

Analytical Study of the Impact of Islamic Values and the Role of Sufis Orders In West Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article surveyed “Analytical Study Of The Impact Of Islamic Values And The Role Of Sufi Orders In West Africa”; The methodology explored for this article was basically philosophical; this means the materials used came largely from published and unpublished sources. The primary focus is on how Islamic values increased West African economics, socio-political life, religious, intellectual activities, and cultural and syncretism among the various West African countries, the article also analyzed how Islam helped expand trading routes from just the Trans-Saharan to outside of Africa, like Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Also Timbuktu and both the Mali and Songhai Empires becomes a major trading point. The 19th century Jihads such as that of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio brought about more far-reaching attempts to reform the whole socio-political, legal and economic system in line with the Qur’an and the practices of the Prophet (saw) and the righteous guided Caliphs. Sheikh Usman, a reformer, who was born in maratta Gobir in 1754 A.C. His father was a scholar and he personally taught sheikh Usman the Qur’an. Later sheikh Usman moved from place to place to be taught by other scholarly relatives. He was much impressed by one of his teachers in Agadesz, Jibril ibn Umar, through whom he was admitted in to a Sufi order. The impact of the Sufi orders in West Africa was spiritual, moral and occasionally political. As indicated, the orders offered a method of achieving spiritual advancement through training in mystical practices. At the same time the sense of belonging to a brotherhood and striving for moral purification under the guidance of a Sheikh would exert influence over the behavior of any Muslim who was seeking to please Allah. In this way the Sufi orders were themselves responsible for attracting people to Islam as well as providing an avenue of spiritual and moral advancement for born Muslims.

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1000 and 1750 C.E. (the 'Christian ,Era) Islam entered West Africa and increased its trade, many Islamic states rose and fell, but many aspects of African religion and gender roles remained unchanged. Between 1000 and 1700, Islam caused West Africa to experience an increase in trade and economic activity, the rise and fall of several Islamic states and empires, and provided new practices to be blended with the traditional African culture. In the period of 1000 and 1750 C.E (the' Christian' Era,) Islam increased West African economics by increasing trade. Muslim merchants brought Islam into West Africa and it spreads throughout the rest of Africa. Islam helped expand trading routes from just the Trans-Saharan to outside of Africa, like Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Also Timbuktu in both the Mali and Songhai Empires becomes a major trading point.

Sufism, which focuses on the mystical elements of Islam, has many Orders as well as followers in West Africa and Sudan and like other orders, strives to know God through meditation and emotion. Sufis may be Sunni or Shi'ite, and their ceremonies may involve chanting, music, dancing, and meditation. West Africa and Sudan have various Sufi orders regarded skeptically by the more doctrinally strict branches of Islam in the Middle East. Most orders in West Africa emphasize the role of a spiritual guide, The Tijaniyyah is the most popular Sufi order in West Africa, with a large following in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Senegal Gambia, and Nigeria. Second, Islamic states rose and fell during the period of 1000 and 1750 C.E. (the' Christian, Era) The Ghana Empire which fell in 1224 never converted to Islam. However the Mali Empire was established around 1235. It was a multi-ethnic state with various religious and cultural groups.

Mansa Musa made Islam the official religion of the state, and in 1324 displays the wealth of the Mali Empire when he makes the pilgrimage to Mecca, and devalues gold in Egypt for about a decade because he spends so much.

i) Influence On The Economic System of West Africa

(a) Arrival of Muslims Traders

The arrival from the 8th century A.C. of Muslim traders from North Africa opened up West Africa to international trades. The chief exports from West Africa were gold, Ivory, kola nuts, pepper, and slaves. The West Africa received in return salt, silk, cloth, metal ware and other manufacture goods from west Africa and beyond. Since the Muslim stretched from Spain in the west to the borders of China in the Far East trade took place over vast distances. In this way useful connection were established with the rest of Islamic world, bringing an exchange not only of products and artifacts but also on intellectual ideas and economic practices. (Aisha, B, Lemo: 2005, p. 222)

(b) Muslim Trading Cities and practices

Since the West African trade was towards the north, the great trading cities grew up along the northern borders where the savannah meets the desert. Here the caravans would rest and unload after their crossing of the sahara. The cities were like ports where ships would load and unload, with camels taking the role the "ships of the desert". Among such important trading terminals were Tumbuktu, Gao, Audoghast, kumbi, Jenne, Borno, and in later times Kano.

Islam does not divided life into "secular" and "sacred" compartments. Even everyday activities and work, if done with the right intention, and provided they are Halal, are considered a part of worship. Therefore Muslims have always considered economic activities, including trade, important. The Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet (saw), teach that trade should conform to

principles of honesty fairness at both the organizational and individual levels. Hence the Muslims traders brought with them to West Africa Islamic principles of market organization, inspection of goods, weights and measures, and fair means of buying and selling. Literacy was also important for long distance trading, in recording order, sales and agreements, particularly in light of the Qur'anic injunctions, on written contracts and witnesses in commercial transactions

The Quran says:
 [يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بِيَدِكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْب كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَِّهُ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رَجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ]

“O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fix period, write it down. let a scribe write it down in justice between you. Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him, so let him write. Let him (the debtor) who incurs the liability dictate, and he must fear Allah”..... (Q: chpt : 2: Vs, 282).

The Islamic prohibition of interest, exploitations, hoarding and cheating and the strong emphasis on keeping promises helped to make trade relationship harmonious and beneficial to both buyer and seller. Even when traders might try to evade the Qura'nic prohibition of interest by various devices. Such agreements could have no legal backing. Therefore it was rare for traders to sink into perpetual debt through interest-bearing loans. (Aisha B. lemo, 2005, p. 223).

ii) Influence on The Islamic Political Systems

a) Islamic Ruling And Paganism

Before the arrival of Islam in west Africa several ethnic groups in the Savanna belt had organized themselves into substantial trading empires . the spread of Islam within these empires was gradual process from the 8th century onwards. Empire established themselves and eventually declined over the centuries, to be superseded by others. Such empires sometimes began under pagan leadership but once established became predominantly Muslim in leadership and in urban population. Nevertheless the indigenious religions of the people existed side by side with Islam, particularly in the rural areas. These religions were based on cults of various local and tribal gods and on the worship of ancestors. The head of state was traditionally regarded as the leader of all the cults, and played ritual role as an intermediary between the people of and the gods. This role of semi-diving king was often sustained by the practice of royal seclusion. In the empire of old Ghana the king would not speak with his subjects directly but through an “interpreter” who would relay his words to the listeners. Similar practices were reported by the great Arab traveler ibn Battuta when he visited the empire of Mali in 1535. The rulers of Songhai and the Mais of Borno also lived in semi-seclusion from their subjects. (Trigmnham, J,S. 1970, p. 160).

b) Achievement of The Islamic Leadership

Thus although the coming of Islam to West Africa in the period from the 8th to 18th centuries influenced the conduct of state affairs in some organizational aspects, most of the West African States of this period, with some notable exceptions, could not be described as truly “Islamic” in ideology or concept. Similarly, although there were in some of these States Islamic courts, and Islamic Judges who were held in high respect, it appears that in applying the law they were guided more by local custom than by the provision of the shari'ah. However there were over the years a number of note worthy attempts at more comprehensive Islamization under the

leadership of able Muslims such as Askiya Muhammad, in Songhai, Idris Aloma in Borno. Muhammad Rumfa in Kano and Muhammad Korau in katsina. (Trimnghan, J. S. 1970, p. 161).

The 19th century Jihads such as that of sheikh Usman Dan Fodio brought about more far – reaching attempts to reform the whole socio-political, legal and economic system in line with the Qur’an and the practices of the Prophet (saw) and the righteous guided Caliphs.

This movement involved much intellectual effort and discussion of the requirements of an Islamic State, and numerous books were written addressing this topic. The achievements of the Sokoto reform leaders were great and in some respects over a large area of what is today Nigeria. However, later generations of emirs who inherited titles of leadership did not always inherit the same religious motivation. The decline of religious and intellectual commitment among the leadership led to the decline of a truly Islamic conduct of State. Some Empires could not resist the corrupting effects of power and came to resemble in their behavior and administration the very tyrants the Caliphate had preached against and overthrown. Nevertheless, the sokoto Caliphate at the time of its founders remains illustrious as an example of how Islamic ideals of a moral political order could be and were applied in the heart of Africa by an indigenous people more than ten centuries after they were first taught in Makkah and Madinah. (Aisha, B. lemo.2005, P. 233).

iii) The Influence of Islam on Social Life and Intellectual Activities

a) Social Life Influence

Religion and culture are closely inter-related with social life and social custom. Islam as it spread across West Africa brought many changes in social life, although the degree and the speed of change vary from place to place and time to time.

The most obvious or visible changes in African social life brought by Islam were related to dress, diet and manners. For both men and women the loose and dignified Islamic styles of dress were adopted in place of the semi-nude condition common in pagan societies. With this went greater cleanness of clothing and of the body due to Islamic ablutions and other practices of hygiene, and encouragement of the use of soaps and perfumes. (Ahmed, A.F. 1986, p. 25.)

The Islamic dietary laws brought the concept of more humane methods of animal slaughter, and the prohibition of eating carrion, blood, pig, and dogs. The prohibition of alcohol had been a common feature of traditional social activities.

1. The Family and Language

The family structure and roles of men and women underwent some modification under Islamic influence. In the tribal system the clan and the clan leader have wide powers. The Islamic legal system however, gives more importance to the immediate family unit (parents, children, grandparents) rather than the wider clan. This applies in matters of authority and also in respect of inheritance. For example, whereas in the tribal/clan system a widow would often be “inherited” by the late husband’s brother, the Islamic law allows the widow to re-marry according to her choice. The Islamic duty of the husband to provide for the maintenance of his wife exercised a moderating influence on the heavy farm work often assigned to women in African societies. Attitudes towards sexual morality were also affected, even though the Islamic legal punishments for adultery and fornication were seldom applied in practice. Ahmad, A. F. (1985).

The coming of Islam brought with it many Arabic loan words, particularly those related to religion and education which were incorporated into the local languages of West Africa. The Hausa language is particularly rich in such Arabic “loan words”.

a) Representational Art

Artistic activities were also affected by the Islamic injunction against the portrayal of living beings. This cut at the root traditional pagan art form such as idols, status, carving, mask and other animal and human representational art forms. In its place there developed abstract and stylized designs, used on buildings, household artifacts, pottery, woven cloth embroidered items.

b) Tribe, Social class and Caste

Tribal life is by its nature limited and parochial. By contrast, Islam could be perceived from the start as a universal religion which superseded the boundaries of nation and tribe. Inter-marriage between races and tribes was not frowned on, and membership of the Islamic faith implied membership of a worldwide community of believers of many races. This membership of an international community could be experienced by all who made the pilgrimage over land across the Sahara and North Africa or direct across the Sudan and the Red Sea.

The Islamic concept of brotherhood also modified existing divisions on the basis of social class and gave no room for the establishment of classes of "outcast", as found in some pagan societies. This is not to say that tribal consciousness and social class ceased to exist, but that Islamic concepts and practices as found in some pagan societies. This is not to say that tribal consciousness and social class ceased to exist, but that Islamic concepts and practices such as prayer, fasting and zakat reinforced the idea of basic human brotherhood irrespective of status or tribe. The daily standing in the rows for prayer, shoulder to shoulder, in the neighborhood mosques, in the Friday mosques, in the Id'el prayers and in the Hajj could not fail to convey this message.

(Ahmad, A. F. 1986. P. 26)

c) Halal, Haram And The Shari'ah

The Islamic concepts of Halal (lawful) and Haram (unlawful) and the comprehensive legal framework of the Shari'ah gave a new image and outlook to the West African Muslim, which will differentiate him from his pagan compatriots in appearance and social behavior.

The impact of Islam on formally pagan West Africans was observed at first hand by European explorers and traders as they penetrated from generally pagan coastal lands of West Africa into the Islamized interior.

For instance Joseph Thomson, in 1877 reported:

"In steaming up the river (i.e. the Niger), I saw little in the first 200 miles to alter my views, for there luxuriated in congenial union fetishism, cannibalism and the gin trade. But as I left behind me the law-lying coast region, and found myself near the southern boundary of what is called the central Sudan, I observed an ever increasing improvement in the appearance of the character of the native, Everything indicated a leaving of some higher element, an element that was clearly taking a deep hold on the Negro nature and making him a new man. That element you will be surprised to hear is Mohammadanism. On passing Lokoja at the confluence of the Benue with the Niger, I left behind me the missionary outposts of Islam, and entering the central Sudan, found myself in a comparatively well-governed empire, teeming with a busy populace of keen traders, expert manufacturers of cloth, brass work and leather; a people in fact, who have made enormous advances towards civilization." (Trimingham, J.s. 1970, p. 172).

2. Influence on Intellectual Activities

Islam being a religion based on a revealed book brought with it the arts of reading and writing. The ability to use a written language was a great stimulus to intellectual life. For the first time, historical events in West Africa could be recorded in written documents. Schools sprang up wherever Muslims lived Qur'an Schools for children, ilm schools for the older students. At least one centre reached the status of university that of Sankore in Timbuktu, established in the 16th

century . some students went further a field in search of knowledge, to the university of Qairawan in north Africa. Or to Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

Influence of Arabic Script

Arabic script was also utilized for the writing of local languages. West African scholars mastered the Arabic languages itself and produced books in both Arabic and the vernacular, mostly related to topics of religion and moral conduct, and indulging many volumes of poetry. Among the most prolific and famous scholars in West Africa were Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu, sheikh al- Maghili, (who was strictly speaking a settler) Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio, Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio, Muhammad Bello and Sheikh Usman's daughter Nana Asma'u who composed religious poetry in several languages.

Sheikh al-Maghili (died 1504) was famous for his book "The duty of kings" which was written as advice on good government for the king Muhammad Rumfa of kano in about 1490 A.C. some of the most famous books of sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio are describe in chapter 83 of this volume. His son Muhammad Bello's books covered a similar field of study. Other important works by Muslim scholars included the Tarikh As-Sudan (HISTORY OF SUDAN) by Abdulrahman As-Sadi and Tarikh al-Fatash (the History the Seeker of Knowledge) by Mahmud Kati . Both writers live in Tumbuktu. Their books were completed around 1665 A.C. and give a lot of valuable information to later scholars about the early history of West Africa. Thus although divided from the rest of Muslim World by the barrier the Sahara, West Africa became an outpost of Islamic scholarship and develop med its own tradition. This tradition and many of the old books have survived and provided a source of inspiration to West African Muslims in the Islamic reawaking of our own times. Nowadays scholars can cross the Sahara to attend courses and conferences in just a few hours by air instead of the many weeks and months needed in earlier centuries when the only means of transport was by camel-back in the burning heat across waterless tracts of sand and rock. (Galadanci, A.S. 1993, p.7,).

A Brief History of the Famous Sufi Scholars in West Africa

Ahmad Baba al-Massufi

Ahmad Baba al-Massufi al-Timbukti, full name Abu al-bbas Ahmad ibn Ahmad al-Takruri Al-Massufi al-Timbukti (October 26, 1556 – 1627), was a medieval Songhai writer, scholar, and political provocateur in the area then known as the Western Sudan. Throughout his life, he wrote more than 40 books and is often noted as having been Timbuktu's greatest scholar. He died in 1627. (Web page, 1st paragraph,)

Muhammad al-Maghili

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, commonly known as Muhammad al-Maghili (died ca.1504) was an Islamic scholar from Tlemcen, the capital of the Kingdom of Tlemcen, now in modern-day Algeria. Al-Maghili was responsible for converting to Islam the ruling classes among Hausa, Fulani, and Tuareg peoples in West Africa. Maghili led a campaign to expel the city's Jewish community, which had migrated there after the Roman Sack of Jerusalem, and was successful. Many of the Jews were indeed expelled from Tlemcen and their synagogue was destroyed. He also served as an adviser for Muhammad Rumfa, Emir of the Hausa city-state Kano, and wrote a treatise on government, Original manuscripts of his work are available from the United Nations World Digital Library. (Web page, 1st paragraph,)

Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio

Sheikh Usman bn Fodio was born in Maratta in 1168 AH/ December 1754 CE, and his full name is Usman ibn Muhammad ibn Usman ibn Salih ibn Ayyub ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Gordo ibn Muhammad Jabbo ibn Muhammad Sambo ibn Ayyub ibn Bubab Bani ibn Masiran ibn

Ayyub ibn Musa who is called Jakolo who came from Futa Toro. The name Foduye is his father's epithet, which is a Fulfulde word meaning "the learned" and the word "Dan" is the Hausa version of "son of". The family of Sheikh Usman bn Fodio, a family that is well known for Islamic scholarship, migrated from Futa Toro to Hausaland in the 5th century after Hijra.

Sheikh Usman ibn Fodio studied under various teachers including his father. But one of the teachers that had the greatest influence on him was Jibril ibn Umar Jibril who was concerned about the level of decadence in the Hausa society. Sheikh Usman ibn Fodio was influenced by the concerns of his teacher, and he dedicated himself to the study of Islam, until it reached a point where he began to see himself as scholar. (Ibrahim, S. 1986. pp. 4-5).

Abdullahi dan Fodio

Abdullahi dan Fodio (ca. 1766–1828), Sultan of Gwandu (1819–1828), was a scholar and brother of Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817). Usman, being more of a scholar than politician, delegated the practical regency of the western part of his empire to Abdullahi, who later became the Emir of Gwandu, and the eastern part to his son Muhammed Bello. The title of sultan was passed on to Bello. 1815. (Ibrahim, S. 1986, p. 5.).

Muhammad Bello Dan Fodio

Muhammad Bello (Arabic: محمد بلو) was the second Sultan of Sokoto and reigned from 1815 until 1837 and was an active writer of history, poetry, and Islamic studies. He was the son and primary aide to Usman dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate and the first Sultan. During his reign, he encouraged the spread of Islam throughout the region, increasing education for both men and women, and the establishment of Islamic courts. He died on October 25, 1837 and was succeeded by his brother Abu Bakr Atiku. (Ibrahim, S. 1986, p.15).

Nana Asma'u Dan Fodio

Nana Asma'u (full name: **Nana Asma'u bint Shehu Usman dan Fodiyo**, Arabic: نانا أسماء بنت عثمان فودي; 1793–1864) was a princess, poet, teacher, and daughter of the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, Usman dan Fodio. She remains a revered figure in northern Nigeria. Nana Asma'u is held up by some as an example of education and independence of women possible under Islam, and by others as a precursor to modern feminism in Africa. (Ibrahim, S. 1986. p 10).

Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa'di

Abd ar-Rahman ibn Nasir as-Sa'di at-Tamimi (1889–1956) was an Islamic scholar, jurist, exegete, and Arabic grammarian with a great interest in poetry who contributed many works on a variety of subjects. His Works Books and treatise written by as-Sa'di include: Taysir al-Karim ar-Rahman fee Tafsir al-Quran. Urdu-Books. Retrieved 2014-07-09.–Tafsir of the Quran and his most famous work *al-Durrat al-Fakhira (The Exquisite Pearl)*. (Web page, 3th, paragraph,

Islamic values: Integration and Syncretism

1. Two cultures

When Islam began to penetrate West Africa, it met ready formed empires such as that of Old Ghana, and a pattern of beliefs and customs based on African traditions and religion. Although African traditional religion encompasses the concept of a supreme God, it also features cult worship of various lesser deities, natural phenomena, spirits, ancestors, and idols. Other common features of West African traditional religions are divination, witchcraft, and various superstitions with regard to unusual phenomena. In some cases such superstitions could involve human sacrifice and even cannibalism. It was also common for the King or Chief to be regarded as a semi-divine figure whose cultic role in some areas was to ensure the fertility of the annual planting of crops. All such beliefs and practices are contrary to Islamic teachings of one God,

Unique and without partners, to whom a Muslim should pray without intermediary. A belief system has its outward forms in people's ceremonies, festivals, art forms and general way of life. Therefore the West African traditional religion found cultural expression in masquerades, fertility festivals, masks and fetishes, as well as spirit dances and the use of alcohol on both religious and social occasions. All such practices or art forms are considered outside the pale of Islam either because they are unlawful (Haram) in themselves or because of their association with idol-worship and polytheism (Shirk) in general. (Hunwik, J. O. 1964, p, 39).

2. The Attitude Of Islam Towards Local Cultures

Islam is a culture in itself in the sense that its teachings relate to the whole of life –spiritual, moral, intellectual, social cultural, and to some extent, material. However, as Islam spreads to parts of the world where it has hitherto been unknown, it comes into direct with people of other cultures, some of whom converted to Islam. Such new converts may want to bring with them some of their cultural practices which belong to their own tradition. What is the attitude of Islam to such a situation? The Islamic approach is to accept any good customs which are compatible with the principles of Islam and to reject customs that conflict with them. In some cases Islam met features of West African culture which it could endorse. For example African societies generally teaches children to show great respect to their parents and elders and Islam confirm this practices. In other cases the local custom may be basically acceptable but it requires Islamic modification or restriction. For example, traditional African societies practices polygamy. Islam also permits polygamy, but subject to restriction in number and subject to certain conditions that ensure fair treatment and justice. (Aisha B. L. 2005, p: 209).

The Role of Sufis Orders In West Africa

1. Sufism

Sufism is the name given to Islamic mysticism. It refers to the attempt of a believer through inner purification, prayer, meditation or other acts of worship to come closer to God and achieve direct personal experience of Him.

2. Growth Of Sufi Orders

In the course of history certain outstanding masters of Sufism become the founders of Sufi orders. These are known as Tariqah (the Arabic word for a way or path). Disciples would gather to learn from the master, and where such gatherings residential, a Zawiyah or a House of retreat for meditation would be established. The retreat might be for short or long periods, and might involve group prayers, dhikr (i.e practices for remembrance of God) or other activities designed to bring the soul into a state of receptiveness. Alternatively Sufi prayers and meditation could be done in a mosque after congregational prayer, or individually at home, without the necessity of a prolonged retreat.

The practice is traced to voluntary group meditation as far back as the time of Prophet (saw) which is recorded in the Hadith ; but the growth of the specific religious orders for the teaching of Sufi practices was a later development in the history of Islam. The leaders of such Sufi orders in some cases came to be regarded as saints. The saint or saint's tomb was believed to be a source of Baraka (blessing) on those who paid a visit. The cult of saints and the tombs however did not spread to West Africa except in the far north western areas occupied by the moors. (Sharif M.M. 1983, p. 42).

3. The Sufi Training

The true Sufi initiation and training is always done at a personal level from master (sheikh)to disciple. The disciples may in due course qualify as a master to initiate others, and so the chains of transmission may ultimately be traced back to the founder of the order. The essence of the

composition of dhikr which originated with the founder of each order is traced back to verses of the Qur'an or to certain Hadith of the Prophet (saw) even though the mode of practice by some Sufi orders could not necessarily be derived from any known practice of the Prophet (saw). The center of the Sufi ritual is the dhikr (remembrance of God) in congregation or alone. When performed collectively it is chanted in rhythm. In some parts of the world this practice culminates in an ecstatic state when the adept experiences a feeling of mystical union with God.

For many West African Muslims association with a Sufi order is confined to the practice of adding a certain formula of dhikr to the meditations and supplications following the daily prayers. For the majority this practice is not in the expectation of any mystical experience. However, belonging to one of the orders may strengthen and purify the moral conduct of the person concerned, since admission is only granted to those who are ready to submit to the moral discipline of the order. This may involve strict avoidance of alcohol, Smoking, lying, corruption and association with pagan cult, along with other positive injunctions. The initiated member then has an added incentive to be worthy of this status in the Order. (Sharif, M.M. 1983, p. 45).

4. The Qadiriyyah Order

The Qadiriyyah order was established by Abdulqadir Jilani in Baghdad in the twelfth century A.C. it spread in to West Africa in the 15th century through Timbuktu, near which a center was established for the order. Two important Jihad leaders, Sheikh Ahmad Labbo of Masina and Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio, were members of this order which produced a number of other scholars, missionaries and leaders, including Sheikh Muktar al-Kunti.

The early spread of the Qadiriyyah was very slow. It was only in the fifteenth century that the order spread significantly beyond Iraq and Syria. At this time it became established in India through the work of Muhammad Ghawth (d.1517).³¹ In the seventeenth century, it was established in Istanbul by Isma'il Rum (d.1631) and in the nineteenth century reached as far as Malaysia and Indonesia. (Kamaldeen, S. 2013, p. 60).

The order also played an important role in Islamic religious and political life in North Africa. In the eighteenth century, under the leadership of Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817), the order moved to impose Islam on those practicing traditional religious in the regions that are now Nigeria and Niger, and in the nineteenth century in Algeria the Qadiriyyah fought at length against the French colonialists. The order continues today in various parts of the Muslim world.

The Qadiriyyah has not developed any distinctive doctrines or teachings outside mainstream Islam. They believe in the fundamental principles of Islam but interpret them through mystical experience. The movement's founder Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani emphasized the importance of humaneness and charity. The order's rituals are characterized by the loud recitation of verses in praise of Muhammad and the singing of sacred hymns. These are sometimes accompanied by various bodily movements designed to induce ecstasy. In some areas, local pilgrimages to *zawiyas* (shrines) of the saints who are believed to be descendants of 'Abd al-Qadir and festivals are celebrated in their honour. The followers of the Qadiriyyah wear a rose embroidered on their caps. Muhammad, Bello (D. 1836).

5, The Tijjaniyyah Order

This order was established by Sheikh Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Tijjani (1731-1815 A. C.) In Morocco/Algeria, After his death, missionary activity was undertaken by his followers which carried the teachings of the order across the caravan routes to West Africa. The Tijjaniyyah order become more widespread than the Qadiriyyah and in some areas replaced it. At the time of the conquests of al-Hajj Umar Tal (d. 1864) in the western Sudan the Tijjaniyyah order was

officially recognized and promoted in the subject territories. When the empire in due course broke up, the Tijjaniyyah allegiance remained strong.

The influx of the Tijjaniyyah brotherhood into West Africa can be credited to the activities of Umar Futi, who had been initiated into the brotherhood and appointed *khalifah* of the Sudan. Before leaving Mecca where he had been initiated, he received his *ijaza* (licence) in which, according to Martins, al-Ghali stated:

“Umar was authorized to give instructions in the Tijjaniyyah to whoever asked it among Muslims, young or old, obedient or rebellious, man or woman, slave or free.”

The *ijaza* also stressed that the order was the Muhammadiyyah (Muhammad order). In effect, this was not to be confused with the order or unreformed orders like the Qadiriyyah order. This again made the Tijjaniyyah order a universal one in that it admitted slaves and woman. This actually increased the number of Tijjaniyyah adherents a great deal.

Tijjaniyyah adherents could be found mostly in Senegal among the Tokolor, Wolof, Laghlah, and other groups. It was from there that the order penetrated into Nigeria. (Kamal-deen, S. 2013, p. 65),

Impact of Sufi Orders In West Africa

The impact of the Sufi orders in West Africa was spiritual, moral and occasionally political. As indicated, the orders offered a method of achieving spiritual advancement through training in mystical practices. At the same time the sense of belonging to a brotherhood and striving for moral purification under the guidance of a Sheikh would exert influence over the behavior of any Muslim who was seeking to please Allah. These aspects were very attractive to people of naturally religious disposition who sought personal commitment in their religious life. In this way the Sufi orders were themselves responsible for attracting people to Islam as well as providing an avenue of spiritual and moral advancement for born Muslims. The tariqas could play an especially important role in times of political turmoil, when then the ordered structures of society broke down. This was so in West Africa after the Moroccan invasion in 1591 A.C. this invasion broke up the Songhai Empire in to small independent Kingdoms in which Islam was no longer the state religion. Paganism had its opportunity to make a come back and many local rulers were either pagans or nominal Muslims who rules by their whims without reference to Islamic norms of government and society. The constant warfare between the petty Kingdoms destroyed both trade and learning. Timbuktu, the intellectual cradle of Islam in West Africa, desecrated, its scholars killed or scattered. Yet it was during this period between the 15th and 18th centuries that the Qadiriyya Tariqa enter West Africa and became firmly established. To be reinforced by the Tijjaniyya Tariqa in the 19th century. (Ahmad, 1986, p. 30).

These Sufi orders were not militant, but rather they contributed to the purification of Soul (Jihad al-Nafs); for example they taught the ethic of asceticism and tarbiyya (character training), thus raising a brotherhood of men ready to endure hardship for the sake of the lofty ideals of Islam. Secondly, they could operate outside the structure of the government as moral and religious movements dedicated to personal piety. Thus their activities could fill some of the gaps left by the States withdrawal of support for Islamic education.

Summary and Conclusion

In this article, we learned about the influence of Islam in medieval West Africa. Islam left a deep mark on West African economy. The Spread of Islam in West Africa was first motivated by Traders and Islamic Scholars who brought Islam to Ghana in the 8th century. The influence of Islam increased under the rulers of Mali and Songhai. Influence of Religious Practices changed West African religion. Many continued to show respect for the spirits of ancestors and to follow

other traditional beliefs, but they learned to adhere to the Five Pillars of Islam and to celebrate Muslim religious festivals.

Government, Law, and Education:

Islam brought new ideas about government and law. The royal succession became patrilineal. Government became more centralized. Shari'ah replaced customary law. There was a new emphasis on learning. People studied at Qur'anic schools and Islamic universities. Timbuktu became a center of Islamic and academic study.

Arabic Language and Islamic Architecture and Decorative Arts:

Arabic became the language of religion, learning, commerce, and government. New styles of architecture developed as West Africans built mosques and changed the designs of their homes. They also adopted new, geometric styles in their decorative arts. Sufi Tareeqahs (orders) played a commendable role and exerted great efforts in spreading Islam in West Africa. Their role was spreading the Islamic teachings, advocating tolerance with Christians, and using the means of encouraging and not intimidation to preach Islam. Moreover, they constructed mosques and places for dhikr that became beehive-like places for remembering and worshipping Allah (The Greatest). They established schools and purchased slaves, taught them the principles of Islam, and then freed them and sent them as callers to Allah (The Greatest) to preach Islam in different regions. Among the Sufi Tareeqahs that had great experience and accomplishments in Da'wah in West Africa were the Qadiriyyah, Teejaaniyyah, Sinoosi, (Sanussi) Tareeqahs, and Naqashabandiyya .

They established schools for studying the Noble Quran wherever they traveled and exchanged ideas with the inhabitants, kings, and rulers. These tolerant Islamic ideas were received well by those of good souls. Shortly, many of the population of the region converted from paganism into Islam.

It is also evident that the Qadiriyyah is one of the oldest *tariqahs* and derives its name from 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166), a native of the Iranian province of Gilan, whereas the Tijaniyyah order was founded by Ahmed at-Tijani in about 1781 C.E. The orders have led many of their members to acquire the necessary discipline before acquiring more knowledge of the true existence of God and his relation to Allah and the universe.

This article therefore, recommended, since it is well known fact that, the resurgence of Islam is flourishing in every part of west Africa, dedicated Muslims should try hard to meet the challenges of modern times, while remaining faithful to the values of their past. Moreover, all Muslims today are duty-bound to sift the chaff from the grains of modern Sufism by eschewing all absurdities woven round the original Sufis. Any attempt to reject Sufism in its entirety is indeed an attempt to reject a pristine Islamic institution.

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