

**THE ROLE OF KANEM BORNO ULAMA
IN QURANIC EDUCATION, BEFORE THE COLONIAL RULE
IN NIGERIA**

DR. KALLI ALKALI YUSUF GAZALI

AUGUST, 2014

Abstract:

The paper seeks to highlight the role of Kanem Borno Ulama in Qur'anic education in Nigeria, before the colonial rule. The interactions, contacts and relations between the Kanem Borno Ulama and other communities in Nigeria was facilitated by movements and migrations in various forms. The contacts and links had greatly played a remarkable role in the establishment of Centres of Islamic Scholarship in the present day Nigeria and beyond before the colonial rule. Hence, Kanem Borno Ulama played an important role in the propagation of the Islamic knowledge, especially Qur'anic Education in West Africa in particular and Africa in general.

(1) Introduction:

The Kanem Borno Ulama played a remarkable role in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and scholarship in West Africa in particular and Africa in general, before colonial era. Kanem Borno, as an acknowledged ancient Islamic polity for over one thousand years, has achieved great heights in scholarship and learning in the entire Central Sudan and beyond. The Kanem Borno Ulama travelled far and near to impart and pursue Islamic knowledge. The Ulama as traders, itinerant teachers, nomads, etc had over the centuries moved to other areas for various reasons, ranging from scholarship, commerce to warfare, or as nomads, etc. Generally, their (Ulama) presence has greatly contributed to Islamic propagation, teaching and learning in different parts of Nigeria, West Africa and Africa in general, especially, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Cameroon, Niger, Sierra Leon, Benin, etc.

(2) The Geographical Location of Kanem Borno Empire:

Kanem Borno, Geographically, Bilad al-Sudan, the land of the blacks, identified as Central Sudan, was described by writers and Arab geographers of the medieval times as areas stretching from Darfur in Sudan to Lake Chad region in the east and the great bend of River Niger and Western Coast of Atlantic Ocean. Kanem Borno therefore, geographically lies across the extended trade routes between Egypt and Bilad al-Sudan. The famous stable, peaceful, busiest, shortest and ancient, which stretches from North Africa to other parts of the continent of Africa. Specifically lies along the caravan routes from the heart of West Africa and Central Africa to Mecca. This position greatly contributed to its very strong and stable economic and commercial links to the great international trade networks. As a result of that Kanem Borno attracted an influx of diverse people with commercial, religious, scientific interests from far and near.

(3) The advent of Islam in Kanem Borno:

Islam registered its initial impact on the history of Kanem Borno after the conquest of North Africa by the muslim expedition under the leadership of Amir bn Al-as and Uqba bn Nafi in 665 and 666 AD respectively, as far as the Wadi Adraa and Sus in Southern Morocco. The further expedition under Amir Uqba bn Nafi to the interior of Africa in 666 as far as Fezzan and Kawar in Kanem. This marks not only the first

noticeable current of Islam in Kanem Borno but it further attracted the attention of more Muslim Traders, Scholars and Arab geographers to Kanem Borno as far back as the eight Century (8th C).

The fact that the trans-Sahara trade route was the most famous, heavily travelled, the shortest and most peaceful of all the Trans-Sahara routes, facilitated the immediate means through which the bearers of Islam reached, the people of Kanem Borno in particular and the Africa South of Sahara in general.

According to Doi (1984), “the State of Kanem Borno was very important since it was situated strategically in the Centres of the trans-Saharan trade routes. This was the trade route which enhanced early contact with the Muslim world of Tunisia, in far North West of Africa and Nubia on the middle Nile and Egypt in the North East of the Continent. Smith (1979) observed that by its very location in Africa and sharing same boarder with Egypt and most of North African Sultanates, Kanem Borno was bound to have come into closer contact with the rest of Africa as early as the birth of Islam. Smith (1979) further declared that the Trans Saharan Trade Routes provided a gateway through which Islam penetrated Kanem Borno throughout the rise of the Sayfawa Dynasty.

This strategic location has eventually formed a sound basis for the well established tradition and culture of not only political, commercial or social development, but also an Islamic society throughout the history of Bilad al-Sudan, Africa South of the Sahara. Clerk (1982) also viewed that Kanem Borno made its first contact with Islam through the trade links with Tripoli in North Africa via Kawar and Fezzan. It was these trade routes that provided the gateway for Islam to penetrate to Kanem Borno. The advent of Islam marked the emergence of Islamic scholarship and learning in Kanem Borno. Islam was brought to Kanem Borno by the Muslim nomads, Berber teachers and traders through the famous trans-Saharan trade routes. Islam as the religion of literary, knowledge and education, its spread, and propagation was possible only through teaching and learning process. Since the advent of Islam, a strong structure and character of Muslim Ummah was firmly established on the basis of knowledge, acquired through its ultimate sources, the Qur’an and Hadith.

(4) The Position of Knowledge in Islam:

The Holy Qur’an explicitly encourages the pursuit of knowledge and education as well as extols the value of learning from experience. The position of knowledge in Islam is so great that the very first divine command in the very first revelation was READ; and was revealed to an illiterate person. Qur’an Chapter 87 verse 1-5) “*says, Read in the name of Your Lord who created. He created man from a clot (of blood). Read and your Lord is Most Bountiful*”.

Allah, the Almighty, created worlds and human for a purpose as stipulated in the Holy Qur’an:

“I have only created jinn and mankind that they may serve Me” (chapter 31 verse 56).

Similarly, in Islam, the process of education started from the first man created on earth. Adam (AS) when Allah the Almighty taught him names of things, as the Holy Qur'an Chapter 2 verse 31 says:

“And he taught Adam the names of all things”.

This marks the first Islamic approach to human knowledge and education.

Generally, this suggests that the Holy Qur'an has the term and concept of education. The most well known names given to the revealed message are the Qur'an and the Kitab (Book). The Qur'an is derived from Kataba (wrote) hence both names are linked to educational concept.

The Holy Qur'an is a divinely revealed book of Allah, a guiding light and a book of knowledge for Muslims. The Qur'an was revealed to man to get educated follow the path of Allah, learn from its chapters and verses, its examples and observe Allah's commands. Qur'an Chapter 20 verse 123-127 says:

“But when there come unto you from Me a guidance, then who so followeth my guidance, he will not go astray nor come to grief”.

The Holy Qur'an is therefore the complete book of knowledge and the book of goodness.

The Prophet (PBUH) says the best between you is the one who studied the Qur'an and taught it to others” (Transmitted by Bukhari and Muslim).

The Holy Prophet further says, “Knowledge or wisdom is a lost property of a Muslim; he recovers it when he finds it”.

Islam therefore urges man to learn and continue to seek knowledge for the development and progress of mankind. Mankind is commanded to learn to get educated in order to know about his Creator (Allah), about His creation, including man himself and life as a whole both here in this world and hereafter. Islam enjoins good and forbid evil. Islam respects man as best creatures and encourages him to learn and gain knowledge. Allah, the Almighty created mankind to worship with the aid of knowledge. The glorious Qur'an States that:

“I have created jinns and mankind that they may serve me” Qur'an Chapter 51 verse 66.

Islam therefore clearly sanctifies knowledge and creates keenness for it among believers. Knowledge is not only recommended duty for a Muslim but its acquisition is also obligatory one for every faithful Muslim from the cradle to the grave.

(5) The Role of the Mai's (Rulers) in the Propagation of Islamic Education in Kanem Borno and Beyond:

The Mai (Rulers) of Kanem Borno maintained strengthened and developed a strong tradition of Islamic Education, through effective culture of scholarship and learning

throughout the caliphate and beyond. As observed by Sifawa (1991:9) ***“that Kanem Borno people recognised learning as the order of Islam and pursued it with vigour until, there emerged from among them scholars of high reputations”***. These scholars were to carry the challenge by passing Islamic learning and scholarship to other parts of Africa especially their immediate neighbours. Kanem Borno Scholars contributed to the development of both dominant and productive scholarship Sifawa (2007:94).

Historically, Islamic Scholarship and learning occupied the attention of the (Mais) Rulers. The Ulama (Mallamwa) were the teachers and scholars of the holy Qur’an, the Prophetic Hadiths, Sharia, etc. In Kanem Borno, Ulama were highly respected by the Rulership, the Mais, to encourage them to maintain the culture of Islamic scholarship and knowledge in the society. Ulama were granted Mahram, a grant in privilege exempting them from the services to the state, purposely for them to concentrate and preoccupied with teaching of the Qur’an and other Islamic sciences.

They were generally deemed models of proper social behaviour. Their habits of speech, dress and behaviour are accepted as the ideal by the Muslim Ummah. While the Mai (Rulers) tried to occupy and educate themselves to govern and administer according to Shariah. To achieve that, the Mais not only surrounded themselves with influential Ulamas but were entirely engaged in scholarship and learning, for the main purpose of acquiring knowledge.

The earlier rulers before Mai Umme Jilme were students under Mohammed bn Mani. Kanem Borno from Mai Bulu to Mai Arki, Mai Kadai Hauwami to Mai Humme Jilmi were fully engaged in scholarship and learning. Mai Bulu read with Muhammad bn Mani from Tabaraka to Nas. He gave the teacher fifty camels. Mai Arki read from Yasin to Nas and gave his teacher sixty camels Mustafa (1987:43).

Mai Humme Jilmi’s respect for knowledge, scholars and scholarship was immeasurable. His reign was characterised by a lot of Islamic propagation and missionary work. Mai Humme’s great gesture of granting *Mahram* to Ulama which attracted scholars and Ulama of international reputation from far and near to Kanem Borno. The grant of Mahram to Ulama served not only as privilege exempting Ulama from military service, tax and other state obligations but the mahram also served as reward and honour, protection, security and freedom to facilitate and strengthen the propagation and the spread of scholarship and learning.

Mai Ali Gaji in conformity with the long established tradition of the Mahram, which he granted to Ibn Abdul Quwata, a privileges of exemption from military service and taxation. Their family were given ***“the land of Marra, Kwolo and Miyo to the service of God and his Noble Prophet (PBUH) till the distant age of our descendants”*** (Alkali 2013:103). The Mai further ensure the future security of his declaration warning all his successors to adhere strictly to his order. ***“He who takes their goods and land which I have given them be my son or grandson or remotest descendants may God take from him his Kingdom and humble him in the dust before another”***. Alkali, 2013: 104.

The Mais considered the services rendered by the Ulama more important than the material value of the land. The Ulama who attended high status were given title of

Imam, Qadi, Wali, Shettima, Talib, Kanenndi etc for the encouragement of learning and to further bring the Ulama to the fore front of the state affairs.

The regular performance of pilgrimage by the earlier rulers of Borno made the Kanem Ulama took great interest in the field of Scholarship and learning within and outside. As a result, the Kanem Scholars soon became known to the Arab writers especially Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bn Ya'qub Al-Kanimi, Abu Mohammed Abdullahi Al-Barnawi, etc (Alkali 2013:54). By 12th Century, the Kanem Ulama had succeeded in establishing the position of influence in the Maghrib, Egypt and Arabia.

Kanem Borno by the 15th century had firmly established culture of Islamic scholarship tradition. Their scholars and Mais were known for their intellectual pursuits. Their posture for the search of knowledge, encouragement and patronage for scholarship, coupled with the interest and zeal in Islamic knowledge, was greatly recognised in the Muslim world. The Rulers had always created conducive atmosphere for scholars to pursue knowledge by granting Marham, facilitating and supporting the establishment of Mallamti settlements, as centres of learning, building of schools madrasas and hostels in Cairo, for advance studies; scholarship awards to Kanem Borno students to study abroad in the Al-azhar University. So important was their commitment to Islamic scholarship and learning that, by 1242, the Kanem Scholars established a Maliki Madrasa in Cairo (Alkali 2013:55) *“as described by Smith.... That learned men of Kanem in those days derived their academic traditions from the world of Sunni learning....”* Al-Maqrizi described the school as... *“this Maliki school was situated in the Hamam Al-Arish Quarter in the city of Cairo was built by the Kanimiyun”* Alkali, 2013:55.

The culture of visiting the Al-Azhar for scholarship by Kanem students continued up to 15th Century. By then most of the Malamti Sangaya settlements (Centres of learning) were occupied by products of Al-Azhar as teachers and scholars thereby attracting more people from all over. The Ulama who benefited from the above gesture was Sheikh Al-Amin El-Kanemi, a product of Al-Azhar University and founder of the El-Kanemi dynasty, who established a school with a mosque in Tripoli Marzuk in Libiya in the late 18th Century. He later founded a Qur'anic school at Ngala in Kanem Borno in present day Borno state, Ngala Local Government.

The four (4) renowned congregational mosques for prayers in Birni Ngazargamu were Garibiya under Sheikh Imam Muhammad Ajirami, Talusu under Sheikh Suramma, Iyamu under Karagawama and Duyamu under Ahmed Bultu. The intellectual activities and disputations in these mosques by the renowned and internationally recognized Ulama was equally rated as same as Qayrawan and Zaituna mosques in Maghrib. Due to the early contact and relationship of Kanem Borno Ulama with the Muslim world, Scholars have noticed the close similarity between the mode and style of memorization, recitation, orthography and writing of the Qur'an in Morocco, Algeria, Libiya and Tunisia with Kanem Borno.

The land given to Mallams carried different names such as: Mallamti, (the Mallam settlement) Goniri, Lamanti etc. In some cases Mallam settlements carried specific names of renown scholars e.g. Goni Damgari, Goni Bukarti, Shettima Kawuri, Goni Lawanti etc. therefore, the tradition of mahram and mallamti settlement facilitated the establishment of various malamti settlements, sangaya Qur'anic schools in towns and

villages in Kanem, Ngazargamu, Ngala, Dikwa, Ngurno, Lawanti fəlaiiya, Karasəram, Goniri Garuwa, yale Garuwa, Konduga, Machina, Ajiri, Kulum fardo, Maine, Ngudo Mairia, Damagaram, Diffa in present day Nigeri Republic. Logone, Mayo, Kanem in Chad Republic, Marwa, Garwa, Ngaudere, etc in Cameron and most city states in Hausa, Nupe and Yorubalands in the present day Nigeria.

These centres of learning attracted Ulama's from various parts of the Islamic world. The centres produced prominent, reputable and internationally recognised scholars who greatly contributed to the dissemination of knowledge in Kanem Borno and beyond. Renown Ulama like Sheikh Umar Masabarma (Gazali 2005:45) who was said to have been involved in propagation and dissemination of Islamic knowledge through his renown tafsir of the Qur'an.

(6) The Quranic School System in Kanem Borno:

The history of the establishment of the Quranic Education started since the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), through whom Quran was revealed to mankind and enjoined Muslims to read and study it. By 7th Century AD Mosque/Madarasa started to flourish in the Magriph. Prominent among the institutions for higher and advanced studies established in 670 were Qayrawan, Zaytuna etc.

Throughout the history of Quranic Education in Kanem Borno, the task of Educating the Society in Islamic doctrines, in accordance with the teaching of Quran, became the Sole responsibility of the Ulama (Malamwa). While the Mais (rulers) strongly encouraged Ulama, Scholars to establish centres of Islamic Education (Sangaya), which attracted various Scholars from within and outside Kanem Borno.

Sangaya Quranic School, is headed by the founder, who should be a learned, to the status of Sayinna or Goni. Teachers, Paramount and visiting Ulama, were also settled within the vicinity of the Sangaya, including both elementary and advanced level students.

The founder, as head of the intellectual Community, he presides over DARASĒ (reading circle) for advanced students, while his representative looked after the elementary and preliminary students. Their feeding and other basic needs were Solely the responsibility of the founder, the Mai (ruler) and the larger community, through the various forms of alms (Sada'a). In Borno tradition, each and every average household should prepare and send food, to the Sangaya, free of charge, for the sake of Allah. The Sangaya settlement also seriously and actively engaged in farming activities to supplement the efforts of the community. Normally the number of Moronji, is rendering to the heaps of ashes surrounded by elementary students reading during the night and early in the morning, with fire burning in the middle to give light for easy identification for their written wooden State. Gazali (2005: 103-104).

Generally, the firm foundation of the intellectual pursuit and strong culture of scholarship and learning was laid on a solid ground due to the activities of the Ulama and encouragement by the rulers.

Especially the Samno Mallamwabe, the annual conference of the renown Ulama from within and outside Kanem Borno. The Ulama gathered annually to deliberate and

discuss on various issues of common interest, presentation of books and papers written on various subjects. Adopt terms and terminologies to be used in Tafsir of the Quran and or disputations on various Islamic knowledge, etc. The appointment and conferment of titles to individual Ulama who excelled in knowledge of Quran/Tafsir, Jurisprudents etc, as Goni, Wali, Imam, Liman, Shettima etc. The tradition which is practice to date in many Mallamti settlements e.g. Kauwa settlement at Baga, Goni Sanda settlement at Lawanti Fəlaiya of Ngurno, Monguno Local Government to mention but a few.

(7) Movements and Migrations of Kanem Borno Ulama to Various Places in Nigeria and Beyond:

One of the significant factors which played a remarkable role in the propagation, growth and spread of Islamic Education in Nigeria and beyond was the movement and migrations of Ulama, who facilitated the establishment of different centres of Islamic Scholarship and learning in various places in Africa and present day Nigeria before the colonial rule.

The Ulama's migrations from one place to the other, on the account of natural disasters like draught, disease, flood or political oppressions, refuges due to wars, has contributed to spread of centres of Islamic Education in many places in Nigeria and beyond.

The earliest and mass migration of Kanem Borno Ulama to other parts of Africa dates back to 14thC (1392 – 1400) AD when the then ruler Mai Sultan bin Idris was said to have been forced by the Bulala, Wadai, Fezzan rebellion to move to Kaga from Kanem with large number of Ulama Alkali (178 – 101). Kanem Borno during the reign of Mai Biri bin Idris (1431) was forced by rebellion from Kaigama Mohammed Dalatu, and the crisis between Sultan Biri Kaliwama bn Dawud with his Waziri Nikale bn Ibrahim took a serious dimension which led to the mass migration of Ulama to places like Wadai, Bagirmi Sudan etc.

The gradual but continuous movements of the people of Kanem Borno to other places occurred during the reign of Mai Idris Alauma in 16th century due to conflicts and insecurity in the caliphate. Kanem Borno up to the time of Mai Ali bn Idris, Mai Mohammed Ibrahim bn Idris up to the period of Mai Umar bn Idris, the internal Security situation was aggravated by the involvement of some Ulama who preached openly against the Government as a result, Mai Umar took the most extreme and unfavourable attitude towards the Ulama, which made most of them to flee the Caliphate to West Africa in particular and to some parts of Nigeria.

The movement and the migration of the Kanem Borno Ulamas led to the establishment of centres of Islamic Education in Central Africa, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Eretria, Sierraleone, Ghana, Benin, Cotonou and various places in the present day Nigeria, especially Fombina, Adamawa, Hausa States, Nupe and Yorubalands.

(8) The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in Islamic Education in Fombina

The upper Benue valley Fombina region today known as Adamawa was a long trade partner of Kanem Borno. The Borno traders were engaged in trade of various items

including Ivory, and other goods from the Saharan region like salt, copper, Brass, Silver rings, bracelets from Murzuk in Libya, red woollen caps, woven cloth Turkey carpets etc, Adamu (1975:16).

By 17th and late 18th century, the state of Kanem Borno started to decline due to famine and Political anarchy which led to movement and migration towards Fombina region in search of food, peace and fertile land for Agriculture. This development necessitated the settlement of Kanem Borno people including Ulamas in Madagali, Budang, Gunjur, Uba, Sheboa, Hong, Song, Sarou, Belel, etc, for peace and favourable Agricultural activities and easy accessibility, Adeleye (1979:505).

The migration played a significant role in the foundation and development of centres of Islamic education in the Adamawa Fombina region. For example the Song Kanuri settlement at selomsowa established their renown Sangaya Quranic School (HUBBURDE), where strong culture of Islamic Scholarship and learning was firmly established. In Song town, the Kanem Borno Ulama constructed a mosque (JULURDE KOLERE) and Quranic Schools over Two Hundred and Thirty (230) years ago. Hammawa (1990:39). The above centres of Islamic education, not only succeeded in graduating qualified Scholars at various levels but the centres also organised Quranic recitation competition annually, attended by many Scholars during the Ramadan period. Participants came from places like Borno, Garwa, Ngaudere, etc.

Similarly, the influx of Kanem Borno Ulama especially the falata Borno the Ngara-en clan with the culture of Islamic scholarship and learning into Adamawa also intensified the efforts and more centres of Islamic education were established. The movement of Modibbo Adama, the LAMIBE of FOMBINA from Borno to Adamawa also facilitated the emergence of more Quranic Schools in Adamawa as described by Sa'ad (1977 : 8) ***“that Modibbo Adama stayed for ten (10) years in Borno studying book (DEFTE) before returning to the upper Benue valley”***. Modibbo's returned to Adamawa with large number of scholars has greatly contributed to Islamic scholarship and learning in Fombina.

By 1846 the then Lamido of Adamawa Modibbo Lawal appealed and requested the Shehu of Borno to assist and dispatch learned Ulama for prayer for peace and propagation of Islamic education in his domain. As a result, Shehu Umar sent a group of One Hundred (100) learned Kanuri Ulama from Borno to assist him. (Gazali 2007:11). The team of Scholars were mostly drawn from Konduga, Goniri Garuwa, Geidam, Ngurno, etc. After the conquest of Bagale with the assistance of the Borno Ulama. Lamido Lawan requested them to stay permanently in Fombina, the Ulama team under the leadership of Goni Gomboni were offered to settle under the foothills of Bagale to form not only another Kanuri settlement but the place became known as Wuro Dole (a forced settlement) and renown centre of Islamic scholarship and learning in Adamawa. Among the graduates from the centre were Goni Idrissa who later became Ulama of international repute. He established his own centre of learning which attracted Scholars from far and near. The centre organises annual Quranic recitation competition during the month of Ramadan. Scholars from Borno, Marwa, Sheboa, Gombe, etc. came to participate in the competition.

Modibbo Goni Mammadu also established his Islamic centre, which was rated as one of the renown centres of learning and graduated many Scholars in Adamawa and

beyond. While Goni Kawu, a Kanem Borno Ulama was said to have travelled extensively to various places to pursue and impart knowledge. He visited centres of Islamic knowledge in Wadai in Chad, Marwa in Cameroun etc. He later returned to Adamawa and continued teaching, where Scholars from Marwa, Garwa, Ngaudere, Adamawa, etc, came for teaching and learning.

In Jalingo Goni Muktar Al Barnawy was said to have migrated from Kukawa to the Fombina region. Goni Muktar migrated through Ganjuwa and played a host to the Emir of Muri, Lamido Mafindi. Who personally requested Goni Muktar to establish a Quranic School for teaching and learning in his domain. Goni Muktar constructed a mosque and Quranic School at his Mutum Biyu residence. The Islamic centre became famous and attracted Scholars and students all over, many have graduated from the centre in various fields of Islamic Sciences. Currently his descendent Goni Hussaini, Goni Al Barnawy, a 70 year old, is the head of the Islamic centre. Among those who graduated from the centre were Goni Kachalla Muri, Goni Sulaiman Durma, Sheikh Waziri Melle, Sheikh Mustafa Sulaiman etc.

In Kolere Abana along Mayo Nbullo (River Nbullo) Goni Musa Al Barnawy's Sangaya Quranic School was established, late 18th century. The School attracted students from Jada, Wuro Bappa, Rai, Ngaudere etc, for scholarship and learning.

Goni Musa Shehu with his brother Goni Ibrahim Al Barnawy later moved to Kochel Bole, and established another Sangaya Quranic School, for the propagation and development of Islamic Education in the area. The School later developed into large and outstanding Sangaya Quranic School with great number of teachers and students.

Generally, Hamidu Alkali (Gazali 2007 : 11) observed that the Kanem Borno Kanuri Ulama had greatly contributed to Islamic scholarship and learning in Fombina region, their remarkable role in the propagation, development and spread of Islamic Education was extended beyond Adamawa region. *The Kanuri Ulama group had the Islamic influence to dominate not only in Adamawa but other places like Garwa, Marwa, Ngaudere, Muri, Jada, Mutum Biyu* etc. Gazali (2007:12).

(9) Kanem Borno Ulama and their Role in Islamic Education in Hausa land

The kanem Borno Ulama moved and visited various places in the Hausa States as teachers and traders. Great number of them who had definite aim of propagating Islamic Education, took upon themselves to reach all nooks and crannies of central and Western Sudan to establish a firm culture of Islamic scholarship and learning.

The migration and settlement of the Kanuri Ulama, predates the movement of Capital of Kanem Borno to Gazargamo as rightly observed by Usman that (1981: 203) "Borno, Kano relationship had developed a powerful tradition of Islamic learning and active participation in public affairs long before the acceptance of Islam as the state religion in the area" In 14th century when Mai Idriss bn Nikale (342-66) was expelled by the Bulala accelerated crisis, he migrated and took refuge in Kano with his followers including Ulama's of high repute.

Similarly, Mai Sultan Usman bn Idriss (1388-89) known as Kadai Afuno, was also said to have migrated to Kano with large number of followers including the Ulama,

who later established various centres of Islamic Education in Kano. Between 1421 to 22, Mai Biri ibn Dawud was deposed by his Kaigama (Commander in Chief) Kaigama Nikale bn Ibrahim, Mai Biri was referred to as Dagachi (Minor Chief) Mai Biri migrated to Kano with large number of Ulama who later established Islamic centres. Later various people of Kanem Borno migrated and joined the earlier group as traders and Quranic teachers. Among them were Buduru, Koda, Dangaron Duma etc, Barkindo (1985:15).

The Kanem Borno Ulama settlers founded the Yan Doya ward in Kano city and established a Sangaya Quranic School which later became a large centre of Islamic Scholarship and learning. The leader of the group Goron Duma was not only a title holder in the Emirs Palace but also one of the ten (10) leading advisers of Sarki Kano. Sarkin Kano Abubakar Kado was said to have led. A shape at the house of Dan Goron Duma.

The Kanem Borno Ulama formed the core of the Kano religious establishment and served as respected guardians of the high Islamic culture, they were patronised and brought to forefront of the Islamic Education and Politics. Liman Yondoya Ulama of Borno origin was involved in bringing about end of the war between Kano and Katsina.

Similarly, another group Kanem Borno Ulama who migrated to Kano from Lagone, a renowned centre of Islamic Scholarship around (1565 to 1573). The group was led by Gesu and Mallam Sheriff. *Their arrival was also associated with increased Islamic Scholarship in Kano especially places like Gabari, Zangon Bari-Bari, Bakin zuwo etc.* (Gazali 2005:112).

(10) Islamic Scholarship and Learning in Zazzau and Katsina:

Zazzau has long history of contact and relations with Kanem Borno not only based on a fair representation of the Kanuri elements in their political establishment, but some identified Ulama immigrants of Kanem Borno origin were said to have established centres of Islamic Education in Zaria.

Despite the three officials of Borno origin in the Zazzau palace, the Bakon Borno, (Guest of Borno representing the Mai of Borno) the magajin Mallam and Kadala family. There was the Sheikh Ya Musa family renown Ulama of Kanem Borno origin. They were known to have been devoted to the caring of their Sangaya Schools and Mosques. They were said to have played a host to most of the Kanem Borno Ulama immigrants on transit to other parts of Nigeria. Especially the Ulama who migrated from Borno and passed through Zaria to Nupe and Yorulands. Sheikh Ya Musa Islamic centre graduated great number of Scholars throughout the Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba lands.

Katsina was one of the states in Hausa land where the Ulama of Kanem Borno played a remarkable role in establishing a long culture of Islamic Scholarship and learning. Especially the contribution of Wali Abu Abdallah Muhammad bn Masani bn Muhammad bn Nur Al Barnawy Al Katsinawy a 17th Century (1590 – 1607) Ulama of Borno origin in Katsina. The Kanem Borno Ulama in Katsina formed the four (4)

major renown centres of Islamic Education. The Masanawa, Gafai, Tsohuwar Kasuwa/Gambarawa and Mai Adua'a Usman (1981:205-207).

The Mallaman Masanawa, were the descendants of Wali Abu Abdullah Al Barnawi in the Masanawa quarters Katsina, where their age long Islamic centre, mosque and residences of their illustrious ancestors still exist. They were known and acknowledged to have greatly contributed to Islamic Scholarship and learning in Katsina as far back as 17th century. They were said to have some contact with Shehu Usman Dan fodio due partly to their Islamic influence and intellectual leadership in the region.

The Mallaman Tsohuwar Kasuwa, was also settlement of Ulama of Kanem Borno origin in Katsina. The prominent among them were Mallam Usman Al-Barnawy and his son Mallam Ladan Al-Barnawy. They both have established a great reputation as Scholars. Their centre of learning not only attracted large number students and scholars but the Islamic centres had produced great Scholars of high calibre, who also established their respective Islamic centres elsewhere.

To the south and east of Katsina, were Sangaya Quranic School established by Kanem Borno Ulama, at Bade, Dan Ashita, Dan Yanuka, Dallaji etc. In Dallaji Sheikh Mustafa Al-Barnawy, a recognised Ulama and a Scholar of international repute, was said to have taught at Yandoto, Usman (1981:17-5). While his son Mallam Usman Al Barnawy travelled far and wide, engaged in Islamic Scholarship and learning in many places on the account of long and short termed visit to centres of Islamic Education. Mallam Usman was said to have greatly contributed in mobilizing a support for the Sokoto Jihad, from Katsina Kingdom.

(11) The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in the Spread and Propagation of Islamic Education in Sokoto:

In the late 18th century, a group of 200 Kanem Borno indigenes including Ulama migrated and settled at Gummi, a small town on Zamfara River. Their presence had influenced the culture of Islamic Education in the area before the Sokoto Jihad. They were said to have had access to the muslim camp during the Sokoto Jihad, through their leader, Dan toga, a foreign minister to the Gummi ruler. Love joy (1980:77). The group later moved to SIFAWA and established a centre of Quranic studies, where Sheikh Usman Dan fodio was said to have studied Quran for a period of time, Sifawa (1991:7).

Similarly, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fallati, Al-Bakari and Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Barnawy were said to have taught both *Sheikh Usman Dan fodio and Sheikh Abdullahi Dan fodio respectively*. Shehu (1981:55).

(12) Islamic Scholarship and Learning in Lafia:

Lafia is a settlement founded by emigrants from Kanem Borno. Descendants of the SIFAWA DYNASTY, majority of the group including the rulers constituted a group of learned Ulama of high recognition, Mai Dunama the founder and his close associates like Madaki Dibi, Zanna Bussami, Dalatu, Kwayam, Laminu, Wamba, Magaji etc, founded and established influential houses and centres of Quranic Studies,

which greatly contributed to the propagation, development and spread of Islamic teaching in the area, including: *Nasarawa, Egon, Akwang, Makurdi, Gidan waya, Kurgumi, Shendam, Keana, Obi, Doma etc.* Gazali (2005:121).

(13) Islamic Scholarship and Learning in the NupeLand:

The trade contact between the Nupe land and Kanem Borno dates back to 16th century. The geographical and strategic location of the Nupeland facilitated the earliest Islamic influence through the Muslim merchants from Kanem Borno and other parts of the North. Naclitcal (1971) observed that Kanem Borno traders carried to the South items from Wadai and Cairo, which includes cotton, glass, beads etc. Later in 17th century people of Kanem Borno origin migrated to Kutigi in Nupe land, after the long reign of Mai Ali bn Dunama, who was said to have led an expedition to Mandara and lost the battle, eventually most of the intelligent Ulama were killed. His son Maina Ibrahim bn Ali Dunama migrated to Kutigi, after he lost the throne of ruler-ship to his brother Mora (1989:40). Their settlement in Kutigi town marks the establishment of centres of Islamic Education in the area. *It was One Hundred years (100) after Kutigi was founded, when the Fulani hegemony established their rule in Bida with Etsu Usman Zaki as ruler in (1832-1841)* (Gazali 2007:14).

In the process, the Kanem Borno Ulama greatly contributed to Islamic Education not only in Kutigi but other places in the Nupeland, including: Enagi, Lapai, Bida, Kagara, Kontagora, Borgu etc. The Kanuri Ulama established various centres of Islamic Education in Kutigi town, especially the palace of the Zonnuwa where a mosque and a Quranic Sangaya Schools were established, for the purpose of teaching and learning. The Chief Imam, Islamic centre greatly contributed to Islamic teaching and learning in Kutigi town.

The centre graduated great number of people in various fields Islamic Sciences. The Kutigi Chief Imam Islam is Centre was established by Goni Muhammad bn Abdullahi Al Barnawy. The School excelled not only in Quranic studies but other subjects like Fiqh, Nahau, Tafsir, Hadith, Injillah etc. *The centre attracted Scholars from Nupe land and beyond.* Gazali (2005:142-154).

(14) The Islamic Centres at Lapai, Borgu and Bida:

Goni Mala Al Barnawy and Goni Adam Rone Al Barnawy, established Sangaya Quranic Schools, first on arrival at the outskirts of Lapai town. Consequently due to their activities and teaching experience in Quranic Studies coupled with their revolutionary zeal on Islamic propagation. The ruler granted them express permission to establish more Islamic Centres and appointed the leader of the group as Chief Imam to lead the congregational prayers. *The centre produced prominent Scholars who established centres of Islamic Education. Among them include Sheikh Abubakar, Sheikh Sulaiman Mokwa, Sheikh Bako Kutigi, Sheikh Ali Enagi etc.* Gazali (2005:156-163).

In Borgu and Bida the family of Sheikh Abdullah bn Muhammad Al-Turkummani Al Barnawy, first settled at Borgu and later moved with his followers to Bida. A renowned Ulama of high repute, on arrival, Sheikh Abdullah constructed a mosque and a school for Islamic teaching and learning. The school taught both Quran and other basic

principles of Islam, while children were taught rudimentary and basic teaching of Islam. *Sheikh Abdullahi taught in many places in Hausaland, especially, Zaria where he stayed with Sheikh Magaji Isiaka and Sheikh Na Iya. He was in Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Gwandu, Kontagora, Yauri, Daura, Lagos, Ibadan, Benin etc.* Gazali (2005:165-166).

After the death of Sheikh Abdullah Al Barnawi, his son and successor Sheikh Waziri Mamman Bida bn Abdullahi bn Muhammad Al Turkummani Al Barnawy, took over the teaching and propagation of Islam. Sheikh Waziri Mamman Al Barnawy well raised and a great Scholar of high respect, he excelled in many Islamic Sciences and Studied both at home and the Arab world. Waziri remained famous Scholar in Hausa, Nupe and Yorubalands. He wrote over One Hundred (100) books. His intellectual activities did not only contributed to effective, Islamic Scholarship but also made a remarkable impact on his students like Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al Illuri. Who described him as **“the greatest Scholar/Preacher in Nigeria and continued.** Indeed, I started preaching writing without any guide. *I started by composing letters and poems My model in this regard was Alhaji Muhammad bn Abdullah Al Barnawy the Waziri Bida”* Musa (1994:6).

Sheikh Waziri Bida Al-Barnawy taught many students, who became erudite Scholars, Specialised in various fields of Islamic Sciences. Prominent among them were Sheikh Adam Al Illuri, Sheikh Yahaya Jibril the Qadi of Kutigi, Sheikh Yunusa Kenji, Sheikh Ahmed Rufa’i, Sheikh Haruna Gaga of Ibadan, Sheikh Lalemi, the Chief Imam of Lalemi mosque etc. Some of his students established Islamic Centres in places like Efu, Islamic centre founded by Nda Goni, Sheikh Nda Kolo established his school at Bida central, Mallam Ba Goni established his Quranic School at Kabari Gudu Bida, etc. Sheikh Waziri Mamman Al Barnawy taught in Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Bida, Zaria, Katsina etc. One of his students Sheikh Ahmed Rufa’i described him as **“Rare gift from Allah”**

Sheikh Rufa’i described him as: “He went deep into the Science of Islamic jurisprudence and its branches, so as was he in the Science of Quranic recitation and was genius in Science of exegesis. His qualities are so many, that I am unable to enumerate them all” Muse (1997:54).

(15) The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in Islamic Education in Yorubaland:

The early trade contact between Kanem Borno and Yorubaland has facilitated the acceptance of Islam and establishment of Islamic Scholarship and learning in the Yorubaland. By 17th century, immigrants from Borno have settled and greatly contributed to the Islamization and spread of Islamic knowledge in many places. *They established centres of Islamic Education in Ilorin, Ibadan, Lagos, Ilaro, Iboro, Ibese etc.* Gazali (2005:175).

In Ilorin, the Kanem Borno Ulama families of Sheikh Mustafa bn Abdullah bn Muhammad Al-Turkumani Al-Barnawy, Sheikh Imam Matase Al-Barnawy, Sheikh Anaagun, Sheikh Kabara Al-Barnawy etc.

The Soro Islamic centre in Ilorin, was founded by Sheikh Mustafa bn Muhammad Al-Turkumani Al-Barnawi. A teacher, Prolific writer, Preacher, a Linguistic Prowess as

manifested by his ability to teach and preach in Six different languages viz Kanuri, Hausa, Fulfude, Yoruba, Nupe and Dindu. His literary works were in Tafsir of the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic Grammar etc. His students came from Ilorin, Oyo, Bida, Lagos, Ibadan, Benin, Togo, Gwanja, Upper Volta, Niger, Ivory-cost etc.

The teaching learning process has been the profile of the Soro Islamic centre. Their zeal in Islamic Propagation, was specifically motivated by their age long poem, inherited from their forefathers:- ***“We the sons of Al-Barnawy (Kanuri of Borno) are people endowed with piety, punity and generosity in Islamic teaching and learning. Transforming darkness of ignorance to light of knowledge.”*** Gazali (2005:215).

The Sheikh Kabara family, was the desendent of Sheikh Adam bn Alim Umar bn Dunama Al-Barnawi. ***The writer of the dated Dala ilu Khairati, written in Kulum Fardo, on a Friday (1184 AH): Gazali (2005:192). The Kabara family moved and settled at Oke Suna, a popular settlement of Ulama of Kanem Borno origin in Ilorin: Gazali (2005:191).*** They taught and graduated Scholars from various places in different fields of Islamic Sciences, e.g. Quranic Studies, Fiqh, Jurisprudence, Tafsir, Arabic Grammar etc. The family is centre education was engaged in the culture of Scholarship and learning before the reign of the first ruler of Ilorin Sheikh Alimi. Among the renown Scholars who graduated from the school include: the Imam Ita Kudimo, Sheikh Amsa, Imam Jamiu Ile Ogba, Sheikh Yakubu, Sheikh Alfa Iliya Abuke Abikan the Chief Imam of Masallachi Kokorokan, Sheikh Alfa Sahbal Alakin who taught the Tafsir of the Quran and Arabic Grammar to mention but a few. Most of the Scholars who graduated from the Kabara Islamic centre have established various centres of learning in their respective places.

In Iseyin the Kanem Borno Ulama established Quranic Schools in 17th century. Among the Ulama emigrant, were the Alaaso, Agbaje (Agbaji) Sheriff Abba Aji, Al Barnawy, Yunusa Al Barnawy, Saware Al Barnawy, Kanaki Al Barnawy etc.

The Alaaso community under the leadership of Sheikh Muhammad Mustafa Al Barnawy constructed a mosque and a Quranic school in 17th century, for the purpose of teaching and learning of the Quran. As described by Olayiwola (1995:44) ***“One of the peculiar and attractive features of the Kanuri Alaaso community in Iseyin, was in the field of Quranic studies not only in Iseyin town but in the whole of the Yorubaland.”*** Products of the centre have excelled in various fields of Islamic Sciences, some were lectures in the Universities of Lagos, Ilorin, Ibadan, etc. While some have established their respective Islamic centres in places like Benin, Ogbomosho, Abeokuta, Ilorin, Oyo, Iseyin etc. Prominent among them were Imam Olukuta, Imam Lajori of Oke Ola, Imam Audul Rasheed Olukuta etc. The community reconstructed their mosque in 1805 after One Hundred (100) years (2005:209-201).

The Alfa Sheriff Abba Aji Quranic School was established in 18th century in Iesyin, The Islamic centre has graduated a number of renown Islamic Scholars, who have greatly contributed to the propagation, development and spread of Islamic Education in Nupe and Yorubalands. Sheikh Alimi the founder of the Ilorin Emirate was said to have studied and graduated from the centre.

In Oyo, Ibadan and Lagos Alfa Usman Al Barnawy, the Chief Imam of the Alaafin of Oyo's Palace, established his centre of Islamic Education in 18th century, the centre taught and graduated many Scholars, prominent among them were Alfa Imam Jimoh of fiditi, Alfa Bisiriyu of Ilaro etc, their disciples and descendants have founded centres of learning in Oyo, Ibadan, Lagos, Ilorin etc.

Alfa Imam Zakariya Al-Barnawy of Ibadan and Imam Nafi'u Gana Al-Barnawy of Lagos Tinubu central Mosque, have established centres of Islamic Education in Ibadan and Lagos respectively. The Ibadan Islamic centre was founded by Alfa Ibrahim bn Ahmed Zakariya Al-Barnawy in (1871) at Alapafiya Ile Alfa Oke Seni Ibadan. Over the years , the School has grown to become large centre of Islamic Education where various Islamic courses were taught ranging from Quranic studies to Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, Arabic Grammar etc. The centre has graduated many prominent Scholars in Ibadan and other places in the Yoruba land.

The Chief Imam of Lagos, Imam Nafiu Gana Islamic centre was established in 1775 as the first Friday congregational Mosque, which also became the first source of Islamic propagation centre in Lagos. The centre taught and graduated many Scholars from various places, especially immediate members of the family and students from Ibadan, Ilaro, Ibese, Iboro etc.

The Kanem Borno Ulama settlement in Ilaro was spear headed by Sheikh Musa Kannike Dunama who established and inaugurated Quranic School for Islamic learning in Ilaro (1860). His singular efforts has facilitated the consolidation, nurturing and spread of Culture of Islamic Scholarship and learning in Ilaro, Ajilete, Igna, Iboro, Ibese, Tpokia, Oke Odan, Itaegbe etc. Imam Musa Dunama Al-Barnawy, up to the period of Imam Dunama Musa II, who continued with the culture of Islamic Scholarship from 1929 to 1959, he was described by the Ilaro Mustim community during his 40th the year remembrance calendar as follows:-

- i. Son of who reads (the Quran) to win slaves;*
- ii. He who prays to win prizes;*
- iii. Son of Borno who sets the pace;*
- iv. The tall Lion, leader any day;*
- v. The great Lion who is able to intimate a thousand hunters..... Gazali (2005:245-246).*

Generally the history of Islam in Kanem Borno is synonymous to the history of establishment development and spread of Islamic Education in West Africa, present day Nigeria and Africa in general. The Islamic influence was the main historic event which dominated not only the Borno society, the whole of central Bilad Al Sudan but Borno Ulamas succeeded in establishing various centres of Islamic learning in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Sierraleone, Ghana, Cameroun, Benin, Chad, Burkina faso, etc, where Goni Ahmed Ngurduiyi, Goni Muhammad Gana, Goni Sale Zakariya, Goni Ammani, Goni Ngurama, Goni Maliki, established centres of learning in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. While Goni Mustapha Jalalainima of Mahal, Goni Dumdum of Kasala, Goni Balumi of Sifawa, etc, established centres of Islamic Education in Sudan.

In Sierraleone Goni Isa Umar Al-Barnawy established a renown centre of Islamic Education, while Goni sale Zakariya was in Ethiopia, Eretria and Egypt, where he taught for over nine (9) years respectively.

Among them, Goni Ahmed Ngurdiyi of Sudan and later Saudi Arabia was described by his student Goni Mahmud Gana in his letter of condolence to the family as follows:-

- **Afterward, the intent of this verse is to bewail our lost patient Scholar.**
- **Ahmad, the sea of knowledge of his time its drink is guidance for youths.**
- **Verily, broke the glass of lamp, locked the house without a Key.**
- **Extinguished the light in the darkness. Aboured differences like grasses.**
- **The great tragedy that occurred. Hearts of all Scholars fell apart : Gazali (2005 : 53).**

In conclusion, the secret of the success of Kanem Borno Ulama in the propagation, development and spread of centres of Islamic Education in Nigeria and beyond, before the Colonial rule, was due to various reasons. Ranging from continuity, maintenance of the structure and organization of the School system, discipline, strict compliance with hierarchy of leadership, the culture of the maintenance of peace and peaceful coexistence with their host communities etc. These in addition to the intellectual leadership and knowledge displayed by the Kanem Borno Ulama in the places they settled, made them to record a great success. These qualities also endeared them to the rulers of their time in the communities where they played a host. E.g. Sheikh Mamman Rone of Lapai was personally invited by Emir of Lapai and appointed him as a teacher and Chief Imam of congregational prayer Lapai. The Etsu Nupe Saidu bn Mamudu appointed Sheikh Waziri Mamman Bida as Waziri and Chief Judge, Sheikh Alfa Usman Al-Barnawy was engaged by the Alaafin of Oyo as a teacher and Chief Imam of the Palace. Imam Nafiu Gana of Lagos was appointed as teacher and Chief Imam by Oba Adeleye of Lagos. Sheikh Musa Kanaki Dunama Al-Barnawy was invited by the Oba Tella Agbenuaran I in 1857 to 1879 and became the Chief Imam of Ilaro. The Kanem Borno Kanuri Ulama have greatly contributed to Islamic Scholarship and learning in Nigeria before the Colonial rule and up to the present date. Through the renown age long effective Sangaya Quranic School system.

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