



## Colonialism and Emasculation of Political and Religious Institutions in Northern Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Colonialism, a phenomenon which has long gone remains an interesting subject of debates especially among the African scholars. This is perhaps, due to the aggressive nature in which colonialism violently altered the evolutionary destiny of the African states. Any study that carefully dig deeply can easily come up with an area of contribution regarding the subject matter of colonialism in Africa. This study specifically explored how colonialism emasculated the political and religious institutions of Northern Nigeria with a view to ascertain the current crisis of identity that the region is facing.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Descriptive analytical design was adopted, thematic analysis and a qualitative content analysis method was used in this study which analyzed critically the various views and dimensions on the role played by colonialism in the emasculation of political and religious institutions in Northern Nigeria.

**Findings:** The results revealed that Northern Nigeria had a well-articulated and functioning political and religious institutions prior to the emergence of the exploitative colonialism. The British colonialist supervised the destruction of these heritages and replaced them with the alien ones that failed to function well leading to crisis of identity.

**Implications/Originality/Value:** So it is concluded that colonialism succeeded in damaging the Northern Nigerian heritage and that there must be a reversal towards that indigenous culture and social settings for Northern Nigeria to record a meaningful progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



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### Introduction

Colonialism is the most truncating phenomenon in the African history because it had altered the classes, institutions, structures and systems that were heritage of the Continent and created alien

values of the colonialist operation (Ake, 1981). Colonialism is a violence, it came to Africa by violence, it was institutionalised by violence and it was countered in many places through greater spontaneous violence (Fanon, 1972). Through the process of colonialism, the black African was uprooted and misplaced from his culture and inheritance. He could not be placed back to his origin nor arrived at the white man's destination that he is aspiring to be (Fanon, 1972). Colonialism is the loss of internal political control of Africa by the natives and the takeover of the control of political affairs of the African Continent by the European colonisers in their scramble for domination of global influence (Nkrumah, 1965). However, colonialism is not only the control of political affairs of the African territory. It is linked with economic goal by the Europeans which underdeveloped the African economic, political, historical, social and cultural progress while developing the European counterparts in the process (Rodney, 1976). The Africa's contact with Europe through colonisation exposed the resources of Africa for exploitation and opened up the African market for European expensive goods. The political independence that was heralded with euphoria of celebration for self-rule was short-lived and was strangled by the external control of the African economy from Europe and America (Nkrumah, 1965). The story of African destiny is incomplete without the mention of the role of colonialism in shaping its religion, institutions (including traditional or royal) and political structures. Before the emergence of colonialism in Africa, there were kingdoms and chiefdoms as well as religious practices and beliefs in addition to educational and social settings. Colonialism affected and influenced most of them in either a positive or negative way (Harris, 1987).

Nigeria is one of the colonies of Britain which was submerged and brought under the control of British by early 1900s after lots of struggles for resistance in both the Southern and Northern parts of the territory (Crowder, 1975). The British in the late 1800s secured the control of many territories in West Africa and that guaranteed for the introduction of colonial government in Gold Coast (later Ghana), Niger-Benue (later Nigeria) and some other places in the Sub-region (Crowder, 1986). The British colonisers captured Lagos by 1869 and advanced into the hinterland of Southern Nigeria and by 1890s, the whole Southern territory comprising of the present-day South East, South South and South West were successfully brought under colonial control (Coleman, 1960). The early 1900s set the foundation for the capture and total control of the Northern territory comprising of the present-day North East, North Central, North West and Federal Capital Territory Abuja (FCTA) by the British colonial government in West Africa (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Prior to the emergence of British colonialism in Nigeria, there were plethora of kingdoms, chiefdoms, societies, organisations, religious practices especially traditional African religion, Islam and Christianity (Dudley, 1976). The British colonialist introduced their own pattern of law, politics and educational institutions different from what were purely obtained in pre-colonial Nigeria. These structures succeeded in altering the Nigerian political, economic, social and cultural structures in modern times (Adamolekun, 1983).

Northern Nigeria is the biggest territory and a largest colony of British in West Africa before the 1914 Amalgamation. In 1914, the British Colonial Governor in Nigeria, Sir Frederick Lord Lugard decided to merge the Southern and Northern Protectorates and declared them the Colony of Nigeria (Heussler, 1986). The Northern territory of Nigeria has a centralised administration under the former Fulani Sokoto Caliphate, Kanem Borno, Hausa Kingdom and other kingdoms in Tiv, Nupe, Jukun and others. Islam was established in the North arguably since 10<sup>th</sup> century AD or even before according to different accounts (Vaughan, 2017). The Northern Nigeria contact with British colonialism altered the faces of the political and religious institutions through the introduction of English Case Law and providing it with supremacy over the native laws as well as the introduction of several colonial policies (Ubah, 2008).

This study is an attempt at establishing the connect or the link between the British colonial rule and the emasculation of the political and religious institutions in Northern Nigeria. This is

because the Northern Nigeria is believed according to many historical accounts to have the most organised and enduring political administration before the emergence of colonialism and it has the most lasting and ancient religious practices for many centuries before the coming of colonial rule. However, few years after the colonial contact, these religious and traditional or political institutions were relegated and altered in their structure and influence by the British laws. The spillover effects of the change in Northern political and religious institutions are still palpable in many ramifications in contemporary Northern Nigeria. This calls for a research to investigate the nature of the problem and its dimension. The research adopted many approaches. Oral interview was conducted with some Northern stakeholders selected based on proximity and possession of vital information. Archives on colonial policies in Northern Nigeria were consulted in the Arewa House in Kaduna. Additionally, documented sources were used such as books, journals, internet sources and reports. The data gathered were analysed using content analysis.

### **The Pre-Colonial Religious and Traditional Institutions in Northern Nigeria**

The religious and political institutions in Hausaland can be traced historically up to the beginning of nineteenth century. There were never a united and complex political entity in the Hausaland from 11<sup>th</sup> century. Several kingdoms such as Katsina, Kano, Zazzau, Daura, Zamfara, Gobir, Bauchi, Jukun, Igala, Ibirra, Tiv and other smaller kingdoms in the North struggled for supremacy and control of a larger empire unsuccessfully. One kingdom or state usually supplanted the other in the rivalry. It was the Zazzau under Queen Amina that succeeded for the first time in uniting the larger Hausa kingdom (Adeleye, 1969). Islam was older in the Hausaland than the united Hausa Kingdom. In one of the accounts (Adeleye, 1969), Islam was introduced in Bornu around eleventh century and in Hausaland in fifteenth century. In another account, the date of the introduction of Islam in Borno pre-dated 11<sup>th</sup> century. It was linked as far back as 7<sup>th</sup> century AD during the period of Caliph Umar (Oral Interview, October 2020 in Gombe). The contact with the Arab merchants from North Africa in a trade relationship paved the way for the embrace of Islam in the Borno and Hausaland. The kings, their courtiers and their subjects accepted Islam in large number which gradually turned Islam into an official religion of many palaces in Hausaland. (Falola, Mahadi, Uhomoibhi & Anyanwu, 2014). The strength of the Islamic religious belief, the benefits of writing and reading Arabic and “Ajami” (an Hausa version of Arabic writing), the use of Arabic as lingua franca of diplomatic relationship among the component ethnic groups, external relationship and the versatility of the Islamic laws as a tool for political integration and the respect of identification as a kingdom with an internationally recognised religion all propelled the acceptance and romance of Islam with the ruling class in Hausaland (Adeleye, 1965).

The spread of Islam in Hausaland did not erode the traditional values of Hausaland. The kings had maintained their royal vigour in their palaces and were still obeyed as the rulers of the kingdom. Taxes were continually collected by the kings from farmers and businessmen (Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu & Nwaubani, 2013). The Hausaland was politically organised. There were hierarchies of power sharing in the Kingdom. There is the King or the Emir, the Waziri (Vice), Magatakarda (Secretary), Galadima (Chief Protocol), Sarkin Yaki (Commander of Army), Yarima (Prince), Sarkin Fada (Chief of Staff) and several other ranks in a hierarchy with a clear division of labour and responsibilities (Abubakar, 2004). The existence of a centralised and an organised political system in Hausaland motivated the British to introduce the Indirect Rule policy for an easy task of administration (Tamuno, 2004). Islam was practiced but it was limited to a certain extent in terms of pure practice and spiritualism. A mixture of myths and tradition was obtained together with Islamic practice in the Hausaland before the famous Sokoto Jihad of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 2004). Islam was practiced more in terms of strict adherence in Borno in the 19<sup>th</sup> century than in Hausaland (Abubakar, 2004).

As a result of the decay in the practice of Islam in the Hausaland, a reform movement emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the stewardship of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio. After his educational sojourn

in West African States of Mali, Timbuktu and Songhai, Sheikh Dan Fodio returned home and embarked on a radical preaching against the Habe rulers in Gobir and Sokoto Province for allowing myths and traditional practices to be mixed in the palaces against the pure teachings of Prophetic Sunnah. The response of the Habe rulers against the perceived threat of the Sheikh led to a violent clash which later turned into the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century Sokoto Jihad (Adeleye, 1965). The Jihad permeated the entire Hausaland and reached down to the Adamawa Province and some parts of Bornu, Ilorin in the Central Nigeria and Niger. Several lieutenants of the Sheikh such as Yakubu in Bauchi, Bubayero in Gombe, Bayero in Kano, Modibbo Adama in Yola and others conquered the parts of Adamawa areas for the Sokoto Caliphate. The consequences of the Jihad led to the political and religious reforms that lasted long until the emergence of colonial rule which introduced some policies that weakened the influence of Islam and Hausa political adventure. Some of these reforms included the installation of the Fulani religious clerics at the helm of political leadership in Hausaland and Ilorin since the Jihad to the present date. Additionally, the Jihad set the foundation for the intensive teaching and practice of Islam in a purified manner. The palaces were turned into a court of jurisdiction for Islamic law. Emirs became judges in the palaces. Islamic scholarship was excellent during the period (Adeleye, 1965).

When the colonial rule came into the Hausaland, there was a stiff resistance from the Sokoto Caliphate because of the perceived implication of colonialism. The British colonialist suppressed the resistance until 1902 when the last resistance movement by Attahiru II was surmounted by the West African Frontier Force (WAFF), the British Royal Colonial Force established to capture the West African Territory. The Caliphate administration was halted and British colonial rule was introduced which diminished the powers of the Emirs and Islamic law. However, the Indirect Rule and the continuous use of Native Rulers to control the indigenous population left the Hausaland still stronger even after the colonial domination (Miles, 1987). By the final hours of the colonial capture of the Hausaland, politics has been already organised and structured under the ruling kings and the Sokoto Caliphate and the spiritual aspect of the Land was clearly organised under the Islamic principles and laws. The entire life and activities in the Hausaland were guided by Islamic laws under the Emirate (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2013).

### **Northern Nigeria Under Colonialism**

The British colonialism succeeded in bringing together the various ethnic groups and kingdoms in West Africa under a merger of colonial states. One of them is Nigeria in West Africa where a large geography was merged together to form a colony. However, the British was known for its policy of colonial administration which differs from that of French in West Africa. The British introduced Indirect Rule. The Indirect Rule became more convenient for applicability in Northern Nigeria owing to a centralised existing administrative structure (Crowder, 1986). The British colonial governor himself in Nigeria Lord Lugard mentioned in his message to one of the introduced policies of Native Law in Northern Nigeria that they didn't come to distort or disrespect the existing administrative, judicial, religious and cultural structures and institutions of Northern Nigeria. Rather, they had come to uphold them and honour them and they shall continue to respect them (Kirk-Greene, 1970). Later developments proved otherwise. Although, the British colonial administration respected the Hausaland heritage in Northern Nigeria and had made some negotiations with the Sokoto Caliphate leadership in some parts of the North, the gradual relegation of the Emirs as subordinate to colonial administrators and politicians succeeded in eroding their ultimate values and positions. Likewise, the deployment of English law and acceptance of Islamic law to continue to operate where it was not repugnant to the modern British law gradually diminished the total and full application of Islamic jurisdiction especially in matters of criminal cases (Adeleye, 1965).

Lugard earlier on reiterated that the most concern of the British reforms and laws in Northern Nigeria was political (Kirk-Greene, 1970). On religious issue, they accepted that the Islam was deeply entrenched and the Missionary activities had reached some parts of the North. Since their goal is not religious expansion but political and economic, the British colonialist did not find it expedient to continue with the expansion or propagation of Christianity. Nevertheless, the introduction of Western English schools in Northern Nigeria contributed in the conversion of some parts of Northern Nigeria into Christianity during the colonial era (Abubakar, 2004). In an Archived notes found in Arewa House in Kaduna, a comprehensive British colonial policy in Northern Nigeria was obtained and studied thoroughly by this research including the Duties of Residents, Books Returns and Office Records, the Law and the Courts of Justices of the Protectorate, Notes on Judicial Procedure, the System of Tribute and Taxes, Duties of Political Officers and Miscellaneous, Education, Taxation, Native Courts, the Position of Native Chiefs, Customs, Roads, Currency, Minerals, Titles to Lands, Government Stations, Fulani Rule, Canoe Registration, Cantonment Magistrates, the Native Revenue Proclamation, Native Law in Northern Nigeria, the Use of Armed Force, Native Administration and Forestry (Kirk-Greene, 1970). Perusing through the above laws in detail will arrest this work for so long. However, a succinct analysis of the laws revealed that the structures of the administrative system in Northern pre-colonial Nigeria was severally altered in the proclamation by Governor Lugard. The Emirs and the Emirates were turned into tax collectors and assistants to the political office holders and the colonial administration. Islamic religion which was referred to as the source of law and legal interpretation was placed behind the English law.

It should be noted that the Northern Province of Nigeria came under British influence or control through the conquest by force. The defeat of the Northern army specifically the Sokoto Caliphate weakened the forces of law and order in Northern Nigeria. It has also diminished the powers of the Emirs seriously (Abubakar, 2004). The British conquest grounded the Chieftaincy in Northern Nigeria to its knees particularly during the period of First World War. During the process of the occupation of Northern Nigeria by British colonialist, many Emirs were deposed despite their sacred sanctity during pre-colonial period. By 1906, more than ten Emirs were deposed and replaced by British front men (Abubakar, 2004). This removal of Emirs during colonialism in Northern Nigeria had a sharp effect on Nigerian royal institutions after political independence. The Nigerian politicians followed the style of British and continue to depose Emirs at will without regard to the heritage of the institution. Muhammad Mustapha Jokolo, for instance, the Emir of Gwandu was deposed by the Governor of Kebbi State because of misunderstanding with the former President Obasanjo in 2005. Few days into the 2020, the Emir of Kano Malam Muhammadu Sanusi II was deposed by the Governor of Kano Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje on political issues. Earlier in 1962, his grandfather, Malam Muhammadu Sanusi I was deposed by the Northern Premier Sir Ahmadu Bello. Many State Governors deposed first class and second class Emirs on their political ambition because of an alleged perceived insubordination as they used to cite for the reason of the action.

The removal of many Emirs in Northern Nigeria distorted and confused the traditional political system in the region. The argument that the Emirs were deposed because they refused to cooperate with the British colonialist is not scientific. For instance, it was factually established that Sokoto and Kano wanted to avoid hostilities with the colonialist but Governor Lugard did not make enough efforts to establish peace between them. He rather preferred a forceful conquest to perpetuate British power in the region than negotiation. This is because he knew the position of the Emirs in the heart of the natives. Conquest by force will transfer peoples' allegiance to the British instead of the Emirs (Abubakar, 2004). Indeed, Lugard was quoted to have said that "the Fulbe Emirs lost by defeat what they had won by conquest" (Perham, 1960). The above statement clearly indicated that the British colonialist deliberately refused to enter into negotiation with some Emirs in the North during colonial rule especially the Sokoto Caliphate for fear of losing

control or allegiance. The Emirs under British rule in Northern Nigeria had little power. All the new Emirs installed by British had to swear an allegiance with Quran and in the name of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) that they will serve his Majesty and to truly serve his Representative the High Commissioner (Abubakar, 2004).

In the judicial aspect, the British did not abolish the Qadis or the judges representing Islamic courts and Islamic laws but they had introduced the English case law and made it supreme over the Islamic law. There is also the Supreme Court in the Protectorate headquarters which has the power of judicial precedence over the native courts in Northern Nigeria (Abubakar, 2004). By interpretation, the Islamic law was not tempered by the British colonial rule in Northern Nigeria but it was systematically and strategically disempowered and relegated to become a second-class law in the land where it was hitherto, the major source of law. Additionally, the British policy of Indirect Rule in the North is a matter of convenience due to shortage of administrative manpower and to cleverly made the natives feel still under the allegiance of their indigenous rulers when in reality, the powers were usurped through the backdoor policies. Colonial administrators even the indigenous ones are revered more by the colonial government than the Emirs. This has a lasting effect on the future destiny that shall befall the traditional institutions in Northern Nigeria. Equally, Islamic religion as the major source of law was faded to the background. Even the attempts to restore the Shari'ah law as it was found initially during pre-colonial era was not only resisted in the current era but it was also frustrated. The movements by some sects like Izalah and Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), the Shi'ite to restore the modern version of pure Islamic teaching could not place Islamic law or Shari'ah courts back to their pre-colonial position. It was seemingly a dead blow that could never be recovered from purposely orchestrated by the colonialist (Oral Interview, October 2020 in Kaduna).

### **Colonial Policies on Religious and Traditional Institutions in Northern Nigeria**

The British introduced several policies after the successful control of the Northern Region in 1902 when the Caliphate was finally defeated by the colonial army. The policies altered the pre-existing order of religious and political settings (Last, 1997). The Emirs were subjugated and forced to surrender to the British administrators who became their supervisors and policymakers. Additionally, the Caliphate was not totally abolished but it was weakened behind redemption under the colonial rule in Northern Nigeria (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). The institutions of politics and administration that were organised and structured according to the indigenous values and culture were replaced with the strange British system which made governance in favour of the colonialist despite the flexibility of the Indirect Rule policy (Afigbo, 1991). The British colonialist themselves were mesmerised and fantasised with the level of aristocracy, sophistication, organisation, and religious practice in the Sokoto Caliphate during their first contact than the war-torn Southern part of Nigeria (Harvard Divinity School, 2020). The pre-colonial era in Nigeria was a period of historical boom, economic prosperity, political organisation and religious spiritualism and any history that attempts to study Nigeria in its three historical epochs should not forget about the above concept even if it were altered by colonial vicissitudes of policymaking and administration (American Historical Association, 2020). There is no doubt that Islam was secularised or the Northern Nigeria was secularised by the British colonialist through the introduction and reforms of Islamic criminal law in the Provinces where the English law was given an upper hand over the Islamic law in the process (The American Society for Legal History, 2019).

After the successful submission and take-over of the Northern Region by the British colonialist, some changes or policies were introduced. These changes consisted of political restructuring and religious changes. The Protectorates were divided into Provinces each under a British Resident. The Provinces were further regimented into divisions with each division under the command of the British District Officer who in turn was responsible for the Resident. In this process, most of

the Emirates fall under divisions of their own. Gradually, the District Officers overpowered every officer in the District including the Emirs. Like masters over their houseboys, the District Officers turned the Emirs into their subordinates because they were supervising and watching over the affairs of the Emirates as superior officers. The Residents were powerful because they were strengthened with the presence of military in the Districts who helped them in the administration process. Conversely, the natives were not allowed to maintain armies. Thus, in the Northern Provinces, the British created small elites that had power and responsibility over the Emirates. This was alien to the history and culture of Hausaland since centuries immemorable. The Emirs, chiefs and other traditional title holders lost their right to their throne until they became submissive and loyal to the British colonial administration. The powers of the Sokoto Caliphate were finally buried during the colonial era when in 1903, the Caliph Attahiru Ahmadu was killed at Burmi. The qualities and charisma of the institutions of the Caliphate and the Emirate government were greatly undermined and seriously eroded. To worsen the situation, the newly appointed Caliph, Attahiru II was denied the title of 'Sultan' purposely. His superintendent role of supervising the Emirs and the Emirates ceased to exist since then (Abubakar, 2004).

From the religious viewpoint, the colonial policy in Northern Nigeria was an emasculation of the Islamic religious supremacy in turn for a British supremacy. For instance, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Caliph was the political head of state or the Caliphate and the religious leader of the Northern community as well as the supreme judge of the Shari'ah whose duties included the appointment of Emirs and the enforcement of Islamic law. By 1903, these powers of the Caliph were gone forever and the Muslim community was left without a leader that can unite their religious and political affairs. The deliberate destruction of the powers of the Caliph and the Caliphate was not a mistake but a reflection of the history because the British were aware of the same structure and its impact on the life of the Muslims from their experience with the Ottoman Empire. It was a targeted and orchestrated movement to forever take over the control of political and economic affairs of the colony. As a result, the new ruler at Sokoto was titled Sultan and just made a first-class Emir whose authority was now confined within the provinces or districts of Sokoto alone. Other rulers were allowed to take over influence in their respective districts. The Caliphate was scattered like the stranded shepherd's flock of sheep in the jungle. The resultant effects of the decimation of the Sokoto Caliphate was the disconnection of communication flow between the Sokoto and the Emirates in favour of the British. Since the Emirs were each isolated from the Caliphate and each other, they lost control of the will to resist the policies and changes introduced by the British colonialist (Abubakar, 2004). In post-colonial period, the authority of the Caliph or the Sultan was restored under the Jamaatul Nasril Islam with Headquarters in Kaduna but the internal state politics had further created a chasm among the royal institution in modern times.

Some of the policies introduced by the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria were on slavery, justice and taxation. These policies had negative impact on the powers of the Emirs. As earlier observed, Lugard introduced many policies in the Northern Native Administration which were detrimental to the system that was met on ground during the colonial contact and conquest. The British abolished the legal status of the slavery, prohibited slave dealings and declared all children born after the policy as freed sons. In the judicial reform, the British maintained the Qadi system which were in most cases operating the Maliki School of Jurisprudence, they only established the English courts operating at three tiers. Each province had a court of jurisdiction over employees of the colonial government and as well as over the non-indigenes. A Supreme court was established in the protectorates' capital. In these English courts, the Residents were the provincial law officers for their territories. However, in the Qadi courts, the Residents and the District Officers were not empowered to play a role, they were allowed access to the records of the proceedings and were directed to ensure that certain canonical punishments such as stoning to death for adultery and amputation of limbs for stealing were not implemented (Kirk-Greene, 1970). Such stringent deterrence of the application of the punitive

laws were contrary to the belief, practice and provisions of the Islamic law and religion. It was a call to riot and revolt against the God's law upon Muslim by aliens who conquered their land forcefully. If the modernity as claimed by the British colonialist will erode or supersede over such laws and punishments, the natives should be allowed to determine that and not necessarily super-imposed upon them.

On the issue of taxation policy, Lugard made it unequivocal that the British is sovereign and that it has power over the appointment of Emirs and all officers of state. He further emphasised that the British administration had ultimate right to all lands, the right of legislation and taxation and the liberty to determine the allocation and sharing formula. The customary taxes and tributes such as Kharaj (land tax), Jizyah (poll tax), and aman (trust) ceased to be paid to the Emirs who used to receive them under the Bornu and the Sokoto Caliphate (Kirk-Greene, 1970). In the Middle Belt (an area which today consists of the North Central Nigeria of Plateau, Niger, Benue, Kogi, Nassarawa, Ilorin and Abuja), the influence or the powers of the Northern Emirs was curtailed and the spread of Islam was halted through the creation of small chiefs who were friendly to the British colonialist and hostile to the Fulani dynasty. By about 1920, the British had succeeded in limiting the influence and territory of the Northern Emirs in the boundaries of the Middle Belt to decrease their powers more except in Ilorin which was controlled earlier by the Sokoto Caliphate (Adeleye, 1965).

### **Impacts of Colonialism on the Changing Face of Religious and Political Institutions in Northern Nigeria**

Colonialism has played a monumental role in shaping the modern history of Northern Nigeria in terms of influencing the religious and political institutions that were found in the pre-colonial era. The colonialist did not hesitate in creating artificial boundaries neglecting the homogeneity of ethnic, religious, linguistic and geographical identity of the colonised. The Europeans blindly remapped the African Continent carelessly without recourse to political, social and cultural background of the colonies. In essence. The colonialists went ahead to alter them unfavourably for the indigenes (Miles, 1987). There were many attempts to manipulate and make the caricature of the African history and intelligentsia by some European chauvinist in attempting to alter the face of scientific history but that does not hold much water when the negative impacts of colonialism is mentioned. One of such works (Heussler, 1986), had the effrontery to boldly assert that "the Africans made nonsense of their history by leaning much of their problems to colonialism and by overplaying the negative role of colonial rule indicating that it has no any positive impact on Africa". The work further chides the African intellectual for not recognising and appreciating the role played by the Europeans in the progress of the African Continent. In response to the above prejudices and ethnocentric eulogy, this work asks three questions from the writer of such apology; 1. Did the Africans invited the colonialist to occupy their territory and why did the Europeans used force, cunning and divide and rule to capture most of the African territory? 2. Were the goal of colonialism not for economic and political benefits? 3. Why did the Europeans altered the existing political, religious and cultural structures of Africa isn't on egocentric feeling of superiority or on what purpose? These questions would be left unanswered by most of the apologies of colonialism except some uncoordinated and disjointed answers that could not satisfy even the writers themselves.

It is believed that one of the effects of colonialism in Northern Nigeria is the unintended transformation of the Empire into colony or political domination and oppression. The colonial encounter in Northern Nigeria depressed the political and religious institutions in the region. Additionally, the social transformation in terms of classes, power holding and religious position had unintended consequences for the Northern Nigeria in terms of its politics and economy especially during the inter-war period of economic depression. The economic recovery in Northern Nigerian colony was ushered in with the grassroots revenue offensives which did not



augur well with the colony and its natives (Ochonu, 2009).

The many challenges and unpalatable changes brought by colonialism in Northern Nigeria led to responses from various classes and groups. Most Northern Nigerian Muslims were constrained by the clear supremacy of colonial rule. In trying to entrench its rule in Northern Nigeria, the British introduced policies that pose great challenges for Northern Muslims. One of these challenges is the military challenges where the British forces found it relishing in using mighty force as against persuasion. This had created several massacres in the region during the conquest. The second challenge is the political issue via the Indirect Rule where the Northern Emirs found it hard to resist or support the second class role accorded to them after the establishment of the colony of Northern Nigeria. The third challenge is the British control of Islam in the North. As many have seen British as patronisers and supporters of Islam during colonialism, it was an inadequate argument to accept that because the British found it comfortable to use Islam to control the majority Muslim subjects and their Emirs in the North under the famous Indirect Rule. One of the ways is the British tax policy in which Lugard stressed that although, Islamic taxation law can be applicable, it was not the source of authority for taxation law under British colonialism. Besides, there were evidences of intelligence gathering against the Ulamaas (Islamic clerics) and Islamic Movements in Northern Nigeria by the British Administration especially on the Sufi order. Furthermore, the Islamic law faced the legal challenges of the British colonialism. Lugard himself narrated that before the colonial take-over in Northern Nigeria, there were native courts in each capital city, and in many of the principal towns, Islamic law is administered by a native judge called the 'Alkali' who is usually a person of a great learning and integrity. In some courts, the Alkali has 'Almajirai' who learnt under him. In some cases, two or more ulama were invited for judgement while in other cases it is appealed to the higher authorities in more learnt centres. Having found this system, the British went ahead to draft proclamations and introduced English law as well as provincial supreme courts which clashed with the Islamic law and courts (Umar, 2006).

The British colonisation in Northern Nigeria created the foundation for the agents of modernities in the region through the fragmentation of the sacred authority. The former political institutions were submerged under colonialism and in political independence, under the powers and control of the indigenous Nigerian politicians. The religion which was an official source of law and judgement in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria became a second class law under the Shari'ah courts in post-colonial period. The puritanical movement of the Izalah sects in post-colonial Northern Nigeria failed to restore religion into its sacred sanctity as an official legal provisions for judgement (Kane, 2003). Consequently, colonial policies on Islam in Northern Nigeria created a future chasm with the Christian counterparts in post-colonial Northern Nigeria. Evidence supported the fact that the pre-colonial Northern Nigerian Islam lived peacefully with the minority Christians and traditional worshippers before the divide and rule colonial policies which set them apart in later years leading to post-colonial violent clashes and conflicts (Nwachukwu, 2013).

The political and religious crises in Northern Nigeria could have been averted if there was no diplomacy of partition by Britain and France in West Africa. Lack of geographical consideration of cultures and identities or deliberate attempt at division led to this policy. The aftermath of such partition is the deepening political and religious crises in Northern Nigeria. The Southern counterparts could not cope or accept the sophisticated complex political and religious organisation of the North and that left the British with the option of slowing and altering the political and religious institutions in the North to reduce the parity in the colony (Hirshfield, 1979). The structure of Northern Nigerian politics, administration and religious institutions were dealt a permanent blow emanating from the single-handed efforts of Lugard during his administration as the Governor of Nigerian Colony. These political and religious institutions

were never recovered again even in post-colonial period (Apata, 1990). The British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria disregard the fact that Islamic legal provisions on certain issues and punishments were God enjoined and that one cannot forcefully push a believer into disbelief if he feels he is free and at liberty to practice his religion. A Muslim believer who submitted himself for amputation or stoning to death is doing so at his own will. Yet, The British went ahead to sanction and regulate this aspect which weakened the Shari'ah law in the region (Weimann, 2010).

The British could not tolerate opposition from the internal rulers who felt that their mandate of leadership was forcefully robbed in a broad daylight. This created the scenario of deposing some rulers which later was to continue even under the indigenous leadership in the name of politics. While in Yorubaland there was such a provision under the Oyo Kingdom that if the Alafin is deposed, he is expected to go and die, in the colonial period, he is to be vanished which countered the culture of the kingdom. In Northern Nigeria, rulers were not deposed. They either die or they are removed for corruption or they had their throne transferred as a punishment where they would be taken to a less influential emirate instead of their own. It was the colonialist that introduced the issue of deposing kings who had opposed their colonial ambition (Oduwobi, 2003). The resistance to colonial movement and revolutionary defense against the British colonial rule in Sokoto Caliphate was an anticipated defense against the obliteration of the political and religious systems that the colonialist met on ground which were flourishing and prosperous in their operation. The institutions were internally built and were sustained according to natives' culture and history. However, all the resistances were surmounted by the mightier British force which led to the undesired changes on the part of the Northern Nigerian politics and religion even in post-colonial era (Lovesjoy & Hogerndorn, 1990). It is quite clear that the British did not come to Northern Nigeria just for economic exploitation or political emasculation as some academics are advancing. Neither did they come to civilise or set the foundation of modernising our societies as some of their writers are working hard in vain to make the world believe. Behind the mask of their motive was the subterranean distortions and manipulation of our inherited political institutions and religious practices. They disguised their motive through the Indirect Rule and the creation of Native Administration. They exhibited friendly gesture towards Islam in the North. However, gradually, unnoticed and unable to counter the progress, they keep on introducing laws and proclamations that ensure that the political institutions were subjected to their wish, the religious practices were curtailed and capsized until they became lame in the process. This has affected the current Northern region in its politics, religious practices and economy. We need to look inward and re-strategise (Oral interview on October 2020 in Kano).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study contributes to the existing body of works on Northern Nigeria history particularly under colonial rule which has not received adequate attention it deserves from the Nigerian intellectuals. The study concludes that the Northern Nigerian region's contact with British colonialism was an obliterating phenomenon that truncated and altered its evolutionary destiny through the creation of classes, institutions and structures that became subservient to British colonialism. In the process, the well-articulated and respected political institutions in Hausaland met by the British were gradually weakened and diminished until they became less relevant except ceremonial. Contemporarily, the royal institution in Northern Nigeria had been turned into an avenue for supporting the politicians and royal regalia only during ceremony. This scenario was created through colonialism. Another vital heritage of the North, Islam as a religion, source of law, judgement and spiritual practices was drowned into coma and dragged into the mud of British colonial administration which it could never slip from until political independence. By the time of political independence, the Islamic principles and practices were injured to the extent that they could never regain their status as reflected in the pre-colonial Sokoto Caliphate.

To this end, the Northern Nigeria could not continue to lament or cry of history. Action is needed and a prompt one. The society is now a heterogeneous one with multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-political settings. Restoring the exact Sokoto Caliphate system is impossible but there is a way of reviving the sanctity of the Northern political and religious institutions. One of them, is the constitutional provision that will make the royal institution in Northern Nigeria independent of the political intervention. The kingmakers and the tenure, appointment and removal of kings should be restored back to the institutions and not politicians to reinvigorate their independence and freedom. Another way of doing it is to refer Nigeria back to parliamentary system in British model where the top three monarchs in the North, West and East and South South can become like the Queen in England in terms of dignity and respect. They may rotate the position as they deem it fit. Additionally, the North still has Shari'ah courts and has the leverage of constitutional application of Islamic law if it wishes. It is high time to reflect on that appropriately.

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### Oral Sources

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2. An Oral Interview with a Northern Elder in Kaduna in October, 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 at 9 pm.
3. An Oral Interview with an Elderly in Kano State on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 in his Residence at 11 am.