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Transmission of Learning in Modern Ilorin: A History of Islamic Education 1897-2012

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Chapter four a

Islamic Education in Ilorin since Nigeria's Independence 1960-2012

Introduction

Although Muslims as a distinct or religious group were not in the forefront of the formal struggle for independence, they nevertheless played important roles as members of the nationalist groups that fought for Nigeria's independence.¹ Their subtle and intellectual resistance to colonial rule formed one of the many strands that fused into the struggle and thus Muslim scholars had great expectations for the coming independence. Attainment of independence for Nigeria made possible the realization of some hopes of the people of Nigeria. Muslims who felt suppressed under colonial rule were looking forward to the independence to put into expression some of their hopes, for a better life where their religious aspirations could be achieved.²

During the colonial period, the Adabiyya and the Zumratul Mu'meenina movements were the major vanguards of Islamic education as distinct groups of Muslim educationists in Ilorin. After the attainment of Independence, more movements were added to the progress of Islamic education, having their build up in the colonial period. Notably the Markazi movement, starting out in Abeokuta, then Lagos, from where it fanned up into Ilorin as an important wave in the invigoration of Islamic education, added its strength to the streams already established in the colonial period. Together with the other strands of reform movements such as the Muhyideen School and Society and Shamsud-deen School and Society, they galvanized the reforms of Islamic education in the decade of independence.

The earlier movements also grew stronger in this period. The traditional system in its very informal nature continued alongside these new movements which by the 1970s and 1980s had multiplied as offshoots of the earlier movements. Though these modernizing movements increasingly dominated Islamic education, the informal traditional system remained as the root and bulwark of Islamic education.

¹ Yakubu A.M., *Saadu Zungur: An Anthology of the Social and Political Writings of a Nigerian Nationalist* (Kaduna: Nigerian Defence Academy Press, 1999) explores the career of one of such Muslims.

² The career of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri is a remarkable example of such aspirations. The cooperation between the emirates and Northern Regional Government in this period of Self-Government was also propitious to the scholars. These two served as an interface between the departing colonial authority and the people. The people and the scholars no less could see that independence is a matter of time and that ensured cooperation in developing Islamic education both in the private and the public sector education system, seeing fellow Muslims at the helm of political power.

By the 1990s and the opening decade of the twenty-first century, Islamic education in the more formal western system had also made important contributions to development in Islamic education, especially at the higher education levels, though the traditional and reformed Islamic system has remained the main strong point of Islamic education.

This chapter will examine the developments in Islamic education in this period of independence and increased globalization with varying implications for Islamic education. We will look at how the new developments in Islamic education, built on pioneering Islamic educational reforms and how these differ from the developments of the colonial period. The careers of some prominent scholars who contributed to the development in this period will also be examined as the reconstruction of the history of Islamic education is tied to understanding the activities of these scholars. Some of them bestraddled both halves of the twentieth century, but new enterprising scholars also added their own contributions to these developments. Islamic education in the western school system also made progress; this would be examined as part of the progress of Islamic education in the post-independence period. The new *tahfiz* (memorization) schools that emerged toward the end of the twentieth century would be examined as well. The chapter will also examine the female context in Islamic education in Ilorin.

Developments from the Decade of Independence

Traditional Islamic education from its elementary Qur'anic schools to the advanced studies as the system that reproduces the Muslim society remained central to the Islamic educational heritage against colonial neglect. It continued in this role in the postcolonial period under successive governments, providing the bulk of Islamic education. The traditional system remained the most important source of Islamic education for the masses and held its own alongside the modernized Islamic schools which were still few compared to the traditional schools in the first two decades of the independence.

In general, Muslims in Ilorin hold the view that western and Islamic education are two distinct streams of education that serve different purposes and that both should be pursued simultaneously or in varying degrees of intensity. Negation of western education had ebbed with generations of Muslims who have had western education and held important positions in the society. The reforms in Islamic education as visible in the works of Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen Al-Adaby and that of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri and the few scholars who joined them as reformers, complementing their efforts, played important roles in the further development of Islamic education especially in the decade of independence and beyond.

In the decade of independence, the Adabiyya movement made additional progress with the affiliation of the school of Sheikh Kamalud-deen to the al Al-Azhar University of Cairo.³ In the same year, 1963, the third stream, Markaziyya of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri came into Ilorin.⁴ Two Markaziyya schools joined the existing streams; one was a communal effort while the second was established by a student of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri.⁵ Muhyideen Society and School also had its origin in this decade as well Shamsudeen Society and School, both of which would become integrationist/bifurcate like the Adabiyya movement in the course of their developments from the 1970s.

Meanwhile, Emir Abdulkadir passed way in 1959 on the eve of Nigeria's independence. This emir had been most supportive of the reforms of Sheikh Kamalud-deen; his palace often the refuge of the Sheikh anytime he and his students were hounded from parts of the town that they had visited on preaching tours. Part of the emir's support to the Sheikh included a donation of two pounds ten shillings every month from his salary.⁶ The emir also sent two of his children to live and study under the Sheikh. He made it a duty to visit the school before the students went on their annual vacation by way of encouragement.⁷

The new emir, Muhammad Sulu-Gambari (1959-1992) would continue in his predecessors' role of patron of the scholars. In the colonial period, the practice had begun of celebrating the annual *Maulud* (birthday) of the Prophet Muhammad communally in front of the palace of the emir. Leading scholars of the town were allotted time to deliver a sermon before the emir and the populace. The new emir Sulu-Gambari, perhaps seeking to have a protégé of his own, but more importantly seeing the achievements of Markaz, where he had visited in Lagos in 1962, invited Sheikh Adam to come and replicate his success of Lagos in Ilorin. The occasion that afforded this synergy was the 1962 annual *maulud* celebration that took place in front of the palace and which had many scholars come to deliver sermons.⁸

³ Abubakr O. Nasir, 'The Role of Ma'had '1-Azhar Ilorin in Manpower Development in Nigeria' (B.A Long Essay, Islamic Studies, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1991), 34.

⁴ Alaaya Olarenwaju Ally, 'Darul Ulum Arabic School Ilorin' (B.A Long Essay, Islamic Studies, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1986), 6; Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 116-117.

⁵ Sheikh Yahya Murtala, the founder of Markaz Taalim Arabi, Oke Agodi.

⁶ Discussions with Alhaji Labaika Bello. 29-10-2012. Alhaji Labaika Bello as the Secretary of Ansarul Islam Society was responsible for collecting the money from the palace.

⁷ Discussions with Prince Salman Olarongbe Abdulkadir (Daudu Ballah). November 2012.

⁸ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 114.

Sheikh Adam had in his sermon of that year warned of the danger of receding Islamic knowledge which needs urgent action to reverse the trend, alluding to the dying generation of old scholars, and a need for training the young ones that would replace them. The reforming zeal of Sheikh Adam could be discerned in the sermon. For the past decade he had been carrying out his reforms in Lagos and had recorded some success. He probably felt alone in his crusade and seeing that the scholars of Ilorin were as yet to catch on his ideal which is different from the Adabiyya and the Zumratul Mu'meenina ideals that had already taken root in Ilorin, he made a case for more efforts. His ideal and method stand somewhat in between that of the integrationist Adabiyya and rejectionist Zumratul Mu'meenina.

The call of Sheikh Adam made the emir and the principal imams to meet and they decided to act in response to the call of Sheikh Adam. They met with scholars in Ilorin to deliberate on keeping alive the flame of Islamic knowledge in line with the call of Sheikh Adam. A committee was created to work out the modalities to establish a school along the line of Sheikh Adam's ideal. The new emir appeared to favour Sheikh Adam taking a leading and active role in this new school.⁹ The Sheikh, however, was not able to abandon his work in Lagos. He was barely a decade into his reforms and had begun to see some results. It would be unwise for him to abandon his succeeding work in Lagos for a fresh one in Ilorin. He was no doubt also wary of petty jealousies that would arise should he decide to relocate to Ilorin. He was satisfied that his call had been taken and he felt there were scholars who were capable of doing the job in Ilorin as well. The school that was created was first named *Madrasatu Taalim Lughatul Arabiya*.¹⁰

Finding it difficult to refuse the request of the emir and not able to abandon his work in Lagos, he found a midway that fulfilled both interests. He suggested the need for an umbrella organization for the imams and scholars like the League of Imams and Alfa (*Rabitah al Aimmah wal Ulama fi Bilad Yuruba*)¹¹ that he had initiated in the southwest among the Yoruba. His aim was to have the new school come under the communal umbrella of this organization. The result was the renaming of the school, at the instance of Sheikh Adam in 1964 as Darul Uloom Li

⁹ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 114.

¹⁰ Ibrahim Lukman Erubu, 'The Contribution of Darul Uloom li Jabhat wal Aimmah, Isale Koto, Ilorin, to Islamic Scholarship 1963-2005' (B.A Long Essay, Department of History, University of Ilorin, 2006), 38.

¹¹ See Kamaldeen A. Balogun, 'An Exposition of Shaykh Adam al Ilory's *Ta'rif Wajiz bi Rabitah al Aimmah wal Ulama fi Bilad Yuruba*' in Razaq D. Abubakre (ed), *Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al Ilory in the Tableau of Immortality, Vol. II*. (Riyadh: Nigerian Centre for Arabic Studies, 2013), 90-100.

Jabhat Ulama Wal Aimma,¹² after *Darul Uloom* of Egypt. It thus became the first Markazi institution in Ilorin. As the name indicated, it is to be an institution under the guardianship of the ulama and the (principal) imams,¹³ thus having no individual ownership. In this, he was also trying to dissociate the school from his person. He had not used 'Markaz' as would be noted in the names of the schools his students would later establish in Ilorin as well as elsewhere in Yoruba region.

A board of trustee was created; the principal imams had representatives in them due to their tight schedules.¹⁴ Sheikh Adam served as the chief consultant and the school was affiliated to Markaz Taalim Al Arabi Al Islami, Agege, of Sheikh Adam.¹⁵

Students were taken from the houses of scholars who had all agreed to provide students from among their children. The teachers of the school were also chosen from among the scholars with the resolution that the school would be a fee paying one and the teachers would also receive some paid allowance. When the school began in 1963, two centres were created for teaching. One was established at the old Ilorin central mosque at Idi-Ape and another at Isale Koto Mosque.¹⁶ The first centre at the old central mosque was designated for adult students who had acquired their knowledge through the cumbersome traditional system, with the aim to align their knowledge to the modern method of the Markazi mode. The scholars could easily relate with the Markazi system because unlike the Adabiyya system already well-established in Ilorin, the Markazi system did not integrate western education into its system, therefore seen as more of a reform of the old system than a deviation that the Adabiyya system was held to represent.

The first set of teachers included Sheikh Ghali Alaya of Pakata, Sheikh Abubakar Sakama and Sheikh Ibrahim Maimasa of Ojagboro.¹⁷ They were persuaded to forfeit their individual schools for that of the community, so they could pay fuller attention to the school. The advanced students were taught some Islamic and Arabic knowledge under the three scholars mentioned above. They were put through the

¹² Erubu, 'The Contribution of,' 36.

¹³ The three principal imams in Ilorin are Imam Fulani- the Chief Imam, Imam Imale and Imam Gambari in that order. This was one of the innovations of the ruling Fulani dynasty to harmonize the different communities that formed Ilorin.

¹⁴ Imam Fulani (the Chief Imam) had Alfa Ghazali Mukhtar, Alfa Ibrahim Omo Oba Ori Oke; Imam Imale had Alfa Abdulkareem Agaka and Salihu Alabira Oloyin; Imam Gambari had Alfa Adam Gambari Idiadan and Alfa Issa Gambari. Other members include Alhaji Kuranga Agaka, a philanthropist and Alhaji Zakariya who had gone through the western education system.

¹⁵ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 115; Erubu, 'The Contribution of,' 39.

¹⁶ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque' 115.

¹⁷ Ally, 'Darul Ulum Arabic School,' 7.

old method: teaching seated in a circle without the use of chalk and blackboard. The school hours were between 8:00 a.m -12:00 p.m excepting Thursdays and Fridays.¹⁸

The decision to collect fees stalled the development and eventual extinction of the central mosque arm of the school. Many of the students could not graduate because of the fees of 2 ½ shillings, being self-sponsored and some of them were married. This affected payment of allowance to the teachers. Inability to pay the old teachers reduced their interest in teaching in the school. Thus the adult or *ilm* class at the central mosque died out, not able to blend into the organized modern system the school was established for.¹⁹ The scholars were used to the non-structured system of payment through patronage and could not adapt to the fee paying system (which had not worked well in this instance) nor was it known in the system for a teacher to refuse teaching for nonpayment of money. This created a dilemma for the teachers who would have benefitted if the financial arrangements had been successful. The new system demanded a new approach and dedication from them with a promise of remuneration.



Fig. 10. Emir Sulu-Gambari Muhammad (1959-1992).



Fig. 11. Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri (1917-1992) Founder of Markazi School.

¹⁸ Pioneer students include Abubakar Umar Erubu, Aduagba Awwal Abubakar Sakama, Ahmad Shuaib Agaka, Murtala Alaya, Saheed Agaka, Ambali, Imam Shuaib Agaka, Alfa Salihu, Shehu Sanni, Musa Ahmed (Imam Fulani 1980-83.) Hassan Ambali Pakata, Alfa Baba Magaji Mafolaku Oke Aluko etc. Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 116.

¹⁹ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 116-117.

The inability of the new system to live up to its financial obligation was one of the reasons why the class of the older scholars did not last long. Islamic knowledge has always been available to anyone who has the desire to learn with or without payment. Since the teachers would not demand or make payment a necessity, they often had to do without payment for educational services they render. Thus, they were not always financially buoyant. This is what Berkey called voluntary poverty of the scholar.²⁰ The scholars in Ilorin were as yet ready for the reform introduced by Sheikh Adam and that section of the school could not continue.

The second younger group of students was taken to Isale Koto under the tutelage of three young teachers, some of whom had gone through the reformed and formal Islamic school. They were Abubakar Abdul Malik, Alfa Abdul Ganiyu Gidado of Ita-Ogunbo and later Alfa Yahaya Murtala of Oke-Agodi. The younger ones were believed to be capable of being tested with the modern system of using chalk and blackboard for instruction through scholars that have gone through similar method. Sheikh Yahya had been a student of Sheikh Adam in Lagos and would later establish his own school in Ilorin. The first set of students had a common final examination in 1966.²¹ Some of the notable first graduates of the school would later work as academics in universities both in Nigeria and abroad.²² They were all able to cross over into the mainstream western system of higher education after the foundational Islamic education of the Markazi mode.²³

The curriculum of the school includes Islamic sciences, Arabic language, tafsir, hadith among others, for a four year *I'dadiyya* certificate course. For the next twenty four years it would run only the *I'dadiyya* course. Until 1988 the graduates of the school would proceed to Markaz in Agege for the next stage of *Tawjihiyya*, the equivalent of senior secondary school of the western system. Like the earlier reforming school of the Adabiyah, some of what was learned in the school was expressed through drama and poem presentations at the annual *maulud* celebrations at the emir's palace.²⁴ Markas at Agege supported the school by sending its graduates to teach at Darul Ulum.²⁵ Up till the period of this research, no western

²⁰ Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, 44.

²¹ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 117.

²² They include Shuaib Abdulbaki (Professor of Arabic at Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto), Dr Ahmad Ghazali (Arabic Department, College of Education, Sokoto), Dr Hamzat Abdulraheem (Kwara State University, Maletete) Professor Ahmad AbdulSalam (International Islamic University, Medina), Dr Shuaib Abdul Hamid Agaka- Chief Imam of Agaka (formerly of Arabic Department, Bayero University, Kano) and Justice Ahmad Belgore of the High Court in Lagos.

²³ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 118; Erubu, 'The Contribution of,' 40.

²⁴ Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 118.

²⁵ Ally, 'Darul Ulum Arabic,' 12.

subject in English medium was in its curriculum. However, they study those written in Arabic like history and geography especially those written by Sheikh Adam. In 1988, Darul Uloom established its own *Tawjihhiyya* level, making it unnecessary for its students to proceed to Markaz in Lagos. The school has been operating more or less in this format since then.

Muhyideen College: In a less dramatic mode than the establishment of Darul Ulum, a new school emerged in 1962, the Muhyideen Society and School. It began humbly enough with the establishment of a Qur'anic school at Idi-igba home of the founder. The figure behind this movement is Sheikh Abdullahi Jubril Imam Sahban. Born to a missionary scholar; one of the innumerable Ilorin scholars to be found all over the Yoruba region, in Yaro, a town in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State 1944. He began his education under his father before returning to Ilorin for further studies with his uncle in 1952, upon the death of his father. He joined Kubat Islam School where he got the *I'dadiyya* certificate in 1962 and *thanawiyya* certificate in 1967.²⁶

For a while he was busy with missionary works and teaching which prevented him from further search for knowledge. His school had been established while he was still a student, an example of how a student gradually metamorphosed into a teacher, the two stages interwoven into each other. For his advanced studies, he studied under Alfa Raji, more known as Alfa Ita-Egba.²⁷ He stayed with this teacher for thirteen years, the last five as an assistant to him. He also studied under Alfa Omo-Iya of Gambari quarters for seven years, within the same period.²⁸

As Sheikh Kamalud-deen had done in the colonial period, Sheikh Sahban introduced reforms into his own Qur'anic School. He also favored acquisition of western education along Islamic education. He pursued this ideal in a gradualist form, starting with Qur'anic education before introducing western education. Financial constraints mostly informed this gradualist approach to reforms among the scholars. These scholars relied largely on their personal resources, which were always meager to build their schools; hence only a little progress could be achieved

²⁶ Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 280; Ibrahim Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh Abdullahi Jibril Al Imam Sahban Mudiru Kulliyat Muhyideen I Dirasat Arabiyya was Islamiyya wa Masahamatuha fi Thaqafatul Talabatul Muslimeena' (Department of Arabic, College of Education, Ilorin, 1990), 1; Hambali Abdulsalam, 'Al Islam dini wa duniya,' Interview with Sheikh Sahban Jubril -in- 'Al *Ihya*', The Annual Magazine of Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ilorin Kwara State, Vol.1.no.1. (2003) 5-7. His Thanawiyya education was likely informal since formal thanawiyya did not come to Ilorin until the late 1970s.

²⁷ Abdul-Lateef Ayo Sheikh Fasasi, 'Muhyid Din al- Islamiyah Society of Nigeria' (B.A Long Essay, Islamic Studies, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1983), 3.

²⁸ Hambali Abdulsalam, 'Al Islam dini wa duniya,' 5-7.

at a time. Two reasons inspired Sheikh Sahban to reform Islamic education. One, seeing the difficulties in the old method of imparting knowledge even as most of the students had to study at a relatively older age; he therefore sought to simplify the process of acquisition of the knowledge. Secondly he wanted to draw young people into Islamic education without them running away from western education.²⁹

He saw benefits to be derived from both systems and wished to harness these for Muslim youths. His integrationist approach is based on the belief that Islam is concerned with both worldly affairs and faith.³⁰ The resistance of scholars to western education in the early colonial period stemmed from the hostile encounter with colonialism, relegation of Muslim scholars to the background and conversion of Muslims to Christianity through mission education. By the generation of the independence era, fears of conversion had largely dissipated; hence scholars like Sheikh Sahban, who had no formal western education promoted its learning. Some scholars had by then come to the understanding that western education can be had by circumventing what they deemed as antithetical to Islam in it.³¹ Resistance was therefore less vehement than in the early colonial period.

To buttress this view, the Sheikh harkened back to the prophetic injunction that anyone who understands another's language cannot be cheated of that language and the injunction of the Prophet to his companions to go and study the language of *ahl al kitab*, (the people of the book i.e Christians and Jews) as well as the several prophetic injunctions to search for knowledge.³² The low social mobility of scholars of Islam, compared to those who have had western education, was also a concern for this scholar. The Muslim scholars were not well recognized, even when they work in western institutions as teachers of religious lessons. This comes from their lacking in certain skills, such as ability to communicate fluently in the official English language.³³ They were thus marginalized from the scheme of things.

²⁹ Abdulsalam, 'Al Islam dini wa duniya,' 5-7. A concern of the theorists of Islamization of knowledge.

³⁰ Abdulsalam, 'Al Islam dini wa duniya,' 5-7.

³¹ This resonates with the *tawhidi* episteme scholars of Islamization of knowledge were championing. Connection to the Middle East played a role in these reforms.

³² See Frantz, *Knowledge Triumphant*, for a general history of Muslim scholars' preoccupation with knowledge.

³³ This much was cited/adduced to by Professor S.A.S. Galadanci in his Keynote Address and Professor Ishaq Oloyede at the National Sensitization Workshop on Qur'anic Education Organized by the Centre for Qur'anic Studies, Bayero University, Kano. 25-26 October, 2014.

Some of the attitudes towards the Muslim scholars dated from the colonial period and the post-colonial state did little to change the system.³⁴ These among other things inspired the Sheikh to adopt the integrationist approach like the earlier Adabiyya movement. His take on the subject of integration was that the Muslim must seek the other world from what he has been given in this world but must not forget the other world as the ultimate target.³⁵ This resonated with theories of Islamisation of knowledge as put forward by al Attas and other scholars of Islamisation of knowledge.³⁶

Although Sheikh Sahban did not train through the Adabiyya system, the influence of Adabiyya as pioneer pedagogical reforming school of thought could not be lost on other subsequent reformers. Sheikh Jubril started the Muhyideen Society in 1962 as a Muslim organization for propagation of Islam. At this period there were only a few Islamic organizations and he felt the need to create one that would protect Muslim youths from being misled and who needed such an organization to guide them on religion. The hadith of the prophet that some of the Muslim ummah should dedicate themselves to calling others to the way of Lord serves as the theory for this step.³⁷ While the Muhyideen Society serves his missionary aims he also continued with his educational ideas in his schools.³⁸

Muhyideen Qur'anic School started out at the Sheikh's home in Idi-Orombo, in 1962 as night classes in a small room. After two years it became an evening class. The school was then known as Madrasatul Rahmatul Islamiyya. The name Muhyideen had been the name of his teacher's school, Alfa Raji Ita-Egba, and he adopted it. Alfa Raji then changed the name of his own school to Madrasatu Bahrul Uloom.³⁹ In 1968, the space of the school became too small for the population and it was moved to nearby Popo Giwa Street in an open space. In the

³⁴ See Superintendent of Education P.G.S.Baylis' remarks dated 6-12-1935. 'Arabic and Religious Instructions in Schools.' NAK file Iloprof 3196/3/1936.

³⁵ Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 22; A'ishah Ahmad Sabki and Glenn Hardaker, 'The Madrasah Concept of Islamic Pedagogy,' *Educational Review* (2012)

³⁶ Al Attas, *Aims and Objectives*, 10-21.

³⁷ He established a women wing of the society in 1969 at Idi-Orombo where he lives, and by 1971 had many branches in such places as Kisi in neighboring Oyo State and Ikporin, one of the towns under Ilorin emirate. A Lagos branch came into being in 1979 as well as in Oshogbo. The members meet weekly at each branch and monthly at the headquarters in Ilorin.

³⁸ Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 13.

³⁹ Discussions with Khalifa Alfa Ita-Egba. August 2012.

same year the school curriculum became that of an *I'dadiyya* (junior secondary) Madrasah. By 1970, the school had secured scholarship from Kuwait and Libya.⁴⁰

In 1973, a proper building for the school began at Idi-Orombo. The building consisted of four classrooms and two offices. The integrated school did not begin until April 8, 1974. The previous year the school got approval from the government to run the school, so that the students could sit for government examinations.⁴¹ In 1975, two additional classrooms were added making a total of six classrooms. Around this period Sheikh Jubril was active in the activities of the Joint Association of Arabic and Islamic Schools (JAAIS). He travelled to Saudi Arabia around this period and was able to secure the donation of books and syllabus for schools under JAAIS. Through this effort he was also able to get his school affiliated to the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. The affiliation terms allow for students of Muhyideen with *Ibtidaiyya* (primary) certificate to get admission to the *I'dadiyya* (junior secondary) and that of *I'dadiyya* certificate holder can enter for *Thanawiyya* (senior secondary) level at the University of Medina, Saudi Arabia.⁴²

In 1978, a nursery school was established where both Qur'an and western education (*kewukewe* in the local parlance) were taught to pupils. By 1980, Muhyideen Secondary School had been established at Kulende towards the outskirts of Ilorin. It had emerged from the Idi-Orombo School. It started with three classrooms. The school began with *I'dadiyya* and years later *Thanawiyya* level was added to the school.⁴³ By the 1980s, the school had developed into three sections: *ibtidaiyya* (3 years of school), *I'dadiyya* (3 years of school), *Thanawiyya* (3 years of school) of the Arabic section.⁴⁴ Like the Markazi system, the school encouraged applicants especially into the *I'dadiyya* level to have had a primary school certificate and testimonial from a western system school.⁴⁵

While working on the schools in Ilorin, Sheikh Sahban was also working around the community where he was born, Yaro, in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara

⁴⁰ Two students, Hamzat Abdulrahim and Yahaya Abdul Hamid Ishola were sent to Libya for further studies. Hamzat Abdulrahim had studied at Markaz Agege but got the scholarship through Muhyideen College. His father had been a teacher to Sheikh Sahban. He thus benefitted from the lifelong connection students usually enjoy with their teachers. Discussions with Dr Hamzah Abdulaheem. 4-1-2014. Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 16.

⁴¹ *Al Ihya*, The Annual Magazine.

⁴² See Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 280; Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 15. Before this he had contacts with Iraq.

⁴³ The Sheikh was assisted by some philanthropists who donated land, cement blocks and money for the building of the school.

⁴⁴ Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 17.

⁴⁵ The school also insists on good moral behaviour and that the pupil should be religious. Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 18.

State. A school was begun in 1976 in the central mosque of Yaro with thirteen students. He sent two teachers to the community to teach in the school. When the school was visited by the state's Grand Khadi Sheikh Abdulkadir Orire, who was also active in the activities of JAAIS, he advocated relocating the school to a new place outside of the mosque.⁴⁶

This led to agitation between the two towns of Kunmi and Yaro, each town wanting the school to be situated on its land. The Grand Khadi then advised that the two communities should form a committee to decide on the location to avoid future altercations.⁴⁷ However, the rivalries of the two communities continued to threaten the survival of the school. The school was then moved into the compound of Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Kulende in Ilorin where it has remained since then as a government run secondary school.⁴⁸ In the early 1980s, the College was also running Grade II Teacher Certificate courses for the training of primary school teachers of the western system.⁴⁹

Through the 1980s and 1990s the school continued to develop, operating the two educational systems within the same premises. There is the western section offering a secondary education, controlled and funded by the government and the Arabic and Islamic education (College) section running a combination of Arabic and some western subjects taught in English, offering the three levels of *ibtidaiyya*, *I'dadiyya* and *thanawiyya* under the control of the Sheikh. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the school upgraded to offering a National Certificate of Education (NCE), a tertiary certificate in the school. At the end of 2012, the school had also gotten approval to run degree programs, affiliated to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ This advice may have been informed by the need to make allowance for future expansion and development of the school which would have been difficult to do inside a mosque. His advice was taken and a new site at Kunmi was found close to Yaro.

⁴⁷ After two weeks of deliberations, it was decided in favor of Kunmi. Kunmi was chosen because it is the less developed of the two communities. Yaro already had a government primary and a secondary school while Kunmi had none. It was decided that citing the school in Kunmi then would help bring development to the town. The school was then moved from Yaro to kunmi. A fundraising was done in 1979 and the fund raised was used to build a block of classrooms. The community in 1983 agitated for the school to be taken over by the government and it has since been under the control of the government. Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 19-20.

⁴⁸ Known as Muhyideen Arabic Secondary School, thus having two schools in the same premises. Discussions with Alhaji Ibrahim Ishaq Shege, Principal, Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies. 3-12-2013.

⁴⁹ Fasasi, 'Muhyid Din al- Islamiyah,' 32; Discussions with Alhaji Ibrahim Ishaq Shege, Principal, Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies. 3-12-2013.

⁵⁰Discussions with Alhaji Ibrahim Ishaq Shege, Principal, Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies. 3-12-2013. See also its website <http://mcoed.edu.ng/>.

Markaz Taalim al Arabi al Islami: A second Markazi institution was established in 1965 by Sheikh Yahaya Murtala of Oke Agodi. He was a disciple of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri and had been one of the teachers selected to start Darul Uloom two years earlier. The failure of the adult class of Darul Uloom and his desire to follow in the footsteps of Sheikh Adam, may have led to his establishing his own school. Like all the other scholars, he began his school at home. Then he moved to a rented place at Pakata.⁵¹ Here, he named the school Markaz Masaiyyat (Evening Center). He changed the name to Markaz Ri'ayatu Shabab, then Markaz Ulum al Arabiyya wa Islamiyyat before moving to the permanent site in 1973 and adopting the name Markaz Taalim al Arabi al Islami. He began with four classrooms.⁵² In 1976, he travelled to Al-Azhar University, Cairo, in the manner of his teacher, Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri and by 1977 two Arab scholars were seconded to his school from Al-Azhar University. The two Al-Azhar scholars helped him organize his school into *I'dadiyya* and *Tawjihyya* sections. Through these some of his students were able to go and study at Al-Azhar University.⁵³

Shamsudeen College: In the eastern part of the town, the Girgisu family pioneered the reform of Islamic education along the line of the aforementioned scholars. Shamsudeen Society and School,⁵⁴ is rooted in the works of Sheikh Girgisu Akalambi. He had been on missionary endeavor to the French colony of Abidjan where he met some Arab scholars who introduced him to some modern methods of teaching. When he returned to Ilorin in 1943, he tried to put these into practice. Sheikh Girgisu tried to introduce reforms such as Sheikh Kamalud-deen had done but he was stoutly opposed by the elders of the Gambari community and he shelved the plan.⁵⁵ His efforts led to problems with other scholars of Gambari who reported him to the emir as introducing innovations, things of the *bakatabi* (people of the book i.e Jews and Christians) into Islamic education.⁵⁶

When the emir summoned him, he told the emir that his teaching method is good and a progress for the religion and the people. His explanation apparently satisfied the emir whom he showed the *Qaidat Baghdadi* primer he was using to teach his students. This is not surprising since we know the emir had been very supportive of

⁵¹ Sadiq Jimoh, 'The Life and Activities of Shaykh Yahaya Muritadha of Oke agodi Ilorin' (B.A. Long Essay: Islamic Studies-Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1992) 8.

⁵² Giwa Isiaka, 'Markaz Ta'lim-'l-'Arabi-l-Islami, Oke Agodi Ilorin, The Journey So Far' (B.A. Long Essay: Islamic Studies-Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 2006), 22

⁵³ Discussions with Alhaji Abdulsalam Imam Olayiwola. 6-2-2014

⁵⁴ See Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 279.

⁵⁵ Discussions with Alhaji Ahmad Said (The Imam of Gambari Ward (2002-). 8-7-2013.

⁵⁶ Shamsudeen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, 2011/2012 Year book.

Sheikh Kamalud-deen and he had faced even stiffer opposition in his reforms.⁵⁷ This part of the town had resisted reforms in Islamic education till after the nation got independence in 1960.⁵⁸ The emir gave his blessing and although Sheikh Girgisu could not establish a formal school like Sheikh Kamalud-deen, he continued his teaching at home using chair, table and chalkboard, without a purpose built school.⁵⁹

Like all the scholars, Sheikh Girgisu's school started from the mosque in his home and later he acquired a piece of land for a purpose-built school. He passed away in 1956 and Sheikh Musa, his younger brother was recalled to Ilorin from Lagos. It took a while before he returned to Ilorin in the early 1960s and it was Sheikh Musa who shifted the school to the Site acquired by Sheikh Girgisu.⁶⁰ While the school had its origin in the educational and missionary endeavors of the elder Girgisu, opposition to his reforms had stalled progress until Sheikh Musa came unto the scene. When he returned to Ilorin, Sheikh Musa raised the issue again of reforming the school along the modern trend and as it happened with the elder Girgisu, there was resistance.

A meeting was called by the elders of Gambari ward and mention was made of the efforts of the elder Girgisu which had been opposed in the mid- 1940s when he first raised the idea of reform. Therefore the new efforts should not be tolerated, they argued. The imam of Gambari, Ahmad (d.1962), had sympathy with the ideas of Sheikh Musa. At the meeting, he allowed everyone to speak without betraying his sympathy. When he stood up to speak, he argued that the school could be beneficial to the people and he advised that when the school eventually starts, everyone should send their children to the school. This stance surprised many who were opposed to the reformation and had hoped the imam would be on their side. By giving support to the reform without directly saying so, the imam encouraged Sheikh Musa to start the school. When the school eventually began, the imam had over a dozen children

⁵⁷ Among other places, Sheikh Kamalud-deen had been stoned in Gambari ward during one of his preaching tours in the town in the early days of his reforms and propagation. Discussions with Alhaji Abdulkareem Saka, 31-10- 2012 and Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani Adisa-Onikoko. 21-6-2012.

⁵⁸ A subtle reason might be the ancestral ethnic background of the inhabitants of Gambari, most of who had come from the Hausa and Borno regions where the resistance to western education had been strongest.

⁵⁹ Shamsudeen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, 2011/2012 Year book; Discussions with Alhaji Olawale Mustapha Idiagbede. 6-12-2013.

⁶⁰ Akanbi Ajarat Abiola, 'The Contributions of Shamu-su-Deen Society of Nigeria to the Development of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Ilorin' (B.A. Long Essay: Islamic Studies- Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1994), 6. Discussions with Alhaji Olawale Mustapha Idiagbede. 6-12-2013.

from his household sent to the school. Others seeing the action of the imam took their wards to the school as well.⁶¹

A number of factors had been fortuitous to this second attempt at reform in Gambari. Nigeria had just gained its independence and people were full of hope for a prosperous country. At about this time as well, the new emir, Muhammad Sulu-Gambari was making the moves to have Darul Uloom established, so that the option of a reformed Islamic school was not only the integrationist Adabiyya school that had been much vilified by some of the scholars but also the unitary Markazi mode beginning to take root in Ilorin. People were beginning to realize that western education and the reformed Islamic schools were beneficial to the community. The tacit support of the imam as the spiritual leader of the ward also had a remarkable influence in the success of the second attempt in Gambari.

At the beginning, the school had a nursery section based inside the mosque of Sheikh Girgisu. The intermediate class was located in an uncompleted building located not far from the school, from where the pupils graduated into the main school. The main school started with two blocks of three and four classrooms each, running *ibtidaiyya* and *I'dadiyya* levels for four years each.⁶² Some of the first set of students spent up to nine years in the school until the school stabilized.⁶³

The school sourced many of its teachers from Markaz in Lagos, with which it had close relations. Some of the students from the first set were also retained to teach in the school. The students were paying a monthly fee of one shilling at this period in the late 1960s. The school was also being maintained from monies gotten from sermons.⁶⁴ In addition, Shamsudeen College was able to source book donations from Saudi Arabia and Lebanon for the use of its students.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Discussions with Alhaji Ahmad Said, the Imam of Gambari Ward, 8-7-2013; Dr Abubakar Ita Aja 28-7-2013 and Dr Ibrahim Mustapha. 5-7-2013.

⁶² Discussions with Dr Ibrahim Mustapha. 5-7-2013.

⁶³ Among their early teachers were ustadh Abdulhafiz Ahmad who had a certificate in Arabic from University of Ibadan and Mualim Salihu Oko-Iya who had studied under Sheikh Kamalud-deen in his integrationist Adabiyya School. Discussions with Mualim Salihu Oko-iya, 27-7-2013 and Dr Ibrahim Mustapha. 5-7-2013.

⁶⁴ This sort of money formed an important source of funding for virtually all the schools. Moneys realized during weekly or annual Ramadan public sermons were channeled towards the establishment of schools. These moneys were given at the end of sermons by the audience when prayers were to be offered.

⁶⁵ The school also had an Arab teacher, Hilal Ahmad, seconded to the school from Saudi Arabia in the 1970s as part of efforts to improve the quality of its teaching. Discussions with Alhaji Ahmad Said (The Imam of Gambari Ward). 8-7-2013.

Shamsudeen Society, the missionary outfit, which had been established at about the same time as the reformed school was also being run alongside the school and both complimented each other. This trend of having an organizational arm of a school could be seen in the Adabiyya School and Muhyideen School as well. The organizational arms were established for the purpose of propagation and missionary activities. Only the Markazi School did not establish an organization arm. It focused mainly on the provision of education and all missionary activities were carried out within the ambit of the school environment. Perhaps in place of an organization, Sheikh Adam devoted his energy into writing, of which he was prolific and even had a printing press.⁶⁶ He was also a pan-Islamic activist, not only within Nigeria but across the Muslim World.⁶⁷ His disciples mostly followed in his footsteps; hence Markazi schools in Ilorin mostly do not have missionary organizations complementing the educational institutions as found with some other schools.

Al Mahad Al Deen Al-Azhar: After Nigeria got its independence the Adabiyya stream had another landmark achievement in its propagation of Islamic education. In 1962, Sheikh Kamalud-deen visited Al-Azhar University in Egypt and reached an agreement with the authorities of the school to have a branch of Al-Azhar in Nigeria. Named Al Mahad Al Deen Al-Azhar, it was the first of such affiliation in sub-Saharan Africa.⁶⁸ In 1963, the school opened with Al-Azhar University sending two teachers, Sheikh Muhammad Shadhili and Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-Deen Ad-Danasuri. The responsibility of the school fell on the Ansarul Islam Society, the missionary arm of the Adabiyya School.⁶⁹ It was responsible for the accommodation and transportation of the Al-Azhar scholars in Nigeria while Al-Azhar University was responsible for the salary and personal expenses of the scholars.⁷⁰

The school started with a rented building along Kamalud-deen Street with thirty students. It would remain on this site and another building nearby for sixteen years before moving to its permanent site at Ogidi in 1978 when it also began its *thanawiyya* level. The school offers the *I'dadiyya* and *thanawiyya* levels of

⁶⁶ Hashir Abdusalam Adekanmi, 'The Da'awah Theme in the Works of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilori' (MA Dissertation, Islamic Studies, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1985), 21.

⁶⁷ Reichmuth, 'Sheikh Adam.'

⁶⁸ See Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 262-272.

⁶⁹ Although it was not an easy relationship in the beginning with the students of Sheikh Kamalud-deen being the Adabiyya while Ansarul Islam consists of mainly non-students.

⁷⁰ Nasir, 'The Role of Mahad,' 32-37; M.M. Jimba, 'The Role of Azhar University in Educating the Nigerian youth: Ilorin Azhar Institute as a Case study.' Paper presented at the Workshop on Islamic Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa: Their History, Mission and Role in Regional Development, Duke, USA, October, 2013.

education after which some of the best students are given scholarship to study for a degree program at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. English language ⁷¹ and science subjects in Arabic form part of its curriculum.⁷² This would enable some of its students to pursue disciplines in the pure sciences such as medicine, geology and agricultural science in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.⁷³

Further Developments in Islamic Education from the 1970s

The decade of the 1970s saw further expansion of the formal Arabic schools. Graduates of the earliest schools began to establish their own schools and others began their own as well. Two of Sheikh Kamalud-deen students, Sheikh Abdulrahim Aminullah Oniwasi-agbaye (d. March 2012) and Imam Yakub Aliagan established their own schools around this period. However, they continued a lifelong assistance and collaborations with their teacher such that their school may as well be regarded as extensions of their teacher's school. For example, it was not until 1983 when Imam Yakubu Aliagan was made imam of his quarter that he was finally released of most obligations to Sheikh Kamalud-deen.⁷⁴ Oniwasi-agbaye established his school on a land he called Madinat Tajul Adab after the teacher of his teacher. He was able to connect to Saudi Arabia philanthropic agencies that assisted his school with teachers and funds. He continued to assist and represent his teacher throughout his lifetime.

This period coincided with the oil boom and economic prosperity in the country. The Federal Government began the ambitious Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in 1976, increasing access to public schools which also meant demand for religious teachers in schools. This favored the graduates of the *madaris*. The Adabiyya with its integrationist system benefitted from this opportunity of providing religious subject teachers in primary schools run by the government. The government took over many faith based schools especially the Christian Mission Schools but Muslim schools were also involved. For some of the Muslim organizations like Ansarul Islam Society⁷⁵ and Ansarud-deen Society, the

⁷¹ A former student of Sheikh Kamalud-deen, Sheikh Ahmad Adisa-Onikoko was teaching the English Language course of the school. Zumratul Adabiyya was feeding Al-Ma'had al-Dini Al-Azhari with its graduates.

⁷² Nasir, 'The Role of Mahad,' 32-37.

⁷³ Discussions with Dr Bukhari Busayry Sulaiman (ophthalmologist), 1-1-2014 and Alhaji Mahmud Hanafi (geologist), 2-1-2014. Both were alumnae of the school.

⁷⁴ Discussions with Imam Yakubu Aliagan. 12-9-2012.

⁷⁵ Ansarul Islam Primary School (erstwhile Adabiyya Muslim School) had been taken over by the government of the Northern Region as early as 1967, before the UPE of the mid-1970s. Kwara State inherited this burden when it was created from the northern region in the same year. Thereafter Sheikh Kamalud-deen concentrated on his Arabic and Islamic School, which he held as an intellectual legacy and trust from his teacher and which is separate from

government takeover was a relief. The financial burden of maintaining the schools were enormous on these organizations with weak financial base.⁷⁶

These two organizations had been at the forefront of providing western education for Muslim children with scarce resources. In handing over the schools to the government, two reasons may have informed this action. By this time, resistance to western education among Muslims of Ilorin was minimal, the point of possibilities and benefits to be derived from the integration of both systems, which Sheikh Kamalud-deen's school was based on was already beyond much doubt, so that he could afford to let go the western section. Secondly, the financial relief of government takeover was a welcome development, given the scarce resources at the disposals of scholars generally.⁷⁷ Despite handing over to the government, the organizations still have some influence over the school such as who becomes the head of the school, so that Muslim interests are protected.⁷⁸

However, for another school at Ita-Egba, Isobat Isfaq (No.16), the story was a little different. The Sheikh of the school had been given a portion of a waterlogged area belonging to the Magaji-Nda⁷⁹ family (a title holding family) to build his madrasah. Like most starting up madrasah, a shed was erected to serve as the school. In the expansion of schools under the UPE program in the mid-1970s, some residents of the area wanted the government to site a primary school in the area. They pressured the Magaji-Nda family to sell the land on which the Madrasah was located to the government. The family then offered the scholar the opportunity to buy the land so he could continue his school on the said land.⁸⁰

Unable to afford the price, the proprietor sought for help but no one could help and unable to raise the money, he gave up the land to the government, which paid the family for the land. The Magaji-Nda by way of compensation then gave the Sheikh the frontage of his house to relocate the Madrasah to. This was used for a while before the Sheikh returned his school into his living quarters. This event made many scholars to see the government's action as a systematic scheme of taking over

the integrated primary school and continued at a nearby location. Discussions with Sheikh Ahmad Adisa-Onikoko.12-2-2014.

⁷⁶ Ansarud-deen Society also continued to operate its Qur'anic School within its mosque premises. Discussions with Alhaji Shafii Muhammad (Chief Imam of Ansarud-Deen Society Ilorin). 17-5-2012.

⁷⁷ Fellar Lamar, Discourses in Islamic Education Theories in the Light of Texts and contexts', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*,(2011)32:4, 479-495. A similar attitude was observed with state funded Islamic Schools in Britain.

⁷⁸ Discussions with Alhaji Ahmad O. Kamalud-deen. 24-9-2012.

⁷⁹ One of the traditional title holders.

⁸⁰ Discussions with Ustadh Abdulkareem Idris. 9-12-2013.

Qur'anic schools.⁸¹ At Shamsudeen College, a somewhat similar scenario occurred.⁸²

This concern that government would eventually take over all Islamic schools decided some Muslim scholars to form an association to defend the interest of the Islamic schools and prevent such take-over in the future. Although the government had not actually taken over the school and people of the area had been part of the scheme that ousted the madrasah from its borrowed location, the impression had been strong in the minds of the scholars that government had interest in taking over Islamic schools.⁸³

The association, formed in 1976 as a result of the incident of the Ita-Egba Madrasah was named Joint Association of Arabic and Islamic Schools (JAAIS). This organization worked for the best part of a decade till the mid-1980s when it gradually fizzled out. The organization sought to prevent government takeover of *madaris* and to coordinate the activities of *madaris* in Ilorin and bridging it with the state government education sector.⁸⁴ The organization also worked towards getting the government to be giving some grants-in-aid to the *madaris*. As part of this effort the organization went on fact finding mission to Lokoja and Agege in Lagos to see the system of the *Madaris* operating in those places and how these could be replicated in Ilorin.⁸⁵ The result of the fact finding mission enabled some of the

⁸¹ Discussions with Retired Grand Khadi of Kwara State, Sheikh Abdulkadir Orire. 25-12-2012 and Ustadh Abdulkareem Idris. 9-12-2013.

⁸² In 1976, when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program began, the government requested from the madrasah to allow the government to use the classes of the madrasah in the morning for its lessons of western education and for the madrasah lessons to be taking place in the evening. Alhaji Mustapha Idiagbede (an in-law of the Girgisu family and Secretary of the Shamsudeen School and Society) in consultation with the family objected and then offered the government a part of the land of the school to build their classrooms. After the government built and began operating the school, the government run primary school then overshadowed the madrasah. Alhaja Mustapha Idiagbede (daughter to Sheikh Girgisu Akalambi (d.1956) would later feel uncomfortable with the situation and she asked the government in the late 1980s to relocate the school from the land of the madrasah. She even offered the government a piece of land to facilitate the movement but she was not able to get the government to relocate the school until 2012. Discussions with Alhaji Olawale Mustapha Idiagbede. 6-12-2013.

⁸³ Discussions with Retired Grand Khadi of Kwara State, Sheikh Abdulkadir Orire. 25-12-2012. This skepticism of government's intention is similar to what was observed in Mali. See Louis Brenner, 'Muslim Schooling, The State and The Ideology of Development in Mali' -in-Thomas Salter & Kenneth King, *Africa, Islam and development: Islam and development in Africa - African Islam, African development* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2000), 243-245.

⁸⁴ Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 10.

⁸⁵ Discussions with Retired Grand Khadi of Kwara State, Alhaji Abdulkadir Orire. 25-12-2012.

schools to affiliate to Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, like the Madrasah visited in Lokoja. Justice Abdulkadir Orire, The Grand Khadi of the state played a prominent role in this organization, though he was not running any madrasah.⁸⁶

Among the major achievements of the association was getting the government to recognize the Islamic schools and giving grant-in-aid to the schools, though only some of the schools benefitted from these grants. The dwindling economic fortunes of the country and government shifting interest on the private Arabic education sector among other issues contributed to the association going comatose. The absence of a system for younger scholars to succeed the leaders also contributed to the association going into limbo. Like its predecessor, the National Association of Arabic and Islamic Schools Proprietors (NAISP) which replaced JAAIS at the beginning of the twenty-first century, was not patronized by every school. JAAIS seemed to have withered away, with government declined interest in assisting the organization. The new NAISP emerged of its own accord and under different circumstances at the beginning of the twenty-first century without any direct connection to the defunct JAAIS.

It would appear that the Adabiyya network of schools were not prominent in this organization (JAAIS). This might have been due subtle rivalry between the different networks of scholars. The Adabiyya *madaris* might have been seen as a strong and self-reliant group, given their earlier head start.⁸⁷ The Adabiyya on their own might have viewed the impact of the organization on Islamic schools as minimal, hence the little interest in the organization. In its active life span of just over a decade it was able to achieve some goals for the schools. The Ministry of Education recognized its existence and the establishment of a unit for Islamic education in the ministry was related to establishment of the organization.

The Ministry of Education also developed a joint examination called Junior Islamic School Certificate (JISC) and Senior Islamic School Certificate (SISC) for students of the *madaris*.⁸⁸ The ministry endorsed the certificate of the aforementioned examinations for admission into higher institutions and for those travelling to the Middle-East for further studies. The organization was also able to liaise with Saudi Arabia Embassy in Lagos. Though based in Ilorin, it worked for the interest of

⁸⁶ Others include Alhaji Ahmad Said (later Imam Gambari), Alhaji Ahmad Imam Fazazi (Markas al Khairi), Sheikh Abdullahi Jubril Sahban (Muhyideen College) Sheikh Yahaya Murtala (Markaz Taalim li Arabi), Alhaji Abdulwahab Sakariya (Madrasatu Tahsib I Khairiyyah), Alhaji Abdullahi Ghali (Jawairul Islamiyya), Alhaji Baba Olomigbona (Al Adabiyya Saadiya) among others. Discussions with Retired Grand Khadi of Kwara State, Alhaji Abdulkadir Orire. 25-12-2012.

⁸⁷ The old antagonism of its tolerance of western education might have been a subtle reason.

⁸⁸ Correspondence with the Kwara State Ministry of Education. 2013.

Islamic schools in Kwara State in general.⁸⁹ The organization itself operated in a semi-informal way. There seemed to have been no change in its leadership throughout its active existence. Government weak support to the private Arabic education sector coincided with divergence of interests of its members. Members grew old and with no formal mechanism of leadership succession, the organization from the mid-1980s went into inactivity and has remained comatose since then.

⁸⁹ One of the embassy staff, Sheikh Abdulrahman Ibn Abdul Rasheed Uwainy used to visit the organization in Ilorin. Discussions with Imam Ahmad Fazazi.17-12-2012; Ishaq, 'Hayat Samhat Sheikh,' 10.