



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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INFORMAL ARABIC EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ILORIN, NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL STUDY

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Abstract

This paper is a historical study of the informal Arabic Educational system in Ilorin metropolis; it examined how the system, through its products, supports and enhances sustainable development in Nigeria. In order to achieve this, the paper was divided into five sections. The first section gives an account of the growth and development of Ilorin town. The second section discusses Arabic and Islamic education in Ilorin, while the third section examines Arabic informal education in Nigeria. The fourth section highlights the role of the products and the stakeholders of Arabic informal education in contributing to sustainable development in Nigeria. The fifth section is a conclusion that summarizes the study, enumerates its findings and suggestions. The study discovered that the majority of Ilorin indigenes, who became eminent in various fields of endeavors today, started their education from the Arabic informal Education. Many of the religious leaders in the country today graduated from this system. In particular, the *Mankondoro* group, who still value this system of education over any other system, contributed immensely to the development of Nigeria, although a substantial number of them completed their education in a formal setting. Conclusively, it is suggested that if the system is improved and raised to the high standard of formal Education it would contribute more to the sustainable development of Nigeria in particular and even Africa in general. It is our belief that Arabic Education curricular developer and stakeholder will find this study significant to their work.

Keywords: Ilorin metropolis, informal Arabic education, Nigeria, sustainable development.

Introduction

Informal education is said to be a general term for education outside the standard school setting. It can refer to the various forms of alternative

education, such as autodidacticism, homeschooling and youth work. Arabic is a member of the Semitic family of languages. It belongs to the South-West Semitic branch, which embraces South Arabian and Ethiopian languages. Of all the Semitic languages, Arabic is the only language that has gallantly stood the test of time, and has left an indelible mark on the course of world history, culture and civilization. Comparatively, it is also the richest in terms of repertoire of vocabulary, syntactic distinction and elaborateness of verbal forms. Development, according to Oxforddictionaries.com (2014) is “a specified state of growth or advancement; a new and advanced product or idea; an event constituting a new stage in a changing situation.” Sustainable Development, according to Brundtland 1987 report as contained in sustainabledevelopmentinfo.com (2014) “is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Ilorin is one of the large cities in Nigeria, and it is the capital of Kwara State. Ilorin, since it became an Islamic Emirate, remains the centre for dissemination of Arabic and Islamic knowledge and teachings in Yorubaland. The method of imparting the knowledge up till the period of Nigerian independence was informal, though, after that, the trend changed but there are certain quarters that maintain the informal education to date.

Many works have been carried out on Arabic and Islamic Education in Nigeria, but very few of these works concentrated on Ilorin. The ones that have direct bearing on Arabic Education are that of Al-Ilory (1982) entitled “, *Lamahātulballur fī mashāhīr‘ulamā’ilorin:(famous Ilorin scholars) from 1200 AH to 1400 AH; 1800 – 1980 CE, and that of Abubakre (2012) entitled: “Ilorin and the Rest of the World: Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory as an Ambassador Plenipotentiary”. The first one is biographies of early Arabic scholars of Ilorin, while the second one accounted for the leading role played by Ilorin scholars in disseminating Arabic Islamic scholarship in Yorubaland with emphasis on the contribution of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory. None of the two works directly discussed the system of Arabic education in Ilorin but effectively explained the Arabic scholars contribution to the development of scholarship in Yorubaland.*

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to study the contributions of the Informal Arabic Education to sustainable development in Ilorin in particular and Nigeria in general. To achieve this objective, the paper introduces Ilorin town and its significant position to Nigerian economy and the spread of Islam and Arabic Education in Yorubaland before venturing into the examination of the contributions of Informal Education, through its product, to sustainable

development of Nigeria. It also looks at the challenges facing this system of education and proffers possible solutions to the various challenges.

The Growth and Development of Ilorin Metropolis

There is divergent of opinions on the meaning and the root of the word "Ilorin" as well as the founder of Ilorin. Jimoh (1994) and other scholars believe that the town was founded by One Ojo Isekuse and his fellow hunter Emila, who came after him. They both created a transit camp at the point of a legendary rock on which they used to sharpen their metal tools. It was called "*Okutailoirin*" (meaning stone for sharpening metals) and from this sharpening of iron Ilorin derived its Name. Other scholars are of the opinion that Ilorin was founded by certain Ayinla from Oyo-Ile (probably the same Ojo) who came to Ilorin to hunt elephant and because of the availability of elephant in Ilorin, the town was named *Ilu-Erin* meaning the town of elephant (Salihu & Jawondo 2006). Another opinion has it that it was a certain Barba hermit who first settled in Ilorin before the advent of Ojo Isekuse in the 17th century and that the word Ilorin is a derivation from Barba word *Ironi* meaning alligator pepper (Salihu & Jawondo, 2006). However, this study does not aim to study the origin of the word Ilorin and the real founder of the town; rather, our concern here is to state the growth and development of the town. It will suffice, therefore, to state that the early settlers in the town were Yoruba-Speaking people with a man called Afonja as a prominent military leader among them. Later the Hausa community from the North also settled at Gambari area of the town headed by Bako. Afterward an itinerant Fulani Muslim scholar, Salihu bn Jinta, popularly known as Shaykh Alimi, also from the North, arrived in the town and within a short period, his descendants established an Islamic state in Ilorin and its environs. The town today is predominantly Yoruba, but it is politically and administratively approximate to the North (Encyclopedia of Islam, 1960). It has expanded to become an Emirate, which comprises Asa, Moro, Ilorin-West and South Local Government Areas of Kwara State.

However, before the advent of Shaykh Alimi in 1817, by the close of the Seventeenth century, some Muslim scholars had begun to settle in Ilorin. Shaykh Solagberu (Abdullahi Tahir) and his compatriots settled at Oke-Sunna. Other scholars in the town included Shaikh Muhammad Munabai and his wife Aishat, Shaykh Sasini, Shaykh Sanusi, Shaykh Muhammad Thanni and others known and unknown to history. The scholars engaged in intensive teaching, preaching and converting the natives to Islam. By this, Islam became established and attained an appreciable influence, which was

maintained till today (Hitti, 1970). The settlement of Shaykh Alimi in Ilorin greatly increased the holdings of Islam.

Ilorin has a rich history of providing great scholars who are of religious, academic and intellectual prominence. Such scholars are scattered far and wide, both in Nigeria and abroad. These scholars include both indigenes of Ilorin and non-indigenes and they are nationally and internationally acknowledged. Some of the scholars include: Sheikh Alimi (after whom the appellation 'Gerin Alimi'-the alias of Ilorin), Sheikh Kamaldeen, Sheikh Ahmad Rufai Salati, Sheikh Adam Abdullahi El-Ilory, Sheikh Muhammad Kamaldeen Al-Adaby, Sheikh Mohammed Maimasa El-Nupawiy, Alfa Ahmad Temimu Ojagboro, the late Sheikh Qadi Abdulrahman Temimu, Sheikh Ahmada Rufai Nda Salaty, Sheik Shazili Sambo, Professor Shuaib Oba Abdulraheem (Former Vice Chancellor University of Ilorin), Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari of the United Nations, Professor Abdurashheed Na'Allah (Vice Chancellor, Kwara State University), Professor Abdulganeey Abdulsalam Oladosu, DrYahya A. Abdulkareem (Former Rector, Kwara State Polytechnic), Professor Ishiaku Umaru Semo (currently serving the United Nations and has a tenure in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) Dr. Hashir Abdulsalam and others too numerous to mention (Al-Iloriy, 1982).

Despite its strategic location as a gateway between the southern and northern parts of the country, Ilorin has only one or two viable industries, notably Global Soap and Detergent Industries Nigeria Limited and the International Tobacco Company. Recently established industries include Dangote Flour Mills, Tuyil Pharmaceutical Company, KAMWIL, Golden Confectionate Food Industries, Chellaram Motor-Cycle Assembly plants, and Rajrab Pharmaceuticals.

The city is a confluence of cultures, populated by Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Baruba, other Nigerians and foreign nationals. There are very significant Islamic and Christian populations. Many ceremonial activities, mostly with religious aspects, take place in the city throughout the year. Ilorin presents the visitors with friendly environment (called "Home of Peace") hence it hosts different religious practice and training institutions. Located on the city's GRA is the degree-awarding United Missionary Theological College (affiliated with the University of Ibadan) that produces many church ministers, teachers and theologians of all denominations. There is also College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies in Adeta Area, which trains Muslims in various Islamic, Arabic and social science disciplines. Alfa

Alimi's Mosque and residence is said to have been built in 1831. According to Jimoh (1994), it was the first Juma'at Mosque in Ilorin.

The city also presents a range of tourist attractions such as the imposing *Sobi Hill*, which is said to have offered protection to natives during inter-tribal wars in ancient times. The *Okuta Ilorin* is located in *Asaju's* compound, *Idi-Ape Quarters*. Pottery is a big business in Ilorin. The city boasts of the biggest traditional pottery workshops in Nigeria. They are located in *Dada* area of *Okelele*, *Eletu* in *Oju-Ekun*, *Okekura*, *Oloje*, *Abe Emi* and *Ita-Merin*. Also thriving in the city is the traditional textile industry. In various parts of the city, *Aso-Oke*, the wonderful textiles and hand-woven on simple looms, are made in large quantities. *Aso-Oke* is patronized by traders and fashion designers from Kwara State, other parts of Nigeria and from abroad. The cultural center houses the Kwara State Council for Arts and Culture, its performing troupe, and a gallery with artistic objects and antiquities. Souvenirs of cultural and historical values are also available.

Ilorin has a recreation park, formerly Amusement Park, now renamed Metropolitan Park, which is located on Unity Road, next to Guaranty Trust Bank. The Kwara State Stadium Complex has an Olympic-sized swimming pool with facility for diving, among others. The only purpose-built baseball park in Nigeria is located in the Adewole area of the city. The National Commission for Museum and Monuments has one of its centers in Ilorin, with interesting cultural and ethnographic objects from Nigeria's many cultures. (Jimoh, 1994)

Arabic and Islamic Education in Ilorin

The Arabic and Islamic education in Ilorin are run through two distinctive channels: the non-formal channel and the formal channel. The non-formal channel is in the form of centres, which abound in many parts of the country. Wherever there is a Muslim population, some kind of Arabic school is established, where both Islam as a religion and Arabic as a language are taught simultaneously. In most cases, these centres operate independently of the formal school system. There are usually Qur'anic schools that concern themselves with the art of reciting the Qur'ān.

There are also Private Arabic Schools established by voluntary Muslim Organisations or individual proprietors. In such schools, students pass through three distinctive stages of Arabic Education: The *ibtidā'iyah* Stage.

the *ʿdādiyyah* Stage; and the *Thanawīyyah* Stage. Each of these stages is described briefly below.

The *Ibtidāʿīyyah* Stage takes care of the learners' primary education in Arabic and Islamic knowledge. The duration at this level varies from pupil to pupil, depending on how much Arabic proficiency a given pupil has acquired. For pupils with no background knowledge of Arabic, instruction may extend to six years. For adults, who had attended formal western-oriented schools, instruction may spread over three to four years. In both cases, pupils get acquainted with the rudiments of the language. At the end of this level of education, learners could read and write some Arabic, use it to identify common objects, and understand the spoken and written language within the elementary school level. Indigenous Nigerian teachers of Arabic are employed at this level and both the Mother Tongue (MT) and Arabic are used as media of instruction. Textbooks addressed to native speakers are mostly used and this encourages translation method in the teaching process.

The *Fdādiyyah* Stage is the "preparatory" stage at which students are prepared for their secondary education in Arabic and Islamic Studies. It may be equated with the Nigerian Junior Secondary School level and it lasts for between 3 and 4 years, depending on individual schools. Here, the four language skills are emphasized. Students are exposed to Arabic Grammar, some aspects of Arabic Morphology, Islamic Religious Studies, Social Studies and Mathematics. Both Arabic and the relevant MT are used as media of Instruction. Textbooks are mostly imported from Arabic countries, except in Marikazi type of schools, where the textbooks are largely authored by Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilory and indigenous teachers. Teachers are both Arab native speakers and proficient Nigerian speakers of Arabic. The Arabs are normally degree holders, while the Nigerians are either degree holders or at least holders of the Arabic secondary school certificate. Final examinations are conducted internally at the end of this stage. Successful students may either gain scholarship to complete their secondary and university education in Arab countries or complete their secondary education internally, at a stage known as *Thanawīyyah*.

The *Thānawīyyah* Stage represents the Senior Secondary School level in the Nigerian formal system of education. It lasts for three or four years with emphasis on intensive study of Arabic Grammar, Morphology, Rhetorics, Logic, Essay Writing, Mathematics, Islamic Studies, History and Geography. Some of these schools offer Physics, Biology and Chemistry, most especially the Adabiya schools. Arabic is the medium of instruction

and teachers are Arab native speakers and proficient Nigerian scholars of Arabic. Textbooks are imported mainly from Arab countries. At the end of their secondary education, students take a final examination conducted internally or by an external body. For example, Al-Azhar Institute, which is based in Ilorin under the auspices of the Ansarul Islam Society of Nigeria, has its final year examination papers marked by Al-Azhar and Nigerian tutors of the Institute and finally approved by Al-Azhar authorities in Cairo. Successful graduates of Arabic secondary schools are either awarded scholarships to complete their university education in Arab countries or given admission into Nigerian Universities provided they meet other admission requirements of these Higher Institutions. Most of the lecturers in charge of Arabic Studies, Arabic Education and Islamic Studies in most Nigerian Universities were, at one time or the other, students of Private Arabic Schools. For example, Prof. Is-haq Olanrewaju Oloyede, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin is a product of the Arabic Training Centre, Agege, Lagos; Prof. R.D. Abubakre is a product of the same school; Prof. Y.A. Quadri and Prof. Z.I. Oseni are products of Al-Adabiyyah Arabic Institute, Owo, Ondo State; Prof. R.A. Raji is a product of RAWDAT Arabic and Islamic Institute, Ikirun, Osun State; Prof. M.A. Ajetunmobi and Prof. A.G.A.S Oladosu are products of AL- AZHAR Arabic Institute, Ilorin; Dr. N.I. Raji is a product of *Markaz Al-Dirāsāt Al-Arabiyyah Wal- Islamiyyah*, Ibadan, Oyo State.

It is pertinent to observe here that proprietors of most Arabic schools used to be skeptical about the introduction of English language as part of the school subjects. They entertained the fear that English could divert students' attention and, therefore, jeopardize the interest of Arabic and Islamic scholarship, which is the focus of these schools (Abubakre, 1984). Conscious of the status of English language, however, most students struggle to study it simultaneously along with Arabic language. By the time such students complete their Arabic secondary education, they would have passed their Ordinary Level papers, and used it to supplement their Arabic papers for the purpose of gaining admission into Nigerian Universities. This is the approach particularly in the southern part of the country. Graduates of the system, who aspire to complete their university education in an Arab country, are eligible for admission into their university of choice, subject to satisfying the admission requirements and availability of vacancies for foreigners in such universities. In addition to this system of Arabic Education, Arabic has been incorporated into the formal school system (Wikipedia, 2013).

Arabic Informal Education in Nigeria

"Informal education" is a general term for education outside of a standard school setting. It can refer to various forms of alternative education. Informal educators work in many different kinds of settings with individuals and groups who choose to engage with them (Wikipedia, 2013). The mass media (including television, video games, magazines, etc.), museums, libraries, zoos, after-school groups and other community-based organizations and cultural institutions offer forms of informal education (Oladosu, 2013).

The Arabic informal education comprises two tracks that originated from the pre-colonial period. The first track is Quranic School that forms primary level in traditional Islamic education, focusing on Arabic literacy and memorizing the Quran. Those able to successfully memorize the entire Qur'an become professional reciters, Quranic teachers, scribes and copyists (Fafunwa, 1991).

The informal Arabic educators in Ilorin are called Alfas. They taught their pupils by writing the lessons initially on slates for memorization due to unavailability of sheets. Later, they started writing on papers which they themselves or the students did the writings and later from a printed books and materials. They used to teach their students under trees or verandahs of their houses while sitting on mats and ram or cow skin without a specific curriculum (Opeloye & Makinde, 2012). The Alfas and students learn different languages to understand their lessons. If, for example, the Alfa is a Hausa man, the student will learn his teacher's language first before learning Arabic in order to understand his teachings properly. Pupils take their turns one after the other to learn their lessons from their Alfas (Opeloye & Makinde, 2012).

These Alfas divide their time into three parts:

- (i) Time for teaching and learning, from dawn till noon.
- (ii) Time for artisanal activities for sustenance, from noon till afternoon.
- (iii) Time for buying and selling of materials produced from artisanal work, from afternoon till evening.

In addition, preaching and spiritual assistance to people are also means of sustenance for these scholars.

For those who did not have the opportunity to attend any Arabic school and who found themselves in the higher Institution of learning and willing to know more about Arabic and Islam, the Muslim Students society of Nigeria (MSSN) creates a good forum to teach them in an informal system of education. Likewise Islamic organization such as NASFAT, QAREEB and BADIRUDEEN AL-ISLAMI have taken upon themselves the teaching of Arabic and Islamic knowledge to the youth and aged persons. These fora empowered many people with the ability to read many verses in the Glorious Qur'an, some textual Hadith and a host of Arabic supplications for their personal and general endeavours (Ibraheem, 2013).

This system of education has produced many stakeholders of Arabic and Islamic education in Ilorin and Nigeria at large. Shayk Belgore, Shaykh Ahmad Ikokoro, Shaykh Badindi, Shaykh Tajudeen Al-Adabi, Shaykh Zakariyah Tajulmumin, Shaykh Yusuf Agbaji, Shakh Salih Esinniobiwa, Shaykh Kamaldeen Al-Adabi (Founder Ansarul Islam Arabic Shool Okekere, Ilorin) Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory (founder of Arabic Training Centre Agege, Lagos) and others are products of this system. Some of these aforementioned scholars in return, established Arabic and Islamic schools and centres to disseminate Arabic and Islamic education in an organized syllabus and curriculum. These centres and schools are run by three different group: the *Markazy*, the *Adaby* and the *Zumrat*.

The choice of different Islamic scholarship takes one to Arabic school. Whereas the Quranic school begins from early childhood and usually terminates by adolescence, the Arabic school does not start before adolescence and often lasts for the entire life of most students. But some may abandon the intellectual pursuits or at some stage become learned enough to be recognized as teachers.

Nigerian Islamic and Arabic scholars have historically enjoyed considerable influence and social prestige. They traveled widely in search of specialized teachers and clientele, and formed a notable part of trading stations all over West Africa (zangos), serving as teachers, letter-writers, legal-draftsmen and notary public, record-keepers, and, of course, as religious specialists (Adamu, 1978).

Consistent with the norm in Islamic societies, some scholars avoided governmental positions and preferred to teach private circles of disciples, especially during the colonial period 1903–1960. The British introduced western education during the 1910s and 1920s, a development that

undermined scholars' monopoly over literacy and access to positions, resources, and prestige. Early in the colonial period, British authorities found that scholars could play crucial roles in establishing colonial administrative personnel, especially in judicial and educational domains, and recruited the scholars as local historians, translators, and "native anthropologists" who provided data for compiling district gazetteers. Used to acquaint new colonial administrators with the history and cultural traditions of the communities they were to administer (Kirk-Greene 1972). Even as the colonial administration employed the *ulama*, colonialism introduced alternatives to their skills through western education. When the first generation of western-educated Muslims inherited power at independence in 1960, the influence of *ulama* began to change.

In Ilorin, Arabic language has made a lot of impact and contribution to the development of the people and the nation at large, most especially it has promoted and influenced various languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, Kanuri, Fulfude, and others.

The Contributions of the Products and the Stakeholders of Arabic Informal Education to the Sustainable Development in Nigeria

The Classes of the Products and stakeholders of Arabic Informal Education

The Arabic informal education system has contributed immensely to the growth and development of many Nigerian Islamic and Arabic scholars as they were trained in the informal Islamic educational system.

It is important to note that most of Ilorin indigenes, who became prominent in various fields today, started their education from the Arabic informal Education. As a matter of fact, some of the religious leaders in the country (Nigeria) today graduated from this system of which they played and were still playing major roles in the development of the nation. For proper understanding of the roles played by these stakeholders, the need to categorize them into five major groups becomes necessary.

Group 1 is made up of all Ilorin indigenes and some other Muslims, who were born in Ilorin or live in Ilorin, started their education from informal Arabic Schools and later switched to western education schools and became stakeholders in various spheres of life. They include such persons as Prof.

Ibrahim Gambari of the United Nation; Justice Mustapha Akanbi, General Babatunde Idiagbon, Prof Oba AbdulRahim and others who are known for their uprightness, discipline, justice, good administration and outstanding achievements. They derived all these qualities from the teachings of Islam they acquired from the Arabic informal education at the initial stage of their life. Without a doubt, these personalities have contributed immensely to the development of Nigeria. Today Justice Mustapha Akanbi has turned to Islamic propagator; leading preachers to towns and villages to disseminate the teaching of Islam.

Group 2 is made up of scholars who were products of Informal Arabic Education, but later established formal Private Arabic Institutes, formulate syllabus and curriculum of Arabic and Islamic Education. As a result, they provide opportunities for students to learn Arabic and Islamic studies in the conventional schools which gave them the qualifications to be admitted into Nigeria universities where further studies are obtainable. Their institutes have produced substantial numbers of Academics, Judges, Teachers, Imams, Alfas, Preachers, Authors, Creative writers and spiritual leader who have in turn contributed a great deal to the development of Nigeria and beyond. Prominent in this group are Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilori (d. 1992), Shaykh Muhammad bn Habibullah (Kamaldin Al-Adabi)(d.2005) Shaykh Khidir Apaokagi(d.2012), Shaykh Abubakri Salahud-Din Agbarigidoma (d.1914), Shayk Ahmad Rufa'I Abikan (d.2012)and others.

Group 3 refers to scholars who started their career with the Arabic informal system of education and later joined the formal system to further with their education. This category includes those who developed their intellectualism through the formal Arabic system of education from primary level up to the University level. They became the forerunners in that field and played an extensive role especially in teaching, research, revising syllabus and curriculum of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria's Junior and Secondary Schools up till tertiary Institutions. Their main contribution is manifested in bringing Arabists into the limelight as people who contribute positively in the society, and not street beggars and retarded class of people in the society. Prof. Ismail Balogun, Prof. R. D. Abubakre Prof. Y.A. Quadri, Prof. Z. I. Oseni, Prof. Ishaq O. Oloyede, Prof A.S. Agaka, Prof M. A. Ajetunmabi, Prof A.G.A.S Oladosu, Prof. Jamiu Sulaiman, Prof. B.L. Yusuf, Dr H.I. Olagunju, Dr H.I. Abdulrahim, Dr Isa Alabi, Dr A.M. Usman, and Dr M.M.M. Jimba, among others, are examples of this category.

Group 4 refers to scholars who prefer to remain in the informal system of Arabic education till date despite all challenges of civilization and modernization. The "*Mankodoro*" (i.e. the men of pure knowledge), who are known with a big turban, are the typical example of this group. Their contributions towards sustainable development are mainly teaching Arabic and moral values to students, guiding and counseling people to the right path in the society through their preaching and spiritual assistance they give to individuals that needed and requested for it.

Group 5 is a group of scholars who teach Arabic and Islamic knowledge informally at the Islamic associations, prayer groups, and sections. This Association includes Ansaru-deenil Islam, AnsarulIslam, Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) Nasrullahil Fatih (NASFAT) Alfathul Qarib (Quareeb), Badrudinil-l Islamy Assalat Circle of Nigeria and others. These groups afford those who could not have adequate Arabic Islamic education at the early stage of their life the opportunities to learn the Quran and Islamic Studies. Also included in this group is Arabic by Radio programme, which is being carried out by Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Radio Kwara, Kwara State Television and NTA, Ilorin and the one that is presented by Hajia Hassanat Funmilayo Abubakar of the Department of Arabic, University of Ilorin on the Unilorin 38.3 FM. The impact of these programmes can never be over emphasized because it makes Arabic gain currency in Ilorin Metropolis today.

Contribution of Arabic Informal Education and Sustainable Development

From the foregoing it could be deduced that the products of Arabic Informal Education has contributed significantly to the development in Nigeria in various ways such as the dissemination of Arabic and Islamic Knowledge. In respect of this point, Ilorin was known as the centre of Arabic and Islamic teaching in Yorubaland and this development has been sustained up till date. It could be observed that teaching Qur'an and Islamic Studies positively reflects in most of Ilorin culture and ways of life; for example, *Waka* night has always been the starting point of a week-long marriage ceremony in Ilorin. This is followed by *Walimat* ceremony, which serves as the final examination of the process of informal learning of the Qur'an for all Ilorin indigenes. *Waka* is a kind of song that derives its components from the Qur'an and the teaching of Islam (Oniye, 2006). It is used to render admonition to the couple, their parent, and well-wishers. This culture has been sustained in Ilorin up till this moment. Likewise the culture of horse

riding, known as *durbar*, which is often carried out during major Islamic festivals, is also a product of Islamic teaching (Oniye, 2006).

The second contribution concerns the documentation of history. Shaykh Ahmad bn Abubakar Ikkro documented the history of the Emirs of Ilorin in his book titled: *Talif Akhbarul Quruun mi Umarai biladi Ilorin* (this was a manuscript but later published by Shaykh Adam Al-Ilory in 1991). Shaykh Adam documented the history of Nigeria in his book titled: *Mu'jazut-Tarikh Nigeria* (Brief History of Nigeria), the history of Islam in Nigeria and Uthman bn Fodios in his book: *Al-islam fi Nigeria wash-Shaykh Uthman bn fodio*. He also documented the history of Ilorin Scholars in his book titled: *Lamhatul-Ballory fi mashahir 'Ulamau Ilorin and others*; Shaykh Khidir Apaokagi also wrote different biographies on Shaykh Salahuddin Apaokagi, Shaykh Muhammadul-Jami' al-Ilabib (Tajul-Adab) and on Shaykh Kamaludin al-Adabi; and others. These books became important references for researchers today. This development has been taken over by modern historian of Ilorin origin and non-native of Ilorin.

A further point is authoring books and publication. The forerunners in this aspect are Ahmad bn Abubakar, Omo Ikkoro the author of *iltiqatu'l-mutan min khamsati funun*, which is a text on the Arabic language branches of grammar, morphology and the three branches of Arabic rhetoric, *bayan ma'ani* and *bad'i*: (Abubakre, 2012), Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory, who has more than 70 publications to his credit; Shaykh Abubakar Agbarigidoma, and others. This development has been sustained to the present time because we have people like Alfa Alaluqran, one of the *mokondoros* who never attended formal Arabic schools but has published a book entitled: "*Almaqamah al-Iloriyyah*."

The next set of contribution includes serving as secretary to the Emirs, judicial engagement, and reformation of Arabic and Islamic education. Most of the correspondences between Emirs of Ilorin and Northern Emirs, Yoruba Obas and Scholars were handled by the products of Arabic Informal Education before the present time, but the development has been taken over by the new dispensation of modern literacy and diplomacy. Most of the judges in Ilorin courts of justice before the advent of the colonials and immediately after their arrival were the products of Arabic informal Education. Today, however, nobody can become a judge in Nigeria without having formal Education. It was people like Shaykh Kamaluddin Al-Adabi, Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilori, Shaykh Khidir Apokagi, Shaykh Agbarigidoma, and Shaykh Sahban, the products of purely Arabic Informal

Education, who reformed Arabic education in Yorubaland and beyond and established private Arabic institutions.

It is also worth mentioning the establishment of Muslim Association and organization: It was Shaykh Aminullahi Oniwasi Agbaye who founded Ansarul-Islam society that establishes schools in the nook and cranny of Nigeria. Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory established the league of Imams and Alfas in Yorubaland. The league is an umbrella under which leading scholars and Imams of Yorubaland converge to discuss matters that have to do with Islam and Muslims in Yorubaland. Some of these scholars are members of International Islamic organization, like Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilory, that was a member of World Islamic League (Reichmuth, 2012). This development has been sustained up till date.

We can also refer to spiritual consultancy services. Most of the products of Arabic Informal Education render spiritual consultancy services and assistance to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, in and outside Nigeria. In fact, Ilorin is considered as the town of Saints and that accounts for the influx of politicians, business moguls and spiritual deliverance seekers to Ilorin to consult the Ilorin *Ulama*. Some of these scholars also engage in traditional medical healings and prophetic medicine.

The final contribution is the propagation of Islamic Religion and the spreading of its Teaching. The products of Arabic Informal Education are mostly in the field of propagating Islam and dissemination of its tenets through preaching in private and public places and in the electronic media; through sermons on Fridays and Salah days and through Qur'anic Exegesis gathering (especially, during Ramadan period).

Despite the contribution of the products of Arabic informal education to sustainable development in Nigeria, as enumerated above, the idea and situation of no curriculum, no syllabus, no definite period of completion of studies, no certificate after the completion and no professional teachers, in addition to lack of a conducive environment for study, rendered the informal education less effective. This accounted for the reason some scholars like Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilory and Shaykh Kamaldin Al-Adabi opted for formal education, which has produced outstanding results.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The foregoing has brought to the fore the features and fortunes of Arabic formal and informal education in Nigeria. These have been revealed by analyzing both educational systems in Ilorin and Nigeria at large. The types of Arabic scholars are also identified with their roles and contributions to sustainable development in Nigeria. The study discovered that most of the Ilorin indigenes, who became eminent in various fields of endeavors today, started their education from the Arabic informal education. Some of the religious leaders in the country today graduated from this system. In particular, the *Mankondoro* group, who prefer to remain in this system of education, contributed immensely to the development in Nigeria, although a substantial number of them completed their education in a formal setting. It was also discovered that the products of Arabic informal education serve as teachers, letter-writers, legal-draftsmen and notary public, record-keepers, and of course as religious specialists, education reformists and nation builders.

We recommend that these fortunes of Arabic informal education should not only be sustained but be improved upon constantly. It is our opinion that if the system is improved and raised to the high standard of formal education, it would contribute more to the sustainable development of Nigeria and beyond.

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