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BRITISH INDIRECT RULE AND ISLAM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA (1900-1940)

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Abstract

When discussing European colonialism throughout history, one can never deny its impact upon the traditional religion of the colonized peoples. Europeans had always considered their colonial domination as being a “civilizing mission” which was based on the Christian principles and could not be achieved without challenging the traditional religion. Such colonists, who were eager to spread their Christian faith, found that the Christian missions were the main agents for conversion. These missions started first to convert the rulers by introducing new Christian ideas and principles. Once these rulers were converted, adherence of the ordinary people was a very easy task. When so doing, the Europeans succeeded to abolish the religious fundamentals of the traditional society. For instance in Togo and Ivory Coast, Christianity succeeded to gain a footing among their peoples and had a considerable position. This was not the pattern in Northern Nigeria, because despite the imposition of a series of reforms based on the Christian principles by the British through the Indirect Rule system, Islam continued to spread during the colonial era. The objective of this research paper is to look for the factors that contributed to the propagation of Islam in spite of the dominating foreign ideology and religion. For this end, it is necessary to examine the Fulani Islamic system, the Caliphate under colonial rule and the spread of Islam under British domination .It is concluded that through the maintenance of Quranic schools, restriction in the missionaries’ activities and the opening of major trade routes,

the British helped a great deal the preservation of Islam and its continued expansion among the non- Muslims. British educational policy in Northern Nigeria after 1940 can be the object of another paper.

Keywords

Religion, Christian Principles, Islam, Northern Nigeria, Indirect Rule

1. Introduction

Though the British were reluctant to extend their territorial interest in the Northern areas of Nigeria, there were many reasons which precipitated occupation. Once Hausaland became under British hands, the main task of the British officials was how to control those peoples who were already accustomed to the Islamic authority.

The system of administration used by the British in Northern Nigeria was known as Indirect Rule. (King, 2016) pointed out that British officials adopted this system in Asia during the first century of their involvement to preserve the Indian states. However, Indirect Rule reached its peak with the British conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate and was referred to as ‘the explicit ideology of British colonialism in the early twentieth century’ (Gerring, Ziblatt, Van Gorp & Arévalo, 2011). As the British conceived it, Indirect Rule was a system of colonial administration through which the native chiefs were considered as an integral part of the machinery government (Tibenderana, 1988). According to the definition of (Mamdani, 1996), Indirect Rule was a type of contract between the British colonial government and the traditional rulers of Northern Nigeria.

Lord Lugard considered Islam as an inferior religion (Ukwandu, 2016). In his book, ‘The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa’, Lugard cited the reasons which drove him to adopt Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria:

“Islam is a religion incapable of the highest development but its limitations clearly suit the limitations of the people. It has undeniably had a civilizing effect, abolishing the gross forms of pagan superstition and barbarous practices, and adding to the dignity, self-respect and self-control of its adherents”(Lugard , 1922, in Langué, 2004: 907).

According to (Reynolds, 2001), the promotion of Islam in Northern Nigeria helped the British officials to consolidate their rule with the support of the emirs. This paper attempts to examine the impact of British Indirect Rule on Islam in Northern Nigeria with reference to the Fulani Islamic system, the Caliphate under British rule and the factors which helped the spread of Islam among non- Muslims.

2. The Fulani Islamic System

Nigeria, the largest area in West Africa, consisted of a great number of ethnic groups with different languages, histories and customs. The main of these groups includes: the Yorubas in the West, Ibos in the East, and the Hausa – Fulani in the North which represented half the population of Nigeria.

Before the advent of the foreign contact, all of these groups shared a common pagan belief which was to change later due partly to the advent of Islam in the Northern territories in the fourteenth century, and Christianity in the Southern parts as early as the nineteenth century. This situation added two religious groups in Nigeria, affected the political, the economic as well as the social life of the Nigerians.

2.1 Islam and the Islamic Revolution

Islam, the religion and civilization of Muslims, was founded in Arabia in the seventh century due to the teaching of the Prophet Muhammed. It is a monotheistic religion and means submission and obedience to one God “Allah”. Unlike other religions, Islam saw a unity which led the followers after the death of the Prophet Muhammed to continue the conquest of the new lands for the spread of Islam sake.

By the year 640 AD (Shillington, 1989), the Muslim Arabs conquered the fertile land of Egypt. The Egyptians then, who were oppressed by the Byzantines, did not resist against the Arabs. Within two years, these Byzantines were expelled from Egypt and an Islamic capital was established in Cairo. The spread of Islam then continued where it reached North Africa by the 690’s. During this time, the Arabs succeeded to defeat the Byzantines and build a new Islamic city at Tunis. Few years later, that is by the year 711 AD the Arabs reached the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

After establishing itself in North Africa, Islam spread into the Savannah of West Africa as early as the eighth century AD (Fafunwa, 1974) through the work of Muslim traders. At first,

it reached only a few towns and was the religion of a minority of people such as traders and kings but its influence was not very deep.

It was only after the success of the Almoravids in the eleventh century (Fage, 1969), and the rise of Muslim scholars that Islam began to penetrate deeply into the West African states. It reached first Kanem and it had a considerable impact where as early as the thirteenth century, a center of Islamic learning was successfully established and commercial relations with different countries from North Africa were developed. Besides this, Kanem survived as a great empire which had a great position in the history of West Africa.

When we turn to Hausaland, we find that Islamic influence reached it as late as the fourteenth century, through the pilgrim traffic and commercial relations with North Africa. This was partly because before that time, Hausaland was not known commercially, that is to say external trade relations with Hausaland did not exist. Islam then succeeded to gain a footing among Hausa peoples, the fact that many of them adopted this new religion and were influenced by their neighboring empires such as Kanem- Bornu and Songhay. For instance during that time, Kano had received a number of clerics, who came from different countries for preaching Islam, and became a center of Islamic learning. Besides this, Katsina, which was visited by al- Maghili, had attracted a great number of pilgrims and scholars who brought with them books on Islamic theology and helped a great deal to the teaching of the Islamic principles.

After the fall of the Songhay Empire by the end of the sixteenth century, Islam witnessed a general decline in the West African territories. During this time, it was practiced by only foreigners who settled in the major towns and a few kings, who professed it, did always maintain their pagan practices. In addition to this, tribal conflicts increased, for example during the first years of the seventeenth century, the Jukun people of the Southern parts conquered Kano and by the year 1764, Gobir occupied Zamfara and Katsina (Trimingham, 1962). This situation threatened the advance of Islam and engaged the whole population of the Northern territories in tribal conflicts.

In fact, this Islamic decline was not to last forever, rather by the eighteenth century, a renaissance of Islam began to take place. During this time; Islam became no longer the religion of a few scholars and long- distance traders in the major cities. This was due mainly to the spread of the Muslim Brotherhoods such as the Qadiriya and an increase in the number of scholars who encouraged Islamic expansion. Members of the Qadiriya who used to settle on the major trade routes, succeeded to establish Quranic schools and to convert a great number of people.

Appeal to Islam then, was the duty of a distinct group of people who revolted against their pagan rulers and succeeded to exclude them. These people were known as the Fulani. As Barth said about them:

“It is evident that the larger portion of the population all over Hausa, especially that of the country towns and villages, remained addicted to paganism till the fanatic zeal of their conquerors the Fulbe forced them to profess Islam, at least publicly”.(Trimingham, 1962:153).

The Fulbe or the Fulani, who seemed to trace their descent back to Takrur, were a group of herdsmen who lived in clans. One of these clans called the Torodbe, was converted to Islam as early as the eleventh century. Starting from the fourteenth century, both the Muslim and nomadic Fulani who were pagans had moved to the Western and Central Sudan. During the reign of Sarkin Kano Yaqubi (1452-1463) AD, they reached Hausaland in great numbers.

By the year 1725, the Fulani leaders of the Western and Central Sudan led the Jihad against their pagan rulers who denied their rights and oppressed them. Such Jihad had an impact upon the Fulani of Hausaland who led the famous Jihad in the history of Nigeria which was known as the Sokoto Jihad under the leadership of Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) (Shillington, 1989). After ending the Jihad and founding the Sokoto Caliphate, the main concern of the Fulani leaders was to establish a uniform government based on the principles of Islam.

2.2 The Central Government and the Emirates

Reforming the Hausa society was considered as the final step of the Sokoto Jihad. This reform was the duty of the Fulani leaders whose powers derived from the “mother” of the emirates- the Sokoto Caliphate which had a central machinery of government. Such centralism précised relations between the Caliph and the emirates and relations between the emirates themselves. Besides this, it determined the nature of the central authority which was represented by the Caliph.

The Caliph or Amir-al Muminin as he was called represented the supreme authority of the Sokoto Caliphate. He was the one who stressed the application of Islam from which his power derived. The Caliph’s authority did not emerge overnight, but goes back to the Jihad era when all the Fulani whether pagans or Muslims, had received authority from the Shaikh and had contributed a great deal to the foundation of the emirates. The Caliph then did not rule alone but was helped by a group of people called the office of the Caliphate. The latter included the Wazir,

the Imams, the Qadis, the Sa'i (the collector of Zakat), the Wali –al- Shurta, the Muhtasib and the Amir-al-Jaish.

The Caliph was in charge of controlling the emirates by stressing the enforcement of the shari'a. He was the one who appointed or deposed the emirs and intervened in internal disputes between the emirates acting as the final arbitrator. The emirs, who were submitted to the Caliph, had to be replicas to the Caliphate model and had to exercise delegated authority from the Caliph for running the day-today administration of the emirates. Relations between the emirs and the Caliph then were expressed by a kind of submission. Each emir was obliged to pay a visit to Sokoto each year during the dry season for aiding the Caliphate. In case the emirs sent only their officials, they would receive hard punishments and even deposition. Further, the emirs had to pay a tribute to the Caliph each year. Besides this, appointment of an emir had to be followed by a series of conditions, for instance in a letter sent to the emir of Bauchi, Yaqub by Uthman Dan Fodio, the former was expected to repair mosques, to ensure that prayers were done in these mosques, and that the principles of Islam were learnt. The emir's obedience to the Caliph depended on the Caliph himself. The more the Caliph respected the tenets of Islam, the more his subjects' obedience increased. This machinery of the Caliphate was also concerned with introducing reforms in many domains namely economic, educational judicial and fiscal.

2.3 Reforms under the Caliphate

2.3.1 Economic Reforms

Under Fulani rule, great stress was put to develop both external and internal trade relations with Hausaland. Hausa trade, which reached its climax during the nineteenth century, included a variety of products

The development of commerce in Hausaland could be proved by the rise of many states which became a source of conflict. During this time, the essential trade of Kano and the neighboring states was the production of cotton cloth woven and dyed. This kind of industry had a great reputation since it spread to different areas and attracted people from different countries. The main areas which became famous by the cotton industry were the North such as Chad and Tripoli, the West as Timbuktu and the East like Bornu.

In addition to this industry, there existed another important African product called kola-nut. The latter was exported to Hausaland and with time it became very necessary, a situation which led these areas to spend huge sums of money on it. The kola-nut industry was so profitable and was sold according to Barth for about 200.000 Kurdi (Hodgkin, 1978) per load. In addition

to kola-nuts, Hausa traders received other goods such as oriental clothing, beads and natron throughout tran-saharan routes and Nigerian coasts such as Nupe and Borgu.

Further to kola-nut, the slave trade was also profitable as the previous industries in the economy of the Caliphate. The question which is raised here is how could an Islamic society engage in such a trade? Indeed these slaves were the result of the captives taken during the conquest of the pagan states. As mentioned by Dr Last, the Fulani used to attract Arab traders from North Africa who succeeded to convert these captives into goods. Thus, the slave trade flourished and huge numbers of slaves were carried to Bornu and Nupe and to Chad and Fezzan as well. The value of this trade according to Barth reached a hundred and fifty kurdi per annum.

2.3.2 Educational Reforms

Islamic education was the main goal of the Fulani scholars. The latter and in order to justify their anti- animist revolution had a number of duties. They should impose Arabic as the official language of the Caliphate, record their revolution to their followers and provide them with an adequate system of education. Such duties then could not be achieved without a considerable economic welfare.

Teaching and learning the Quran and Arabic language continued under Fulani rule and the number of Quranic schools increased. Unlike the latter which emphasized the teaching of the Quran, the Fulani established another type of schools called the Makarantar ilmi or schools of higher Islamic learning. These schools of advanced learning which emphasized the teaching of theological learning had received a great importance by the Fulani scholars.

Besides this, women education was also taken into consideration as a response to Uthman's call to the participation of women in political affairs and education in his book "Ihiya- al- Sunnah " in which he said:

" If anyone says that a woman is generally ignorant of these matters (for example matters related to business transactions) my reply is that it is incumbent upon her to endeavour to know these (commercial regulations) as it is binding upon her to know about matters pertaining to her religion like ablutions, fasting and praying"(Fafunwa, 1974:56).

Uthman's call spread among the Fulani and as a result, women situation began to change for many attended his lectures and those of his daughter.

2.3.3 Judicial Reforms

In the field of justice, the Caliph set up courts and introduced laws based on the Shari'a. He also appointed the alkalis or native judges at the head of jurisdiction with judicial councils under them. These alkalis then were chosen by the Caliph on the grounds of their knowledge of law. They were in charge of judging cases of offences against law and enforcing punishments according to Islam. For example, mutilation of limb was a punishment of theft. If it happened and the alkalis would confront cases that dealt with unwritten law, it was the duty of the Caliph and his agents, district and village heads to intervene and judge them.

2.3.4 Fiscal Reforms

The system of taxation which existed in Northern Nigeria under Hausa rule was not ended with the advent of the Fulani. Fulbe pastoralists had thought that under the rule of Uthman Dan Fodio, their taxes would be abolished. In fact, the emirates represented an important source of revenue for the Caliph's wealth (King, 2016). The imposition of jangali continued even during the era of the Caliphate and the ones who refused to pay such tax would receive punishments from the courts.

Besides jangali, the Caliph imposed religious taxes on the Fulani. For instance Zakat was collected for building mosques, helping the poor and maintaining the Muslim teachers or the malams as they were called. Further, the Fulani imposed another tax called "Jizya" (Kashmiri, 1967) on people who refused to adhere to Islam. The Sokoto Caliphate then remained in its strong position until the advent of the British, a situation that brought many changes and caused a decline of the Caliphate era.

3. The Caliphate under Colonial Rule

During the nineteenth century, when the British possessed only small territories on the West African coast, they used to govern their African subjects directly through the British officials. Later, that is as their influence increased throughout the interior and when they started to concentrate their activities upon large areas, the model they used became ineffective.

This new attitude towards Africans was due to a number of reasons. First, British interest in the abolition of the slave trade drove them to intervene into the internal affairs of the African states such as those along the Nigerian coast. Such intervention goes back to the year 1849, when a British Council was appointed for the Bights of Biafra and Benin. This British interest in the

suppression of the slave trade reached Lagos which was conquered and finally fell to the British in 1861 (Afigbo, Ayandele, Garin, & Owner, 1968).

Second, British desire to protect a legitimate trade required the establishment of a company of merchants under the head of George Goldie. This company was later on granted a charter and became known as the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C) in 1886 (Fage, 1969). It was in charge of administering the Niger trade and regulating relations between European and African traders. With the development of trade, conflicts raised between Goldie and Nupe and Ilorin emirates. This situation threatened British interests and increased conflicts between these emirates and the British. For the sake of defending his company, Goldie sent military forces against Nupe and Illorin which were conquered and finally fell to the company.

Besides this, there was another important reason which precipitated occupation. This was mainly due to the existence of the French in the coastal areas, a situation that caused a dispute over Borgu and led to the intervention of the British government. Such intervention led to the creation of the West African Frontier Force in 1897 under Sir Frederick Dealtry Lugard (1858-1945) (Collins, 1971) who, after years of uprisings, succeeded to throw away the French from Borgu and occupy it. By the year 1900, and due to the financial inability of the R N C to extend its frontiers Northwards, it was revoked of its charter and Northern Nigeria was declared a protectorate under the command of Lord Lugard who was appointed as High Commissioner. By this time, Nigeria was divided into three administrative units: the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the Lagos Colony and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

After occupying the territories of the Company, Lugard started to conquer the remaining parts of the Sokoto Caliphate. He then, sent military expeditions against Kontagora and Yola and conquered them. By 1903, Sokoto and Kano fell to the British forces. Three years later, a mahdist revolt, known as the Satiru Revolt (Burns, 1974) attacked the British in a village near Sokoto. As a reaction to such a revolt, Lugard sent a military force against Sokoto which within few months was completely defeated. By the year 1907, nearly all the Northern emirates were under British control. Lugard's main concern was how to control these peoples who were already accustomed to an Islamic model.

3.1 Lord Lugard and the Indirect Rule System

Lugard's experience during the Satiru Revolt of 1906 taught him how to deal with these Muslim peoples. He was of the opinion that the Fulani Caliphate which had already a developed system of administration based on the Islamic principles could not be abolished easily. He then,

suggested the idea of ruling the Caliphate through the emirate model. In addition to this, there were other reasons which drove Lugard to keep the traditional political institutions of the Fulani government. This was mainly due to the lack of finance and experienced administrators which impeded him to provide a direct administration. Thus, reliance on the native authorities was the cheapest and most effective system since it would preserve order and stability and would serve the colonial rule as well.

This system of native administration which had a great reputation all over the West African territories was known as “Indirect Rule”. Indirect Rule means governing people through their indigenous political institutions. In Northern Nigeria, this meaning was ironical. This was mainly because the British did not keep the traditional structure as it was, but they introduced changes gradually. The question which is raised here is how this system of native administration was organized?

Prior to the advent of Indirect rule, the Caliph was the supreme authority over the Caliphate, but under British rule, the era of the Caliphate came to an end and a Sultan was appointed by the Governor instead of the Caliph. Unlike the latter, the former had no power on the Native Authorities. These latter, which represented the basis of the Indirect Rule system, were headed by the emirs. Such basis was well defined by Lord Lugard when he declared:

“The policy of the government was that these Chiefs should govern themselves not as independent but as dependent rulers” (Kirk-Greene, 1968:70)

Concerning the emirates, Lugard, who was confronted with a large area amounting to about nine million, could not ensure the day –to- day administration of the Sokoto Caliphate. He then divided this Caliphate into 13 provinces with few changes in the old names and some amalgamations. For instance, Borgu was amalgamated in Kontagora and Katagum in Kano (Burns, 1974). This division is well explained in the following table (Kirk-Greene, 1968):

Table1: The division of the Sokoto Caliphate

Name of Province	Area in Sq.miles	Population
* Sokoto	35.400	1.262.300
*Kano	28.600	3.398.300
*Bornu	32.800	679.700
*Bauchi	24.700	679.700
*Zaria	9.850	390.300
Nupe	18.450	388.500
Kantagora	27.000	118.400
Illorin	14.100	330.100

Nassarawa	17.900	582.600
Munshi	17.000	471.000
Muri	15.600	407.800
Yola	14.300	291.300
Total Area and Population	255.700	9.000.000 +

*First Class

+ Approximately 5.855.000 Moslems, 3.135.000 Pagans and 10.000 Christians.

Each emir or chief was appointed a ruler by the governor and was in charge of a native administration. The emir was the one who collected taxes through the activities of his agents and was responsible for legislative affairs. He was also the one who issued instructions to his councils. Each native administration under the emir was divided into districts with a district head for each. District heads were controlled by the emir and were responsible for collecting taxes on his behalf and paying them to the native treasury. The districts were further divided into villages, each under a village head.

All the activities of the emirs and their councils were controlled by residents. The resident was appointed at the head of each province. He was mainly concerned with supervising the emirs and was responsible for the native administration of his province. In addition to this, he was in charge of controlling the various departments through the British staff.

Though fully elaborated in Northern Nigeria, the Indirect Rule system was extended to Southern Nigeria which was amalgamated with the North on January 1914. This amalgamation was the result of a number of reasons. First, Lugard, who relied primarily on the poor grant from the Imperial Government, was not able to develop the native administration. Second, the North, which was very far from the coast, needed railways to develop its trade and to provide customs for import duties. The Indirect Rule system spread to other parts of West Africa such as the Gold Coast and was adopted by the British officials “first as a useful administrative device, then that of a political doctrine and finally of a religious dogma” (Kirk-Greene, 1968). Indirect Rule was also concerned with introducing reforms in the various domains such as economy, taxation, education and justice.

3.2 The Main Reforms

3.2.1 Economic Reforms

For the sake of consolidating their colonial rule, the British imposed a new economic regime through which they introduced many changes. The first step was to develop the means of

communication and transport. Thus, in order to make the North accessible to the South and to develop its commerce, the colonial government started the construction of the railways. The first railway was constructed in 1906 from Baro port to Kano (Robert, 1986). By 1911, another railway was built from Kano to Lagos. Two other important lines were established in 1926, one from Kano to Port Harcourt and the other from Lagos to Kano. Second, the colonial government encouraged Hausa farmers to supplant the American variety of cotton called Allens Long Staple. As a result, the import of cotton goods witnessed an increase between 1905 and 1913. Groundnuts were also cultivated in large quantities and the export reached 20,000 tons in 1913 instead of only 2,000 tons in 1911 (Robert, 1986).

3.2.2 Fiscal Reforms

The system of taxation which had existed during the era of the Caliphate was not ended with the advent of the British; instead it was developed and became an essential feature of the British administration. Lugard, who believed that taxation was the main source of revenue, did not find problems in imposing his direct tax on peoples who were already accustomed to pay taxes. His emphasis on taxation was well explained when he declared in 1906 its importance:

“There is no civilized state in the world where direct taxation had not been found to be a necessity; and African communities which aspire to be regarded as civilized must share the common burden of civilization” (Crowder, 1962:206).

After studying the old system of taxation, Lugard found it complex and unsuitable to his colonial needs. He then replaced it by one tax for the sake of simplifying its collection. Part of this tax was given to the emirs and his councils, whereas what remained was given to the Colonial government. In 1906 and under the Native Revenue Proclamation, the collection of religious taxes such as Zakat was forbidden. Despite opposition from Muslims to such an action, their claims were never taken into consideration by the colonial government.

At the beginning of the imposition of the British tax, money was neither controlled nor accounted by the residents, but later on that is after Lugard left Nigeria, the Native Treasuries were created by his successor H.R Palmer between 1906 and 1911 (Robert, 1986). Under the Native Treasuries, the kind and sum of taxes imposed was the work of the colonial administration. Thus, fixed salaries were given to the emirs and their functionaries, and what remained, was used for satisfying public needs. It was not until 1911 that the Native Treasury

system became official. Six years later, the number of the Native Treasuries in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria reached 50 and their revenue was about £441.000 (Kirk-Greene, 1968).

3.2.3 Educational Reforms

Since Islam preceded Christianity and Muslim education had already a developed system and a strong position inherited by the Caliphate, the colonial government could never ignore such education. Thus, although Lugard had favoured Christian education, he was very careful in imposing it on the Muslim territories. This attitude was the result of many reasons. The main one was the Satiru Revolt of 1906 which taught Lugard that minimal intervention was the best way to avoid such reaction. Besides this, the British did not want to repeat what happened in the South as a consequence of Western education where a group of educated elite challenged British presence.

So for the sake of preserving order and in addition to the maintenance of Islamic schools, the British restricted the work of the missionaries in the Muslim areas. They also established schools for the sons of chiefs to win their confidence. The first school was set up at Kano in 1909 with native teachers under European supervision. In fact, wealthy parents preferred to send their children to one of the 101 Quranic schools which existed at that time (King, 2016).

Unfortunately, what happened was that these schools could not receive the same popularity as the Quranic schools. In 1913, the number of children who attended Islamic schools was about 143.312 whereas it reached only 527 (Fafunwa, 1974) in government schools. For this reason, Lugard suggested a co-operation between the two schools. Under this co-operation, Islamic ideas were to be introduced into government schools. The same thing was proposed for Quranic schools where secular subjects were to be included. The result was also not satisfactory.

3.2.4 Judicial Reforms

As far as justice was concerned, the British, who preserved the Native and Alkalis courts, introduced many changes which affected the judicial system of the Caliphate. Under the Native Courts Proclamation of 1906 and the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914 (Tibenderana, 1988), the establishment of the Native Courts and the appointment of the alkalis was the work of the resident. The latter then, had power to modify or abolish decisions of the Native Courts. He was also able to dismiss any alkali or his judicial council who would not follow his advice.

Under British rule, all punishments which opposed British ideals of “natural justice and humanity” were abolished. These punishments which were excluded from the native courts included for instance mutilation of limbs which is a punishment for theft and blood money or

diya which is a punishment for murder. Such Islamic punishments were changed by others that compiled with the British principles. For example, imprisonment replaced mutilation of limbs and diya was also replaced by capital punishment.

In addition to the abolition of Islamic punishments, the British abolished the legal disabilities between slaves, non- Muslims and Muslims. Under the Islamic law of the Caliphate, evidence of a Muslim slave equaled half that of a free man .Whereas evidence of a non-Muslim had no value. This difference did not satisfy the British who obliged the Alkalis to enforce anti-Islamic judgements, a situation that affected a great deal the Islamic law and led to the increase in the number of crimes.

Despite the imposition of these reforms based on the Christian principles, which affected the Islamic society of the Sokoto Caliphate, what was not expected was that Islam continued to spread among non- Muslims. So the question which is raised here is how colonial rule aided the propagation of Islam?

4. The Spread of Islam

During the colonial era of Northern Nigeria, Islam witnessed a great expansion among the non-Muslim population. Such expansion was achieved by many factors which were provided by the colonial rule.

4.1 Persecution of the Non- Muslims

Prior to British occupation of Northern Nigeria, the Islamic model of the Caliphate was well consolidated. Besides this, non-Muslims who used to pay their tax to the Muslim authorities, managed their political affairs independently from them. Unfortunately, with the advent of the British, their situation was changed. This was mainly due to the imposition of the emirate model upon the whole protectorate, a situation that neglected the administration of the non- Muslims.

Lugard, who had financial problems, could not provide a direct administration for the whole protectorate. Thus, when imposing the emirate model, he did not take into consideration the religious consequences of such rule because he believed that since Islam was not a strong religion, it would disappear with time and what interested him at first was whatever served his colonial rule. This meant that a definite colonial policy towards non-Muslims did not exist.

Even under Lugard's successors, Girouad and Hesketh no change was made towards the situation of the non-Muslims, because both of them encouraged the imposition of the emirate

model upon them. In fact, the base of the Indirect Rule system which, persecuted the non-Muslim culture and helped the progress of Islam was the work of Lugard himself. Through the territorial reorganization of the emirates, he divided them into districts by appointing a district head for each. When so doing, the British undermined the non-Muslim culture. This was mainly because such policy implied the establishment of Muslim courts, mosques and the use of Arabic language or in other words the use of Muslim law.

Mr. W.R. Crocker, an administrative officer who carried out an investigation on the Kare-Kare peoples of the former Misau emirate, explained well the impact of British policy on the non-Muslims. With the advent of the British, the Kare-Kare, who had no paramount chief before, were brought under the emir of Misau. Besides this, under the division of this emirate into districts, a District head and a Muslim court were established for each. Under this Islamic pressure, the Kare-Kare was adjusted to the new changes and was brought into contact with the Muslims who treated them with such humanity that a great number of them were converted to Islam. In his report of 1934, Crocker said about the Kare-Kare:

“These institutions brought them into contact with a culture which they are not slow to recognise as superior to their own”. (Ubah, 1991:138).

This policy towards non-Muslims was applied until the advent of Donald Cameron as Governor of Nigeria (1931-1934). Under him, the question of the non-Muslim culture had been raised. For example, in the memorandum of March 1934, Cameron declared that “the question of the improved administration of pagans is most important in the Northern provinces today” (Ubah, 1991). Cameron who insisted on this point, warned the residents in the non-Muslim territories to make investigation in the system which prevailed before the advent of the British. When investigating the emirate of Gombe especially the Bolewa ethnic group, it was found that these people had lost their language and their religion had disappeared under the influence of Islam. Thus, Cameron, who was not satisfied with Lugard’s rule, especially the district system, wanted to improve the non-Muslim culture. Unfortunately, this new policy failed because non-Muslims were accustomed to the district system and many were converted to Islam and lost their old beliefs.

4.2 Restriction in the Missionaries’ Activities

Unlike other West African territories, Northern Nigeria, which was dominated by Muslims, represented an exceptional case in the activities of the Christian missions. The latter

who concentrated their work on the Muslim parts, were not allowed to penetrate freely there without the approval of the emirs. This was mainly because the British believed that since Islam preceded Christianity and had already been implemented in these territories, conversion to Christianity would not be an easy task. Thus, for the sake of preserving their colonial rule, British officials were ready to support Islam though it represented a real threat to Christianity. Besides this, they excluded missionaries from Muslim territories because they knew that conversion of pagans to Islam would not cause problems as their conversion to Christianity.

Christian missions who, were not satisfied with government attitude towards them, started to send petitions to it for establishing schools for the sons of the chiefs. As a response to their demands, the missions were allowed to open a first school for the sons of the chiefs in 1907. Unfortunately, the school failed because the missionaries started to interfere into the local affairs of the emirs and insisted on their will to convert their children. They also stressed the conversion of the pagans and obliged them to abandon their old beliefs and cults. When so doing, they did not succeed to convert the pagans who were attracted to Islam which did not require great demands in conversion. Such failure was well explained by the 1921 census in Illorin province where the number of Christians was only 1% whereas for Muslims it reached 33% (Trimingham, 1962).

4.3 New Economic Facilities

The new economic facilities which were brought by the colonial rule helped a great deal to the propagation of Islam. Under colonial rule and with the opening of trade routes, which were formerly closed, a new kind of migration developed due to the growth of towns. Young men then were attracted towards groundnut cultivations, mines and urbanised areas where they could have a better life. Such migration towards these coastal regions included both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Once in the foreign areas, non-Muslim emigrants, who felt themselves marginalized and isolated from their community, admired the Muslims who had always maintained their sense of solidarity and unity wherever they found themselves. This was mainly because Islam taught them to be united (Mukhtar, 2018). Thus, the situation of the emigrant obliged him to adhere to Islam. Besides this, since Muslims were the ones who monopolized trade and were responsible for the welfare of emigrants, they succeeded to attract non-Muslims whose relations with the Christians were not as good as those with the Muslims. In this way, non-Muslims were attracted to Islam

and they acted as Islamic agents when they returned to their homeland bringing with them this new religion (Guy, 1981).

It is clear that the main factors that helped a great deal to the propagation of Islam were provided by the colonial rule. When realising the positive impact of their administration, the British tried to stop such expansion by changing their attitudes towards non-Muslims. The result was disappointing because Islam continued to spread and the non-Muslim culture disappeared.

5. Conclusion

Unlike other West African territories, colonial rule in Northern Nigeria did not succeed to abolish Islam. Rather it facilitated its expansion in many ways. The British, who were afraid of creating disorder, were very careful in imposing their colonial regime upon those people who were already accustomed to the Islamic model. Besides this, while retaining the native structure, British officials believed that changes would take place gradually.

In fact, the introduction of Indirect Rule had resulted in the opposite of what was aimed at and the British, who were confronted with the real and striking consequence of their administration, tried to change their policy towards non-Muslims. Unfortunately, they failed because Islam had already established itself among the non-Muslims whose native culture disappeared. (Ukwandu, 2016) asserted that the policy of Indirect Rule had facilitated the rise of Islam and Quranic education in Northern Nigeria. Certainly, non-Muslims who adhered to Islam started to send their children to the Quranic schools. There is lack of evidence in the major documents about the number of children of newly converted parents who attended the Quranic schools. British educational policy in Northern Nigeria after 1940 can be the object of another paper.

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