

A STUDY OF INTER-GROUP RELATIONS BETWEEN THE HAUSAS AND IGALA IN THE ADVENT OF ISLAM IN IGALA LAND (1900-2000). KOGI STATE. NIGERIA

Haruna, Muhammad Rabiu

Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, Faculty of Arts and Humanities,
Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi – Nigeria

Abstract

The paper is the study of inter-group relations amongst the Hausas and Igala people in the advent of Islam in Igalaland (1900-2000) Kogi State, Nigeria. The main objective of the work is to study the phenomenon of inter-ethnic contact between the Hausa and the Igala ethnic groups in Igala land, Kogi State. In this paper, studies have shown that the establishment of Hausa Community in Igalaland did not experience violence inter-ethnic conflict, this was due to the peculiar nature of the inter-ethnic relations between the two groups as well longer period of contact, Historically, Nigeria ethnic groups had achieved a high level of integration prior to the colonial conquests. it also looked at Igalaland in perspective, Kogi State at glance. Hausa Muslims community in Igalaland as well as their roles played in the spread of Islam in the religion were elucidated judiciously, conclusion were also made, historical and analytical methods was used, findings so far asserts that the rise of party politics had effect on the social structure of Hausa Muslim community in Igala land. First it brought Igala and Hausa people together in political activities and social interaction such as meetings, negotiation, campaigns etc .

Key Words: Migration, settlements, trade, intergroup, relations, integration.

Introduction

Islam is a religion which specifically aimed at human progress and shows the proper way of life in a number of commands and prohibitions covering every aspect of man's daily life, his social life and politics as well as his mind and spirit (Pickthals 5). A believer is therefore called a *Mu'min* meaning one who has come into peace or security because he/she has accepted the principles which brings about peace of mind or security from fear, while the practical includes all that a Muslim is required to do physically which include *salat, fasting, zakat, Hajj and Jihad* (Jibril 3).

The history of Islam in Nigeria has attracted much attention from the Northern and South-Western parts of Nigeria with few attentions on the south-east and south of Nigeria (Abdulrazaq 1).

Moreover, in-group relations are assuming an important area of study in Nigeria historiography with particular reference to Igalaland. This work is a study of the inter-group relations between Hausa and Igala in the advent of Islam in Igalaland (1900-2000). This study is intended to understand the

consequences of the migration and contact between the Hausa people and their Igala host in Igalaland. Consequently, history of inter-ethnic contact in pre-colonial Nigeria have shown that diversity of culture and ethnicity have not always led to conflict. People had found common grounds to resolve their groups' differences when they came into contact with one another (Abdulwahab 253).

The problem of inter-ethnic conflict has been the bane of modern nations. Some writers believed that problems arise from contact between people that have linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity. Professor Onwuajeogwu observes that:

The fact that there are over 300 ethnic groups in Nigeria makes it a unique grotesque instance of a country that suffers from hype-ethnic instability syndrome.
(Onwuejewu 87)

Islam is the system that governed the entire aspects of human activities. It also aimed at establishing righteous individual's families' virtues, just state and a prosperous universal brotherhood of mankind. It is

meant to be a universal system application and suitable to all time, people and place (Adamu 268).

Igala land in Perspective.

Igala land (ane'Igala) refers to the territory where the people speaking Igala language are numerically and culturally dominant and whose common political identity dates back to the early 17th century. It is located in the eastern part of Kogi State, Nigeria, lying approximately between latitude 6° 30' and 8° 00' North, and longitude 7° 40' East. The land mass is about 13,665.61 square kilometres (Edimeh, 1).

Similarly, Igala land is located at the angle formed by the River Niger and Benue at the right-hand side of the confluence of the two rivers. However, the area of the land is about 160 kilometres long and overall area of about 1,920 square kilometres (Okwoli 2, 1). In other words, the land is located on the eastern region of Kogi State, bordered on the North by Benue and Aoko in Nassarawa State, on the west by River Niger, on the East by Enugu State and on the South by Anambra State respectively (Egbunu 7).

Geographically, Igala land enjoys homogenous landscape. The entire area is watered by the two great rivers, namely the Niger and Benue, and their tributaries. The tributaries in the land include the Anambra, Ofu, Okura, Owe, Ubele, Bagana and Omala. From ancient times, these two great rivers provided a means of communication and transportation. The major river ports include the followings: Idah/Itobe, Gbobe/Shintaku and Bagana, during the early years of the British colonial administration (Okwoli4).

Its Eastern limit, touched Idoma land while on the West lies the river Niger skirted on both sides by the two great water ways, the Niger and Benue. Igala land occupied a strategic position which not only connected with many peoples like the Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Bassa, Nupe, Jukun, and Europeans, but also enabled it to dominate the socio-economic affairs on these rivers for centuries (Boston 1). The constituencies in Igala land are:

1. Idah/Ofu/Ibaji-IgalaMela-Odolu
2. Bassa/Dekina
3. Ankpa/Olamaboro/Omala (Usman, 13)

The communities are organized according to family steads (Egbunu/ 21). The major Igala towns include:-

1. Ankpa, Anyigba and Idah

The word Ankpa stands for so many socio-political reference points. Today, we have Ankpa zone which also covers three local governments of Ankpa,

Olamaboro and -Omala. AnkpaTownship and adjoining villages which sprawled on the undulating land from the village of the Anambara (Imabolo) river up to the top of the west-ward hill which terminates around Angwa.Ogebe, and Opulega areas are also covered. Omala lies to the North while Olamaboro lies to the South of Ankpa. To the West, Ankpa has boundaries with Dekina as well as parts of eastern Ofu local government.

Anyigba;it is very difficult to say precisely the actual meaning of Anyigba. However, Gbobe's writing on *Umar Muhammad Imam Anyigba Portrait of a Muslim Leader*, states that, there are two versions as regards to the real meaning of Anyigba, the first version says, one of the earliest settlers in the area had an Igbo slave called "Anyi" who swept the courtyard while he (the -master) was away. When he returned, he was impressed by the clean environment and asked who did the fine job and the respond was 'Anyigbaya', (Anyi swept it) From that period the place was christened 'Anyigba', It therefore, means Anyigba is a contraction of 'Anyi' and 'gba (Ada 2).

Idah is an ancient metropolitan town located in the present day Kogi State, Nigeria. It's also an old river port town, lies on a sand stone cliff on the East bank of the River Niger in the North central (middle birth) region of the country on the globe, Idah Local Council Area with headquarters at Idah coordinates 7° 05' N 6° 45' E/7.0830 N 6. 750° at an attitude of approximately 62 metres. It has commercial routes on the river Niger linking Lokoja through to the North of the country, Onitsha in Anambra State, to the south, and Aganebode in Edo State across the Niger with the aid of ferry service to the West. Roads from the town lead to Nsukka and Anyigba as well (Ada 2).

The high cliff on which Idah was positioned and which was the highest point along the Niger made it impossible for *riparian* invaders to penetrate and make surprise attacks. This contributed to the concentration of the people of the area. In 1833, Oldfield had claimed that nearly 15,000 people assembled at Idah for the Ocho (hunting) festival (Oldfield 230)

Idah remained the cultural headquarters of Igala land and the political capital of Idah local government Area. In 1968 Igala land was spilt into three administrative units for the sake of conveniences. The units Idah, Ankpa and Dekina were administered as local governments, later in 1976, Dekina division was spilt into Dekina and Bassa local government areas were crapped out of Ankpa while Ofu was carved out of Idah thereby bringing the total number

of local government areas in Igala land to six and up to eight currently now (Usman 2).

Kogi State at Glance

Kogi State at glance was created on 27th August, 1991 by General Ibrahim Babangida's administration. The State falls in the North Central geo-political zone. Its capital is the confluence town of Lokoja, a rocky town, the first capital of Northern Nigeria by Lord Lugard's administration .(Jimba 3). Kogi State is found in central region of Nigeria, it is popularly called the Confluence State because the meeting of River Niger and River Benue and its capital, Lokoja, which is the first administrative capital of Nigeria (Usman 2).

The State was created in 1991 from parts of Kwara and Benue States. The State as presently constituted, comprises the people of the defunct Kabba province of Northern Nigeria. Furthermore, there are three main ethnic groups and languages in Kogi State. Igala as the majority, Ebira and Okun (part of Yoruba). Other minorities like Basa, a small fraction of Nupe mainly in Lokoja, Gwari, Kakanda, Oworo people (similar to Yoruba), Ogorimagongo and Egan community under Lokoja local government area also found (Usman 2 and 3).

Kogi. State is located between longitude 5 018 E and 70 94 E; and latitudes 60 30' N and 80 42' N. It has a land area of approximately 28, 044 square kilometers. It is surrounded by ten other states and the Federal capital Territory (FCT) as follows; Niger State and FCT to the North Nasarawa State for the North East; Benue State in North East; Enugu State to the South East; Anambra State to the South; Edo, Ondo and Ekiti States to the South and South West; and Kwara State to the North-West respectively (Jimba 3).

The State is made up of three senatorial districts, namely, Kogi Central, Kogi East and Kogi West, which, are further divided into 21 local government areas (LGAs), as follows:

Senatorial Districts	LGAS	HEADQUARTERS
Kogi Central	Adavi	Ogaminana
	Ajaokuta	Adogo
	Okehi	Obamgede
	Okene	Okene
	Ogori–mangongo	Akpafa
	Ankpa	Ankpa
	Bassa	Oguma
	Dekina	Dekina
	Ibaji	Onyedega

Kogi East	Idah	Idah
	Igalamela/Odolu	Ajaka
	Ofu	Ugwolawo
	Olamaboro	Okpo
	Omala	Abejukolo
Kogi West	Ijumu	Lyara
	Kabba	Kabba
	Lokoja	Lokoja
	Kogi	Kotonkarfe
	Mopamuro	Mopa
	Yagba East	Isanlu
	Yagta West	Odo - Ere

(Jimba 3)

The Advent of Islam in Igalaland

Islam was introduced to Igala land in the middle of the 15th century, during the reign of Ata-Ayegba Om' Idoko by group of Hausa Muslim migrants from Bebeji Kano State, who were invited to visit and join the Igala war of independent against the Jukun (Adegbe 7). On the other hand, Islam was introduced in the present Ankpa in Igala land in 14th century by Malam Abubakar, the Hausa Muslim Scholar from Kano State. From there Islam was sprung to various places within the Igalaland (Zakariyau 19).

Islam under the reign of HRM (Dr.) AliyuObaje who reigned between 2nd November 1956 - 15th July 2012 (Abdullahi M.S vii) became the religion of the rulers of the Igala kingdom, the royal chiefs, the elites of the merchants and the large majority of Igala people. An important aspect of Islam in the palace is the weekly morning and Friday prayer (salat) that Islamically performed in the palace under the close supervision of HRM Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Obaje and member of his councils. His Royal counselors and senior chiefs like Achadu Ata, Inalogu Ata, Akpa Ata, Akpochi, Amana Ata, AgenyiAyegba, OnuIdah, OnuEha, Odoma Ata, Ohiomogbolo, Odekinas-Ata and others are always in attendance with the chief Imam of Idah leading the Muslims scholars in prayers . “Indeed the first Igala contact with Islam was though the Hausa and Arab traders who visited the confluence and Igala hinter land markets”. (Adegbe 16).

Similarly, Ata Ayegba Om’Idoko during his reign extended official royal invitation to six Hausa Muslims from Bebeji in Kano State. These scholars were Malam Aliyu Adache, Malam Rufai, Malam Zakari, Malam Umoru and Malam Ali who were invited to assist in the procurement of Igala war of independence that was fought against the Jukuns in the middle of the 15th century that the Igala people

won the war through the help of the Muslims, thus, making Igalaland an independent kingdom. This victory made Ata Ayegba Om'idoko to be more receptive to Islam and the Muslims. And Islam has since then continued to spread peacefully in Igalaland to date.

When Idoko-Ayegba father came from Ife to defeat the last offspring of Ata AbutuEje a Jukun prince who came to Idah and defeated the Ata Atinolo, he engages the services of some Malams from Bebeji in Kano State; that happened in 1449 A.D. This was some 589 years ago, Islam became routed in Igalaland from that period". Another factor responsible for the speedy and steady growth of Islam in Igalaland was the presence of groups like Yoruba, Hausa Nupe, Ebira and Bassa-Nge in the kingdom following the outbreak of the Shaikh Usman Dan fodio great Jihad in 1804. His valiant efforts towards the revival of true Islamic practices actually aided the peaceful spread of Islam to a number of places like Igalaland, Auchi and major Yoruba towns near Ilorin. One other enduring major facilitator of peaceful spread of Islam in Igalaland was the coronation of His Royal Majesty Alh. Dr. AliyuObaje as the first Muslim Ata Igala in the history. His coming in 1956 has actually facilitated fertile groups for the Islamization of the kingdom Adegbe 23

In the same vein, his reign from 1956 to date can be described as good time for Islam and the Muslims. Islam the Religion of peace penetrated into Igalaland peacefully over six hundred years ago. The advent of Islam in Igalaland dealt a serious blow to the enemies of Islam that are the exponents of the spread of Islam through the use of force Oral dependable traditions and research findings by eminent scholars of Igala history revealed that Hausa Muslims traders from Northern Nigeria brought Islam to Igalaland. "Prior to the ascension of Ata Ayegba Om'Idoko to the throne of Ata Igala in 1449 A.D., some Muslims traders and a handful of itinerant Muslims scholars in search of fertile lands for the propagation of Islam were found in major towns in the kingdom"

Research findings by eminent scholars of Islamic history have revealed that the religion of peace (Al-Islam) had its first bath in Africa in the earliest period of Islamic revolution. The first Saudi African Muslim was Bilal bin Rabah an Ethiopian slave who travelled to Arabia in the last quarter of the 6th century. Bilal bin Rabah (R.A) was not only opportune to be the first African Muslim and companion of the prophet, but he was the first official mua'zin appointed by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) Another contact Islam had with Africa was the official letter of invitation to Islam sent by the

holy Prophet to the then king of Habasha (Abyssinia)-As Huma bin Abjar. Prior to this letter, about twelve men and four women among the Muslim faithful migrated to Abyssinia to seek refuge. This migration is considered to be the first political Asylum in human history (Adegbe 18).

"In the whole history of the world, there has been nothing comparable in the universe and immediate nature of its consequences with the expansion of Islam in the 7th century". The spread of Islam in North Africa in the 7th century paved the way for the islamization of the Barbers who in turn carried Islam to other parts of Africa. This was made possible through the activities of a group of pastoral Barbers known as Sanhaja. Towards the end of the 7th century, Muslims (from) Egypt and other part of North Africa could be found in many markets in West Africa. It was from Sudan that Islam came to Maiduguri in the Northern Nigeria through the same trans-Saharan trade routes. (Haruna 37).

Hausa Muslims Community Contact with Igala People in Kogi State

Contact between the Hausa Muslims and the Igala hosts was primarily based on religious and economic motives. One of the most paramount points to note about the Hausa Muslim migrants is that neither their departures from home nor their subsequent captivities while away from home appear to have been subject to detailed control by any of the government in Hausa land. It may have been because the majority of the migrant intervention in the religious affairs of the people particularly before the Sokoto jihad of 1804C E, was kept minimal.

Hausa Muslims appeared quite faithful and consistent in their prayers for the kings for peace staying of the society whenever they need assistance they did not hesitate to write to their scholars and other Muslim leaders to ask for some" more efficacious formulae. Moreso, the Hausa Malams encouraged new Malams to settle with them (Adamu , 84) .

However, history of inter-ethnic contact in pre-colonial Nigeria have shown that diversity of culture and ethnicity have not always led to conflicts, people had found common grounds to resolve their groups differences when they came into contact with one another (Tijani 28). Consequently, we viewed the inter-group relations between the Hausa Muslims and their Igala hosts as containing more interactive elements, than conflicts especially in the absence of violent conflicts. The text of Hausa Muslim settlers in Igala communities were later joined by their other kinsmen. In the same vein, Hausa Muslim migrants settled in Ankpa, Dekina and Idah local government

areas. They settled as tenants with the Igala landlords, many of whom were their trade partners. However, the population of Hausa Muslim migrants increased in Igala land. This was due to the shift in the major trade routes from Kano, Sokoto and other routes to Igala land (Ademu 85).

Furthermore, the rise of party politics threatened the unity, autonomy and exclusiveness of Hausa Muslim community in Igala land. This was due to the captivities of the political-party and the rise in importance of politicians and nationalists as leaders of Thought and action. Consequently, Hausa Muslim migrants had settled in Igala land since 15th Century or even much (Adegbe 36)

1. The Iroko tree under which the Hausa Muslim migrants used to conduct the oath-taking with the Glorious Qur'an at Ogbede during the reigns of Igala monarchs from Ata Ayegba Om'Idoko to date is still standing there after five hundred and fifty-seven years;
2. In the same vein, the tree (Obobo) at Angwa under which the pioneer Hausa Muslim migrants in Igala land erected the first Mosque in Igala land at the middle of fifteenth century is still standing there;
3. Similarly, the chronicle of prominent Hausa Muslims invited by Ata Ayegba Om'Idoko to help the Igala win their war with the Jukuns has not only continued to be passed on from generation to generation, but it has been transformed from myth to one of the facts of Igala history with the Inachalo stream as its proof of reality (Adegbe 37)

The introduction of Islam by the itinerant Hausa Muslim scholars in Igala land has enormous contributions on the life of the people across all spheres of human endeavors. It was a revelation that touched the life of the people religiously, politically, socially, economically, culturally and educationally (Haruna 75)

The historical process of Hausa Muslim migrants in Igala land, and the intergroup relations between the migrants and the Igala as hosts is indeed an interesting one. In the case of Igala, the interesting aspect of the relationship between Hausa Muslims and Igala lies in the evolution of an effective mechanism of cordial inter-group relations while at the same time, reducing the inter-group tension and conflicts being witnessed in a number of similar multi-cultural communities in Nigeria. The Hausa

Muslims settled in Igala land since the fifteenth century or even much earlier (Salihu Zariya oral interview).

The coming of the Hausa people has impacted positively on the Igala culture. Today keeping of idols has been abandoned by Muslim chiefs, no native feasting is permitted after the investiture ceremony, For example no food is offered in sacrifice to idols or spirits and emblems of the offices are sanctified with Hausa Muslims prayers. With the introduction of Islam, capital punishment, are now things of the past (Abdul Abubakar oral interview).

In the same vein, with the support of Allah and the itinerant Hausa Muslim scholars, Igala land were able to champion the stoppage of traditional mourning practices among the Igala such as shaving the hair of a widow, use of black head tie and folding arms and the traditional law of the land ordering a widow to re-marry to another man in the same family, These practices have since been abandoned (Haruna 89).

The fasting of Ramadan is observed in Igala land with the attendance activities like *tarawvih* (early night prayer) and *Tafsir* (Qur'an exegesis). The month of Ramadan in Igala land is month of religious activities and rejuvenation for the Igala Muslims. Many of the Igala Muslims who are so busy due to their work schedule within Kogi and Nigeria at large, take their annual leave during the month so that they actively participate in the spiritual activities of the month like *Tafsir* & Qur'anic recitation, *I'tikaf* (retirement privacy), and Ramadan lectures being organized by various Islamic groups (Abdulrahman Haruna oral interview).

It has been argued by Adesoji and Alao that the dividing line between an indigene and being a settler could be very thick or thin. Depending on the co-existence state of community concerned (Adesoji 151). Jenkins asserts that as a citizen of Nigeria there are constitutional rights guaranteed to enjoy in respective of one's ethnicity, location or place of birth.

Conclusion

The major factors through which groups established contact has been migration. Contact between peoples of diverse ethnic and cultural background have often led to conflicts or integration. In the case of Igala people there has been rising consciousness among those who considered indigenes; by maintaining that the Hausa settlers remain settlers regardless to of the period of their settlement there.

The history of inter-group relations in Nigeria area is abound with case of harmonious inter-ethnic

relations. Moreover, this work had discovered that in spite of the various political crises that had led to inter-ethnic conflict in various parts of Nigeria. The Hausa Muslim Community in Igalaland had harmonious inter-ethnic co-existence with their Igala host in Igalaland kogi state between (1900-2000). This has been achieved through da'awah and commercial relations.

WORKS CITED /REFERENCES

Adegbe Musa. An Insight into the religious life of HRM Alhaji Dr. Aliyu Obaje CBE, CON, FIAMU, LLO, CFR Ata Igala and President Kogi State Council of Chief Coca Lokoja 2006.

Abdullahi Adamu Suleiman: Impact of Islamic education Institutions in Nasarawa State Nigeria. A (Ph.D) Thesis Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies Nasarawa State University Keffi, 2013.

Abdullahi Yusuf Ali (Trans), the Noble Qur'an with Arabic Text, Translation and commentary, Shuja Sons printers, Islamabad 2004.

Abdulrazaq O. Kilani Minaret in the Delta (Islam in Port Harcourt and its Environs (1896-2007) J 1.6 palm Avenue Muslims, Lagos State Nigeria 2008.

AbdulwahabTijani: Ethnic Relations: A study of Hausa Community in Ogbomoso, Nigeria (1924-1967) Department of General studies, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Ogbomoso Nigeria 2008.

Edimeh F.O: The OjOcholi provenance in Igala History Ankpa, Kogi State, Nigeria 2013.

Egbunu Friday E. Chieftaincy Titles Among problems and prospects for Christians, Enugu snap press 2001.

Haruna Muhammed Rabi: The contribution of Hausa Muslim community to the development of Islam in Igalaland kogi state. A Ph.D Thesis submitted to the school of postgraduate studies Nasarawa State University Kefi Nigeria 2018.

Jibril, B.T Aisha G.H and Suleiman A.H: Towards on Islamic Economy: A book of Readings International Institute of Islamic thought, Nigeria 2012.

Pcikhil, Muhammad M. The Cultural side of Islam, Nusrat, India, 1990.

Okwoli P.E: The History of Fifty years Reign of Ata Igala Alhaji Aliyu Obaje 1956-2012 snap press. 2006

Oston J.S.: The Hinter in Igala Legends of Origin of Africa xxxiv 1964

Egbunu, Friday: Igala Traditiuonal values versus moderinity Afro-Orbis publishing co. Ltd Nsukka Nigeria 2009.

Usman Abdullahi Yusuf "Da'awah in Taraba state Nigeria methods prospects and challenges" A Ph.D Thesis proposal presented to the Department of Islamic Studies Nasarawa State University, Keffit 2015.

Oldfield, R.A and Laird M. Narrative of an Expedition into the interor of Africa by the river Niger in 1932 and 1834 Franck Lass, London, 1971