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Muslims of Kwara State: A Survey

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Abstract

The paper begins with an overview of Kwara State, then proceeds to a brief discussion of categories of Muslims in the state, with estimates of percentages of Muslims in various categories. There follow discussions of Islamic education in the state, and of Muslims and Islam in politics and government. The last two substantive sections discuss Muslim NGOs, with details on four groups, and then three notable Muslim personages active in the state, and the paper ends with a brief conclusion.

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1. Overview

Kwara State is one of the North Central zone states, created in 1967 by the military regime headed by General Yakubu Gowon, which took over the country in 1966. The population of the state in 2006, according to the census then taken, was 2,371,089. A large majority (about 75%) of the inhabitants of Kwara State are Yoruba, with significant Nupe, Bariba and Fulani minorities. For purposes of local government the state is divided into 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs), each with its own elected Local Government Council. The capital city is Ilorin. A majority of the people are engaged in farming, but there are large numbers of skilled craftsmen of many types and of course modern employments are coming in as the economy develops.

The 1963 Nigerian census put the percentage of Muslims in what is now Kwara State at about 77% of the population, while about 14% were Christian and about 9% adherents of other religions.¹ No census since 1963 has gathered data on religious affiliation, but based on the author's own observations, it appears that the percentages of Muslims, Christians, and others are about the same now in Kwara State as they were in 1963. Kwara State has a long tradition of religious harmony. It is not unusual, in fact, to have both Muslims and Christians in one family, and inter-marriage is quite common.

2. Categories of Muslims

In Kwara State almost all Muslims were Sunnis from the outset, except in the last three decades when Muslim children went outside the state and of course outside the country to study and sometimes came back with other ideas. And then of course immigrants to the state have brought their own religious practices with them.

a. Estimated percentages belonging to various groups

It is very difficult to try to estimate percentages of Muslims who belong to one group or another. But here are my opinions on this. Among the Sunnis, more than 80% belong to one or the other of the Sufi brotherhoods of Qadiriyya or Tijaniyya, with Tijaniyya predominating. Few belong to anti-Sufi groups like Izala; Izala has no bearing in Kwara. But among the Sunnis there are increasing numbers of "independents", neither Sufi nor anti-Sufi, who simply choose to join none of these particular groups. As for non-Sunnis, less than 1% are Ahmadiyya.

b. Relations among the various groups of Muslims

In Kwara, all Muslims prayed together until the emergence of Ahmadiyya or Izala who prefer to pray only with their own members. It is important to point out here that members of those new groups are non-indigenes of Ilorin the state capital where almost all these groups are concentrated. Kwara State, the "State of Harmony" as it is known, accommodated these groups once they claimed that they are existing, according to one of their Muslim scholars or leaders as in the case of Ahmadiyya or Izala. Though one group tries to convince another, this is done with the decorum of *da'wah* which Islam urges Muslims to uphold. The relationships among these various [Muslim] groups is cordial, in the sense that all of them belong to either the Organisation of Muslim Unity (OMU) or to Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI). OMU is an

¹ Based on calculations from the 1963 census results performed by Philip Ostien, see Appendix to his "Report on Nigeria's North Central Geo-Political Zone" for this project.

umbrella organisation for Kwara State that coordinates Muslim organisations in the state, and in fact almost all Muslim groups in the state belong and contribute to supporting its activities. Headquartered in Ilorin, its officers are elected from the member organisations. They are even organising joint programmes, especially during Ramadan. As to JNI, almost all Islamic group leaders are members, under the Chairmanship of the Emir of Ilorin. Other Muslim emirs, obas, traditional chieftaincy holders and other prominent Muslims are also members. These two auspices have created and maintain religious harmony in the state.

3. Islamic education

a. Qur'anic education

Despite the monopoly of Western education on other traditional and Islamic education in Nigeria as whole, the Muslims of Nigeria, Muslims of Kwara State inclusive, are always desperate to give their children, before any other education, the traditional Qur'anic education, and this is the first illiteracy eradication programme that Muslims believe should be given to their children before they proceed to acquaint themselves with Western education. The major objective of traditional Qur'anic education is to allow children to know how to read the Glorious Qur'an with which to observe their daily prayers and other religious rites in order to accomplish the purpose of creation by Almighty Allah. There is no reservation from any groups or organisations against this system in Kwara State as the basis to be a good Muslim.

b. Islamiyya schools

After graduating from traditional Qur'anic school, Muslims in Kwara State send their wards and children to Islamiyya or government primary and secondary schools. But for Islamiyya schools, the ideas came up as a result of finding means for graduates of Qur'anic schools to further their education especially during the colonial period when some Muslim children were being converted to Christianity.

The Islamiyya schools of this category were established in towns and villages. An example is Darul-Ulum School of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Isale Koto, Ilorin, established early in the 1960s by the scholars of Ilorin Emirate under the supervision the Emir of Ilorin. The school has produced many academics of international repute, jurists, administrators and hosts of others, this writer inclusive. With the increase in the Muslim population in Kwara State, the number of Islamiyya schools established increases with the same mission of promoting Islamic education in the state. In recent times, some groups and organizations have established schools not only to eradicate illiteracy but also to spread their doctrine which in no way was against the popular belief of Muslims of Kwara State. Others have also been established by individuals, e.g. College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Lafiaji by the Chief Imam of the town, a retired Kadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna. Another is Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Kulende, Ilorin, by Sheikh Abdulla Jibril Imam Sahban. Let me quickly state here that all these schools are being supervised by the state Ministry of Education.

c. Tertiary Islamic education

i. Private

The Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Kulende, Ilorin was mentioned in the previous paragraph. Its establishment by Sheikh Sahban has led to the establishment also of a private Islamic tertiary educational institution, Muhyideen College of Education, Kulende, Ilorin, with the status of similar institutions owned by the state government. Students of this College of Education come out with NCE (National Certificate

of Education), a national qualification to be a teacher) in a wide range of subjects, including, besides Arabic and Islamic Studies, such other subjects as English, Yoruba, Christian Religious Studies, Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, and Social Studies.²

ii. Public

For the government of Kwara State to cater to its citizens, some schools devoted to Arabic and Islamic Studies were established by the state itself, e.g. College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin and the Arabic Teachers College, Jebba. The latter, as its name indicates, is educating teachers. The former, was established pursuant to statute in 1992, with Dr. (now Prof.) M.A. Ajetunmobi as pioneer Provost. The college is divided into five “schools”, of Arts and Islamic Studies, Education and General Studies, Languages, Law, and Remedial Studies.³ These schools all award diplomas and certificates going by various names. The College is affiliated to Bayero University, Kano, which monitors its curriculum and moderates its exams. It was established as a result of the ever increasing demand by the Muslims of the state for Islamic education. Graduates of the Islamiyya schools early mentioned, proceed to those tertiary institutions.

In addition to these institutions, there are departments/units of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Colleges of Education in Ilorin and Oro, and in the recently established Kwara State University, Malete. The University of Ilorin of course also has departments of Arabic and of Islamic Studies, where one can go as far as a Ph.D. as this author did. But the number of students enrolled at these levels still does not come up to the population of Muslim students seeking admission to their departments and units.

4. Politics and government

a. Traditional rulers

As Muslims in Kwara State are in the majority, and have been for a long time, it is to be expected that a majority of traditional rulers in the state would be Muslims. There are, for example, a number of emirates which trace their lineages back to the Sokoto Caliphate, including the Emirate of Ilorin. Even when the traditional rulerships are more clearly based in ethnicity, as with the Yoruba Obas, the occupants of the thrones are likely to be Muslims. Nevertheless, in some areas or localities where both Muslims and Christians are indigenes of the same town, their traditional leaders could be a Muslim or Christian. Before the arrival of the colonial masters in Kwara State the traditional rulers were operating either according to Islamic dictates or the traditional way of life, with many marrying their practices together.

b. Application of Islamic law

From the time of the incorporation of Ilorin Emirate into the Sokoto Caliphate, Islamic law was applied in the courts at least in Ilorin. But outside the city, many of the people, though Muslims, still preferred to follow the Yoruba laws and customs which they were accustomed to. This continued under the British, who established “Native Courts” in many different places. These applied “the native law and custom prevailing in the area of the jurisdiction of the court”. In Ilorin the Native Courts applied Islamic law, but in many of the towns outside of Ilorin, they applied Yoruba or other ethnic law and custom. This continues today in the Area Courts. There is a Sharia Court of Appeal for Kwara State, which hears appeals from the Area Courts in cases decided under Islamic personal law. Appeals from the Area Courts in other cases go to the High Court. It is only Islamic or customary “civil” law which is applied, all criminal law is under the Penal Code.

² See the Muhyideen College of Education’s website, <http://www.mcoed.edu.ng/>.

³ See the College’s website, <http://www.cailsilorin.com/>.

c. Religious affiliations of elected officials

As at present the Executive Governor of the state in person of Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki is a practising Muslim, while his deputy, a Christian, is Deacon Joel Afolabi Ogundeji, they were both voted in under People Democratic Party (PDP). With 24 members of House of Assembly, majority from PDP, four of them are Christians, the remaining twenty are Muslims, including the speaker Rt. Hon. Babatunde Muhammad. Two out of three of Kwara's Senators are Muslims, as are four out of six of its Representatives. Finally, 13 out of 16 of its Local Government Chairmen are Muslims. As government of the people both the legislative and executive arms are working under the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

d. Muslim government agencies

Despite the fact that the governor of Kwara State is a Muslim, as are most of the members of the state House of Assembly, the state is not an Islamic state and it does not have Islam as its official religion. But as matter of fact, the state government has established certain Boards and Bureaus for religious purposes.

i. Sharia Court of Appeal

To this end the government of Kwara State like other northern states established Sharia Court of Appeal in 1976, with Alhaji Abdulkadir Orire as its pioneer Grand Kadi. The court has its divisional offices in some local government areas like Omu-Aran and Lafiagi. The work of the court has been discussed in section 4.b above.

ii. Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board

In order to take good care of its citizens at Holy Land the Kwara State government established Kwara State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board in 1976 under the office of the state governor to supervise the affairs of the board. When the federal government of Nigeria established its National Hajj Commission the Kwara State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board was affiliated it, to coordinate the state board in preparation and execution of its programmes before, during and *hajj* exercise.

e. Special Assistant to the Governor on Religious Affairs

Let me add that the Kwara State Governor appointed Special Assistant on Religious Affairs to oversee religious matters in the state in person of Alhaji Bolaji Alege.

5. Muslim NGOS

Kwara State has many Islamic organisations. Some are local, some are national, while a few others are international.

a. Local groups

In almost every community however small you can find at least *al-asalatu* group either with young or older Muslims. Some have as their objective to congregate on weekly basis to pray, some have as theirs to give essential services to their Muslim brothers and sisters. An example of the latter is the Ihtiad Shabab Ulama Offa (Association of Islamic Youth Scholars in Offa). This has among its aims and objectives the management of the local Muslim burial ground, propagation of Islam, and visitation and assistance for the sick. Another smaller group which is at local level is in Lafiagi, Jamhiyyatul Hizbullahi (Young Muslim Brothers).

b. National and international organisations

Apart from these smaller groups, Kwara State has some national organisations, some of which are also going international, such as (in alphabetical order):

Ansarudeen Society of Nigeria International
 Ansarul Islam Society of Nigeria International
 Badrudin Islamic Asalatu Circle
 Federation of Muslims Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)
 Islamic Missionary Association of Nigeria (IMAN)
 Islamic Movement
 Khabaru Deen Society of Nigeria
 Nasirulahilifati Society of Nigeria. (NASFAT)
 Nawaur Deen Society of Nigeria
 Nigerian Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO)
 Qadirriyyah organizations
 Qareeb Iahi Society of Nigeria
 Rahmatul Ilahi International Society of Nigeria
 Sheriff Guard of Islam
 Tijaniyya organisations
 Zumuratul Muminina of Nigeria

c. Details on four organisations

The selection of these four organizations was based on the characteristics of each of these organizations. (i) Zumuratul Muminina of Nigeria, was selected based on its ideology and its unique mode of dressing. Moreover, it is the only traditional organization that is not influenced by modern trends of ideology. (ii) The Islamic Movement was selected based on the view that it was formed by Nigeria Muslim youths in school and university. (iii) Badrudin Islam Asalatu Circle, an organization for Muslim women, was selected because its members channel their activities not only towards their religion but also towards their home affairs. (iv) Islamic Orphanage Foundation, finally, caters for Muslim orphans, the area that none of the other organizations are interested in.

i. Zumuratul Muminina of Nigeria

This organisation is popularly called for *da'wah* and its members known for putting big turbans, with tall bears to distinguish them, while females, mostly their wives, put on veil and black dress covering all parts of their body. They are popularly called *makodoro* (knowledgeable people) in some parts of Yorubaland, they are a distinct group of Islamic scholars spread mostly across Kwara State and into the Yoruba southwest. The group was founded in 1908 by Sheikh Yusuf Abubakar, also known as Sheikh Tajul-Mumini from whom the name of the group was carved. Sheikh Tajul-Mumini was only 23 years old at the time. The group was founded in Ilorin, and later spread to other parts of Yorubaland, especially Ibadan, but today the group also has its presence in Kaduna and Zaria. Agbaji, an ancient quarter in Ilorin, remains the national headquarter of the group until today.

ii. The Islamic Movement⁴

After Nigeria became independent in 1960, increasing numbers of Muslim students, graduates of Islamiyya schools inclusive, enrolled in the universities for various courses. They later founded Muslim Students Society (MSS) with the main objective of propagating Islam while on campus. This society is only for the students of the universities. Some graduates realized that activities of propagating Islam should continue after graduation. Some of them then founded 'The Islamic Movement' in the early 1980s, and expanded its cope to comprise establishment of Islamic Nursery and Primary Schools as well as secondary schools and establishment of hospitals. The movement has its branch in southern western Nigeria. It can be derived from the above that members of the movement are graduates of higher institutions.

iii. Badrudin Islam Asalatu Circle

The circle was established in Kaduna in 1990, under the Murshid Ustaz Mikail Hamzat and later relocated to Ilorin as its headquarters in 1994. The circle now has branches in Ibadan in 1995, Lagos in 2000 and Bida in 2009. The National Amirat is Alhaja Fadila Usman while Dr. Lateef Onireti is the present national Murshid. The circle started with women by intimating them with essential issues on Islam and teaching them how to read the Glorious Qur'an, but now a men's wing also exists, mostly the husbands of those women members of the circle. There are also children's and youth wings in all its branches.

iv. Islamic Orphanage Foundation

This foundation, registered under the Corporate Affairs Commission Act, is headquartered in Ilorin. It was conceived over a KWBC Islamic radio programme called Adwa'ul Bayan anchored by Ustaz Khalilullahi Gbodofu in the year 2002, where matters affecting orphans were discussed. The topic provoked much interest. This led to the constitution of a committee formally charged to work out the feasibility and workability of a programme to help the orphans, with Arc. Saefullahi Ahmad Alege as chairman and other notable Muslims as members. The committee embarked on some publicity and advocacy programmes to inform the public of the existence of the Foundation. Subsequently, widows and guardians who were in possession of orphans tabled their problems before the committee. The committee embarked on the following activities:

Define and determine who an orphan is according to sharia.

Printing and issuing of application forms to the applicants/orphans.

Conducting of interviews of the applicants.

Screening exercise and discreet investigation of the claims of over 300 applicants.

Selection of sixty orphans drawn from the three senatorial districts of the state based on available resources. These were the pioneer beneficiaries.

The funding of the needs and training of these orphans was borne solely by the committee members through monthly contributions/levies. However, when the numbers of beneficiaries increased in multiples, the committee was compelled to reach out to the public. Therefore, in 2005, a sensitization week was organized and executed and more funds were raised.

The cardinal principle of the Foundation is to provide and assist orphans with sound education and proper training in the field of their choice. In doing this, the education team of the Foundation ensures that each ward is maintained in school, by providing school fees and

⁴ Much of the material in this subsection is based on the author's interview with the Secretary, The Islamic Movement, Mall Aminu Jatto, on 8th March, 2011.

other materials. This committee is charged with buying of school materials for distribution for the orphans and all other relevant duties. At the inception, education was the major problem faced by the Foundation followed by vocational training. In addition to education, they also trained orphans in various trades which include tailoring, computer operator, motor mechanic etc. However, many of the orphans opt for going to school rather than vocational training.

6. Three notable individuals

These three individuals were selected because of their prominence in Kwara society. First, (a) Sheikh Khidir Salaudeen Apaokagi, is a Grand Islamic Jurist (*mufti*) for Ilorin Emirate and by implication for the whole Kwara state. (b) Honourable Justice Abdulkadir Orire, as a former Grand Kadi for Kwara state, is also executive Secretary-General of Jama'atu Nasril Islam since 2001, while (c) Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna, a former Kadi in the Sharia Court of Appeal and presently chief imam of Lafiagi, in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara state.

a. Sheikh Khidir Salaudeen Apaokagi⁵

Sheikh Khidir Salaudeen Apaokagi was among the pioneer students of Sheik Kamaldeen Al-Adabiy and the National President of Ansarul-Islam Society of Nigeria from 1967-2000. He is the founder of the Al-Adabiyat School for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Owo, Ondo State in 1955. Among his students are professors and doctors in diverse fields of study. He is a pillar in the cause of propagation of Islam over the years, not only in Ilorin, but also in Ondo State and parts of old Bendel State now Edo and Delta States.

He was an Islamic teacher of note, he started his career in 1945 and until 1985 he was Arabist under the employment of the defunct Western Region during which he taught in various Primary and the then Modern Schools.

Sheikh Khidr has been turbaned as the Mufti of Ilorin i.e. the expounder of Islamic law or the greatest scholar of Islamic law due to his transcendental contributions to Islam and its language i.e. Arabic. Sheikh Khidr dedicated his life to the knowledge and Islam. In fact, this is a great honour for every one of us. This honour is not limited to our Sheikh and his entire family only but to Ansarul-Islam members worldwide. The distinction is not confined to Ansarul-Islam members only but to all Muslims all over the globe. Even is not restricted to Ilorin town only but to all the towns in which the light of Islam beams.

b. Honourable Justice Abdulkadir Orire⁶

Honourable Justice Abdulkadir Orire, was born in 1934 at Ilorin, Kwara State. He attended Qur'anic education in Ilorin 1938-43; Bala Elementary School, Ilorin, 1943-47; Government Secondary School, Ilorin, 1947-51; School for Arabic Studies, Kano, 1951-55; School of Oriental and African Studies, London 1959-61; University of London, 1961-64 and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 1965-66.

He began his career as a primary school teacher at Baboko Senior Primary School, Ilorin, in 1956. He was appointed Teacher, Government Secondary School, Ilorin, 1958-59; Teacher, Barewa College, Zaria, 1964-66; Vice Principal, Arabic Teacher's College, Sokoto, 1966-71. Thereafter he was appointed Judge, Sharia Court of Appeal in the former Kwara

⁵ Much of the material in this subsection is based on the author's interview with Sheikh Khidir Salaudeen Apaokagi at his house on 9th March, 2011.

⁶ Much of the material in this subsection is based on the biography of Hon. Justice Abdulkadir Orire CON, prepared for his installation as Marafa of Ilorin, on the 9th December, 2005.

and North Central State, 1971-74; Deputy Grand Kadi, 1974-75 and Grand Kadi, Sharia Court of Appeal Kwara State, 1975-2000 before retiring in 2000.

Justice Orire has also held notable positions such as: Chairman, Jama'atu Nasril Islam, Kwara State 1973-2000; Member, Advisory Judicial Council of Nigeria; Chairman, Board of Trustees Muslim Students Society of Nigeria; Chairman, Council of Ulama; Chairman IMAN Da'wah Organization; Vice President, Nigeria Da'wah Coordination Council (NDCC) and a part-time Resource Person, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. His other assignments include Member, Nigeria Constitutional Review Committee, 1987; Member, Constitutional Conference, 1988-89 and Member, 2005 Confab in Abuja.

Justice Orire is a recipient of several merit awards from a number of reputable non-governmental organizations such as: the Nigerian Bar Association, Ilorin Branch, 1988; Nigeria Aid Group of Jama'atu Nasril Islam 1996; FOMWAN, 1999 and the National Association of Muslim Council, Abdullahi Maikano Memorial Islamic School 1992, Sheriff Guard International Nigeria September 1991, Muyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies 1981, among others and in 2003 awarded CON (Commander of Order of the Niger) by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Justice Orire worked with renowned judges and scholars like Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, Sheikh Haliru Binji, Sholah Mahmud Yola, Sheikh Baba Kura of Borno, and Kadi Jibrin Daura. At the same time he worked with Dr. Hassan Gwarzo, Sheikh Ahmed Lemu, Justice Bashir Sambo, and Alhaji Bappa Mahmud who were Grand Kadis of Kano, Niger, FCT and Bauchi respectively. He was once awarded Wali of Ilorin by the late Emir of Ilorin Alhaji Zul-Karnain Gambari of blessed memory but because the during the regime of Buhari, Idiagbon did not permit serving government officers to receive traditional titles, the award was shelved through a letter written to him by Governor Salaludeen Adebola Latinwo. He has now been turbaned as Marafa of Ilorin by the present Emir Alhaji Ibrahim Zulukhanani Gambari. Retired Justice Abdulkadir Orire was found worthy by the entire Emirs under the Caliphate and Kanem Borno Empire for the first time to be appointed full time executive Secretary-General of Jama'atu Nasril Islam since 2001.

c. Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna⁷

Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna, the youngest of the six children of his father, was born in 1937 at Lafiagi, Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. He lost both his father, Alhaji Naibi Haruna Saba Kobo and mother, Malama Mariam Haruna at a tender age. His father died as Naibi Imam (Deputy Chief Imam) of Lafiagi. His grandfather, Saba Kobo was the 12th Chief Imam of Lafiagi Emirate.

He was therefore brought up under the guardianship of his elder brothers, Sheikh Idris Haruna (Yanda) and Alhaji Abdullahi Tsowa Haruna. He was able to demonstrate versatility in Islamic scholarship along with his brothers. It is noted that he was the most brilliant of all his siblings. The little Muhammad Bida Haruna started his Qur'anic education under his father but completed it under his elder brother Sheikh Yanda at the age of fifteen.

He moved to Ibadan and Lagos in 1951 and 1957 respectively to pursue his Qur'anic education further. He used to accompany his Mu'allim (Sheik Sani Abdul-Salam Arathi) on preaching and touring of Yorubaland and Cotonou in the Republic of Benin. He however

⁷ Much of the material in this subsection is based on Sayid Muhammad, *Contributions of Lafiagi Markaz to the Development of Arabic and Islamic Learning in Lafiagi, Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State*. M.A Thesis submitted to Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 2003.

graduated in 1961, having acquired proper knowledge of Arabic and various branches of Islamic studies. He later left for the School for Arabic Studies, Kano in 1963 where he obtained Higher Islamic Studies Certificate in 1966. He returned to Lafiagi the same year.

Alhaji Haruna acquired Arabic and Islamic learning from different malams, they include one Sheikh Alfa Sani Abdul-Salam Arathi at Ibadan and late Professor Noib Suwaid of Bayero University Kano, among others. He started conducting open-air preaching in the whole of Nupe-speaking areas of old Kwara State at a tender age. He worked as an Arabic and Islamic Studies teacher in various schools under the defunct Patigi/Lafiagi Local Education Authority from 1967-1971. His quest for knowledge took him back to Abdullahi Bayero College/ABU Kano campus for a Diploma course in Arabic and Islamic Studies between 1971-1974.

He was appointed as an Area Court Judge under the Kwara State Judicial Division, on 15th February, 1976. Despite his change of profession, he remains a teacher because he was still teaching students in his house whenever he returned from court. On the 16th day of February, 1994 Alhaji Lafiagi was appointed Kadi in the Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal, Ilorin.

Having been assessed as both a scholar and a jurist and having been found worthy in learning, Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna was appointed Chief Imam of Lafiagi Emirate Council on July, 25th 1997, turbaned on 23rd August 1997. Because of his new leadership in the community he had to retire his appointment as Kadi on 1st September 1998 to pave way for effective performance of duties of Imamship in the Emirate.

A pious and simple scholar who devoted all his time to the service of Arabic and Islamic education in Lafiagi, he is currently a leading scholar of *tafsir* in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. Even before he became the Chief Imam of Lafiagi Emirate Council his annual leave was permanently fixed to coincide with the month of Ramadan, to enable him carry out effectively the Ramadan *tafsir* which he has been presiding over since 1985 till date. He has credit for enlightening the Muslims in Lafiagi Emirate as a result of which clarification was made to debunk the claims that:

1. That females are not allowed to be educated.
2. That Muslims should not study under non-Muslims or in non-Muslims nations.
3. That Islam encourages fatalism.
4. That Islam discourages scientific investigations.
5. That Islam is oppose to modern education.
6. That Islam encourages begging.
7. That Islam is against progress and development etc.

7. Conclusion

It could be discovered from the foregoing that Muslims of Kwara State are engaging in propagation of Islam to achieve the same objectives, based on understanding and decorum as urged by the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur'an. The position of the four organisations and three notable individuals mentioned are distinguished from what is known in other North Central states of Nigeria first by having branches towards south-western Nigeria like Lagos and Ibadan, and second by diversifying the methods of their practicing, towards facing the challenges of the global in making Islam a universally acceptable religion.