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Survey and Profile of forty Madaris

The semi-informal nature of the madaris makes it difficult to have very accurate data and knowledge about them. Three works stand out in their detailed study of the madaris: they include the “Religious Education Committee of Arabic and Islamic knowledge of 1980” of the early 1980s, Reichmuth’s Islamische Bildung and the work of S.O Muhammed carried out in the late 1980s. In Muhammed’s work twenty madaris were surveyed, most of which were not located in Ilorin. Only nine of the madaris surveyed were located in Ilorin town, the area of the present study. In the absence of detailed records in most of the madaris, it is difficult to reconstruct the stages these schools have passed through since establishment. Despite attempts at formality, the informal nature of Islamic education still prevails. To have some understanding of the organization and running of the madaris, a survey of forty madaris was carried out. Forty was chosen with the view that despite the absence of accurate data and records, forty madaris form between a quarter to half of the whole madaris in Ilorin. The oldest and most organized have been included as well as smaller and newer ones. As such the schools in this survey fairly represent the spectrum of the madaris to be found in Ilorin.

A madrasah in the context of this research is a school that has either one or all of the ibtidaiyya, I’dadiyya or thanawiyya levels of Islamic education. They follow a curriculum to impart the knowledge on various religious subjects, roughly grouped into Islamic sciences, Arabic language/literature and general subjects. They also have a purpose built school for this. In one instance (No.36) the school uses a rented place. Another makes use of a shop and its verandah (No.29). The curriculum and purpose built premises are the two key indices that distinguish them from the Qur’anic schools where mainly Qur’an reading are taught to the students.

1 For a similar survey in northern Nigeria see Muhammad S. Umar, ‘Profiles of New Islamic Schools in Northern Nigeria’ [link](http://www.international.ucla.edu/media/files/Profiles_of_Islamic_Schools.pdf) accessed on 3-3-2013.
2 All efforts to get this document were futile, as neither the Ministry of Education in Ilorin nor the principal authors have a copy. I have relied on secondary reference to it in other works.
3 Reichmuth, Islamische Bildung, 340-351. 230 schools were listed.
4 Muhammad, ‘A Study of Selected,’ 81-82.
5 See Appendix XV and XVI for the sample questionnaire and selected answers from the forty schools.
6 See Appendix VII for comparison of levels of both the western and Islamic system levels of education.
Map 6. Map of Ilorin showing the location of the surveyed madaris.

Fig. 12. Relic wall blackboard used by Sheikh Girgisu; the humble beginning of Shamsud-deen College. Picture from the Girgisu family.
sometimes with hadith and a few other introductory texts of theology or jurisprudence.\(^7\)

The *madaris* are not uniform in terms of curriculum; as a result we can classify them into different categories based on their curriculum. There are those that tolerate English language, in addition to the remainder of Arabic and Islamic subjects. Zumratul Adabiyya and its sister Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari, where also science subjects in Arabic are taught and the Adabiyya network of schools fit into this category. There are those that do not allow for English language in the school such as Darul Uloom and most Markazi *madaris*. However, Markaz Taalim Arabi, Oke Agodi, tolerated English in its curriculum.

There is yet the category of those who are integrationist in approach having a number of western subjects in addition to Arabic and Islamic subjects such as Muhyideen College and Shamsudeen College. In addition, these also had a separate western primary and or secondary school, run and managed on its behalf by the government within the same premises.\(^8\) They use the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Education Studies (NBAIS) curriculum. Then there are those who are bifurcate, running a western nursery/primary school in the morning and running its Madrasah in the evening. Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah and Muhyideen College of Education offer tertiary education as well.

It is difficult to arrive at a specific number of the Qur’anic schools. All that is needed for their establishment is a teacher and a student. Any place could serve as the school; mosques, living quarters, verandah, under a tree or in open spaces. As such at least over a thousand of Qur’anic schools exist throughout Ilorin. Based on the definition of a Madrasah given above, we can safely conclude that there were around a hundred *madaris* in Ilorin when this research was conducted. Not included in this category are the new and emerging *Tahfiz* (memorization) schools. These will be discussed later in this chapter.

In previous research on Islamic education in Ilorin, various numbers of Islamic schools were given. In those studies; the different categories of schools such as the traditional Qur’anic schools and the Madrasah had been grouped together. Various figures had been given and none of the figures was conclusive for obvious reasons.

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\(^8\) Shamsudeen College’s government run western primary school has been moved out of its premises in 2012.
Fig. 15. Pupils grouped into classes. Note the blue (Markazi) uniform on some of the pupils and the mosque. Fiwa-Kesin Qur’anic School, Oko-Erin. Picture taken by the researcher in 2013.

Fig. 16. A pupil devolving his knowledge to junior pupils. Fiwa-Kesin Qur’anic School, Oko-Erin. Picture taken by the researcher in 2013.
It is almost impossible to arrive at a certain or specific figure because of the nature of the Qur’anic schools. Some change locations or name, others may no longer exist. Colonial records of Qur’anic schools in Ilorin varied over the years they were taken as to be inconclusive. Some Qur’anic schools also consider their selves as madrasah.

Aliy-Kamal gave a figure of eighty-nine Islamic schools and Reichmuth surveyed two hundred and thirty schools. Both researches were carried out in the decade of the 1980s, one at the beginning of the decade, the other in last half of the decade. The figure of three hundred and fifty-one private Arabic schools given in the Religious Education Committee report of 1980, covers the whole of Kwara state, parts of which have been excised to Kogi State and others merged with Niger State in the 1991 state creation by the Federal Government. The more popular and enduring madaris got mentioned in all the reports. In between the researches mentioned above new madaris have emerged from the 1990s through to the twenty-first century.

The popular slate Qur’anic School (ile kewu walaa) had by the beginning of the twenty-first century mostly faded away except in some places. Children with slates (walaa) sitting on ground around a teacher was a rare scene. Where pupils were seen with slates, they now sit on benches instead of mat on the floor. New generation Qur’anic schools; those established from the late 1980s by graduates of madaris basically use the Qaidat Baghdadi primer for teaching reading skills, from the huruf hijaiyah (alphabet) to syllable formation and it also contained the juzu amma, the last 1/30th of the Qur’an which also contained the shortest and easily memorized chapters.

These young teachers having passed through the more organized Madrasah system introduced some organization to their open air Qur’anic schools as well. Though often operating inside a compound with open spaces where they arrange benches, they group their students into different classes according to their levels. The youngest children are taught to read from the blackboard or simply to chant after a teacher in rote. Those who have advanced to using the Qaidat Baghdadi and those

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9 See Appendix XI.
10 Aliy-Kamal, ‘Islamic Education in,’ 130-137.
11 Reichmuth, Islamische Bildung, 340-351. 230 schools listed.
13 One of such was found at the entrance to Darul Uloom, in the course of this research. It was being run by a scholar living opposite the school. See fig. 7 and 8.
who have advanced into reading the reminder of the whole Qur’an are kept in separate classes.

Fig. 17. Pupils of Fiwa-Kesin Qur’anic School, Oko-Erin during their wolimat (graduation) ceremony. Picture taken by researcher in 2013.

Chart 1. Location of the surveyed madaris

Chart 2. Period of establishment of surveyed madaris
Hadith and poems were also taught, especially those recited to open and close the school. Some of these schools introduced wearing of uniforms and they have badges even though the schools have no purpose built classes nor some of the administrative paraphernalia of the madaris. Unlike the slate Qur’an schools with mainly one teacher, these new generation Qur’an schools tended to have more teachers. Some of them would be mates from some of the madaris. Sometimes the teachers were also pursuing further studies in one of the higher institutions of learning in the city. Like the traditional slate schools, token amounts are collected monthly from the pupils but these are not enforced and many default in paying. Some of these teachers augment the little income by providing home tutorship to children of the Muslim elites or professionals at their homes, especially those living in Government Reserved Area (GRA) or in localities where open Qur’anic schools were not many or nearby. Provision of prayer services and officiating in socio-religious ceremonies such as naming and weddings also served as a most important source of income for the scholars.

In one of such schools the teacher introduced a two page reading primer to replace the Qaidat Baghdadi. This was as a result of the young pupils constantly tearing the Qaidat Baghdadi. The words of the Qur’an are considered too sacred for it to be torn and littered around in pieces. His pupils start by rote learning if less than five years old. From that class they would graduate to the two page primer. If the pupil is between eight to ten years old, the pupil could start directly with the primer.

**Establishment:** The madaris were virtually all founded from the home of the founders. None of the schools was completely built before learning began. The closest to having a school built before learning began was Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah (No.31) but even that was for its lower levels and unusually, it was the only school

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14 Discussions with Alfa Salihu Hambali Kewulere.6-11-2012. He named the school Mahadul Fityatul Salihina. He also teaches in a government primary school. He had attended technical school and proceeded to have a diploma and an NCE certificates.

15 He had devised this on his own and had it laminated. It lacks the standardization of the Qaidat Baghdad but it serves the purpose of teaching reading in Arabic. A printer-entrepreneur also produced an abridged two page primer derived from the Qaidat Baghdad being sold in the open market. However their uses are still limited.

16 Through this primer he taught his pupils alphabet and syllable formation that is the foundation of learning to read the Qur’an. Though the standard of this primer is not up to that of the Qaidat Baghdad, it was able to serve the purpose it was meant for. Since Yoruba language does not have some of the sounds of Arabic, similar sounds may be used in their stead. The new primer is typed and laminated. This eliminated the concern of it being torn or scattered about. The whole lesson of alphabet and syllable learning is thus limited to a sheet of paper.
that began with provision of higher education before that of the lower levels. The school began with its diploma program inside a mosque in 1995 before the buildings for classes were eventually put up.\(^\text{17}\) Only in few instances do we have the madaris using a rented place. Markaz Taalim Oke-Agodi (No.4)\(^\text{18}\) at a point rented a place before moving to its permanent site. Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari (No.6)\(^\text{19}\) also used a rented place for a while. Limited financial resources played a key role in the schools hardly using a rented place. Most would not have been able to afford the rent. The very weak financial base of the madaris made it difficult for the schools to complete the building of their madaris even for those that have been in existence for decades.

While schools like Zumratul Adabiyya (No.1) and Isobat Isfaq (No.16) that have their buildings within or close to living quarters of the founders, some of the schools had to site their buildings on the outskirts of the town and sometimes in difficult terrains subject to erosion or flooding. Some built their schools in waterlogged areas because these were the locations where they could afford to buy the land at the time of establishing the schools. The sites were often bush in the beginning. Only later would settlements come to surround the schools as the town was expanding. The least expensive lands were often the choice for the siting of the schools, in the absence of funds to finance the project of building the schools.

**Location:** Ilorin West Local Government Area had the largest concentration of these schools followed by Ilorin East Local Government Area and Ilorin South Local Government Area respectively. Ilorin west has the largest concentration of the scholars, comprising Alanamu and Ajikobi wards. These two are the biggest wards of the four wards that make up Ilorin. This explains the concentration of the schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

The motto of the schools naturally reflects some religious ethics or belief. Adabiyya schools generally use ‘*adab fawqan ilm*’ (etiquette is superior to knowledge). Maashar Soliheenah Kuntu (No.12) uses *Nuru wa taqwa* (light and piety). Common symbols to be found in their logos include book (Qur’an), crescent, pen, minaret and mosque.

**Founders:** Most of the schools were first generation schools with the founders still alive and in control of the school. Some are under second generation managers, usually children of the founders, such as Markaz Taalim Oke Agodi, Zumratul

\(^\text{17}\) Discussions with Dr Abdulkadir Oba Solagberu, founder of *Darul Kitab wa Sunnah*. 19-12-2012.
\(^\text{18}\) Jimoh, ‘*The Life and Activities,*’ 8.
\(^\text{19}\) Discussions with Alhaji Waliy Aliy-Kamal. June 2012.
Adabiyya, Bahr-l-Ulum and Jawairu Islamiyya. All of the first generation founders never had a formal madrasah education nor western schooling but some like Sheikh Kamalud-deen and Sheikh Sahban had acquired some western learning privately.

In responding to question number two, reasons given for the establishment of the schools included ‘continuing a tradition in the family, promotion of Islamic and Arabic education, protecting Islamic education against the domineering western education, responding to modern trends in education, all of which are subsumed in the primary goal of daawah (propagation) of religion.’ Religion is seen as threatened by modern secular world and western secular education. Despite its beneficial side it is perceived as the handmaiden of the secular world against religion. These schools emerged in response to this threat to religion and the custodians of its heritage. While not completely against western education, they were wary of its ability to subsume Islamic education under its wing or obliterate it altogether.

Administration: Though most of the schools have an administrative structure of the Founder-Governing Board-Principal-Staff hierarchy, most have these structures only in name. Despite their attempts at formalities like the western schools, most of these formalities remain informal. Sometimes this is attitudinal, most of the times financial constraints is the major factor. Unable to meet the financial implications of most of the formal structures, they exist mostly in name and were minimally used in running the school.

Record keeping was not very strong in the madaris. Those who have combined western education with Islamic education tended to have more record keeping culture than those who did not. Even in such schools, the record keeping of the western section tended to be stronger than in the Islamic section. The informal root of Islamic education is partly responsible for this. Formalities were means to sustain the informalities of religious education and in the absence of means to maintain the formalities, the informalities predominated the operations.

Only Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah had specific boarding system. Even this is semi-formal since only lodging is provided; the students were responsible for their own food. Most of the rest organized boarding in an informal way. Students lived with the teacher who allocated a part of his building to the students. Some would be students given to him from within and outside the city to train;20 from the Yoruba towns of the southwest who still revere Ilorin as the center of Islamic learning among the Yoruba. The schools were too financially weak to operate a full formal

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20 Reichmuth, Islamische Bildung , 104
boarding system as in the western system. Some of the schools employed nonacademic staff, usually drivers and security guards while others use voluntary helpers, sometimes neighbors seeking to serve God through such voluntary service, such as keeping the school environment clean.  

**Equipment:** Most schools have audio equipment especially microphone and loudspeakers that serves for call to prayer as well as public preaching. Because these schools are extensions of the religion, you tend to see more funds expended on the mosques of the schools than the school facilities. The building of the mosque in many instances dominated the landscape of the school as the most imposing building. One can discern religious motive in this. The founders felt the religion is more important than the school which is just an extension of the religion. Religious knowledge does not necessarily require the paraphernalia of modern school facilities but religion cannot be practiced without the mosque. The mosque also attracts financial support from the community more than the school.

As such the mosque is more financially robust than the school even though both were built by the same person within the same compound. The mosque is seen as a communal building for the sake of Allah (*fisebilillah*) while the school is the personal property of the founder. The community has a connection to the mosque more than to the school. Everyone attends the mosque at one point or the other but only limited number of students will attend the madrasah. The Madrasah is thus farther away from the consciousness of the people than the mosque. Many people not connected to the Madrasah education system are less likely to be aware of the challenges facing these schools. The scholars bore the difficulties as test of faith and hardly complain. The independent spirit of the scholars also distanced people from the affairs of the schools.

Computers are becoming popular among the owners of the schools due to their portability and affordability and can serve for personal use outside of the school as well. Some schools have computer studies on its subject list (Nos. 1, 3, 4, &5). In the era of typewriters and cyclostyling machines, such facilities were hard to come by as indicated from research carried out in the late eighties.  

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photocopying machines. Two of the madaris have a website \(^{23}\) each while another three have plans to have one. \(^{24}\) This shows a trend of moving with the time.

Female teachers were rare and mostly were to be found in schools having a western section, where the women teach. One school had the wife of the proprietor helping in the Islamic section at some point (No. 29). Generally only few women have had the kind of educational qualification needed to teach and the social role of women as wives and mothers serves as further constraints. Islam also places women under the guardianship of men, thus less likely to play the mentoring role a male scholar adopts toward his students. Only one woman from Ilorin studied in Egypt in the

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\(^{24}\) Schools No.5; 6; 15.
Chart 3. Mosque usage in the surveyed *madaris*

Chart 4. School hours in the surveyed *madaris*

Fig. 19. Morning Assembly at Darul Uloom.
mid-1980s, but even this opportunity came outside Ilorin. By the twenty-first century, female graduates of Darul Kitab was-Sunnah received scholarship for further studies in Qatar. Other women who have had Middle Eastern education only acquired it as wives accompanying their husbands to the Middle East for studies. Women educated along the Islamic lines have always remained in the background and were especially influential in promoting informal education among the womenfolk.

**Learning and Teaching:** Many of the madaris developed their own curriculum, especially those of the first generation schools, established up till the decade of the 1960s. Subsequent schools have either followed on their lead by using their curriculum or a combination of their own and that of one of the early schools. The Adabiyya network of schools tended to follow the Adabiyya curriculum while the Markazi network also followed the curriculum of Markaz. From the 1960s when Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari was established, the curriculum of Al-Azhar also became popular among the schools who either adopted it whole or in combination with their own.

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25 Discussions with Hajiya Khadijat Abdussalam.9-12-2013. She left Ilorin for Lagos to avoid an early marriage tradition in the family. She enrolled in an integrationist school in Lagos run by a friend of her mother. From this school she got scholarship to study in Egypt. She is a presenter of the Islamic programme ‘Al-Hidayah’ on Radio Kwara.

26 Discussions with the Provost of Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah, Dr Ahmad Faozy Fazazy.23-9-2013.

27 Discussions with Alhaja Habeebah Abimbola Otuyo, a female Arabic teacher. She also presents a programme on television during the annual Ramadan fast. 11-12-13
The Al-Azhari curriculum cuts across the Markazi and Adabiyya networks since both networks are connected to it. Connection with Saudi Arabia from the 1970s also added the curriculum of Saudi Arabia institutions like that of the University of Medina to the options available. There is also the curriculum of the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Education Studies (NBAIS)\textsuperscript{28} under the auspices of the

\textsuperscript{28} The Board, though having antecedents from the 1960s only became a government approved agency with legislative backing in 2011. See R.D Abubakre, ‘The National Board
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This came into the picture in the twenty-first century. This is being used in the bifurcate/integrationist schools such as Muhyideen and Shamsudeen Colleges which enables the students to sit for a central examination conducted by NBAIS based in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Levels to be found in the schools ranged from raodat atfal (nursery), ibtidaiyya (primary), I’dadiyya (intermediate), thanawiyya or Tawjihiyya (secondary) to diploma and National Certificate of Education (NCE) levels. Only Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah offers a diploma course and Muhyideen College of Education offers NCE, of two and three years respectively. The provision of tertiary education began in the last decade of the twentieth century. These were affiliated to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah began as a diploma awarding institute in 1995 while Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic studies began its NCE program in the year 2005. Muhyideen had also been given approval to begin its affiliated degree program which it had begun by 2013. In the absence of a coordinating central authority, each school operates each of the levels of education differently. The two colleges offering affiliated higher education courses use the curriculum of the institution they were affiliated to. None is yet to independently offer a tertiary course.

Raodat al atfal (the kindergarten/nursery level) entrance age ranges between one to two years old. Not all schools offer this. It is a fairly recent development partly due to the younger age children get to start learning and partly in competition with private nursery schools that began to dominate the provision of western education from the end of the twentieth century. Only nine of the forty schools surveyed have this section. All the schools operating the ibtidaiyya level were established between the 1970s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, three of them operating the bifurcate system.

The duration of the Ibtidaiyya level ranges between two and four years depending on the school. This is rated the equivalent of the primary of the western system. Before Raodat al atfal became popular, the ibtidaiyya is sometimes considered to be the nursery school equivalent. The range of subjects taught at this level ranges for Arabic and Islamic Studies: a legacy of Sir Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto.' Paper delivered at the Golden Jubilee of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. November, 2012.

29 This used to be a three year course before it was reduced to two years. In recent years Arabists have advocated for a return to the three year duration to bolster what they consider dwindling fortunes of Arabic Studies, see Abdulganiy Abdus Salaam Oladosu, Fluctuations in the Fortunes of Arabic Education in Nigeria, 115th Inaugural Lecture, University of Ilorin (Ilorin: University of Ilorin Press, 2012.) and Oloyede, Islamics: The Conflux.
between six and eleven subjects. One school had 16 subjects (no.33) on its list of subjects. The duration of I’dadiyya for Adabiyya network of schools is three years and four years for the Markaziyya network respectively. Three of the schools have I’dadiyya as their lowest level. The I’dadiyya level is the most common of the levels to all the schools. While all the schools have the I’dadiyya level, not all of them have the other levels. Some have only two or three of the levels. Only Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah and Muhyideen College have all the levels in their respective schools. Eleven of the schools do not have thanawiyya/Tawjihiyya level.

The duration of thanawiyya/Tawjihiyya is three years across the different networks. I’dadiyya level had been in existence for decades before the thanawiyya level began in 1978 with Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari. The thanawiyya level gained popularity from the 1980s when many of the schools developed that level of education, the result of improvement on the system. When the Religious Education Review Committee in 1981 proposed a diploma awarding college, among their recommended qualifications for a direct admission into the diploma course was the I’dadiyya certificate. However, by the time the objective was realized over a decade later in 1992, it was only the thanawiyya certificate that was to be accepted since many of the schools had upgraded to that level, thus making the I’dadiyya substandard as the entry requirement for a higher certificate.

The average age of students in the raodat atfal (kindergarten/nursery) level which is a fairly recent development, is between two to three years. With every generation the age of entrance into school drops by a few years. It is not uncommon in recent times to have children under the age of ten who have finished the recitational study of the Qur’an. In the previous decades, most pupils would have been in their teens. Perhaps taking a cue from the explosion of private nursery schools, some of the madaris too began to have kindergarten equivalents in the raodat atfal. At the ibtidaiyya level the average age of pupils is six to eleven years.

At the I’dadiyya level, age of pupils ranged between twelve to eighteen years, many of whom would have attended some primary or even secondary education of the western system. At the thanawiyya level, the age of students on the average ranged between fifteen years and early twenties, though in some rare cases you find older students and in an instance a retired civil servant who wanted to pursue the knowledge out of interest. The Islamic schools have flexibility for the age of entrance into the various levels. Sometimes there were students of higher institutions of the western system in the I’dadiyya or thanawiyya levels of the

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30 Nos.3;4;and 6. They were all established in the 1960s.
31 Aliy-Kamal, ‘Islamic Education in,’ 117. Thanawiyya level was still in its infancy at this period.
Madrasah system. Some students in secondary of the western system were also attending the I’dadiyya or thanawiyya at the same time, especially in madaris with afternoon sessions. This creates a problem of low attendance for the madaris during school sessions. Attendance is fuller at weekends when the western schools are on break and the madaris open or when the western schools are on holiday. Attendance is fullest when the madaris are having their examinations.32

The ibtidaiyya level is usually equated with the western primary school, though pupils only spend two to four years at this level. I’dadiyya is equated with junior secondary while thanawiyya is equated with senior secondary school. There is as yet a purely Islamic sciences based institution of higher learning, not connected with the western system. Institutions run by the government offer diploma, NCE, degree and post graduate studies as departments of either Islamic Studies in English or Arabic language or combination of both. Only two of the madaris mentioned above run a higher education as an affiliate of a government run University, the same institution responsible for the JISCE and SISCE examinations that serves to bridge the graduates of the madaris into western higher institutions. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Islamic studies with education course in Arabic medium began to be offered as an alternative for those who have had their education through the madaris and were not particularly strong with English language. 33 The College of Education, Ilorin, was the only institution offering the Arabic medium course in Ilorin during the period of this research.

This classification of the schools serves mainly for academic or distinction purpose. In social relations, a Muslim scholar is not judged essentially by the certificates he holds but by the piety he is perceived to possess. A holder of I’dadiyya certificate may command more respect from the community than a degree or Ph.D holder if he is perceived to have greater istijaba (intercessory power of prayer) resulting from taqwa (piety). Many of the older generation scholars who never attended any Madrasah system are in the highest hierarchy of the scholars of religion. Increasingly however, the younger generations of scholars are getting certified; hence you have master and Ph.D holders teaching in some of the madaris. Unemployment and the prestige of having a postgraduate certificate have led to an increase in the number of graduates of Arabic and Islamic education pursuing postgraduate degrees.

32 Discussions with Khalifa Abdulrafiu Abubakar Agbarigidoma. 28-7-2013. Even if the western schools were on, such students would skip school to have the examination of the madaris.
For most of the schools, the school calendar runs from Shawwal (the tenth month of the lunar Muslim calendar) to Shaaban (the eighth month). Ramadan (the ninth month of the lunar Muslim calendar) is the common holiday corresponding to the annual fasting month for Muslims. Some, however, used a different calendar, although all made Ramadan the vacation period. The traditional Saturday to Wednesday was still the school week but some ran Saturday to Thursday. Most operated in the morning but because of the prevalence of western education, as well as those operating bifurcate system, some have shifted to afternoon, to allow students attend western schooling in the morning. Some ran morning, afternoon and night sessions. In the bifurcate schools morning was used for nursery/primary level of western education and the afternoon for the Arabic and Islamic education.

In the forty madaris surveyed, there were a total of 16,954 students of which 3,837 were females. There were a total of 502 teachers, 60 of which were females, in only eleven of the schools. Those running the bifurcate schools accounted for most of the female teachers, which means most if not all of the female teachers would be found in the western nursery/primary school sections. There were on the average of 33.7 students to a teacher. The most populous schools were Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah (3000 students) followed by Darul Uloom (2100 students). Only three other schools have populations over one thousand. They include Zumratul Adabiyya, Shamsudeen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies and Zumratul Adabiyya Kamaliyya.

Most of the rest are above a hundred in population with Mahad Thaqafatul Adabiyya (no.13) having only thirty students. The figures are not absolute figures. Most do not keep very specific records and fluctuating populations of students according to the time of the year made this difficult. Figures for the teachers were equally not very specific. Some of the teachers were voluntary helpers to their own teachers and their availability depended on their other schedules. The figures given above give approximate figures of students and teachers in these schools.

Curriculum: As noted earlier, most of the madaris have no single or unified curriculum. In the absence of an overarching agency, each school worked out its own curriculum. A bill was signed into law in 2011 by the Kwara State House of Assembly, for the establishment of Arabic Education Board, a state equivalent of

34 Sixteen schools in the survey run two or three of these sections.
35 For comparison for a survey carried out in the mid-1980s see, Reichmuth, Islamische Bildung, 283-287.
36 There were anecdotes of female teachers in a few of the non-bifurcate schools. They were nevertheless rare occurrences.
National Board for Arabic and Islamic Schools. The Ministry of Education has relations with some of the schools especially those using the NBAIS curriculum but those mainly based on Arabic medium have little or no connection with the ministry.

Madaris of the Adabiyya network tended to be similar to each other. The same applies to those in the Markazi network. The integrationists such as Shamsudeen College and Muhyideen College also have similar curriculum. As a result, different subjects were being offered in different Madaris and different texts sometimes were being used for the same subject. The nomenclatures of some of the subjects were also different in the madaris. For the raodat atf al, between six and eleven subjects were offered and at ibtidaiyya levels; students were taking an average of eleven subjects, up to sixteen in a school. Depending on the school, I’dadiyya level subjects on the average were sixteen and could be up to twenty. Thanawiyya/Tawjihiyya subjects averaged twenty-two to twenty-four subjects.

In the madaris surveyed, there were a total of twenty-nine different subjects at the I’dadiyya level. At the Thanawiyya/Tawjihiyya level, the total subjects available for all the schools were forty-three in number. Some subjects are thus unique to some schools but there are also others that cut across the schools. The large number of subjects to be offered thus limits the number of periods a subject is taught in a school. The differences in the subjects being offered are due to preferences of the owners of the madaris.

Organizing the Madaris: A major problem of the madaris is organizing themselves into a formidable association; that speaks for all of the madaris with one voice. This is one of the problems of trying to formalize an informal system. Traditional scholars have always operated independently and there is the absence of the church in Islam as compared to Christianity where the church is responsible for the training

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37 In September 2014, the State Government announced the appointment of Dr Abdulkadir Oba Solagberu as its pioneer chairman and named others as members of the board. The board is expected to, among other things; streamline the activities of Arabic and Islamic schools across the state. It is too early for this research to make any appraisal of the board. See ‘Group Commends Kwara govt on Arabic education board.’ www.tribune.com.ng/islamicnews. Accessed 22-12-2014.

38 Most of the respondents see the government as indifferent to the Arabic and Islamic education system.

39 See Appendix X for a sample of Timetable for the idadiyya and thanawiyya of Zumratul Adabiyya Kamaliyya.

40 See Appendix XIV for subjects available in the schools surveyed. The use of different nomenclatures for the same subject in some instances is partly responsible for this large number of subjects.

41 See Appendix X for sample time-tables of a madrasah.
of its clergy. In Islam scholars develop independently; this independence is thus
carried over into their career. Until the reformation of the Qur’anic schools into
madaris in the twentieth century, there was no need to have an association for
proprietors of school. School is conceived around the teacher and whereever he was
located.

JAAIS which had been established in 1976 to defend the interests of the madaris
had fizzled out by the mid-1980s. The new association serving to coordinate the
madaris, National Association of Arabic and Islamic Schools Proprietors (NAISP)
had only some of the schools as active members, none of whom are in the top
hierarchy of the schools. The organization was yet to receive any major assistance
from the government and in the absence of a major benefit to be derived from
membership; most of the madaris do not pay attention to it. Many were not even
aware of its existence.  

Twenty-five of the schools surveyed were not members and of this number, fifteen were unaware of the existence of the association. The
association itself came into being through the indirect prompting of the government
Adult Education Agency. An official of the agency wanted to see how learning
materials could be given to the Qur’anic schools after seeing the efforts of a woman
proprietor of a Qur’anic school, Alhaja Raihanat Temim.  

The official brought some learning materials: books, pencil, chalks and mats to be
distributed to about twelve Qur’anic schools through Alhaja Raihanat Temim. Sixty
schools turned out for the materials when it was to be distributed. The official
then advised that there should be an organization for the schools to coordinate their
activities. This way they can tap into such opportunities in the future. Already
JAAIS had been comatose for years and younger scholars emerging were not
conversant with it. She became the coordinator of the new group.

After the organization had been established, she stepped aside for the men to hold
the rein of the association while she became the secretary of the association. This is
in line with Muslim tradition of having men as leaders and she was the only woman

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42 The Adabiyya appeared not well represented in the association like the defunct one.
43 A retired nurse, she had started her school by accident. According her: One day, her
toddler son was crying, wanting to follow his elders to a Qur’anic school and she had decided
to play teacher with the son to calm him down. Other children joined them and from that day
onward the school began as they gathered again in subsequent days. The school had since
become a regular Qur’anic school. She is the head teacher and is supported by other teachers.
She named the school Markaz Ahmad Rufai after her son. Her efforts also led to the
formation of NAISP of which she is Secretary. Though she had come from a scholarly
family, she herself had only completed her studies of the Qur’an in her 40s. Discussions with
Alhaja Raihanat Abidayo Temim. 26-12-2012.
44 Many if not all would have been Qur’anic schools rather than the madaris.
among the men. The new association was established on March 6, 2002 and in 2012 it registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission based on the advice given by the emir of Ilorin when the group paid a courtesy call on him. The emir also funded the registration of the association with the agency.\textsuperscript{45}

In just over a decade of its existence, its influence was still weak with the most prominent of the madaris hardly aware of its existence. Most of its members were young scholars still struggling to build their schools. Unless it can strengthen its structure and facilitate some assistance for the madaris, many would continue to ignore its existence.

**Examination:** Most of the madaris conducted their own examinations and it was only at the junior or intermediate (I’dadiyya) and senior levels (thanawiyaa) was it possible to have a joint examination set by an external body and this body is located and run in a western higher institution, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The body responsible for this examination is the National Board for Arabic and Islamic schools (NBAIS). This body has its history in the Sardauna’s\textsuperscript{46} effort to see that the Muslim education system get some support and development such as the grant-in-aid being given to mission schools in Northern Nigeria under colonial rule. The board was not officially recognized by the government of Nigeria until February 2011.\textsuperscript{47}

All the while the Institute of Education of Ahmadu Bello University hosted the Board. This system essentially serves as a bridge into higher education in the western educational institutions. Not all the madaris have subscribed to this system of external central examination. It is suffused with much western formalities such as the financial requirements which most of the madrasah students could not afford. At the time of this research, the highest fee in all of the madaris surveyed was four thousand naira per annum, as school fees. NBAIS examination fee was seven thousand naira per student, with the cost running up to twelve thousand naira, including administrative charges in some schools. School registration with NBAIS to be eligible as an examination center was one hundred and fifty thousand naira.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Discussions with Sheikh Murtala Yakub Alaboto (Chairman NAISP), 6-10-2012 and Alhaja Abidayo Temim and uztadh Ahmad Abdul Wahab Saura. 26-12-2012.
\textsuperscript{46} The late Premier of Northern Nigeria, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, assassinated in the January 1966 coup.
\textsuperscript{47} Abubakre, ‘The National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies.’
\textsuperscript{48} The few schools interested often had to merge to have a centre.Discussions with Alhaji Abdullateef Adekilekun, Zonal Coordinator (Zone 4) of NBAIS, 7-1-2013 and Alhaji Is-haq Shege, Principal Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies.3-12-2013.
With most schools running tuition free, the school registration fee and the student examination fee of the NBAIS examination were on the high side. The Board however, does not appear to see the fees as high. Most of the schools could not afford the fees and some of the schools had to merge their students to reduce the cost. The weak financial base of the madaris makes them vulnerable and unable to fully harness this opportunity. Many of the madaris would not be able to employ teachers to teach western subjects which are required as parts of the subjects to be taken in the examination.49

Those of the proprietors of madaris who were afraid of domineering western system were also wary of NBAIS as attempts to subdue Islamic education under the western system.50 Most of the madaris of the Markazi network, for example, see the system as too loaded with western subjects. Most of the madaris feel independent enough and, without the NBAIS, many students of the madaris have crossed into the higher education levels of the western system by self-learning or enrolling in a western school for the school leaving certificate examination. This gave them qualification needed for entrance into the higher institutions. This makes NBAIS unnecessary and uneconomic even if desirable as a bridge into higher western education system for many of the madaris. The registration fees needed for madaris to get their students to sit for the examination was beyond what most of them can afford and as such were discouraged. They saw it as additional burden when what the system needed was some relief. For the whole of Kwara state in 2012, only ten madaris registered with the board, five of them in Ilorin.51

Teaching of science subjects in the madaris is almost nonexistent. Only Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari has successfully taught the key science subjects of mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics for its products to have gone ahead to study disciplines such as medicine, geology and agricultural science through Arabic medium in the Middle East. Some of the madaris made attempts to teach subjects like mathematics, geography and one school (No. 29) attempted the teaching of chemistry through Arabic medium but the school did not have the required facilities for it to be thoroughly and sustainably taught. Teachers who can teach the subjects in Arabic were difficult to come by, neither were there funds to sustain such venture. Mathematics is more common and has some resonance within Islamic

49 The new Arabic Board in Kwara State announced on the radio that it has begun payments of fees for the NBAIS examination in 2015 for students of the madaris. However, this meant only schools which have subscribed to the examination may benefit from the scheme.
50 See Appendix XII for the NBAIS Examinable subjects list.
51 Madaris nos.3, 5, 15, 31, Omo Iyah Arabic school being the fifth and not in the survey. Discussions with Alhaji Abdullateef Adekilekun. 7-1-2013.
knowledge system. For the most part what is taught is elementary mathematics compared to what is as taught in western schools. 52

The libraries in the madaris were almost non-existent. For the most part they operate as informal collections of the founders. The nature of Islamic learning where silent reading and personal reading of texts is limited makes the provision of a library not a strong priority. Personal reading of texts is more attuned to the higher level of Islamic knowledge than the intermediate level the madaris are more known for. Most importantly, the funds for running a library were almost non-existent in the madaris.

Relations of some of these madaris with the government was strong in the mid-seventies to mid-eighties and some received grant-in-aid from the Ministry of Education but this system seemed to have faded in the mid-eighties corresponding with the era of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of the Federal Government of Nigeria. However, while it lasted, not all the madaris benefitted from this aid. This seemed to have contributed to the ease with which it was dispensed with; there were not many madaris as stakeholders that would have fought for its maintenance. The ministry relations with the madaris consisted of organizing a joint examination for the madaris which was later replaced with NBAIS examination. 53

The ministry visits the schools to see their syllabus and see how it is uniform with others. 54 However, most of the schools said the government is not doing anything for them. A few acknowledged visits from ministry officials. Some of the madaris that registered with NBAIS for the examinations of its candidates meet regularly at Muhyideen College, to discuss their relations with NBAIS. Those madaris that have instituted NBAIS examinations are affiliated to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, but the relationship is mainly the provision of syllabus and conduct of examination. This does not include any financial incentives to the schools, training for either their teachers or administrators except workshops.

52 Discussions with Dr Muhammad Mahmood Jimba 27-12-2012 and Dr Busayri Sulaiman 1-1-2014. See Appendix XIII for a copy of the report sheet of Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari.
53 Correspondence with the Kwara State Ministry of Education. 2013.
54 Correspondence with the Kwara State Ministry of Education. 2013.
Chart 8. Affinity among the surveyed madaris

Chart 9. Affiliations in the surveyed madaris
Chart 10. The varied routes a scholar can follow to acquire Islamic Education in Ilorin
Teaching: In the eighties, many of the madaris relied on their former students, mostly with thanawiyya certificates to teach but from the 1990s when many products of the schools have acquired higher degrees from both Nigerian universities and from Arab countries, the schools began to have teachers with diploma and degrees. Some of the madaris now have Ph.D holders or Ph.D candidates among the proprietors and teachers. There has generally been an improved quality in those available to teach but the remuneration has not been commensurate with their certificates and when compared with colleagues with equivalent certificates in government establishments, it is grossly inadequate.

We can infer that more graduates of Arabic and Islamic studies seem to have been produced than the society can cater for and be employed with remuneration that is commensurate with their level of academic achievement. With high unemployment rate for the graduates of the western system, it was even more acute for the graduates who have specialized in Arabic and Islamic studies, disciplines that are not primarily in the class of financially rewarding courses or disciplines. The ability of the scholars for self-employment as clerics, officiating religious ceremonies or offering spiritual services helped in reducing dependency on paid employment. For those not inclined toward the prayer economy, employment can be very difficult to get in the formal sector.

The use of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and Old Boys association were lukewarm imitations of poorly practiced traditions in the western school system in Nigeria. The madaris generally do not have Parents Teachers Association, though a few indicated they have. This was partly due to the reverence parents have for the scholars who are to be obeyed without much questioning as religious and community leaders. The decision of the scholars, concerning the schools and the students would be accepted by the parents and thus make any interaction with the school authority less appealing to the parents. Many of the parents were poor and low income earners and would not have been of much help to the schools. The madaris have also not made much move in the direction of involving parents in the affairs of the schools, being generally independent in inclination.

1 Madaris Nos.1, 8, 13, 10 and 31 fall into this category.

56 Going through the madaris tended to reduce the inclination of scholars towards a career in spiritual consultancy, especially if the student had not come from a scholarly family where such skills could be partly inherited. This is especially true for those who have passed through integrationist schools.
The Old Boys Associations function better than the PTAs and this could be expected. It is usually from among their ranks that the madaris recruited some of their teachers, often generally on voluntary basis as a mark of respect for their teachers and contribution to their alma mater. Because of the close connection that usually develops between a teacher and his students, the students sometimes remain close to their teacher for life and they operate within the same network. The proprietor could always call on his former students to assist the school in whatever form they are needed. This also works in an informal nature, largely based on personal relations.

**Funding:** Perhaps the greatest challenge to Islamic education in the period under our study is the problem of funding. Whereas in the period before twentieth century, funding was not primarily a problem, from the colonial period this changed due to the general socio-economic changes wrought by colonialism such as western education and monetized economy. In pre-colonial times the needs of the system were simple and easily met. The system operated informally and there was no competing system to contend with. The society from the aristocrats to the commoners patronized the scholars. The scholars were also few and were well sought after. In addition to patronage as source of incomes, many of the scholars were merchants, moving from place to place and spreading knowledge along the way. A few were also warriors and derived some income from booty resulting from wars or raids. The economy of the society was simple and scholars enjoyed some immunity from taxes that were imposed on peasants. However, the coming of colonialism, western education and a new economic order changed the status of the scholars and put the system into a defensive posture it has not much recovered from. The system, however, has survived due to the utmost value it has in the mind of the scholars and the people around whose lives this institution revolves.

Under colonial rule, the status of the scholars vis-à-vis the rulers was first affected. The subjugation of the authority of the emirs and the aristocrats alienated most of the scholars who were opposed to foreign rule of Christian Europeans. The emirs were seen as having forsaken their role as amirul Mu’meen (leader of Muslims) and many scholars distanced themselves from the court even as some remained close to and supported the emirs in their dealings with the colonial authority.\(^{57}\) Their status as voice of conscience or herald of the people’s wishes diminished under colonial rule with the colonial officers having the final say on the emirs.\(^{58}\)

\(^{57}\) Al Iluri, *Lamahat Al Ballur fi*, 16.

\(^{58}\) Nevertheless the emirs continued to patronize the scholars and they also have supporters from the ulama class such as exampled by the very good relationship Emir Abdulkadir had
The imposition of taxes by the colonial authority affected the scholars too. Hence they were leaders and part of the 1913 tax riot in Ilorin. Unlike everyone else they had to source for money to pay the taxes which were anathemas to them. Colonialism introduced new economic mode of production and consumption far more complex than was hitherto in the precolonial economy. The economy was tied to currency introduced by the new regime and many would have to struggle to have the currency to pay the taxes, hence the desire of some of the scholars to work for the colonial authority to earn salaries to be able to pay the taxes.

More than the monetization of the economy and political control of the emirs, the introduction of western system of education posed the greatest threat to the survival of Islamic scholars as a group. The new system first relegated the traditional intellectual to the background. Steeped in religious knowledge production, their knowledge was not of much use to the new system and was only tolerably used until the new authorities were able to train some people according to the western system. Already the two systems have at their cores different aims and objectives and any form of cooperation between the two systems was further straitened by negative encounter between the colonizer and the colonized.

The new system was not only very formal but was also well funded and all through colonial period and beyond, western education received more attention and funding from both the government and the people than the Islamic education system. Western education is secular and tailored to be financially profitable unlike the Islamic education that was more into religious and social profits. The new system of government and economy favored those with western education much more than those with Islamic education. Even as the scholars of Islamic education rose to the challenge of the rival system and began to formalize their system, the system could not boast of a financial base as strong as the western education system. The result was that individual scholars built their new schools from meagre financial resources and the schools survived only because it is tied to the religion despite the odds against it.

All the schools were founded from the personal funds of the founders. However, some would get some assistance from Arab countries as their schools progressed. Despite this, one would find the physical structures in the madaris mostly with the Adabiyya group from the time of Tajul Adab, particularly so with Sheikh Kamaludddeen.

59 See Hodge, Gazetteers of Ilorin, 79
61 Al Illuri, Lamahat al-Ballu, 15. See also Kirk-Greene, Gazetteers, 123.
uncompleted even for those that have been in existence for decades. School fees generally were little compared to the needs of administration of schools and were not strictly enforced because of the religious origin of the schools. Some of the scholars felt they had gotten the knowledge free, they therefore see no reason to collect money to pass on the same knowledge.

Despite the low cost of fees, many students did not pay the fees either because they could not afford it and or relied on the fact that it was not strictly enforced. Seventeen of the schools surveyed were not charging any fees. Moneys realized from public sermons and public festivals were some of the ways the schools were founded. Most of the schools have never appealed to the government for assistance. A few who had tried complained of no response from the government. In the absence of a uniform system through which they can channel their needs, their interface with government remained very weak.

None of the madaris could affiliate to foreign Arab schools for higher education according to the Nigerian law. When Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari, as a branch of Al-Azhar University in Nigeria tried to affiliate to Al-Azhar for diploma courses, the school was informed that it was not possible under the law to affiliate any tertiary course to a foreign university. This legal impediment led the Adabiyya group to begin the process of establishing their own university to be named after its founder as Muhammad Kamalud-deen University.

Foreign aids were limited to some schools and in some of the schools it only lasted a while. This came in the form of supply of teaching personnel, books and cash donation as well as scholarship for the best students in some of the schools to study in the Middle-East. This sort of aid is formal and consistent with Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari because its affiliation to Al-Al-Azhar University is formal. Assistance from the Arab countries is a closely guarded open secret. It is mostly schools whose proprietors have some connections with philanthropist organizations in the Middle East, that benefitted from such aids. A few have kept a consistent contact with Arab donor agencies facilitating such assistance.

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62 Only schools Nos. 1,3,4,5 and 31 could be said to have completed their buildings with possibility of expansion in No.3, 4 and 5.
63 Discussions with Ustadh Idris Abdulkareem. 8-12-2013.
65 Those getting some assistance would not reveal their source or amount of assistance nor is there a record of most of such foreign aids. It is facilitated mostly through efforts of individual scholars and these are not shared with others for fear of betrayal and petty jealousies. Discussions with Alhaji Fatihu Yahaya Murtala (Mudir, Markaz Taalim Arabi, Oke Agodi ).5-10-2013.
Some got linked to the Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Endowments through their students who have gone to study in Saudi Arabia and who facilitated financial assistance to some of the madaris. Doctrinal belief of owners of a school may also have an impact on this. Saudi authorities or organizations do not favor schools with Sufi connections. Such madaris would not be assisted. A number of madaris were founded by Sufi scholars.

Of the madaris surveyed, many operated a tuition free system. Nearly half of the madaris (17 schools) surveyed were operating a tuition free system. The madaris that were collecting some fees charged only a minimal amount of money. The fees were never strictly enforced and many default because they could not afford it or simply latched on to the widely held notion that religious education need not be paid for and the fact that the scholars never made the payment a prerequisite to pass on their knowledge. The average fee paid by students for all the forty madaris surveyed was nine hundred and fifty naira per annum. A few collect their fees monthly, ranging between one hundred to five hundred naira. Most collect their fees on annual basis, ranging between one thousand naira and four thousand naira. As earlier mentioned, even for this low amount, many defaulted in payment.

Definitely fees were not the main source of funding for the madaris. As a result the proprietors could not afford to pay their teachers very well. Often they depended on their former students, many of whom would teach without earning a salary. This affected the dedication of teachers, since they sometimes have to absent themselves from schools to earn some income through the prayer economy or if they are pursuing higher education as well. Even for those on fixed salary, the amount is often too small to be a living wage. Additional income comes through their skills as prayer specialists or spiritual consultants to augment whatever is being paid to them. Basically teaching alone is not economically viable. It survives as an important vocation because it is believed that it is a service to Allah first and foremost, pecuniary gains a secondary consideration.

Any interested individual can gain virtually all the knowledge he needs to become a scholar of Islam without having to pay much to gain the knowledge, provided he is ready to undergo the rigor and dedication needed for acquiring the knowledge. A considerable amount of knowledge is thus acquired without money being paid. For

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66 Discussions with Dr Abubakar Ita-Ajia. 29-7-2013.
68 The highest annual fee recorded in the survey (N4000:00) is about the equivalent of fee for a term in some the lowest fee paying private western primary schools.
69 Discussions with Khalifa AbdulRafiu Abubakar Agbarigidoma.28-7-2013.
the most part, it is from among the low income earning members of the society that the students come from, making imposition of fees difficult.\textsuperscript{70} Often the proprietors had to support their schools with incomes earned from other services they were providing to the society. Only Darul Uloom indicated full compliance in payment of fees. It is easy to see why it was so. Darul Uloom is the only communally owned madrasah of all the madaris, having no one individual responsible for it. The head (‘Amid) of the school reports to the leading imams of the city (three of them) and the school council responsible for the school on behalf of the emir. This way no personal sentiments or relationship could be used to default on payment of the fees.

An important source of income for the schools was the graduation of the students at each level of studies. However, on a closer scrutiny this in itself is not much, given the number of people that would share in it and expenses the school would incur for organizing the event.\textsuperscript{71} At the graduation, usually each of the students in gown and turban would be called out individually for the presentation of his certificate. At this juncture the parents and relatives are then called out to give donations for the blessing of their child.\textsuperscript{72} The ceremony also serves to advertise a school and encourage parents to send their children to the school. This method of earning extra money from the parents has been copied by the private western schools especially those that charge low fees in the town, an instance of interaction and influence between the two systems.\textsuperscript{73}

**Bifurcate Schools**

In the early 1980s after the oil boom of the 1970s, the Federal Government introduced austerity measures but the waves of the oil boom of the 1970s still swept into the mid-1980s when the regime of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida introduced the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The people began to feel the economic crunch as government gradually began to implement liberal economic policies and withdrawing from provision of social and public services. The

\textsuperscript{70} Yahaya Uthman Kolawole, ‘The Development of Islamic Learning in Ilorin’ (B.A. Long Essay: Islamic Studies-Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1997), 58.

\textsuperscript{71} Part of the money gotten goes as gifts to invited scholars, the master of ceremony and renting of chairs and tents for the occasion.

\textsuperscript{72} Sometimes humor is added to the event such as the master of ceremony saying the airplane bringing the certificate is being held and money is needed to bail it out. The graduating student’s family then comes out en masse to give their tokens. Several imaginary obstacles could be used in this way to get money from the families of the graduating students.

\textsuperscript{73} It is now common in the private western schools to organize graduation ceremonies for every level of the school from kindergarten to nursery and then into primary stage. Pupils are called out individually, parents and well-wishers doling out money that would go to the school. Some even have fixed charges to be paid before the public ceremony where more money is spent.
education sector would feel the government withdrawal of subsidy from the sector, with gradual ascendancy of private schools. JAAIS, which had been able to get government to give some grant-in-aid to some schools, began to fizzle out and it appears the grant was last given in the mid-1980s.  

From the 1990s there began an increase in the number of private schools as standards in the public schools began to plummet. The primary school sector was the first to start experiencing this increase. The early private schools were run by Christians who have always had an edge over the Muslims in terms of western education. By the late 1990s to the early years of the twenty-first century, private schools had replaced public schools as the essential provider of education for the majority of the people. The Christian owned schools began to give Muslims concern as the owners were using the schools to subtly proselytize with Christian songs, poems and prayers. This began to irk western educated Muslims. This led some of them to begin to establish private schools to serve the Muslim population. Muslim cultural practice was emphasized in the Muslim run schools as a counter to the Christian run schools. Some adopted Arabic names as part of the school identity.

In this period also, some owners of madaris began to venture into this edupreneurship of providing especially western primary education in their schools. These bifurcate schools operate nursery/primary schools in the morning and the Madrasah in the afternoon. A number of reasons led to this development. As would be noted, thirteen of the madaris surveyed adopted this system. Only Muhyideen College and Shamsudeen College operated a western primary and secondary school respectively long before the 1990s as attempts at integration of western and Islamic education. Some of the madaris began as a result of demands from the Muslim population around the madaris who wanted the owners of the madaris to start a nursery school so that their children would not have to go far to attend western schooling. Schools number 19 and 26 began this way. Confidence in the public

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74 In the reply of the state Ministry of Education dated 5-3-1987 to JAAIS over the reminder about grants to schools, the government’s reply was in the negative, promising to consider the request when the state’s economy improves. See Muhammed, ‘A Study of Selected,’ Appendix XXI, 242.


76 Discussions with Alhaji Abdullahi Toyin Ghali, Mudir of Jawairul Islam Arabic School. 16-10-2012.
sector primary education having gone down, most people would rather have their children attend private schools if they can afford it. As in the 1940s with Sheikh Kamalud-deen, some scholars bought into this trend as more pupils were being lost to the western schools.\footnote{See Appendix VIII for the corresponding levels of the Islamic and western education systems.}

Others were challenged by the overt proselytization in Christian run private schools to start their own western nursery and primary schools. One school began in order to keep the site of the Madrasah from being redundant and being run over by bushes.\footnote{Discussions with Alfa Murtala Muhammad Raji (Nujumul Hudah Arabic School). 23-9-2013.} Some school were also inspired into existence by the manner some radical western educated Muslims were running their private nursery and primary school. These Muslims are believed to be indoctrinating the pupils with their own ideas and beliefs contrary to orthodox praxis.\footnote{Discussions with Ustadh Mansur Alaye. 27-9-2013. See Ware, \textit{The Walking Qur’an}, 207-210.} This led some owners of \textit{madaris} to start their own western nursery/primary section. The radical Muslims were held by traditional scholars as having little knowledge of Islam, most of which had come through

Fig. 21. Bilingual illustrations on the wall of a bifurcate school, Darul Uthmaniyya, Gaa-Akanbi (No.40).
Some scholars were critical of this new development, warning that western school is a *tijarah* (trade or profitable venture) and that Qur’anic education is in danger of being run over by the schools being established. There were even claims that some scholars had completely converted their *madaris* into nursery/primary schools. It is noted that most of the owners of *madaris* who have adopted the bifurcate method have all been through western institutions of higher learning for diploma or degree in Arabic and Islamic studies and some are also religious teachers in government primary schools and one had even risen to the post of a head teacher in one of such schools. These owners do not have the fears the critical or wary scholars have, seeing in the system a way to help preserve Muslim identity and culture which Christian owned private schools were eroding. Apart from inculcating Muslim culture in the pupils, the schools also have the added advantage of providing some source of income that was being used to maintain their afternoon madrasah. Many Madrasah run tuition free, since most students do not pay even where there are specified fees to be paid. The old belief that religious education is to be gotten free still very much entrenched in the mind of the people.

The system as well helped increased the number of students in the madrasah. Some parents let their children stay behind after the closing of the nursery/primary section to attend the Madrasah as well in the afternoon, benefitting from both systems. Of the thirteen bifurcate schools in the survey, only three charge fees for its Madrasah section. The private western schools generally have increased the closing hours of schools from 1:00 clock to between 3:00 and 4:00 clock in the afternoon. This made it difficult for Muslim students attending these schools to attend the neighborhood

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80 They hold an independent view of knowledge and have little regard for the hierarchical and service mode of the traditional scholars, having acquired their knowledge largely through the modern rationalist mode. They hold that the Supreme Being is accessible by dedicated individual efforts without the mediating role of a sheikh. Not in majority, they tend to band together under one of them that is more vocal in denouncing esotericism of the old ways.

81 However, this appears to be an exaggeration. What makes it appear so to the people is that once a madrasah introduces a western section, its appearance and paraphernalia dominates the ambience of the school. They are registered with the Ministry of Education which monitors and regulate their activities. The western school system naturally overshadows the madrasah as to make it appear as if the madrasah had been abandoned. The madrasah would operate in the evening and the population is usually less than that of the western section.

82 Discussions with Dr Abdulsalam Uthman Thaqafi. 24-9-2013.

Qur’anic schools operating in the evenings.\textsuperscript{84} The coming of western education and its popular acceptance had led to virtually all traditional Qur’anic schools shifting their school hours from morning till evening. The new wave of private schools also began to threaten this arrangement, with most students returning home late afternoon and too tired to attend further schooling in the evening.

Thus the Muslims began to establish their own private schools. Some of these schools were established by Muslim professionals hoping to latch onto the increasing need of the Muslim population for Muslim run schools where their children could be acculturated with Muslim ideas from early learning. Schools run by Muslim professionals or edupreneurs tended to be better run and organized than those run by erstwhile owners of madaris. Those run by the ulama have a major challenge of the Muslim population transferring attitudes toward the nursery/primary school, the belief that money may not be paid to get Islamic education and seeing the western section as an extension of the Madrasah.

Though these schools charged very low fees, they are beset with many instances of fee defaulting. Because many of the pupils were usually the children of low income earners and were either neighbors or families, they tended to appeal to the religious and social sentiments of the proprietors to default.\textsuperscript{85} Those who can afford it took their children to the more expensive Muslim or Christian run schools. Used to nonpayment in the Madrasah system and their position as men of God, expected to be merciful and lenient, the ulama/owners tended to be lenient to appeals for postponement of payment or outright default of payment. They had to accept this in the belief that it will keep the low population of pupils from dwindling. Any attempt to be strict, they believe, will reduce the population of the school; some would likely withdraw their wards to other schools. These bifurcate schools are still emerging and evolving and the direction or form they would eventually take cannot be certain for now. However, they are positive in their outlook despite the challenges they are facing.

Evolution of Tahfiz (memorization) Schools
In 1986, the Centre for Islamic Studies of the Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University (then University of Sokoto) began the National Qur’anic Recitation Competition. The aims among others are: to encourage the proper reading of the Qur’an as was it revealed to the prophet and as he read it out to his disciples and the promotion of unity especially among young Muslims. This competition has led to an increase in

\textsuperscript{84} In recent times extra mural lessons have also become common extending school hours till evening. Discussions with Dr Abdulsalam Uthman Thaqafi. 24-9-2013.

\textsuperscript{85} Discussions with Uztadh Uthman Daud Abubakar.23-9-2013 and Zainul Abidina. 23-10-2012.
the awareness of the science of Qur’an recitation (tajweed) among Muslims all over the country.86

Kwara State, of which Ilorin is the capital city, began participation in the competition from inception culminating in the state representative winning the overall grand prize in 1999.87 Until the establishment of the National Qur’anic Recitation Competition, Qur’an recitation is usually done in the reciter’s tone or that of his teacher, the local dialect reflected in the pronunciation. Learning to read in the proper tone of tajweed requires having a hafiz (one who has memorized the Qur’an) as a teacher. There have always been scholars who had memorized the Qur’an but not necessarily with the rules of tajweed. The competition thus led to the emergence of young scholars with special interest in this form of Qur’an recitation. Many of them had represented the state in several of the National Qur’an Recitation Competitions. The competition is meant for young men of twenty-five years and below. However, there is no age limit in the female category. This is probably to encourage the females whose participation in Islamic education is generally secondary to those of the males.

When some of the young scholars finished the memorization of the Qur’an and were beyond the competing age, they began to train others and to establish Tahfiz (memorizing) schools. Most of the schools were established in the first decade of the twenty-first century, with Al Katibi Tahfiz School established as early as 1999.88 The competitions at the national level were largely dominated by northern states, especially Borno and Kano states with a longer tradition of Qur’anic education and memorization. Borno scholars were particularly well known for learning to recite and write the whole Qur’an from memory.89

The early learners of hifz al Qur’an (Qur’an memorization) in Ilorin had to face the challenge of absence of qualified teachers, syllabus and an organization responsible for the reciters. Hence many had to spend long years of between eight to ten years before completing the memorization of the Qur’an.90 Then in the mid-1990s, two

87 See Appendix IX for the six categories in the competition. Discussions with Hafiz Ahmad Katibi.14-11-2013.
88 The founder of the school was still competing while running the school. Discussions with Hafiz Ahmad Katibi.14-11-2013.
89 Gazali, The Kanuri in Diaspora.
90 Recently, with scientific methods and depending on resources available and mnemonic aptitude of the student, memorization of the Qur’an is possible within a year or a few years. Discussions with Hafiz Ahmad Katibi.14-11-2013 and Hafiz Abdulrasheed al Warai, (Secretary of the League of Memorizers). 5-10-2013.
trainers were brought in from Borno, Uztadh Alwali and Gwoni Bishara to train interested reciters, by the Kwara State Committee on Qur’an Recitation. The coming of the Bornoan scholars gave impetus to many young reciters who for the first time had access to qualified and experienced trainers. This played a crucial role in Ilorin emerging as the national winner in the most senior category in 1999. Regular attendance of the national competition also encouraged the reciters in furthering their knowledge of the technical science of Qur’an recitation.

As of the time of this research there had emerged over a dozen *Tahfiz* schools seeking to promote and develop the science of Qur’an recitation in Ilorin. Unlike the *madaris* earlier discussed, the new schools are different in concentrating mainly in the science of Qur’an recitation. The discipline has subdivisions such as *Qiraa* (recitation), *tahfiz* (memorization), *hija’a* (spelling rules) and *tajwid* (techniques and rules of recitation). Other subjects were also included in their curriculum such as hadith and *adab Islamiyya*. Not all the *huffaz* (hafiz sing.) are Arabists. As can be seen from the categories available in the national competition only the first category requires a mastery of Arabic language for the purpose of exegesis. The other categories only required the correct pronunciation, intonation and the rules of pauses and elongation in the recitation of the Qur’an.

In 2012, the *huffaz* in Kwara State, most of whom were based in Ilorin, formed an organization called The League of Qur’anic Memorizers of Nigeria (Rabita Hamalat ‘l Qur’an ‘l Kareem Nijeriyya) to among other things provide a forum to promote the affairs of Qur’an reciters and to complement the work of the State Committee on the National Qur’an Recitation Competition. The organization also seeks to promote unity and development of the science among the Yoruba speaking states. The organization differs from the State Committee in that all its members are *huffaz* unlike the State Committee members who had no training in the science of recitation but had been responsible for the administration and organization of the state reciters at local, state and national level for competitions since the inception of the program. Although the organization is meant only for *huffaz*, allowance was

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92 Memorizers of the Qur’an.
93 See Appendix VIII.
94 Though the name suggests it is a national body, it operates mainly in Kwara State and works with similar organizations with other Yoruba speaking states of the southwest of Nigeria.
made for accepting a non-\textit{hafiz} with a strong interest in promoting the aims and objectives of the organization.\footnote{See the leaflet of the organization. Within its short period of establishment, the organization had achieved some success. They successfully established a state competition which takes place annually during the month of Ramadan. They were also able to get a slot on the radio for a weekly program promoting and enlightening the society about the activities of the group. One of their members also got appointed as a judge of the national competition. Discussions with Hafiz Abdulrasheed al Warai. 5-10-2013.}

Most of the members of the new organization were young men in their thirties and early forties having spent their teens and early twenties as contestants and learners. Their number at the time of this research would be in the range of a few dozens in Ilorin. Like the more popular \textit{madaris}, funding remains a major challenge to development of the discipline. Their preoccupation with the technical reading of the Qur’an made some of the orthodox scholars to be cautious of new discipline. More knowledgeable than most of the \textit{huffaz} in the other traditional sciences of the Qur’an, they regard scientific reading of the Qur’an as secondary, even as it is desirable.

Some of the new \textit{Tahfiz} schools tried to grapple with the challenge of western education by making their \textit{Tahfiz} schools to operate as an integrated formal system. English, mathematics and general science would be taught alongside the science of the Qur’an recitation under a fixed number of years program.\footnote{Equivalent of the six years primary school level.} This system was still in its nascency during the course of this research, as such, it is too early to evaluate the trajectory the system would eventually follow.\footnote{For example, one of the \textit{Tahfiz} integrated school visited during fieldwork had only three students while another had fifteen students. They also offer evening classes which enabled those attending western schools to attend \textit{Tahfiz} lessons. Discussions with Hafiz Murtada Yahaya. 9-10-2013; Hafiz Ali Migdad.12-10-2013 and Hafiz Abdul Hamid Uthman Abu Royan (a judge of the National Competition).19-12-2013.}

Until the emergence of the \textit{rabita}, the Kwara State Committee on Qur’an Recitation had been the sole organ for organizing and promoting the science of Qur’an recitation in Ilorin. The committee emerged after the first letter of invitation to the maiden edition of the competition was sent to the state Ministry of Education. The ministry then liaised with other government agencies to form a committee to oversee the participation of the state in the competition.\footnote{Correspondence with the Kwara State Ministry of Education. 2013; Other institutions represented in the committee included Nigerian Television Authority, Radio Kwara, the Herald Newspaper, College of Education Ilorin, University of Ilorin and Ilorin Local Government Authority.} From then, the committee became a quasi-permanent organ responsible for organizing state competitions from...
which the state representatives to the national competition are chosen. The committee is also responsible for sourcing for funding for camping and participation of the contestants in the competition. The Ministry of Education usually assists with some funding and has a tradition of providing allowances and bus for the transportation of the participants to the venue of the competitions.  

Despite its recent emergence, funding became a problem for this new strand of Islamic education as well. Government assistance to the state committee was suspended under a military governor. Unlike in the other northern states, where similar committees have been institutionalized under the auspices of some government agency, in Kwara State, the committee was only recognized.

As a new trend in Islamic education, it is one of the indices of religious revivalism brought about by globalization beginning from the mid-1980s. Its development is also linked to the large number of western educated Muslims who are also well grounded in the Islamic sciences, who are the major promoters of this renaissance. While the national competition may have been the harbinger, it is increasingly becoming a popular mode of Islamic learning not necessarily geared towards the competition but as a way of enriching one’s religious experience. The new Muslim run private western schools are increasingly including it in their curriculum by way of encouraging Muslims to register their children in such schools. Electronic media through which this mode of recitation could be heard has also contributed to the

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100 Colonel Baba Nyiam insisted that the government has no business funding a religious program. He challenged the committee to seek assistance from Muslims and gave a personal donation of ten thousand naira and made his Muslim commissioners to donate one thousand naira each by way of example. The governor, a Muslim himself, felt that well-to-do Muslims should be assisting the committee rather the committee begging government for assistance. As a result Muslim leaders, the emir, top civil servants and business men came to the assistance of the committee. The committee also began to raise fund from the community. Discussions with Alhaji A.K.W. Aliy-Kamal. 21-11-2013.

101 This resulted partly from a fear that other Muslim organizations would want government to institutionalize their own needs as well. There is also Christian/Muslim equation in the state to be considered. When civilian rule returned in 1999, the committee was able to reconnect with government to assist the committee. After the state won the overall national prize in 1999, the opportunity was given to the state to host the next edition. Foremost politician in the state, late Dr. Oluola Saraki supported the committee financially in hosting the competition in year 2000. The civilian Governor Muhammad Lawal (1999-2003) gave the committee five hundred thousand naira. Fund left over from hosting the national competition in 2000 was used by the committee to buy a bus for its operations. Discussions with Alhaji A.K.W. Aliy-Kamal. 21-11-2013.
popularity of *hifz al Qur’an*. This trend can be seen as parts of the effects of globalization on the Islamic education sector.

**The Female in Islamic Education**

It has been noted in the first chapter the special value that Muslim societies give to knowledge, its acquisition and transmission. The theoretical incumbency to search for knowledge does not exclude the female. Despite the restricted status of women, they nevertheless are encouraged to seek and treasure religious knowledge. However, the status of women in Islam naturally would affect the role of women in Islamic education, both in acquisition and imparting the same. In the Qur’an and the traditions specifying the need for Muslims to acquire knowledge, both male and female are implied. The implication of this is that religious education as a socializing agent in Muslim society makes it important for the woman to be educated as she becomes the first contact and teacher of children in the socializing process. This foundational role thus makes knowledge acquisition and transmission an important virtue for a Muslim woman.

Islam subordinates women to men, granting her some privileges and rights for this subordination. The Qur’an has set the position of the female as subordinate to the man. This is unequivocal. However, how subordinate a woman should be is rather controversial, with cultural and social realities as well ideological inclinations in different climes and times often prevailing. The man is given the position of leader and protector of women. A woman thus cannot assume certain kinds of leadership where men are concerned. A woman is commanded to keep her voice low in public, to dress decently and comport herself in a way that dignifies her position. This subordinate position, however, gives her rights and privileges such as being protected and provided for by the man. Rather than suppression of women in popular imagination, it is a hierarchy of reciprocal responsibilities between men and women.

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104 Q 4:34 “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (husband’s) absence what God would have them guard…”

105 For example, women among the Yoruba are active in economic activities and even participation in religious activities more than the women of the Hausas of northern Nigeria. They form the backbone of many of the Muslim organizations in terms of membership and financial support.

106 This view must have been impressed on Leith Ross when making her enquiries about the possibilities of starting a female education program in Ilorin. Leith Ross, ‘Female Education in Ilorin Province’ NAK file 89/1928/Vol.1.
and women, equal before Allah but having different stations in life. However, social and cultural realities determine how these are realized.

Since knowledge is power and ultimately prepares the scholar for leadership position, a woman’s involvement in acts that lead to this is thus limited by social and cultural practice though in theory she has equal rights to knowledge possession as the man. Although we have a number of cases where women have been religious authorities, such as Aisha, the wife of the prophet and closer home in Nigeria, the daughters of Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodiyo, rarely do women achieve scholarship to that level. However deep her knowledge, a woman cannot be the official in a religious ceremony such as praying except in an all women congregation. She cannot serve as a judge or become a political leader as well. A woman’s role as home maker also limits her foray into scholarship. Once a woman is married, maternal and family responsibilities hinder her participation in scholarship.

Despite this, Muslim women have participated in knowledge possession and transmission as far as their responsibilities accorded them. From the time of the prophet to contemporary times women have been active in acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. The prophet’s wife Aishah, for example, is well known as a transmitter of hadith. Many women of the Mamluk period were also known as transmitters. Women have been more renowned in this field than the in other fields of jurisprudence and allied sciences that would make a man to be referred to as an alim. This was easier for women since memory is the most important requirement in transmission of hadith unlike the other fields where personal opinions and disputations may take place, with possibility of a woman scholar pitching argument against a male scholar, especially in the oral form.

When Islam came to West Africa, Islamic and traditional practices combined to affect the role of women in education. Not much is known of female scholars until the time of Uthman Dan Fodiyo who admonished scholars of his time for allowing their women to revel in ignorance. The subordinate position of women in Islam and local traditional practices also presupposes a limitation of women participation in Islamic education. Uthman Dan Fodiyo, however, set examples by allowing women to attend his lectures and his daughters were well educated as shown in the

107 Berkey, The Transmission of, 175.
108 Modern Muslim women are breaking down this barrier with more women attaining the level of scholarship that enable them to argue for their rights. As would be shown in chapter six, their argument have largely been for recognition of more rights for women suppressed through social and cultural context, not of equality of power with men but as supportive of the men’s role with their enhanced role.
works of Nana Asmau. Naturally the women in the households of scholars tended to be more active in learning than women of other households.

In the pre-emirate settlement of Okesuna in Ilorin, mentioned is often made of Asiya, the wife of one of the scholars, Sheikh Munabau. Generally the girls attend Qur’anic schools like their male counterparts and daughters of scholars have little choice but to partake in this knowledge acquisition. Before the twentieth century as well as the early part of it, a woman’s education would be limited by two factors in Ilorin. The longer number of years that is needed to acquire the higher education presupposes that even a woman in a scholarly household would be ready for marriage before she could delve much into the higher type of education and once she is married her roles at home limits further acquisition of knowledge even if she married into a scholarly family. Because of limited roles of women in Islamic education and clerical roles, unlike men, females are not sent to scholars to live informally as a boarding student. All knowledge is acquired from home.

The opening up of Ilorin to outside influence and the reform of Islamic education early in the twentieth century increased the opportunity for women to participate in learning just as it did for the male scholars. When Sheikh Kamalud-deen began his reform of Arabic education in the first half of the twentieth century, girls were among of his students. These include his daughters and those of other scholars. They studied the same texts as their male counterparts such al-Akhdari and Ashmawi. Later as married women they would lead the evolution of women asalatu groups. For most women in Ilorin in the first half of the twentieth century, the completion of the recitational study of the Qur’an often coincided or came close to the time of wedding; hence the ceremony (wolimat) of completing the Qur’an went together as part of the wedding ceremony. This wedding wolimat has since become a cultural aspect of the wedding ceremony in Ilorin.

Colonial attempt at educating the female began tentatively in 1928 when Mrs Leith Ross was appointed Lady Superintendent of Education, to study the needs for girls’

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110 See Beverly B. Mack and Jean Boyd, One Woman’s Jihad Nana Asmau, Scholar and Scribe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
111 This woman is believed to have been the only woman who fasted with scholars whom Alimi had charged to fast with 41 dates for forty days as part of the prayer asking Allah to make Ilorin an Islamic town. Discussions with Ustadh Isa Abdulismam Gbagba Sirrullah. 27-11-2013; Al Iluri, Lamahat Al Ballur, 20.
112 Abubakar Funmilayo Hassanat, ‘Asbabu Takhlif Nisai an Dirasatu Lughatu Arabiyya fi Bilad Yuruba ( Factors hindering Women from Learning Arabic in Yoruba land)’ (B.A. Long Essay, Department of Arabic, University of Ilorin, 2002), 82.
113 Discussions with Alhaja Fatima Batuli Salah. 15-11-2013.
114 Asalatu derives from Arabic ‘salatu ala nabiyy,’ the saying of benediction on the Prophet.
115 Reichmuth, Islamische Bildung, 61.
education. Ilorin was chosen as the testing ground in this experiment for the Northern Region. Ilorin’s affinity and closeness to the south west was a reason the experiment began in Ilorin. Women in Ilorin were also less exclusive than in the Hausa region and age of marriage a little higher than obtained in Hausa region. Conscious of religious and cultural sensitivity of Muslim society, her main duties was to spend months talking with the women trying to understand what sort of education they needed and wanted. The emir was happy about the idea and the colonial authority made it clear she was not a missionary but a colonial Education Officer.  

She came to the conclusion that the society was not ripe for formal school. She advocated for the education of women to begin around welfare and home needs of women and in an informal way before attempts could be made to introduce them to formal classrooms, with a proposal for the all-male Provincial School to be opened to females when the time comes. The Sewing School already opened in the town and the hospital were places she hoped to use to familiarize herself with the women. Her suggestion was to start female education around a proposed ‘Children’s Home’ where young mothers would be encouraged to visit and get introduced to hygiene and a gradual introduction of the children to formal instruction using the Montessori Method.

Although there were 1229 out of a possible 8152 girls attending Qur’anic schools in 1928, she did not consider them as possible candidates for the education she was proposing. A general colonial caution about interfering in the religion of the people was a reason for this attitude. Her conclusion was that while the emir and his chiefs were not against a school for the girls, they were not proactive or enthusiastic about the idea. They would take no step of their own but would accept government’s decision on it. This passive expectation she considered as not a reason for starting a female education. Education for girls generally would not be in earnest until the last decade of colonial rule.

In the second half of the century, especially the post-colonial period, with more formal Arabic schools in operations, more females got to be educated in the formalized Arabic schools. Improvement in the methods of imparting knowledge

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117 Ross, ‘Female Education in Ilorin Province’ NAK file 89/1928/Vol.1.
118 See Appendix XI, for figures of girls in Qur’anic schools in Ilorin in the period 1935-1951.
119 Ross, ‘Female Education in Ilorin Province’ NAK file 89/1928/Vol.1. Queen Elizabeth School was established in 1956, to coincide with the visit of the Queen to Nigeria in that year. The school played an important role in the education of Muslim girls from all over the Northern Region.
also meant graduation for recitational studies of the Qur’an took place earlier. Students now finish the recitation studies in their early teens or before, no longer coinciding with the time of marriage. The ceremony (wolimat) of finishing the Qur’an recitation is then postponed till the wedding time. From the 1990s this wolimat is often done twice. One is done on completion of the recitational study of the Qur’an as a kid or teen and the second one during the wedding ceremony; this having become a cultural part of wedding.

Women studying Arabic in higher institutions were rare. Unlike the males who get to study in the Middle East, the females were not groomed to follow this trend. Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari, responsible for giving many scholarship to study in the Middle East from Ilorin is an only male school, thus females were denied this opportunity. However, one of the newer madaris, Darul Kitab Was-Sunnah had by the twenty-first century began to send some of its female graduates to Qatar for higher education. The only known woman from Ilorin to have studied in Egypt did not go through any of the madaris in Ilorin but through a bifurcate school in Lagos. A graduate of Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies also studied Arabic for non-native speakers at the University of Qatar and returned to Nigeria for her degree program.

Zumratul Adabiyya had been running its I’dadiyya as a feeder into the thanawiyya of Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari and in 1990 Sheikh Kamaludd-deen decided to start its own independent thanawiyya especially to allow the girls who could not proceed to Al-Ma’had al-Dini al-Al-Azhari for the thanawiyya level, to have that level of madrasah education at Zumratul Adabiyya. He was able to convince six of the sixteen girls, of the graduates from I’dadiyya level to stay behind and have the thanawiyya in Zumratul Adabiyya. Some boys also stayed behind as a result. Thanawiyya level of Zumratul Adabiyya thus began as an effort to allow girls have access to higher education which had not been available before then.

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120 Discussions with the Provost of the school, Dr Ahmad Fazazi. 23-9-2013.
121 Discussions with Alhaja Khadijah Abdulsalam. 9-12-2013. She studied for her thanawiyya at Al Azhar University in Cairo.
122 Her name is Fatima Ishaq Alawuyan. See Mubarak Olohunoyin, ‘An Examination of Da’wah Activities of Muslim Women Scholars in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State’ (M.A Dissertation: Islamic Studies-Department of Religion, University of Ilorin, 2013), 102. This work examines the career of some women scholars of Ilorin.
123 Discussions with Alhaja Khadijah Kubra Aboto. 22-12-2013.
While women have made great advancement in Islamic education, they still lag behind their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{124} Hasanat noted in her work that 95.5\% of the graduates of Darul Uloom since inception were males.\textsuperscript{125} She listed a number of obstacles against the female in acquiring Islamic education. These include little or no clerical roles for women, fathers and husbands not encouraging women to actively participate in scholarly pursuit, inability to travel in pursuit of further knowledge, preoccupation of women with economic activities, arguments of male scholars that the women’s role is in the home and amorous distractions by male teachers in the madaris discouraging the few girls interested in studying.\textsuperscript{126} The traditional limitations of social and cultural roles and limited clerical roles would continue to be challenges for women in Islamic education. In chapter six, their roles as propagators of religion would be examined.

\textbf{Islamic Education in Western Schools}

Although they were not included in the survey, it is also necessary to describe how western schools offer Islamic education. This had its origin in the colonial period. From the onset, colonial authority tried to allay Muslim fears and antipathy to western education by allowing some Islamic learning to be included in the curriculum. For the colonial officers, it was primarily a means to get Muslims to attend the western schools. It was obvious that without any form of Islamic learning, even the few who agreed to attend the schools would be discouraged. A mallam was therefore attached to the Provincial School in Ilorin. Qur’an and Arabic were being taught, though the standard was considered low. It was also being taught in a zaure (veranda) like in the traditional setting, different from the other subjects being taught in classrooms.\textsuperscript{127}

The subject of religion was treated as a tolerable appendage to western education and as the years went by efforts were made to improve Islamic learning in western schools along what the colonial officers called ‘enlightened lines.’ Early colonial views of Islamic learning considered it to be entirely rote and uninteresting. Later the colonial education authority would favor Arabic training as an academic discipline, not necessarily as a religious training.\textsuperscript{128} The British were wary of Muslim accusation of interference in their religion. One of the conditions that the

\textsuperscript{125} Hassanat, ‘Asbabu Takhlif Nisai,’ 52.
\textsuperscript{126} Hassanat, ‘Asbabu Takhlif Nisai,’ 81-82; discussions with Dr Sherifat Hussain Abubakar.12-12-2013.
\textsuperscript{127} ‘Annual Report Education’ NAK file Iloprof 0433/1928.
\textsuperscript{128} Thurston, ‘ The Era of Overseas Scholarships.’
British had promised the emirs when they surrendered after defeat was noninterference in the religion of the people. Hence the policy was one that stated that “the teacher of religion is nominated by the emir, the subject and method at his discretion alone. No interference except superintendent of education allocating time of lessons and supervision basically in the hand of the emir.”

The first set of students to attend western education at Ilorin Provincial School were adults and were taught *Ar-risala* and other theological works such as *Zakkaki, Hukami, Shriniya* and *Zuhudu*. As just one of the many subjects available for the students, the time allocated to religious study was generally felt to be insufficient. Order and method were considered lacking in Qur’an instruction and this had retarded progress in its instruction. Only fourteen out of one hundred pupils in the Provincial School completed the instruction course in the Qur’an within the first two years of its existence. At the initial stage, it was not examined nor supervised, making many of the students to be indifferent to it. This further increased the distrust of the traditional scholars of western education as having any benefit for religious study.

The British favored Arabic training such that the students should be able to know the meaning of what they were being taught rather than the rote method of the traditional Islamic education. Sudanese Gordon College scholars were considered to be used as example of Muslims who are grounded in both systems. Colonial officers were divided into those who wished to see improved Arabic training and those who thought doing so would be strengthening Islam which was not the aim of the colonial government. As parts of efforts to strengthen Arabic knowledge, the colonial authority organized a number of workshops for the Arabic teachers in Ilorin in the 1940s and 1950s. As independence was approaching, there was not much that could be done, what progress was achieved would be carried over into the post-independence years. Mentioned have already been made in chapter three of efforts of Sheikh Kamalud-deen to integrate western and Islamic education in 1947. It was the only private effort in that regard and there was no synergy with the government efforts until the last years when Self-Government gave a boost to the Islamic education sector especially in government institutions such as SAS.

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130 This indicates they must have already finished the recitational study of the Qur’an and were adults. NAK ‘Provincial School Annual Report’ Iloprof 163/1917.
132 It did not become examinable till 1945.
It was based on the development of Arabic in government schools that the administrators of education in Nigeria would build on from the period of independence. From 1953 efforts were made to include Arabic and Islamic Studies as examinable subjects in the West African School Certificate Examination. By 1968 Islamic Studies had become examinable under West African School Certificate Examination.\textsuperscript{134} Earlier, the University of Ibadan had in 1962 opened a department of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

The same year Abdullahi Bayero College (successor to the colonial School of Arabic Studies) opened a faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies.\textsuperscript{135} By the 1970s Islamic Religious Knowledge had become part of the subjects to be taken in primary and secondary schools with Yoruba and English languages as the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools respectively. In the mid-1970s when the Federal Government began the Universal Primary Education program, teachers of religious studies were recruited especially from among the graduates of the reformed Islamic schools such as those of the Adabiyya and Markaziyya networks.\textsuperscript{136}

In 1986, the Federal Government introduced a new 6-3-3-4 system of education, six years of primary, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary and four years of university education. From primary through secondary school, Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) is offered and at university level it is offered as Islamic Studies. Unlike the traditional and reformed madaris, religious knowledge in western schools is taught through the medium of English and or with the local language in primary schools and in English in post primary institutions.\textsuperscript{137} Largely it gives the student the opportunity to know the meaning of some of the shorter chapters of the Qur’an and about articles of faith. Arabic writings form a smaller part of the teaching. As such any Muslim who had not attended the neighborhood Qur’anic schools cannot base his knowledge of religion on what is learnt in school. However, it serves as a good complement to the knowledge acquired in the traditional Islamic system.

\textsuperscript{134} Reichmuth, \textit{Islamische Bildung}, 310.
\textsuperscript{136} Reichmuth, \textit{Islamische Bildung}, 311.
\textsuperscript{137} A new national curriculum of education was instituted in 2014, styled 9-3-4. Under the new scheme, religious education is not a standalone subject. It will now be called ‘Religion and National Values’ (Civic Education, Social Studies, Security Education, Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Education). See \url{http://nerdc.ng/academic-centres/curriculum-development-centre}. Accessed 14-12-2014.
While in the colonial period, more efforts were put in development of Arabic education, in the post-colonial period, teaching of religion was given emphasis in English medium. Arabic and Islamic Religious Knowledge became two distinct subjects examinable at secondary school levels. Not all secondary schools offer Arabic as a subject. Islamic Religious Knowledge is the only subject of the two to be found in all the schools, especially in Muslim regions. In primary schools, only Islamic Religious Knowledge alone, no separate Arabic subject was taught. It thus became possible for Muslims who have not attended the traditional Qur’anic school where Arabic is the writing script, to learn more about their religion even if they could not read or write any Arabic. Religious knowledge taught this way, however, is rather superficial. Not only was it one of the many subjects for the students to learn, it was also a minor subject and was not often compulsory. The orientalist approach to the subject inherited from colonial time has little changed over the years.138

**Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the developments in Islamic education from the period Nigeria gained independence in 1960 to the time of this research. The independence period ushered new hope of progress for the new nation and the scholars of Islam shared in this notion. In the decade of independence there emerged new madaris to expand the opportunity in Islamic education. Notably the third stream of Islamic education in Ilorin, the Markazi emerged, first as a community effort led by the emir. This led to the establishment of *Darul Uloom li Jabhat wal Aimma*. A second Markazi Madrasah also emerged, established by a student of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri. In this period as well, the Adabiyya stream had an affiliate of Al-Azhar University of Cairo established in Ilorin. Shamsudeen College and Society and Muhyideen College and Society, both of which would become integrationist in approach also emerged in this decade of independence. Until independence in 1960, only the Adabiyya School based in Ilorin and Markaz based in Lagos played an important role in the development of the decade of independence.

Subsequent developments from the 1970s was also examined when new madaris emerged, established by the students of the earlier ones. The economic prosperity of the oil boom of this decade also rubbed off on the madaris with government

138 Although there has been improvement in terms of content, the argument has been that the subject is more or less an academic subject that imbibes little of faith in the students. That religious knowledge outside the western school system is still more relevant for faith learning.
takeover of some of the madaris. Increased spending on public education led to the need of employing more religious teachers in public schools.\(^{139}\) This provided employment opportunity for many graduates of the Arabic schools, especially those operating integrationist or bifurcate schools. The madaris were also able to organize themselves into an association that facilitated interaction with the state government through the Ministry of Education. This gave some of the madaris recognition from the government and facilitated grant-in-aids to some of them. The economic crises of the 1980s and the semi informal nature of the organization would lead to a fizzling out of this relation and the organization itself. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a new organization emerged in a different circumstance. Like the earlier one it is not known to all the madaris, thus marginal to their existence.

A survey of forty of the madaris, covering the broad spectrum of the categories of the madaris, brought to the fore the organization of the madaris and key problems militating against their development. Funding is highlighted as a key problem of the madaris. Founded with personal funds of the scholars, running mostly tuition free or taking low and largely unpaid fees, financing the system is thus very weak. Society’s attitude had not been helpful either. People continued to think the system should operate tuition free despite the necessity of funds to run the system. The madaris also lacked a united front and operated largely on individual basis. This had militated against the system having a strong connection to the government through a united front.

Government declined dominance of provision of education from the mid-1980s led to the rise in private schools. This posed further challenges to Muslims as the early private schools were run by Christians who like the colonial mission schools used the opportunity to proselytize. This led to the emergence of Muslim run western private schools to cater to the Muslim needs. Some of the madaris found opportunity in this and began to use their schools for the provision of western education in the morning and Arabic and Islamic education in the evening. Though some expressed fear of domination of the western system, those who bought into the trend found it as a way to also preserve their Arabic schools, using some of the profits of the western system to maintain the Arabic schools and giving opportunity for the pupils of the western school section to acquire Islamic education as well.

In addition the chapter examined the new trend of Tahfiz schools, one of the strands of religious revivalism beginning in the mid-1980s. Its main preoccupation is the scientific recitation and memorization of the Qur’an. Stemming from the National Qur’anic Recitation Competition, the past competitors from the 1990s; by the

\(^{139}\) Reichmuth, Islamische Bildung, 311.
twenty-first century began to establish schools focused on this aspect of Islamic education. This is one of the indices of progress in the Islamic education system in the post-independence period.

The participation of the female in Islamic education was also examined. Limitation of the female role in the exercise of knowledge production and cultural factors played a prominent role in limiting the participation of the female in Islamic education. However, the expansion of opportunities in the system in the period under study also provided for the increased participation of the female even as it still lagged far behind that of the males. Islamic education in the rival western education system was also examined. Having its root in the colonial attempt to accommodate Muslim feelings by allowing for some Arabic and Islamic education within the ambit of colonial education system, it would develop into Islamic Religious Knowledge and Arabic as subjects within the broad spectrum of western education, taught in English and vernacular. These would be found in both primary and secondary education as well at tertiary levels. Its curriculum, however, would not be as deep as those found in the private Arabic schools.

In general, Islamic education progressed as it continued to struggle against the western system that is well funded and supported by the state. Greater connection with the rest of the Muslim world and greater participation of Muslims in western education all rubbed off on the development in Islamic education sector. Islamic education in western schools developed more in this period and products of the madaris had more opportunity to bridge into the western system especially for higher education not only in the Arabic and Islamic sciences but into the non-religious disciplines as well.