 2:256) A person may continue to appear as an unbeliever or reluctant Muslim whereas a seed of faith may have been sown that may take years to manifest in him or her. The style and method of prescription are very important in facilitating the appreciation and internalization of the message. For instance, if a nice meal is poorly presented or thrown at a person, he or she is likely to reject it even if he or she is hungry.

iv. **Follow-Up: Stay Connected.** One should try to ensure that the prescription does not undermine rapport-building or continuous opportunities for interaction. If the previous encounter is positive, there is need to do follow-up both to re-establish some rapport, and to see if there are any other thoughts that have occurred or any rethinking in the minds or heart of the individual concerned. If one has promised to return or to find answers to questions then it is important to keep those promises, as breaking promises is itself a form of negative *Da'wah*. Never give up hope even when things appear to have ended on a low note or a person appears unconvinced. He or she may have had greater reflection or time

to obtain more information after being stimulated by the discussions. Follow-up may also involve looking for better approaches or better people to handle certain issues. In the event that some incorrect or incomplete information was conveyed to *Da'wah* target, it is very important to follow-up with more correct or complete information.

Different aspects of *Da'wah* require the use of different skills – intellectual communication, sometimes emotional etc. A continuous relationship should be built so that one becomes a facilitator for any further assistance towards the truth in order to sustain *Da'wah* even if one is not the primary giver of information or assistance. The facilitator's role is very valuable.

Follow-up entails personal growth. Live up to the impression so that the confidence and trust established in one is maintained. A Muslim's own personal, educational and spiritual development should be a continuous exercise as Allah says: "O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not yourself".¹⁰ Be aware of the significance of good company and do not lose contact with or neglect a person with whom you have engaged in *Da'wah* successfully. A supportive social network is vital to maintaining faith.

Da'wah methodology depends on many factors, and this four-step procedure is only a practical and effective guide among many others. An important principle is that the order of these steps should be appreciated. However, sustaining the four step simultaneously and on and on – going basis is usually necessary for best results.

Moreover, inter-marriage can enhance freedom of religion in Osun State. Presently, our findings have shown that there is inter-marriage in the State. This certainly increases love and peaceful coexistence among the Muslims and Christians in the State. But one point needs to be made clear. That is, in doing this; we have to follow the injunction of Allah which says:

This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the people of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the people of the book revealed before your time"¹¹

Concerning the issue of inter-marriage quoted above, Yusuf Ali in his commentary says:

Islam is not exclusive. Social intercourse including inter-marriage is permitted with the people of the Book. A Muslim may marry a woman from their ranks on the same terms as he would marry Muslim woman, i.e. he must give her an economic and moral

status and must not be actuated merely by motives of lust or physical desire. A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man because her Muslim status would be affected: the wife ordinarily takes the nationality and status given by her husband law. A non-Muslim woman marrying a Muslim husband would be expected eventually to accept Islam. Any man or woman of any race or faith may, on accepting Islam, freely marry any Muslim woman or man provided it be from motives of purity and chastity and not of lewdness.¹²

In general, Muslim men are not permitted to marry non-Muslim women. “Do not marry unbelieving women until they believe. A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you... (Q 2:22). An exception is made for Muslim men to marry chaste or pious Jewish and Christian women who are referred to as “People of the Book”. This comes from the understanding that Jews And Christians share similar religious outlook, believing in one God, following the commandments of Allah, believing in revealed scriptures (Q. 5:5). The children of such a union are always to be raised in the faith of Islam. This should be discussed thoroughly by the couple before they decide to marry.

Based on my experience and observations, I cannot advise Muslims to marry non-Muslim girls among some Christian denominations, because such marriage usually leads to divorce due to incompatibility in some aspects of their religions. A Christian girl might promise a Muslim that if he married her, she would convert to Islam. But, more often than not, after marriage, such promise was not fulfilled, and this usually led to divorce.

As regards a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man, under no condition is a Muslim woman permitted to marry anyone other than a Muslim man. “Nor marry your girls to unbelievers until they believe...” (Q. 2:221). Muslim women should not marry Jews and Christians. So, the law stands that she may only marry a believing man (Muslim). As head of the household, the husband provides leadership for the family. A Muslim woman does not follow the leadership of someone who does not share her faith and values.

The glorious Qur’an lays out clear guidelines for marriage. One of the main traits you should look for in a potential spouse is a similarity in religious outlook for the sake of compatibility and the upbringing of the future children. It is advisable for a Muslim to marry another Muslim. However, in some circumstances, it is permissible for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim Christian or Jewish woman.

Olosos recommendations in his work, *The Politics of Religion in Nigeria: The Way Forward*,¹³ should be implemented by the Federal Government. He recommended that the Federal Government should establish a National Centre for the Study of Inter-Religious Relations. The centre should be charged with the responsibility of organizing courses periodically for Muslim and Christian clerics, religious leaders, government functionaries for the promotion of peace and harmonious co-existence. The government should come up with a code of Ethics for religious preaching with penalties for violating any of its clauses. The code will regulate how to preach, where to preach and when to preach, taking into consideration peculiarities of each religion.

Again, Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), Osun State Branch should be resuscitated for promoting inter-religious dialogue. NIREC which, since the beginning of the religious conflicts, had played a tremendous role in peace building at the Federal level. Formed by equal representation from Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), it provides a veritable forum for Muslim and Christian leaders to interact, exchange ideas and work collectively to resolve problems between the adherents of the two major religions. NIREC has branch offices in all States of the Federation. Another alternative is formation of an inter-faith committee in local and state governments, and to be meeting every month. This will create more understanding and love among adherents of religions in Osun State.

Finally, religion should be considered as one of the criteria the governments – both local and state - should consider when giving posts, appointments and contracts. Equitable distribution of posts, appointments and contracts among adherents of religions in the State will give them a sense of belonging and drastically curb crisis and tensions that are usually attributed to distribution of posts, appointments and contracts.

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter briefly highlighted the salient points as regards the introduction and growth of Islam in Osun State. Then, the relationship between Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion [ATR] was also examined. Finally, recommendations were proffered to enhance freedom of religion in Osun State.

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LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

S/N	Name	Age	Profession	Place	Date
1	Shaykh Mustapha	78	Cleric	Osogbo	15/05/2014
2	Oba Abdul-Rasheed Olabomi	53	Secretary	Iragbiji	26/05/2014
3	Alhaji Kolawole Usamat	56	Coordinator JOMAF	Osogbo	14/05/2014
4	Alhaji Tunde Aminullah	48	NASFAT Missioner	Ede	30/03/2014
5	Mallam Abdur-Sabur Sulayman	45	Noibal-Amir M.S.S.N.	Ede	30/03/2014
6	Dr. (Engr.) Tawfiq Abdul-Hamid	50	Cleric	Ede	05/03/2014
7	Mallam Muhammad Qasim Oloyede	40	Teacher	Osogbo	29/03/2014
8	Alhaji Dawud Imran Malasan	53	Cleric	Iwo	05/04/2014
9	Mallam Abdul-Wahid	50	Trader	Bode-Osi	29/04/2014
10	Alahji Abdul-Rasheed J. Buwayb	54	Cleric	Iwo	05/04/2014
11	Rev. M.A. Alade	65	Cleric	Ede	07/04/2014
12	Pastor M.F. Adetokunbo	65	Cleric	Ilesa	27/05/2014
13	Alhaji Muhammad Qasim Mudathir	65	Cleric	Ilesa	24/05/2014
14	General Most Apostle S.I. Komolafe	50	Cleric	Ilesa	21/05/2014
15	Rev. John Olatunde Adesuyi	46	Cleric	Erin-Osun	19/05/2014
16	Chief Baba Jagun Sango	75	Chief Priest	Ede	24/05/2014

17	Agbajere Sango	56	Priest	Ede	24/05/2014
18	Chief Simeon Olaleye Orisagbemi Oginni	60	Chief Priest	Ilesa	20/05/2014
19	Chief Imomoran	67	Chief Priest	Ede	18/05/2014
20	Chief Abiodun Olaore	65	Herbalist	Osogbo	15/05/2014
21	Mrs. Deborah Rafiu Anima- sahun	45	Tailor	Ilesa	4/12/2014
22	Mrs. Muslimat Bolanle Falomo	47	Trader	Ilesa	06/01/2014
23.	Dr. Olaniyi Abdul-Hakeem Olawole	48	Lecturer	Ife	06/02/2014

**QUESTUONNARIRE
APPENDIX I**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to find out reactions of people to the issues of freedom of religious in Osun State of Nigeria. Kindly answer the question below as honesly as possible after careful reading and understarding. Your answer will be confidentially treated.

Section A: Personal information.

1. Name:
2. Name of school or religious organization (as applicable).
3. Class or rank (as applicable).
4. Sex:
5. Age:
6. Religious:

Section B.

Kindly tick the appropriate column of your choice

S/N	Research Question	Yes	No
1.	Is there freedom of religion in Osun State?		
2.	Is there freedom of religion in the private secondary schools in Osun State?		
3.	Has any religious cisis been witnessed in this State, of recent?		
4.	Is there freedom of religion in the public secondary schools in Osun State		
5.	Is there any religious discrimination in governmental establishments of Osun State?		
6.	Can the relationship between the Muslims and Christains of this State be regarded as cordinal and peaceful?		
7.	Do the governments – both local and state – encourage freedom of religion?		
8.	Can the level of understarding between the Muslims and Christains be described as being high?		
9.	Have there been interactive sessions between the Muslim and Christian clerics in Osun State?		
10.	Does the State government consider religion as one of the criteria when giving appoinmemts and posts?		
11.	Is there religious tolerance in the State?		
12.	Is there inter– marriage between the Christuians amd Muslims of this State?		
13.	Have there been cases of religious imposition on Muslim students by the Christian School Authority?		
14.	Have there been cases of religious imposition on Christain students attending Muslim secondary schools?		