



Impact of Traditional Qur'anic Schools on Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT

The significance of the Quran to every Muslim can never be underestimated. Unarguably, it is the primary source of Islamic Law (Shari'ah). Indeed, one cannot worship Allah without knowing the Quran. It is against this background that the researchers aim to examine the impact of traditional Qur'anic Schools on the development of Islamic Education in the Afon Area Council, Kwara State. In an attempt to do justice to this paper, secondary sources of data collection were used such as journals, manuscripts, and other relevant publications were used in the course of this study. The findings of the paper revealed that traditional Qur'anic schools impact positively Islamic education in the Afon area council, Asa Local Government, Kwara state. The study further concluded that government should assist these traditional schools in the Afon Area Council with funds and instructional materials that integrate them into their monthly payroll to facilitate effective productivity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic School is an establishment that offers Qur'anic education that focuses on the teaching of Islam, the Arabic Language and the sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) (Salako & Abiodun, 2019). Qur'anic education is the root of Islamic education because Quran is the primary source of Islamic knowledge (Isaack, 2018). It is the book of guidance, ethics of conduct and code of life of every Muslim. Qur'an is the book of Allah (Q3:23, Q25:29) (Firman *et al.*, 2022; Al Husaeni *et al.*, 2022), revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the guidance of humanity.

The acquisition of Islamic knowledge is strongly emphasized by Allah (Q, 96:1). Similarly, Prophet (SAW) further said, "He who knows has everything in life and he who loses knowledge loses everything in life". In addition, the instruction to Muslims of all ages has to strive and contribute excellently to human development, World civilization, culture and educational advancement. Quranic education is obligatory for all true believers because Allah clearly stated in Hadith Qudisy that "Know Me before you worship Me, for if you do not know Me, how are you going to worship Me? It can be deduced here that Qur'anic Knowledge is very essential to all believers.

2. METHOD

Qur'anic School is an establishment that offers Qur'anic education that focuses on the teaching of Islam, the Arabic Language and the sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Qur'anic education is the root of Islamic education because Quran is the primary source of Islamic knowledge. It is the book of guidance, ethics of conduct and code of life of every Muslim. Qur'an is the book of Allah (Q3:23, Q25:29), revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the guidance of humanity. The acquisition of Islamic knowledge is strongly emphasized by Allah (Q, 96:1).

Similarly, Prophet (SAW) further said, "He who knows has everything in life and he who loses knowledge loses everything in life". In addition, the instruction to Muslims of all ages has to strive and contribute excellently to human development, World civilization, culture and educational advancement. Quranic education is obligatory for all true believers because Allah clearly stated in Hadith Qudisy that "Know Me before you worship Me, for if you do not know Me, how are you going to worship Me? It can be deduced here that Qur'anic Knowledge is very essential to all believers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Emergence of Qur'anic Schools in the Afon Area Council, Kwara State

The source of Arabic schools in Afon Area Council can be traced back to the beginning of Islam in the Afon Area Council in Asa L.G A Kwara State because Arabic school could not have been established without Islam. Wherever Islam spread, the rudimentary knowledge of the Qur'an, the Hadith and the Shariah began (Canon Law of Islam) began to be thought to the followers of the religion. Therefore, once an early Muslim leader found a foothold in a town, the first thing he did was to make a provision for Qur'anic education and instruct the new converts and this serves as Islamic academic's jihad which was operative throughout the Islamized world and Qur'anic schools. Islam flourished and become more accepted among the people through the effort made by most early Muslim leaders (scholars).

Yoruba land had contact with Islam through war and trade early said by the seventh century there was a record of Muslim converts among the Yorubas. Furthermore, Islam was well known in Yoruba land in the nineteenth century (Cole, 2004), when the Madinka, Nupe

and Fulani traders brought Islam closers to the indigenous. Most if not all these scholars came to Afon Area council from Ilorin as learned teachers of the Qur'an and preachers who in addition performed other religious duties like leading the congregational prayers and conducting naming, funeral and marriage ceremonies. Acceptance of Islam, Qur'anic teaching and learning was very easy for the people of Afon Area Council because the rules of the religions (Islam) and Quran agreed with some of their cultures like polygamy.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that many rulers in the Afon Area council were Muslims and this helps in the establishment of well flourished Qur'anic schools. In addition, Islam and Quran enforced morality and prohibit all forms of indecency which were the major duties of community leaders as witnessed in the rapid spread of Arabic and Qur'anic schools in the Afon Area council, Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. It is worth noting that Afon, Alaaji-Irede, Laduba, Budo-Agun, Ago-Oja, Otte, Kankan, Aboto- Alfa and Ilaji-Garuba were the major towns and villages that play a vital role in the establishment and proliferation of Qur'anic schools in Asa Local Government Areas.

Islam was introduced into Afon in the late 19 century by Mallam Abu Alfa, the founder of the village (O'Hear, 2006). Abu Alfa whose son became the Magaji-Ngari of Ilorin was a student of Sheikh Alimi. He was recorded to have been among those that spread the religion of Islam to Ilorin South and Ilorin West as his contributions to his divine teaching, mission and vision within the environment. Abu Alfa left Ilorin and stopped at a place presently called Afon as his central abode, where the religion of Islam could go around his environs.

Furthermore, people from different towns and villages including Ilorin came to settle with him as the founder of Afon. Mallam Saliu Biworu Samo, from Ajagbon compound Agbabiaka Ilorin, Alfa Idrisu Salahudeen from Pakata area Ilorin and Mallam Baba Beluko from Magaji Ngeri, Baboko Ilorin. All of these people and other personalities help the founder in the establishment of Islam and Qur'anic Schools firmly in the Afon.

In a similar development, Alaaji Irede was established by Inda Musa who happened to be a warrior, loyalist and follower of Sheikh Alimi having conquered the rest of Yoruba Land he left his house with his first son Inda Musa and some of his followers on Islamic mission of expansion of Islamic territory and propagation of Islamic and Quranic education. Quranic schools were also established in Alaaji Irede under the care of Inda Musa. He later went back home to their Ilorin Alaaji Compound. Laduba was another prominent village in Asa Local Government that is germane to this study. It is worthy of note that no specific date was mentioned as to when Islam came to Laduba.

This implies that the exact period that Laduba came in contact with Islam is still unknown, but being close to Muslim areas like Ilorin, Afon, Ogbondoroko and others. Nobody doubts of it having immediate contact with this area. When Islam was spreading to other area councils in the Afon, it was on record that Islam did not reach Laduba at that particular time due to its firm antiquity to traditional belief. The foray of Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio which converted the rest of Yoruba did not find its way to Laduba. Nevertheless, despite the paganism status of the indigenous, Islam still became more influential and better received than Christianity in the town.

However, Islam was brought to Laduba by these noble scholars Sheikh Bukhari Apataki the first chief Imam of Laduba and Sheikh Aliyu Mandamipo they both came from Ilorin Balogun Fulani compound with the effort made by these Sheikhs, Baale of Laduba and his family accepted Islam and Quranic school was established to teach the new converted Muslim and their children the basic knowledge. Through the collective efforts made by Sheikh Bukhari Apataki and Sheikh Aliyu Mandamipo, several Quranic schools rapidly sprang up in many of the compounds in Laduba through their sons that have graduated from Qur'anic schools in

Ilorin. In addition, Islam gain rapid footing through the effort of the time of immediate past Imam Raji Ajisebiola who was turbaned in 1959 and died in 1993 converted the majority of the inhabitants to Islam through his constant teaching, preaching, praying along with other Alfas from every compound in Laduba to establish more Quranic schools.

Budo-Agun is another village that is very apt for this study. Islam was first brought to Budo-Agun by Alfa Busari, a native of Ilorin, Agbaji, through his preaching and teaching in the morning and evening but no one listens to him. In 1970 the rapid spread of Islam was championed by Alfa Amuda Yusuf the then chief Imam who was also a native of Ilorin in Jonkoto, Okelele with his massive effort many people converted to Islam in Budo-Agun among whom were Alhaji.A. Kadiri (Idigba), Alfa Baba Idigba, Alfa Yusuf, Salahudeen Ishola, Alfa Saka, Alhaji Sanni Okeju and Baba Bello Ile-Kewu. All these men under the leadership of Imam Amuda Yusuf constituted the core Muslims among the Budo-Agun Muslim community in Asa Local Government, Kwara State.

In a related development, Islam was introduced to Agooja town around 1905 by a scholar, Alfa Agba A. Hussain a stranger from the Gegele compound in Ilorin (Law, 1985). There were only three Muslims in Agooja at that time but Alfa Agba Hussain was able to convert people to Islam through door-to-door Islamic teachings and preaching. Alfa Salahudeen Bello (then Imam Jamiu) and Mallam Yakubu Oniwasi were the first early converts. Unlike the earlier Muslim scholar whose preaching was rejected, Alfa Hussain was genuinely accepted and enjoyed by all and sundry which attracts new converts into the fold of Islam. With time, the first indigenous Imam was Alfa Garuba Salami turbaned by Mallam Hussain.

Mallam Bello Salahudeen, Alfa Yaqubu Oniwasi, Malam Ibrahim Araromi, Alfa Abdurahaman (the then Imam Araro) and others later became the pillar of Islam in Agooja and with all sense of togetherness, they all joined hands towards the establishment of traditional Quranic schools for other new converts and their children.

Moreover, Islam came to Kankan during the reign of the 7th emir of Ilorin, Oba Shuaib (Oba Bawa) between 1915-1919 through Alfa Baba Busari in 1918. Alfa Busari enjoined the support of one of the key personalities, Mallam Kawu Sasha, who both belong to the Beluko/Magaji Ngari family in the Afon. With the effort of Alfa Busari and some of his students like Alfa Jimoh and Alfa Hamadu Baba spread Islam through preaching and his students extended this mission to other villages like Budo-Isale, Gbago, Gboede, Oloka, Ofin Ada and Gboroko usually preached for three days weekly to call people to Islam and explain the teachings of Allah and the sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) to people. Subsequently, Islam became the principal religion in all these villages earlier mentioned and the establishment of traditional Quranic schools was founded in all these villages.

3.2. Organization of Quranic Schools in the Afon Area Council

Islam is a religion that caters for the spiritual, intellectual and social needs of the individual and the community (Dariah *et al.*, 2016; Hashim & Langgulung, 2008; Omer, 2010). The responsibility of dawah and Islamic education was the primary duty of traditional Quranic schools usually operate using simple buildings or parlours, verandahs or under trees to provide Islamic basic education for both young and old Muslims. The term Quranic school is called "Ile-Kewu Walaa" in Yoruba and "Makaranta Aloo" in Hausa while Fafunwa at 1974 called it "School of Tablet in English Language. It is usually described as elementary school and not extended to the advanced level. Its most objective was to expose the child to life-giving words of the Quran which serves as a source of happiness and salvation in the hereafter.

In traditional Quranic schools, Asa Local Government no rigidly codified timetable guides both the pupils and the teacher. There was no fixed time for the commencement of the classes; lateness was not a serious offence, provided the pupil comes along with the parents. In the traditional Quranic schools in Asa, work starts on Saturdays and ends on Wednesdays every week. The exact time of the beginning of classes varies from one area to another and teachers respectively. There are two sessions, morning and evening daily. The morning session is usually between 8:00 am to 11:00 am, while the evening session is between 4:00 pm -6:00 pm. Thursday and Friday are usually holidays. Pupils go on break for weeks or months during Islamic festivals such as Idiel-Kabir, Idiel-Adha and the month of Ramadan while teachers sometimes can declare a holiday if there is any religious obligation such as burial or naming ceremony.

It is pertinent to note that during the course of this research, all traditional Quranic schools visited in the Local Government Council of Afon, there was no single teacher who can provide written records about his traditional Quranic schools, the numbers of pupils, parents and past since the establishment. They did not attach much importance to record particularly the accurate statistical figures of their ex-pupils and their present pupils not to talk of bringing them together to form an association that can positively contribute their quota towards the development of the school.

3.3. Impact of Traditional Quranic School on Islamic Education in the Afon Area Council

The traditional Quranic schools have contributed significantly to the development of Islam education in the Afon Area Council in numerous ways such as the promotion of liberal education, and the inculcation of moral and spiritual values in both the old and young people of the area. Before the advent of Islam in the Afon Council the natives were politest having many deities; worshipped. When Islam reached them, many traditional Quranic schools sprung up to provide sound Islamic Education for muslim parents started enrolling their children to these schools for the acquisition of Islamic knowledge. These children after their graduation turn out to be a scholar and preachers in their later life and this brings about the spread of Islam and its Education in every nook and corner of the city.

At the beginning of Islam in the Afon Area Council, early traditional Quranic teachers use to encourage and persuade the parents whether Muslim or pagan to allow their children to come to Traditional Quranic Schools. This has greatly good results because many pagan homes later turned into Muslim homes. In fact, that the fulfilment of the prophet said in a Hadith which goes thus: "A single learn person is more threatening to shaitan (devil) than thousands of worshippers" Another impact of trade Quranic school on Islamic Education in the Afon Area Council was the exposition of children to life which brings happiness in this globe and salvation in the hereafter.

The Quranic education received by children had a great influence on their way of thinking, dressing, utterance and behaviour (Demina *et al.*, 2022). The knowledge of the Quran stops all the pre-Islamic ways of life in terms of dressing, bad utterance, intermingled and other immorality in society. Traditional Quranic knowledge acquired by the female children remodels them Islamically. The Quranic school has promoted unity and cooperation among the pupils. Children also gathered in their teacher's house every day and interact with each other later becoming friends and partners in progress. This goes with the one verse from the Noble Quran which says "Cling vast to the rope of Allah and do not fall apart" prophet said enjoined the unity of Muslims when he said, "Muslim and Muslim are brothers".

Traditional Quranic school serves as the foundation for all the Islamic scholars in the Afon Area Council of Kwara State. Several important personalities in the Afon Area Council were

products of traditional Quranic Schools and who have become Islamic scholars occupying an important position in the society. Many of those scholars have established their Arabic Schools in a modern way while some are working in government establishments through such letters receive Western education in addition to what they have learnt in the traditional Quranic school which is still reflected in their characters. This school also has a great influence on the culture of people Afon Area Council specifically on marriage both male and female Muslims assembled themselves during the marriage ceremony to listen to pupils who have completed the learning process of nikkah (marriage contract).

The aims and Objectives of Quranic Schools in Asa Local Government Area Council are

- (i) To enable the child to recite a portion of the Quran for his regular obligatory prayers and religious duties in Islam.
- (ii) To prepare the child for adult life as a dedicated and committed practising Muslim.
- (iii) Indicating Quranic schools, the teacher (Mallam) sits under a tree in his parlour or verandah surrounded by volumes of the noble Quran and other Islamic books. While some pupils sit on the mat, others sit on the benches with their wooden slate "Wala" held in their hands, they read loudly, different verses of the Quran.

3.4. The Teaching Method in Traditional Quranic Schools in the Afon Area Council

In traditional Quranic schools drilling, recitation and memorization of the Qur'an are the major methods of instruction; where the teacher recites to his pupils, the verse to be learnt were taught while the learners then repeat those verses or contents after their teachers. The Mallam (teacher) shall continue reading it to them until he is satisfied that they have memorized and mastered the correct pronunciation delivered to them. The pupils shall continue repeating the verses individually or in groups until they perfectly mastered this process they commit into their memory.

The verses coupled with the previously memorized verses gradually make the pupils learn by heart a complete chapter of the Quran. Any mistake made by a pupil during the recitation is quickly corrected. Furthermore, after mastering the short verses and chapters of the Quran for prayer, the pupil proceeds to learn the alphabet of the Arabic language and the formation of syllables with vowels. It was after the completion of the whole Quran, that the pupils can then be taught the meaning of the Quran (*ilm*). The pupils shall be espoused to several Arabic books.

3.5. Teachers of Traditional Quranic Schools in the Afon Area Council

The qualification of traditional Quranic school teachers differs from person to person and from place to place. Some are highly learned scholars, well versed in Islamic studies but very few while others are blessed with proper recitation of the Quranic text and writing of Arabic alphabets. Teachers in traditional Quranic schools are the sole administrators of their respective schools. He is the custodian of his pupils and their belongings. He determined when to open and close the school.

3.6. Pupils in Traditional Quranic School (Omo Ile Kewu)

There is no stipulated age for any pupils whose parents wish to enrol their wards in the traditional Quranic schools. As early as the third- or two-years children can be enrolled depending on the modes of operation by the respective teachers. The learning materials used by the pupils were based on the provisions made by the parents of pupils so far it is allowed by the teachers. Copies of Qaidatul-Baghdad and the Quran are required from the pupil's parents depending on the levels of the pupils. Some teachers are operating boarding while

some do not, depending on the arrangements between the parents, the school and the teacher.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of traditional Qur'anic schools on Islamic education in the Afon area council, Asa Local Government, Kwara State. Government should assist these traditional schools in the Afon Area Council with funds and instructional materials and above all, integrate them to their monthly payroll to facilitate effective productivity.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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