

# The Impact of Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci Conversion activities in the Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, Nigeria.

AMINU MALAM YAKUBU UMAR

*Federal University of Education, Kontagora, Niger State, Nigeria*

***Abstract- This study was aimed at giving the historical account of the conversion activities of Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci in Kontagora Emirate and its impact on the people of the area. Two methods of research were used. Firstly, field trips in order to conduct interviews so as to obtain data in respect of the history, success, methodology of the Committee as well as validate data obtained from the other sources. Secondly, the researcher also arranged to go with the Committee's Ulama in their preaching tours for fact- finding tasks in order to validate data obtained using the other means of data collection. Among the findings of the work include; the Committee makes use of conventional methods of preaching in reaching the non-Muslims with little or no material gift to the new converts; the Committee has nothing to do with politicking or vote hunting; it was purposely established for the spread of Islam in the area; the Committee was able to convert over forty five thousand non-Muslims to Islam and also impacted greatly in improving their social and educational life. Considering the enormous impact of the committee, it was recommended that; the Committee should seek for other sources of revenue in addition to charity, the work of teaching and preaching should be separated and the committee should adopt other methods of conversions through the use of modern devices like the use of Radio and television stations, the provision of health and educational facilities, portable water etc. This is because; modern man today is materially inclined.***

***Indexed Terms- Impact, Conversion, Activities, Kontagora Emirate, Islam.***

## I. INTRODUCTION

Islam as a perfect way of life is universal in nature and revealed for all mankind throughout the ages till the

Last Day. During his life time, the Prophet (SAW) fulfilled his duty as a messenger at every slightest opportunity. He addressed people individually and collectively; invited them to Islam by his beautiful preaching and characters. With the demise of the Prophet (SAW), the task of inviting people to Islam was carried out by the Muslims from generation to generation because it is an obligation on all Muslims to command people to act rightly and enjoin what is sanctioned by Allah. This act of inviting people to Islam is called Da'wah in Islamic terminology which is carried out for the purpose of conversion. Initially, the task of Da'wah for the purpose of conversion was carried out by itinerant Muslim scholars and merchants who sow the seed of Islam in the various parts of the globe. Today, Da'wah has taken a collective and organizational structure as a result of increase in the number of Muslim organizations launched with the aim of propagation for possibly conversion. These Muslim organizations have been working tirelessly in making intensive efforts to present Islam to the non-Muslims and educate the Muslims on the tenets of Islam.

Kontagora Emirate of Niger State is predominantly occupied by the Muslims with reasonable number of Christians and dispersed pagans mostly in the ruralites and farm settlements. The people of Kontagora area came into contact with Islam long before the Jihad of Sheikh Usman Danfodiyo from such places like Yauri, Kebbi, Hausa and Nupe lands, however, Islam did not have a wide acceptance among the predominant pagan population of Kambari, Bassa, Dukkawa and Dakarkari in the area until after the Jihad and particularly, with the arrival of Umaru Nagwamatse. The spread of Islam in the area was by peaceful means through the roles played by the Muslim itinerant scholars, merchants, preachers as well as Islamic organizations and local traditional Muslim rulers

instead of by the wars of conquest (Bature, 1983). Presently, there are various individuals and organizations in the Emirate that are busy in spreading Islam among the non-Muslims. The activities of these individuals and organizations are either towards the reformation of Muslims or conversion of non-Muslims or combination of the two. One of such organizations established for the purpose of conversion to Islam in the Emirate is the *Kwamitinn Yada Addinin Musulunci* (Committee for the Propagation of Islam).

*Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci* was constituted in Kontagora in 1999 on the realization that majority of the indigenous tribesmen that live in the remote areas of the Emirate are not aware of Islam, they are largely animist (lead a pagan life). The committee is non-denominational and non-partisan, and has only two goals- Islamic revivalism for the purpose of conversion among the non-Muslims. Since its inauguration, the committee has been working towards the attainment of its objectives. Annually, the committee has been giving encouraging, success stories through public presentation of its reports where large number of non-Muslims were reported to have been converted to Islam. That apart, the Committee is also striving towards bringing together the Ulama in the area who have been divided along denominational line to fight for a common goal (i.e converting the non-Muslims to Islam). Likewise, through the efforts of the Committee, some rural communities were provided with teachers and where necessary, schools were built for the training and teaching of the newly converted, children, women as well as adult men who were not opportune to have basic Islamic knowledge in their early years. Therefore, the main thrust of this work is to examine the impact of the activities of *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci* on the people of Kontagora Emirate.

The hypothetical questions around which this research work was based are stated below:

- (1) What is the history of Islam and conversion activities in Kontagora Emirate?
- (2) What is the history of the *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci*?
- (3) What are the structural organs of the *Committee*?
- (4) What methodologies of *Da'wah* does the Committee use in converting the non-Muslims to Islam?
- (5) Do the activities of the committee have any serious impact on the life of the people in the Emirate?

## II. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The object of this research is to study the conversion activities of *Kwamitin yada addinin Musulunci* (Committee for the propagation of Islam) in Kontagora Emirate. The work covers the activities of this committee since its inception in the year 1999 to 2024.

## III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since the creation of *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci* in 1999, it has been working hard for the spread and the development of Islam in the area through preaching, community projects, the provision of scholarships and vocational skills to both the new converts and born Muslims. To date, no one has carried out conversion work in the history of the Emirate than that done by the committee. Considering the immense activities of the committee in the area of spreading the Message of Islam and gaining more converts as well as providing the Muslims with the basic knowledge of Islam, any attempt to study and document such efforts would not be out of place.

Although quite a number of works have been written on Kontagora Emirate especially its political history, there is midget work done on the history of the spread of Islam in this area. Since Islam has become a force to reckon with, in fact the greatest influence in the life of the people of the Emirate, any work under taken to document this big change will be of benefit not only to our own generation but also generations after ours. It is also hoped that the work will serve as a source of literature for future researchers as well as an opening for more areas of research- interests in this field (conversion).

## IV. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Even though Islam has reached Kontagora Emirate long before the Jihad of Sheikh Usman Danfodiyo, it got wider coverage in the area through the Jihad of Sheikh Usman Danfodiyo and in particular, after the arrival of his grandson Umaru Nagwamtse in the area. Initially, the spread of Islam in the area was through the efforts of individual scholars, but today, there are

several Islamic Organizations in the Emirate that are out for the conversion activities. One of such organizations is the *Kwamitin Yada addinin Musulunci* (Committee for the Propagation of Islam). Since its inauguration in 1999, *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci* has been striving in for the conversion of non-Muslims who live in the remote parts of the Emirate to Islam. This voluntary non-governmental Islamic organization has distinguished itself from other Islamic organizations in the area in terms of its aims, composition of its preaching team and method of preaching.

Likewise, the committee has been giving success stories every year on the number of new converts among the non-Muslims. Is this genuine and if it is what is the secret behind the success of the Committee? How effective is the methods used by the Committee in reaching the non-Muslim for possible conversion in the Emirate? Do the activities of the Committee have any impact on the people in the area?). These were some of the areas this research investigated.

#### V. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

From the foregoing, the main objectives of this study were to;

1) Trace the history of Muslim Conversion activities in Kontagora Emirate. 2) Trace the historical origin and development of *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci*. 3) Examine the methodologies used by the *Kwamiti in its conversion* activities. 4) Examine the impact of *Da'wah* activities on the life of the people in the Emirate.

#### VI. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions for the study:

1) What are the historical trends of religious conversion within the Kontagora Emirate? 2) What are the specific activities and strategies employed by the *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci* to promote Islam in the Kontagora Emirate? 3) What are the impacts of *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci's* activities on the people of the Kontagora Emirate?

#### VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct this research work, two methods of research were used. Firstly, the use of libraries both public and private. Such libraries consulted include; the Usmanu Danfodiyo University library, Sokoto and Niger states' libraries, IET library at Minna, personal libraries of different scholars, the Committee's library, Kontagora Emirate Council library, National Archives in Kaduna, Arewa House Library, relevant official documents of the Committee as well as websites in order to review the existing literature relevant to the topic. Secondly, arrangements were made to go on field trips in order to conduct interviews so as to obtain data in respect of the history, success, methodology of the Committee as well as validate data obtained from the other sources. The categories of people interviewed include; elders among the *Ulama (religious scholars)*, traditional rulers, the officials of the Committee, the *Ulama* of the Committee, cross section of the public who are usually present at the annual report presentation of the Committee. Similarly, the researcher also arranged to go with the Committee's *Ulama* in their preaching tours for fact-finding tasks in order to validate data obtained using the other means of data collection.

#### VIII. LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though not much has been recorded in respect of the Kontagora Emirate, the researcher was able to lay his hand on the following materials.

Hogben and Kirk- Greene (Hogben, et'al,nd), wrote a book titled, "Emirates of Northern Nigeria". In this book, they traced the historical development of Kontagora Emirate right from its inception to 1961 including the military adventures of its emirs and also debunk the notion that the nickname of its founder, "Nagwamatse," means "Destroyer". Although the history narrated in the book stopped at 1961, it is still a good reference in writing about the history and development of the Emirate especially its early history.

Mahdi Adamu (1978) in his work, "The Hausa and other People in Northern Nigeria 1200- 1600 C.E", gave an explanation on the relationship between Hausawa other indigenous tribes living in Kontagora

emirate such as Kambari, Gungawa, Dukkawa, Gwari and Kamuku. He pointed out that relationship seems to have been based on the Hausa migrants in the area where many people left Hausaland for military, farming, hunting and trading purposes majority of whom settled there, some retaining their language and culture while some lost it and took- up the language and culture of the hosts. In another work, "The Hausa Factor in the History of West Africa", Mahdi (1980) also highlights the struggles of Umaru Nagwamatse, the founder of the Kontagora Emirate and his son, Ibrahim Nagwamatse, especially against British colonialism and in the spread of Islam. These two works are invaluable materials for the study of Kontagora and how Islam became the dominant religion of its people.

A work of similar importance is that of Baban Larai (1982) "Umaru Nagwamatse: Founder of Kontagora Dynasty." The book is an account of Umaru Nagwamatse's wars of territorial expansion and the establishment of his rule over Kambari, Dukkawa, Kamuku and Dakarawa. The work examined the political, social, educational and economic developments in the Emirate from the time under review (1806-1974). Hiskett (1984), in his celebrated work "The Development of Islam in West Africa" also touches the history of Kontagora explaining how Nagwamatse was able to push into old Yauri in an attempt to expand the territories of the Caliphate. He pointed out that Nagwamatse was able to establish a new Darul Islam in the south and put up an effective fight against the British occupation. This is an indication that Nagwamatse's expansionism was not only political but also religious. This work also debunked the impression that the Nagwamtse were nothing but slave dealers.

The work of Bature, (1983) "the Rise and Growth of Kontagora Emirate (from 1957-1929) traced the rise and growth of Kontagora Emirate by giving an account of the activities of Umaru Nagwamatse and his son Ibrahim. He discussed the establishment of the Emirate, the stages in the spread and development of Islam in the area, the attack and capture of the Emirate by the British as well as the indirect rule in the Emirate. Musa Abdullahi's (2003) work "The Legacy of Umaru Nagwamatse: Kontagora Emirate into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" went down memory lane to the origin of

Kontagora Emirate linking it to the efforts of Umaru Nagwamatse. He disputed the assertion that Nagwamatse was a ferocious fighter and warmonger. But he said nothing about the spread of Islam in the area. The Turban: A Compendium of Traditional Institutions in Niger State (Niger State Govt,2005) is another valuable material for this work. Chapter three of this book was dedicated to the background history of Kontagora Emirate, the composition of its council members, functions of the council, Districts in the council as well as socio- economic and political viability of the Emirate. Dabai (2007) conducted a research work on the contribution of *Jam`atu Izalatu Bid`a wa Iqamatus Sunnah* to the development of Islamic Education in Kontagora Emirate. In the work, she gave a brief history of Kontagora Emirate and the propagation of Islam before and after the advent of *Izala*. After tracing the history of *Izala* which she said started in Kontagora, Dabai identified the areas of contribution by *Izala* in Kontagora. Tahir's (2009) work named, "History of Kontagora and its Founder, Umaru Nagwamatse" Like other authors Tahir gave historical accounts of the efforts made by Umaru Nagwamatse and his sons, Modibbo and Ibrahim which provided the foundation upon which the Emirate was formed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The last work that could also be relevant here is the book titled "History of Kontagora Emirate: The Emirate at a glance" History and Development Committee (2009) produced by History and Development Committee of the Emirate, the book gives the history of Kontagora Emirate and the major achievements under each of the emirs to date.

#### IX. RELIGIOUS CONVERSION ACTIVITIES IN KONTAGORA EMIRATE

Kontagora Emirate, located in the mid-western part of the area that makes up Niger State, was one of those Emirates that emerged south of the seat of the Caliphate through the enormous efforts of the grandson of Sheikh Usman bn Fodio, the leader of 1804 jihad movement in Hausa land. The Emirate has a large territory of about 15,300 square miles, bounded on the west by Borgu Emirate (in Niger State), on the south by Ilorin Emirate (in Kwara State), a narrow strip of Nupeland Separate it from the railway as far as Zungeru on its south-eastern border, to the north-east.

It is separated from Bida Emirate by river Kaduna and bordered in the north by Yauri Emirate of Kebbi State. Kontagora Emirate is inhabited by various ethnic groups notable among who include, the Kambari, Dakarkari, Dukawa, Gwari, Achifawa, Bassa, Nupe, Kamuku and Gungawa (Mahdi, 1980; nasir, 1983). It is difficult to say exactly when Islam penetrates Kontagora area. However, it is a fact that the introduction of Islam into Kontagora area had followed the same pattern as in other parts of West Africa, that is, Islam penetrated the area through the emigrants from the already Islamized states. What can be said with confidence is that Islam had been in the area prior to 1804 Jihad and the arrival of the jihad warriors in the area around 1854 C.E through some parts of Hausa states, Nupe and Yauri Kingdoms who has contact with the area through trades and conquest. However, Islam received a boost in the area with the arrival of Umaru Nagwamatse in the mid nineteenth century.

The first thing to note here is that, the rate of conversion activities during the early period of the founder of Emirate, Umaru Nagwamatse, and his immediate successor, Abubakar Modibbo was very slow. This is because, the period was characterized by wars and raids that devastated the area and dispersed the population (MSS,2009). With this, few Muslims seems to have set-out to make a career of converting the pagan communities, there was no organized *Da`wah* work, no even centralized administrative arrangement in the areas so captured (Ja`afaru,2024). But this does not mean that no any concern was given to Islam and its development during Umaru Nagwamatse era. It was said that whenever the army of Nagwamatse approach a community with the intention to attack it, when the call of prayer (*Adhan*) is heard, the town is spared. Similarly, certain individuals especially the scholars seem to have made special efforts to attract the pagans through direct preaching to them, display of good conduct worthy of emulation (Yahaya, 2002). Thus, it could be said that little was achieved as far as conversion is concerned in this period since the situation did not provides enabling ground where scholars (Muslim preachers) would move freely for conversion activities.

However, conversion activities in the Emirate got a boost with the improvement in communications as a result of the constructions of roads and the establishment of commercial centers under the British Colonial rulers and coupled with the relative peace and security in the area. The relative peace achieve in the Emirate also produced a favorable environment that encouraged Muslims both traders and teachers to traveled along the new roads into the non-Muslim areas to expand their commercial and religious interests. Thus, Muslim immigrants from; Sokoto, Gummi, Tambuwal, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Borno as well as the Nupes trooped into the various districts of the Emirate. Most of these people were craftsmen and scholars who settled among the indigenous communities and influenced them immensely. Still in this period, conversion activities were carried out at the individual level. Each concerned Muslim carried activities either through education (the establishment of schools) or through itinerant preaching (Bature, 1983). But the golden age of conversion activities in Kontagora Emirate started after the independence. This was the period when Muslim Organizations emerged with the aim of protecting Muslims' interest and systematic spread of Islam throughout the country.

With independence, remarkable achievements were made in the Islamic development, as colonialism approached its sudden death, in the words of Peter Clerk, Islam in many parts of West Africa was becoming more organized (Clerk, 1982). Kontagora Emirate was not free from such developments. With the attainment of independence of Nigeria in 1960, the country witnessed rapid political, economic and social changes. With the political process that involved more freedom of religion and association, Muslims in general continued to press more for their religious freedom that led to the emergence of Muslims Organizations that has played prominent role in the expansion and the development of Islam in Nigeria. One of such Muslim Organizations for example, is *Jama`atul Nasril Islam* founded in 1963. Since the introduction of the organization in the Emirate, the organization have been carrying out its conversion works that includes; preaching, conducting Tafsir in the month of Ramadan, given assistance to the new converts and teaching them the rudiments of Islam (Kontagora, 2009). The emergence of *Izalatul Bid`a wa Iqamatus Sunnah* popularly called *Izalah* in 1978

also contributed in the conversion activities in Kontagora Emirate. While tracing the origin of the *Izalah* movement, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Kontagora is the birthplace and breeding ground of *Izalah*. This is because, the initiator and founder of the movement, Sheikh (Captain) Ismaila Idris served in Kontagora for a number of years before retiring and officially launched the movement. Thus, it could be said without fear of contradiction that it is in Kontagora that the idea of forming *Izalah* was nurtured and that the people in the area have for long felt the impact of *Izalah* even before it was officially commissioned in 1978 through the preaching and sermons of the Army- Imam (Barade, 2007). Similarly, the efforts of Islamic Education trust (IET) in the up liftment of conversion activities in the Emirate was recorded. In its efforts to boost conversion activities in the area, IET trained three persons from the Emirate in 1995 on the methodology of *Da`awah* and how to initiate *Da`wah* at the grass root level. The trained persons were instructed and given the necessary material by the IET to go and organized the training of *Du`at* in the Emirate. In the year 2000, seeing the success of the programme, IET sent two of its staff *Da`wah* training for interested members of the community especially among the civil servants and students in the headquarters of the Emirate. This effort made by IET have also helped in intimating the attendants on their role in *Da`wah*, methods of *Da`wah* and the needs for *Da`wah*. This might have in turn, instigated some among them to joined some Islamic organizations in the charged with conversion activities or even carryout conversion tours at the individual level. Two other events that aided conversion activities in the Emirate were; the interest developed by the Emirate Council in the affairs of *Da`wah* in the Emirate especially the personal interest of the Emir and Chairman of the Council, Alhaji Sa`idu Namaska and the interest developed by such influential community leaders in the Emirate like General Muhammadu Gado Nasko towards transformation activities and the development of Islam in the area. The efforts of these personalities in the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam among in the Emirate seem to be enormous (Bawa,2024).

In the whole, the spread of Islam in Kontagora Emirate was mostly by association, inter-marriages, mutual inter-action and education rather than by war. The

agents responsible were the itinerant Muslim scholars, preachers, traders, Muslim rulers and Muslim organizations.

#### X. CONVERSION ACTIVITIES OF KWAMITIN YADA ADDININ MUSULUNCI.

The focal aim of Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci is to reach the non-Muslim pagan population in the Emirate especially those that live in rural areas and farm settlements. In carrying out its *Da`wah* activities, the committee uses two main methods of religious conversion. These two methods are:

##### Preaching

The committee uses the traditional form of propagation by going from one farm settlement to another preaching to the villagers and converting them to Islam. In this regard, two methods of preaching are often employed by the field workers in reaching their audience. These two methods are Group Preaching Tour (GPT) and Individual Preaching Tour (IPT). In the case of Individual Preaching Tour (IPT), an individual field worker (propagator) is usually assigned with an area to cover over a period of time. He is expected to go on individual preaching tour in his assigned area four times a week from Saturday to Wednesday KEIDAF, (1999). In this tour, the fieldworker is expected to conduct house-to-house preaching or address the non-Muslims in group (a whole family, community or peer group) as the case may be. If he meets up a person or group of people that proved hard and are willing to engage him in debate, he is allowed to do so and when discovers that his knowledge of comparative religion cannot withstand their argument, the field worker is expected to notify his supervisor who immediately arrange for an alternative or inform the Administrative Secretary for necessary action. Through this, the committee has succeeded in converting many pagans to Islam. For Group Preaching Tour (GPT), there are two instance that could it. Firstly, the committee do organize a team of preachers, provides them with preaching materials (public address system, vehicle, feeding allowances etc) and send them for a special preaching activity in an area the committee is inform, the likelihood of conversion. Secondly, the committee do arrange for group preaching whenever it receives information

from certain family or community in his area is ready to accept Islam if the committee can send delegate from whom they would accept Islam or when there is a particular person who wants to engage the committee in debate or have some questions he wishes to ask about Islam before he can become a Muslim. The committee in such situation will arrange for a team of preachers to visit such a place or where there is reported case of mass conversion, a group of preachers including supervisors would be sent to welcome those new converts to Islam and preach to them more about Islam (Report, 2006). Through this method, the committee recorded a huge success.

#### Debate and Dialogue

The propagators either in group or individually engage in understanding conversation with the non-Muslim in the Emirate especially the Christian clergy in form of debate, dialogue or question and answer session. The main focus of the conversation used to be what Islam is all about and the position of Prophet Isah (Jesus) (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be Upon Him, Amin) in Islam. In this case, propagators, who have knowledge of the Bible who can read, translate and quote Biblical verses from memory are often sent to meet with such clergies who are ready to converse with them. These field workers when sent are usually warned to be patient and wise with what they are going to hear or say and on no condition should they cause any crisis or violate the rules and regulation governing preaching set by the committee as contained in their letters of appointment. Through debating and logically answering the questions of the Christian clergies, many of them do accept Islam and in some cases with a large number of their church members (Report, 2006).

Nevertheless, one major contributory factor to the success of the committee was the organizational structure of the committee's team of preachers. The committee divided the Emirate into six supervisory areas and assigned a supervisor to each. No supervisor goes outside his supervisory area unless told to do so. Each supervisory area was in turn divided into smaller units as preaching areas. Each preaching area is allocated to one propagator or preacher who is responsible for the preaching and teaching of the people there. The preacher also reports back to the supervisor his activities and if there is any matter

arising or needs urgent attention in his preaching area, the supervisor takes the necessary action and if it is beyond his ability he report back to the committee through the administrative secretary.

In addition to the organizational structure, the use of local languages (Kambarci, Dakarci, Dukkanci and Kamukkanci which are the main languages spoken by the farm settlers) also contributed a lot to the success of the committee. Majority of the field workers are drawn within their respective local communities. Thus, they share some common cultural values with their target audience, even in some cases, they had once practiced the religion (either traditional or Christianity) of their audience and held higher offices before reverting to Islam. For example, one Malam Haruna Muhammed Nasko was also once a Migiro worshipper holding the title of Jagaba in his ancestral Magiro shrine (Haruna,2010). With the advent of Islam in his community, Malam Haruna reverted to Islam, studied Islam and became a teacher and preacher among the Kambari even before the inauguration of the committee. With the inauguration of the committee, Malam Haruna was appointed as preacher in charge of Nasko, Isana, Libele and their environs. Thus, the ability of the preachers to communicate to their people through the language they could understand best assisted in establishing sense of belonging between the preachers and their target audience.

Similarly, the preachers are strongly warned not to show interest, collect something inform of money or any material things in exchange for the services they rendered to their target audience in form of payment or gift. The sales of charms or any other spiritual protective or healing items to the new converts is also vehemently prohibited by the committee to its preachers. On no account is a preacherr allow to discuss any political issue with his audience nor sell to them the idea which is the right party to join or initiate them to any sectarian or ideological beliefs (KEIDAF,nd).

Thus, although the committee is still young and facing a lot of financial incapacibilities, the huge success it recorded in terms of inviting people to Islam as well as educating them seems to be enormous. This therefore, might not be unconnected to the fine

administrative and preaching structures, use of appropriate medium of instructions and the sincere adherence to the rules, and regulations governing preaching set out by the committee by its Da'wah workers. These rules are free from selfish or sectarian interest as well as politicking.

XI. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF *KWAMITIN YADA ADDININ MUSULUNCI* IN KONTAGORA EMIRATE.

To date, the committee has recorded laudable success and has contributed in no small measures towards the socialization of many inhabitants of the Emirate. For ease and clarity, these contributions could be categorized into religious contributions, educational contributions, counselling and welfare contributions as well as promotion of unity among the Uiamah in the Emirate.

1) Religious contributions

The committee so far as at their last annual general meeting have succeeded in converting a total number of forty-five thousand non-Muslims to Islam in the Emirate (KEIDAF, nd). For the past over twenty-seven years of its conversion activities, the committee recorded the above success through the efforts of its propagators who goes from one village to another sharing the Message of Islam with the non-Muslims in the Emirate. Areas visited by the researcher on a sight-seeing where there were mass-conversion have attested the authenticity of the figures because, all the people claimed to have embraced Islam in such areas were seen by the researcher. There are few among these new converts who later returned to their former religions either as a result of the failure of the committee to provide them with their request as demanded, pressure from their family members and threats from their financial supporters or those who feel they cannot compromise their old habit like selling and drinking alcohol or abide by the Islam rites like fasting and prayers (Abubakar, 2024).

Also, a careful comparative study of the annual committee reports presented before the public and bi-monthly individual propagator reports of seven years was carried out in order to ascertain the authenticity of the figures so presented. A close analysis of the two reports revealed that there were little differences here

and there between the figures presented at the annual meeting and the monthly reports from the propagators. However, these differences are so little that they could be as a result of calculation errors and therefore, insignificant compared to the figure so presented which can be consider as human error. When further asked for clarification on why the differences between the bi-monthly reports which was used to arrive at the annual reports, I was informed that some reports of conversion do reach the committee not necessary from the side of the propagators but especially from village heads who were present at the ceremonies. Such reports were usually incorporated into the committee's reports instantly as they were presented by community leaders (Yahaya, 2025).

Conclusively, it could be said that though some calculation errors were identified in the number of people claimed to have accepted Islam through the activities of the committee, such errors as minor as they are, could not be enough reason to discredit the committee or reject their claim as false. The most justifiable remarks therefore, could be that through the activities of the committee, many non-Muslims were converted to Islam.

2) Educational contributions

The major-educational contribution of the committee is the provision of religious education to the new-converts. Each propagator is assigned two major duties in his area, to invite the non-Muslims to Islam and then, provide the new converts with basic knowledge of Islam and its rites and rituals as well as how to read and write in Arabic inscriptions. So, each propagator is mandated to earmark certain days of his Da'wah activities devoted to teaching the new-converts in his area of assignment. Through this, the new converts learn how to perform ablution, pray, read Arabic text, recite the Quran and other basic Islamic sciences especially tauhid and rituals.

Similarly, the committee also constructs schools in areas where there is a case of mass conversion. Good examples here are schools built at Mairo in Lioji and Dusai. These schools were built and furnished as well as provided with supporting teachers to assist the propagator in the area. In addition, the committee also furnished and manages Islamiyya schools built by individuals or local government authority and handed



to it for the teaching of new converts both old and young (KEIDAF, 2007). At least there are about twenty Islamiyyah schools under the care of the committee spread throughout the Emirate. It is also in consideration of the committee's educational contributions that the Kontagora LEA assigned a senior education officer to take the charge of education unit of the committee in 2007. In addition, the committee also does give scholarship to new-converts whose relations withdraw their financial support to them as a result of their conversion (KEIDAF, 2006). Through these efforts of the committee, many people in the Emirate especially the new converts became literate and can now read and write using Arabic letters. Some of these new converts have gain much knowledge about Islam so much so that, they too, are now propagators and are making serious efforts in inviting their kinsmen to Islam.

### 3) Counseling and welfare contributions

Although the committee never use gift as a method of inviting the non-Muslims to Islam, it however provides some welfare packages to the new converts so as to strengthen them and soften the life difficulties and problems encountered as a result of conversion. Apart from the material gift, the committee also provides counseling services to the new-converts in order to assist them tackle problems associated with abandoning the old religion of their family members. This services however is more lasting than the material gift since, the converters are guided, comforted and assisted in identifying and solving their problems themselves.

Categorically, three major problems are usually faced by the new converts to Islam in the Emirate. The famous is loss of family support. Where a member of a Christian or pagan family decided to embrace Islam, he faces the threat of the family withdrawing their support and cutting away from him. Such supports that are usually cut-off from the new convert include financial support like refusing to pay for his school fees, withdrawing their finance from his trade or business, not assisting him on his farm work, seizing from feeding him and sending him out of the family, if he is married they attempt to separate the marriage or divorce in the case of female convertee by the husband or taken a legal action against her by the husband so as to pay him back his bridal expenses

(Gulmo or traditional engagement expenses). The second area that requires counseling – attention for the new-converts in the Emirate is what is associated with loss of property, job or farmland. At time, a new-convert can be threatened by his employer (the Christian missionaries in particular) of terminating his appointment, close his business premises or withdraw their financial support from his business and at time even attempted to take away his farmland. These could lead to general loss of property. The third trouble area encountered by the new-converts that calls for counseling is separation or divorce and legal action for the female-new convert. Where a Christian wife decides to accept Islam, she could be threatened by the husband with separation or divorce regardless of the number of children they have just to bring her back to her former religion. On the other hand, a betrothed girl can be threatened with court action by her betrothed pagan non or his family in order to pay him/them expenses they incurred in the course of the betrothal like the annual farm-work done to her parents in form of Gulmo.

The above faith-threatening problems are usually encountered by the new-converts in the Emirate. Since these problems could not be completely solve through monetary means and even those that requires monetary aid could not be properly handled by the committee due to financial bottle necks, the committee resorts to providing guidance and counseling services to the new-converts so as to help them solve their problems by themselves or assist them with the right approach to such problem. Through these counseling services, many of the new-converts were saved from the fangs of these faith threatening issues (Abubakar, 2024).

Similarly, the committee also does assist the new-converts with some materials at the time they accept Islam. These materials include closing materials, washing and bathing soaps, salt, food stuffs (KEIDAF, 2006; 2008).

### 4) Promoting unity among the ulamah (scholars) in the Emirate.

Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci serves as a forum where the Ulamah (scholars) in the Emirate do meet, interact and discuss on issues that are of common interest to them. It is a known fact that today Nigerian

Muslims in general and Muslim scholars in particular have been divided along sectarian and ideological differences. This difference of opinion serves as a source disunity among them in such way that they are no longer considering one another as Muslim.

The Ulama of Kontagora Emirate are not excluded from these factional differences. Generally, the Ulama have been divided into Tariqa-Izalah factions and each faction of the Ulama do looks at others as deviants. Basically, there are four major factions in the Emirate. The Tijjaniyya Tariqa Ulama, the Jos Izalah Ulama, the Kaduna Izalah Ulama and those Ulama that neither belongs to any of the above three. Although the Emirate through the efforts of the Sarkin Sudan, Alhaji Sa'idu Namaska, have been trying to bring lasting peace and unity among these factions since it started, the emergence of Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci have also greatly complemented the efforts of the Emir in promoting unity among not only the Ulama in the Emirate but even with their followers.

Firstly, the committee is non-sectional or factional. Therefore, at the time of its inauguration, considering the existence of the divisions among the Ulama in the area and in order to bridge these differences so that no section of the Ulama felt sidelined, four Ulama were selected who are also leaders of the factions, one from each of the four factions to deliberate over the idea of forming the coming. This joint-effort was what led to the birth of the committee. The same Ulama were also appointed as supervisors and in addition, they were asked to present two people each for appointment as propagators. The appointment of these Ulama to serve in the committee serves as a forum where they interact and try to bury their differences for a common interest. In the course of working for the committee, the Ulama traveled together, eat together, pray together, discuss with one another thereby understand each other. The propagators are also from different ideological back ground but yet, they traveled together, work together, eat and pray together in the course of propagating Islam. No one shows his dislike over another due to differences of Aqeeda (creed), they considered themselves as Muslim working for Islam. In this respect also, through their interaction, the propagators understand one another and come to

appreciate the beauty of burying ideological difference for a common goal (i.e, the preaching of Islam).

In the whole, the committee has succeeded in bringing the Ulama from various ideological backgrounds to work for a common goal, which is to invite the non-Muslim to Islam. Through this, it has succeeded in achieving a lasting peace and unity among the Ulama since it provides, them with room to interact and tolerate one another as well as bury their ideological differences for a common goal.

## XII. THE IMPACTS OF CONVERSION ACTIVITIES OF KWAMITIN YADA ADDININ MUSULUNCI ON THE PEOPLE IN KONTAGORA EMIRATE.

For the purpose of clarity, these impacts can be classified into religious impacts, social impacts and moral impacts.

### i) Religious impacts

This is the major impact of the Da'wah activities of the committee in the Emirate. Through the activities of the committee the religious beliefs and practices of many farm-setters and other rural people drastically changed. As the reports of the committee's activities have indicated, more forty-five thousand people were converted to Islam through the efforts of the committee. Consequently, many fetish practice like Dashe, Tsafi, witchcraft and divination are reduced to minimum level among those new converts in the Emirate thereby inclining to pure – Islamic Monotheism (Tauhid) which was preached and thought by the committee's propagators in the Emirate (Yunusa, 2024). In addition, mosque built through the efforts of the committee to replaced shrines where Islamic devotional practices are observed in place of Magiro worship. The knowledge imparted to both new converts and other Muslim by the committee control the thought and emotion of many people in the Emirate. More than twenty-one mosques were said to have been brought to life by the committee throughout the Emirate.

The mass conversion of many people in the Emirate into Islam have contributed in cementing relationship between the indigene of the Emirate whereby, those new converts who have now come under the fold of

Islam have become brothers in Islam with other Muslims in the Emirate sharing common ideology, practicing one religion, discussing matters of common interest. This in turn, went a long way to minimize inter-religious crises in the Emirate.

ii) Social impacts

The conversion activities of the committee brought many changes in social life of the people in the Emirate. Such social changes were related to dress, diet, ceremonies and habits and the reduction of some bad social habits among the new converts. Some of the social impacts of the preaching activities of the committee could be seen in the following perspectives.

a) Dressing and dieting: It is a known fact that up till today, there are still some people in the Emirate especially among the Kambari people who live in the remotest part of the Emirate who are still pagans and lead a life of nudity in their jungles. Some of them do come to the town on market days appearing in a semi-nude condition using *Akasali* (Mini-Skirt) and *Arabani* (pants) to cover their private parts. These people are commonly seen around the areas of Ragada, Makuku, in Gulbin Boka districts. (Muhammadu, 2024) With the acceptance of Islam among these rural dwellers through the efforts of the committee's propagators, these nude and semi-nude appearance common among the pagan communities were replaced by the dignified Islamic styles of dress in addition to the habits of cleanness.

b) Marriages and naming practices

The conversion activities of the committee also have serious impacts in the marriage and naming practices among the new-converts in the Emirate. To some extent, the practice of *Satan mata* (wife stealing or elopement) which is very common among the Kambari pagans whereby a woman even if married can be abducted by another person has reduced to the barest minimum among the new converts (Wando, 2024). The Islamic principles and procedures of marriage are now practice in place of the customary mode of *satan mata* (wife elopement). So also, is the institution of divorce.

Similarly, the common practice of naming a newborn child among the pagan rural settlers which was quite opposite of Islamic naming procedure has changed

with their conversion to Islam. The pagan Kambaris for example, drive the names of their new born in three ways firstly, when a woman is pregnant, at the first stage of the pregnancy when she is suffering from pregnancy-related sicknesses, she would be taken to her family's *magiro* and sacrifice of a hen would be made, dedicate the woman and her pregnancy to *magiro*. Whenever she delivers, the child would be named with name of the family's *magiro* who have protected the woman and her fetus till delivery as a mark of honour and thanks given. Example of such *magiro* related names are *Kamuna* and *Aguino* (Mazame, 20224). The second way is the use of seasons and market days. If a child is born during the middle of raining season, he would be called *Damuna*, if it is during corn harvest, it would be name *Maidawa* or *Cidawa*, when a woman delivers on market day, the child would be named *Kasuwa*. The third way through which the pagan farm settlers got the names of their newborns is through the name of their visitor or a stranger in their village. When a stranger visited the village or the family have a visitor and before he leaves or become well known to them, a woman delivers, whatever the name of that visitor is, that would be the name of their new born. If it happens that the visitor is a man and the new born happens to a female, still, they ask the visitor to give any name he so wishes to the new born because, they feel, "*Arzikin shi ne*" (is his own fortune). Almost all the new converts through the efforts of the committee have one of these names changed after accepting Islam to Islamic names (KEIDAF, 2007).

One more interesting naming practice of the pagan people in the Emirate which Islam had impacted is that the pagan tribes doesn't slaughter animal (*Aqiqah*) for the newborn. With their conversion, majority of the new converts are now adhering to the Islamic practice of *Aqiqah*, (slaughtering ram on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of a child birth) *walima* (*banqueit*) and shaving the hair of the new born.

c) Festivals and ceremonies

The Islamization of the pagan and Christian rural settlers in the Emirate also brought a drastic change in the festivities and ceremonies among the new-converts. Generally, the pagan rural dwellers have two major ceremonies, religious and social. The religious festival is related to the worship of *magiro*.

It is an annual occasion to appease the magiro and seek for his protection in the next coming season. On that occasion day, each of the grow-up man in the community would go to the shrine of his magiro with a hen and hoe, he would give the two items to Magaji (the priest of magiro) who in turn, cut the jungler vein and throat of the hen using his thumb nails and spread its blood on the Magiro hut (shrine). It is believed that the fortune of each an individual in the community for that year is determines by the magiro on that occasion. The social festival on the other hand known as *Hebike Halabo* is an age group festival organized during guinea corn harvest where people assemble at the festival ground with their festive fests and seat base on age group. At the occasion, each peer-group would eat and drunk alcohol (locally made) to their satisfaction as well as dance or listen to the melody of the singers. In most occasions, the ceremony do ended with fighting especially when someone wants to seat in a group that is not of his age mate.

With the acceptance of Islam, the new-converts now have to abandoned these festivals and in their place, they are replaced with Islamic festivals like idil fitr (observed after completing fasting in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar), Idil Adha (observed on the tenth day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar) and Idil Maulud (celebrating the birth day of the Prophet of Islam).

Another area of impact that could be seen among the people in the Emirate as a result of the conversion activities of the committee is the death and burial rites. It is a common practice among the pagans in the Emirate that if a person dies, he will be buried with a quantity of guinea corn, some money and clothes. He would either be buried at standing posture or lying regardless of which direction and in most cases in his place of dwelling. His wife would be made to remain in doors for seven days within which she would be carrying knife anywhere she moves. After the seventh day, she would then shave her head, if the deceased is an elderly person, she would be tying a white wrapper with a raffia rope round her waist, carrying his guard (which he used white alive to carry water on a journey or *Burkutu*) as well as the staff (*sanda*) or spear he used for a complete year (Tanimu,2024). With the spread of Islam in most of the interior areas of the Emirate, these practices have been brought to barest

minimum level. Those who have embraced Islam are now free from the practices. They practice the simple burial rites prescribed by Islam and observed the *Iddah* as outlined by *shariah*.

a) Moral impacts.

The conversion activities of the committee also have great mark on the moral and ethical life the people in Kontagora Emirate. Like any part of the world where Islam spread, the spread of Islam in the Emirate have greatly changed the moral and ethical attitudes of the new-converts in the area. With the acceptance of Islam by the pagan committee or individuals for example in the area, they became introduced to the Islamic principles of *Halal* and *Haram*. With the knowledge of *Halal* and *Haram* in Islam, the new converts were made to re-address for example, their habits of eating, the habit of alcoholism, eating of dog etc. They are also introduced into Islam habits of slaughtering animal before eating, washing hands before and after eating, etc. These dietary habits replaced that of their former one like chasing a hen with stick and heating it to death or cutting its throat with nails.

Similarly, with the acceptance of Islam, the new converts were introduced to Islamic teachings and manners of toileting and attitudes toward sexual morality. These teachings have influenced in a no small measures the attitude of the new-converts towards toileting and also shaped their behavior as regards the relationship between the sexes. This to some great extent has molded the attitude of the new-converts towards nudity especially among their women folk.

Another moral impact of the committee's activities is the reduction of the practice and belief of witchcraft and superstition. Generally, witchcraft is part and parcel of *Magiro* worship. Many of these new-converts who have undergone lessons in the Islamiyyah schools conducted by the committee's propagators have willingly discarded these immoral practices. Added to the above is the reduction in the practice of tattooing and the piercing of the lips among the pagan tribes. It is the common practice among the Kamaris in the area for example, that a year to her marriage, a girl would be tattooed all over her body. Similarly, the upper and lower lips would be pierced.

The significance of piercing the two lips is that, should in case there is misunderstanding between her and the husband, she would lock her mouth by putting a threat over the two lips and tied or putting a stick with bead and would not talk to the husband until the intervention of her family through the family's *Magiro Bawa* (Bawa, 2024). These practices have reduced among the new-converts. If there happens to be any marital misunderstanding, it is resolved using Islamic manner of resolving marital conflicts.

However, it is important to point out here that despite the fact that the committee have succeeded in making converting many to Islam, and looking at the socio-religious impacts of the committee's activities in the area, it is common to find among the new-converts and even the old and born Muslim in the area involved in some of the old practices that Islam have condemned, for example, (Bawa, 2024) alcoholism, witchcraft, magic, superstition and the use of amulets. These practices are still been practiced by some pockets of Muslims in the Emirate (Haruna, 2025).

### XIII. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### Findings

What this work attempted to do is to make a historical account of the conversion activities of Kwamitin yada addinin Musulunci and its impact to the people of Kontagora Emirate. The following are considered to be the major findings of the study.

1) It is observed that the spread of Islam in the Emirate was a gradual process that started earlier than the arrival of the Nagwamatse by the immigrant Muslim traders, soldiers and itinerant scholars. Similarly, Islam spread in the Emirate by peaceful means through mutual interactions, inter-marriages and education rather than by war.

2) Even though Kwamitin yada addinin Musulunci was launched at a time of political transition from military to civilian democratic rule and though the committee is supported by some politicians in the Emirate, it is difficult trace the influence of party politics in the operation of the Committee.

3) It is also discovered that the Committee's source of funds is through charitable donations from the individual rich men in the Emirate. The bulk of the Committee's money is spent on the staff salaries. This therefore, seriously handicapped other activities of the committee.

4) It is also observed that in the course of its propagation activities, the Committee makes use of conventional method of preaching in reaching the non Muslims with little or no material gift to the new converts. Thus it could be said that the non- Muslims embraced Islam mainly because they are fed up with their former religions which are fast fading. The Committee also suffers from inadequate personnel who made them to assign to the propagators, the tasks of preaching and teaching of the new converts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions are hereby presented for the optimal performance of the Committee.

1) There is the need for the Committee to seek for other sources of revenue generation rather than solely relying on charity. The Committee could enter into a business investment from the little it generates annually from donations so as to be self- supporting and compliment the efforts of the voluntary donors as well as prevent the danger it may encounter should in case the principal donors decide to withdraw their assistance or if they pass away.

2) The work of teaching and preaching are two different things that demand serious commitment and dedication. By combining the two, there is likelihood that one would suffer. Therefore, it would be of great importance if the two can be separated.

3) Today, there are divergent methods of presenting Islam to the non-Muslims. It is therefore imperative for the Committee to adopt more Da`wah methods in addition to the traditional preaching method. The Committee should look into the possibility of reaching the non - Muslims by the use of modern devices like the use of Radio and television stations, the provision of health and educational facilities, portable water etc. This is because; modern man today is materially inclined.

CONCLUSION

From the proceeding, it has been shown that the spread of Islam in Kontagora Emirate has been mostly through the peaceful means rather than by the means of war. This effort was further carried out in the present time by the Muslim organizations the most remarkable of which is the role of Kwamitin yad addinin Musulunci. With all the problems round its neck, Kwamitin yada addinin Musulunci has succeeded in no a mall measure to bring into Islam more than forty-five thousand people in the Emirate as well as educate them not only on Islamic rituals and rights, but also in the art of reading and writing in Arabic. This means that the Committee has contributed greatly in the socialization of the people in the Emirate. Thus, to some extent, the work of the Committee could be seen as an effort to bring together, the people in the Emirate who are divided along religious differences and multi- tribal affiliations. These two divisions are the major courses of disunity and unrest in the Emirate.

REFERENCES

[1] Abdullahi, M. (2003) The Legacy of Umaru Nagwamatse; Kontagora Emirate into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in KEDA Newsletter, vol.1, no.1, March.

[2] Baban Larai, A. A. (1982). Umaru Nagwamatse: Founder of Kontagora Dynasty, Triumph Publishing Company, Kano.

[3] Bature S. B (1983), The Rise and Growth of Kontagora Emirate, M.A. Thesis, History Department, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

[4] Clerk, P. B. (1982)

[5] Dabai, A. S (2007), The contribution of Izalatul bid'a wa iqamatus sunnah to the development of Islamic education in Kontagora, B. A Project, ABU, Zaria, Nigeria.

[6] Hisket, M. (1984), The development of Islam in West Africa, Longman, New York.

[7] Hogben S.J and A.H.M. Kirk Greene (), Emirates of Northern Nigeria, Oxford University Press, London.

[8] KEIDAF (nd), Ka'ikdodin Dauka Aiki na Wa'azi.

[9] KEIDAF (2006), Annual Committee Report, 18/11/2006.

[10] KEIDAF (2007), Annual Committee Report, 10/11/2007.

[11] KEIDAF, (2008), Annual Committee Report.

[12] Kontagora Emirate History and Development Committee, (2009), History of Kontagora Emirate: The Emirate at a glance, Halygraph Nigeria LTD, Minna, Nigeria

[13] Kontagora Emirate Council (2009), History of Kontagora Emirate, Manuscript.

[14] Mahdi, A.(1980), The Hausa and other people of Northern Nigeria, 1200-1600 AD, UNESCO History of Africa, vol.iv, chapter 11.

[15] Mahdi, A. (1978) The HAUSA Factor in the History West Africa, ABU/ Oxford University Press, Ibadan.

[16] Niger State Government (2005), Turban: A compendium of Traditional Institutions in Niger State, Deligent Publishers, Minna.

[17] Tahir, A. (2007), History of Kontagora and its Founder, Umaru Nagwamatse, Unpublished manuscript.

[18] Yahya, I Y (2002), Hausa a Rubuce: Tarihin Rubuce Rubuce cikin Hausa, NNPC.

List of Informants

[19] Malam Ja`afaru Tagwai, a grandson of Malam Dan Hadiza one of the earliest settlers in Kotonkoro from Kauran Namoda. Interviewed on 04/03/2024, 2:45 p.m.

[20] Alh. Aliyu, S.B. Baraden Kontagora.

[21] Bawa, M. M, an indiegen of Mazame in Gulbin Boka District, interviewed on 18/03/2024 in his office, 11:30am.

[22] Yahaya Nuhu, Admin. Sec, Interviewed in his office, 11am – 1pm, 29/04/2024.

[23] Malam Abubakar Sahabi, leader of the propagators, interview on 03/05/24 at his residence. 8:01p.m.

[24] Yunusa Mai Bulu interviewed 12/05/2024 in his residence.

[25] Malam Muhammadu Bawa, (60Yrs) interviewed in his residence, 14/05/2024.

- [26] Malam Yusuf Wando 50Yrs, new convert interviewed in his residence, 12/05/2024 10am 12pm.
- [27] Tanimu Masamagu 60Yrs interviewed in his residence, 02/05/2024. 2:00 – 4:00pm.
- [28] Malam Bawa Anaba, 50Yrs, court official, interviewed in his office, 18/05/2024 11-12pm.
- [29] Malam Haruna Nasko 45yrs, ex-magiro worker, now an Islamiyyah teacher in one of the \Islamiyyah schools in the Emirate. Interviewed 23/04/2024 in his residence.