

# Agents of Islamization amongst Kambari Tribe in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *Islam as a universal religion has been spread and propagated from generation to generation because of the divine command for Muslims to transmit the message even if it be a verse. This task of propagation is usually done through peaceful means by itinerant scholars, adventurers, merchants, rulers and Muslim organizations in various parts of the globe. Among such communities that were blessed with Islam are the Kambari communalities of North-western Nigeria predominantly found in Niger and Kebbi States. The pace of Islamic development in the area differs from one period to another. In this paper, an attempt is made to x-ray the activities and contributions of Muslim organizations and community leaders in the Islamization of Kambari people.*

**Key Words:** Agents, Islamisation, Kambari, Nigeria.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Being a universal religion, Islam made it a divine task for every Muslim to disseminate its message to all humanity as the blessed Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was reported to have requested us to transmit from him even if it be a verse. Thus, Muslims from generation to generation continued to carry out the task of spreading Islam. However, it should be noted that even though Muslims have been commanded to spread Islam, it was never spread by the force of sword as some non-Muslim writers like Kenny<sup>1</sup> and Hartwig<sup>2</sup> tried to portray, but rather through peaceful means by itinerant Muslim scholars, adventurers, merchants and Sufi scholars in various parts of the globe.<sup>3</sup>

One of such communities that were blessed with Islam is the Kambari community of North – Western part of Nigeria mainly found in Niger, Kebbi and Kwara states. These groups of Kambari communities are distinguished from other people that bear the same name by the language they speak according to Mahdi<sup>4</sup> and Temple<sup>5</sup>. The Kambari under discussion speak various dialects of the language called *Kambarci* which are related linguistically. They dominated most of the present-day Kontagora Emirate and Ngaski District of Niger and Kebbi States respectively. It is against this background that this paper reviews the Islamization process of Kambari people. In doing so, the questions the paper tried to answer are: Who are the Kambari tribe? How do the Kambari tribe come into contact with Islam? What are the agents carrying out the Islamization activities among the Kambari tribe and extent of success so far attained?

## 2. WHO ARE THE KAMBARI TRIBE?

Historically, the origin of Kambari is difficult to understand as not much of their past has been recorded. However, there are some legends about their origin. One of such legends was reported by Mahdi<sup>6</sup>. According to this tradition, the Kambari originated from Makkah. Their ancestors left the holy city of Makkah, following a clash with the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). On leaving Makkah, they brought along with them one of the deities named Lata and settled on the hill called Agwara hill. Another version maintained that the Kambari migrated from Madinah on the day of the Prophet's (S.A.W) triumphant entry to the city in protest to the new religion. They migrated as one group and according to Nasko<sup>7</sup> and Boyd<sup>8</sup>, later broke into three main groups. A group reached Sakaba, another to the western region and the third probably reached Argida.

<sup>1</sup> Kenny, J. The Spread of Islam in Nigeria: A Historical Survey, a paper presented at Conference on Sharia in Nigeria at Spiritual Institute of Theology, Enugu, 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24 March, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Hartwig, M (nd), Spread by the Sword? Is holy war against Infidels a preservation of Islam? Here is evidence from Islamic texts and history. Retrieved from [www.answering-islam.org](http://www.answering-islam.org) as of 16/11/2012.

<sup>3</sup> Peter B. Clarke. *West Africa and Islam: A study of Religious Development from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Edward Arnold, London, 1984, pp.147 – 148.

<sup>4</sup> According to Mahdi, are non-Hausa, non Barebari people in Yauri and Kontagora Emirates. See Mahdi, A. The Hausa Factor in West African History, Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1978, P. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Temple, O and Temple C. L *Tribes and Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1965, PP 198 – 199.

<sup>6</sup> Mahdi, A. 1968, op. cit, P. 31

<sup>7</sup> Nasko, M. G, *The Life of Kungulu and Madabe* 1984, op.cit p.3-5

<sup>8</sup> Boyd, C. E Brown, H. W and Ley-Greaves, J. A Kontagora Province, in Temple, C.L, 1965, *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Nigeria*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Frank Cass, London, P. 487.

In another development, the Kambari people were said to have originated from a tribe called Katumba who lived in Daura for many centuries. They later migrated to Katsina and were re-named Kachibawan Katsina. When the Fulani conquered Hausa Kingdoms, Kachibawan Katsina were enslaved into making mud houses for the Fulani hence they are nicknamed Kachibawan Laka. Feeling exploited, Kachibawan Laka decided to migrate from Katsina and first migrated to Kwatarkwashi but again decided to migrate to as far as Kumbashi, Kotonkoro and Bena<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, tradition collected from Makuku claims that the Kambari originated from Maradi in the then Katsina Province<sup>10</sup>. According to this version, the Kambari were led by one Korau who left Maradi with his followers until they arrived at Makuku. So also, the Kambari of Argida in Rijau Local Government claimed that they descended from an ancestor who left Katsina for Argida near Rijau<sup>11</sup>. However, according to oral tradition recorded in Salka which is still in circulation, the Kambari are autochthonous.<sup>12</sup>

But a careful look at some of the claims will shade some light on the origin of Kambari people. In the first instance, the tradition of origin which stresses Makkah as the original home of the Kambari had been debunked by earlier researchers. Umaru<sup>13</sup> for example, opined that the claim was couched by the migrants who took over the political control of the area from Kambari out of political and religious consideration. Yusuf<sup>14</sup> observed that most of legends have no evidence to support their claims of having link with the Middle East. The legend which linked the Kambari people to the migration of Kisra as noted by Fagbunmi<sup>15</sup> was seriously challenged by Professor Abdullah Smith who concluded that it has no relevance, because there was no evidence to indicate a substantial Berber migration into Hausa land before or during the period (1000-1250 AD) when state formation in the area has been established<sup>16</sup>. Also, the claim that the Kambari originated from Katsina or Katumba tribes, has been debunked by Temple, C, L, Nasko, M. G and later Yusuf<sup>17</sup>. According to Yusuf, those who made the Kambari are mostly the ruling houses that migrated from Hausa states, established their rule over the indigenous groups. This is why they always claimed to have come from Katsina. As regards to the claim that the Kambari were once those people that were enslaved by the Fulani to build mud houses for them, the work of Usman<sup>18</sup> has thrown light to that effect. After tracing the history of Laka (dark-red clay soil) on which major centres of Zamfara are situated, Usman concludes that 'Katsinan Laka is a description of a territory called Laka and not people enslaved in the building of mud houses'.

But the history that seems to be most acceptable as opined by Yusuf<sup>19</sup> and which has linguistic and archaeological evidences, is that the Kambari are indigenous of the area they occupied. Archaeological excavations have shown that the Kambari people have been in the area for about 2,200 years.<sup>20</sup> Linguistically, it has been established that the Kambari belong to the Niger-Congo family and are genetically related to the other languages in the area. Kambari people are divided into six major groups residing in Mariga, Magama, Agwara, Rijau, Mashegu and Kontagora, local governments of Niger state as well as Yauri and Ngaski local governments of Kebbi state. The six main groups of Kambari people are; 1) Avadi 2) Agadi 3) Ashigini 4) Mawanci 5) Akimba and 6) Makatange. Geographically, the Kambari people live in the western section of Nigeria's middle belt, surrounding Kainji Lake.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. THE ADVENT AND SPREAD OF ISLAM IN KAMBARI LAND :

Kambari people according to traditions have travelled a long way in avoidance and resentment of Islam as documented by historians like Mahdi<sup>22</sup>, Samuel,<sup>23</sup> and Fagbunmi<sup>24</sup> little did they know that it will reach them at their new place.<sup>25</sup> Islam penetrated the area through emigrants from the already Islamized States and empires. Moreover, it is difficult to say when exactly did the Kambari people came into contact with Islam due to the fact that the Kambari land is bordered by different kingdoms and states that had contact with Islam earlier than Kambari. The period during

<sup>9</sup> Nasko, M. G, 1984, op.cit p.3-5

<sup>10</sup> Umaru, P. S. Incorporation and Resistance: A Study of the Relationship between Alela and the Sokoto Caliphate to the British Occupation c. 1804-1910, p.64

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, P. 65

<sup>12</sup> Bature, S, op. cit p.71

<sup>13</sup> Umaru, P. S, op cit. p. 65

<sup>14</sup> Yusuf, A. 2000 The History of Rijau District from the Earliest Period to 1976, M. A Thesis, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, p.25

<sup>15</sup> Fagbunmi, M. O. 1989, Intergroup Relation Among Riverine Communities of Upper Middle Niger and the Kabi Valley, 1500-1806 A.D, Ph.D Thesis, Department of History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, p. 117

<sup>16</sup> Kwanashie, M. Y, Mangyvat, M. A, Mohammed M. A and Usman, Y. B, A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith, Abdullahi Smith Center for Historical Research, 1987, Kaduna, PP. 329 – 346 and 64.

<sup>17</sup> Yusuf, A., op. cit, P.29

<sup>18</sup> Yusuf, Y. B, the Transformation of Katsina 1400-1883, the Emergence and Overthrow of the Sarauta System and the Establishment of the Emirate, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1981, pp.46-47

<sup>19</sup> Yusuf, A op. cit p. 21

<sup>20</sup> Augi, A.R Survey of Social and Political History of Zuru Emirate Before 1900, p.92)

<sup>21</sup> Stark, H. 2010, History of the Kambari People, [www.theseedcompany.org /project/kambari](http://www.theseedcompany.org/project/kambari) p. 30 retrieved on 23/02/2011.

<sup>22</sup> Mahdi, A, "Hausa Government in Decline Yauri in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century", M. A Thesis, Department of History, A. B. U. Zaria, 1968, P. 31

<sup>23</sup> Samuel, P. U. "Incorporation and Resistance: A Study of the Relationship Between Alela and the Sokoto Caliphate to the British Occupation C. 1804 – 1910", M.A Thesis, Department of History, A. B. U, Zaria, 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Fagbunmi, M. O, "Inter-group Relationship Among Riverine Communities of Upper Middle Niger and the Kabi Valley", 1500 – 1806 A. D, Ph. D Thesis, Department of History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Nasko, M.G (1984); *The life of Kungulu and Madabe*, NNPC, Zaria, P.27-28.

which Islam entered each part of the land differed. It is therefore pertinent to survey directions from which Islam entered Kambari land.

On the North - eastern part of the land comprising Kumbashi, Koton-koro, Ragada, Kwuimo, Gulbin Boka, etc, where the Avadi communities of Kambari dominate, Islam penetrated the area through the already Islamized Hausa states of Katsina, Zamfara, and Zaria<sup>26</sup> as a result of the activities of Hausa immigrants during the 15th and 16th Centuries<sup>27</sup>. In the Northern part of the land, the waves of Islam were said to have reached the settlements of Kambari in Shambo, Chibadi, Warari, Genu and Argida through the emigrant Hausa farmers and hunters from Kuyambana in southern Katsina who had been in the area as far back as the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It was also in this area that Malam Muhammadu Sambo launched a jihad movement in about 1810.<sup>28</sup> The Southern part of Kambari community came into contact with Islam through their neighbors, Nupe land<sup>29</sup>, while in the western part, Islam penetrated into the area through Borgu, who had contact with Islam as a result of their relation with the Wangarawa traders.<sup>30</sup>

From the above areas, Islam started to filter into Kambari land through the waves of trade, migration and conquests. It should be noted that the diffusion of Islam among the Kambari people had been a gradual process over a period of time and that the techniques of conversion varied from period to period and agent to agent.

#### 4. AGENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN KAMBARILAND :

What can be said with high degree of certainty is that Islam spread in Kambariland through the waves of migrations rather than through war and no single ethnic group was responsible for its spread. In the following paragraphs, an attempt is made to identify some of the agents that were responsible for the spread of Islam in Kambariland which include:

##### i. Muslim Migrants

It is difficult to say the actual time when Muslim started trooping into Kambari land, but what is certain is that the land was peopled by migrants of various origins as suggested by Harris.<sup>31</sup> Four categories of immigrants could be identified who came to Kambari land<sup>32</sup>. They are:

(a) Muslim traders from Hausaland, Nupe Kingdom and Borno who followed the trade routes buying and selling. Since Islam has been in those areas as early as the 9th century,<sup>33</sup> there is high tendency of these traders being Muslims and the possibility of them influencing the conversion of their hosts with whom they lived and intermarried. In Auna town for instance, the first Muslim scholar to settle there was a trader who dealt in horses, called Malam Isah who first settled at Libata after passing through Nupeland from Kukawa, He was followed by Malam Ibrahim Baban Iya<sup>34</sup>. In Wara, the earliest of such migrant traders was Mazokano<sup>35</sup>. He was the first Muslim from Kano to settle in the upper land of Wara.<sup>36</sup>

(b) Muslim scholars from Sokoto, Zaria, Katsina, Anka, Bida, Maska etc that settled in various parts of Kambariland and engaged in teaching and preaching activities. These scholars who are well spread in Kambari communities made tremendous efforts in the spread of Islam among Kambari. In Wara, Muslim migrant-scholars who were in the area and who contributed in the spread of Islam are; Malam Mu'azu, the first person to start *Da'wah* among the Akimba of Wara; Malam Karami;<sup>37</sup> Malam Mammman Nakontagora from Tambuwal living in Kontagora;<sup>38</sup> and Malam Ibrahim Gulu from Kano. At libata, the duo of Malam Adamu and Malam Dodo from Argungu and Malam Bawa from Bussa were the first Muslim migrant scholars that contributed to the Islamization of Kambari in the area. They preached to the pagan

<sup>26</sup> Since Islam had been in Hausa land as early as the 11th century, there is high tendency of these Hausa emigrants being Muslims and the probability of them influencing the autochthonous with which they live and inter-married-P. B. Clerk, 19820, West Africa and Islam, Edward Arnorld, London, P.11-26.

<sup>27</sup> A. Mahdi, 1978, op cit P.24

<sup>28</sup> M. Hisket 1982 Op.Cit, p.77

<sup>29</sup> Jimada op cit, pp 41-42

<sup>30</sup> Lovejoy, Paul E. (1978) The Role of Wangarawa in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan 15th and 16th century, Journal of African History, xix, 2, p.180

<sup>31</sup> According to Harris, the territory was peopled by immigrants of various origins none of whom according to him can be called aborigines. Harris P. G, Notes on Yauri (Sokoto Province), J. R. A. 1, XL, 1930, p.286

<sup>32</sup> Yakubu, A.M 2010, Da'awah in Kontagora Emirate: A Study of the Contributions of Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci 1999-2009, 42

<sup>33</sup> Gada, A, *Early History of Islamic Education in Hausaland*

<sup>34</sup> The rulers of Auna refer themselves as Kambarin Barebari who were said to have been originally Barebari (Kanuri) or people from Borno that migrated and settled among the Kambari and became of assimilated thereby losing their language and some aspects of their culture too but retained their religion. this information was obtained from interviews granted by Alhaji Mamman Wakilin Auna and Malam Zakari Limamin Auna interviewed at their residences in Auna

<sup>35</sup> Alhaji Musa Kwana Hakimin Makwalla refers him as MasoKano while Malam Umar Wali referred him as MazoKano.

<sup>36</sup> Alhaji Umaru Dogo Nawara, Hakimin Wara III in interviewed at his residence in Wara.

<sup>37</sup> Khalifa, op cit

<sup>38</sup> From where he got his nickname" Nakontagora"-

Kambari at home, in the market, in the farms and even at their drinking place.<sup>39</sup> In Nasko, the first Muslim Scholar to settle among the Kambari was Malam Abdulmalik from Kamfanin Jibrin who was later joined by Malam Umar Maibulala from Nasu<sup>40</sup>. In Salka, the first Muslim scholar who preached Islam in the town was Malam Adamu from Bida.<sup>41</sup> He was later joined by Malam Yero from Kusfa, (Zaria) around 1958.<sup>42</sup> Other scholars that visited the town include; Malam Bakatunbe from Kano, Malam Maikarfi from Kontagora and Malam Garba Bagausha from Tagware (in Yauri).<sup>43</sup>

(c) Muslim War Migrants from already Islamized States. Two types of Muslim war migrants can be identified who settled in Kambari areas and might have contributed in the Islamization of their hosts. The first were the military men who came to Kambariland as a result of wars of conquest lunched by Katsina, Zazzau, Zamfara, Nupe and Yauri rulers<sup>44</sup> many of whom could not return home but rather married and settled among the local people. The second war migrants were the war refugees who sought refuge as a result of wars and political tussles that engulfed their respective state and kingdoms. These people might have in the course of interaction served as agents of Islamization in the area as many of them were Muslims.

(d) Muslim Herdsmen and Farmers coming to the area for farming activities and for greener pastures. The topography of Kambariland is blessed with abundant fertile land and vast grazing land. Good example here is the settlement of Sullubawa, a town founded by the Sullubanko'in, a clan from Sokoto<sup>45</sup> in the midst of Kambari communities of Avadi kingdom.<sup>46</sup> It was also the search for a pastoral land that brought Muhammadu Sambo and his entourage to Kambariland. There was also migration of Gimbanawa community from Besse, to Genu, a Kambari settlement.<sup>47</sup> The close association of these migrant Muslim populations and the pagan Kambari in these areas seems to have produced some effects however small as suggested MacBride.<sup>48</sup>

## ii. Sir Ahmadu Bello conversion campaigns

The late Premier of Northern Nigeria< Sir Ahmadu Bello (Sardauna of Sokoto) contributed a lot towards the spread of Islam through his conversion campaigns in Yauri and Kontagora Emirates between 1962 and 1966<sup>49</sup>. Under the auspice of JNI, Sir Ahmadu Bello encouraged local Malams to carry out the duty of preaching in the area. In addition, he gave the new converts one hundred (100) bundles of white yard (*farin Lailai*) and wrapper (*Atamfa*) as well as counting beads (*Tasbaha*). This was to encourage the new converts to remain in Islam and also to draw the attention of those who were yet to embrace Islam to do so. He built a Mosque at the Kambari town of Wara, and visited the Kambari towns of of Ngaski, Wara and Shanga. He was also in Kontagora Emirate where he visited the tomb of Umaru Nagwamatse at Mamba. Whenever his representatives (Wakilai) among Malamai went on preaching tours,<sup>50</sup> the elderly one among the Kambari on receiving the massage of Sardauna usually gave their younger ones for conversion with the excuse that they are too old for the new religion and that they have taken an oath not to abandon *Magiro*.

## iii. Muslim rulers and Community Leaders

The first formal attempt to saw the seed of Islam among the Kambari or in Kambariland was said to have been made by Sarkin Yauri Ibrahim (1689- 1708)<sup>51</sup> who embarked on an Islamic reform movement<sup>52</sup>. Prominent among those community leaders that have contributed greatly in the spread of Islam among the Kambari people are:

<sup>39</sup> Alhaji Ibrahim Jika, village head of Libata, Wazirin libata, Sarkin Noman Libata, and Alh. M. T. T in a group interview held at the palace of the village head.

<sup>40</sup> Alhaji Hussaini Nasko, Sarkin Nasko in an interview at his palace.

<sup>41</sup> Alhaji Idris Haruna, the Chief Imam of Salka in an interview at his residence in Salka.

<sup>42</sup> The date was arrived at based on the information obtained from Alhaji Idris, the chief Imam that his father held the office of Imam for fifty years and he is now four years in office after the death of his father.

<sup>43</sup> Alhaji Tanko Shugaban Izala, Salka interviewd at his residence in Salka

<sup>44</sup> Mahdi, A, 2010, op cit, p.

<sup>45</sup> MacBride, D. F. H the Rijau area of the Kontagora Division, Noger Province, with notes on the Dukawa of Gwandu Division, Sokoto Province, Report, M.2722, NAK, p.2.

<sup>46</sup> Avadi is a Kambari kingdom comprising of thirteen Kambari village clusters namely; Genu, Argida, Shambo, Warari, Yungu, Beyanu, Chibadi, Malango, Angu, Bauni, Sullubawa. Of all these towns, only Sullubawa is not a Kambari town. Ibrahim Nasamu in an interview at his residence in Argida.

<sup>47</sup> MacBride, op cit, p.2

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.9

<sup>49</sup> Adamu, Musa, op cit, p. 33

<sup>50</sup> My informant was among the Wakilai Sardauna in Wara and he told me that he was given a bicycle to enter into the interior Kambari farm settlements though with no allowance.

<sup>51</sup> Before becoming Sarki, to show his zeal for Islam, Ibrahim went on pilgrimage and on his accession  
Mahdi, A.2010, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.31

(a) **Sarkin Sudan Alhaji Saidu Namaska.** The areas where the emir contributed in the upliftment of Islam include; giving financial support to any organization and individuals that engage in *Da'wah* and teaching, giving financial and material support to new converts who might be rejected by their relatives as a result of their conversion and at the same time, intervening and reconciling between the new converts and their relatives who are often in conflict with their convertee relatives.<sup>53</sup> Above all, he was a keen supporter of *Kwamitin Yada Addinin Muslunci* in the emirate that has so far converted more than thirty thousand Christians and pagans in the Emirate to Islam.

(b) **General Muhammadu Gado Nasko.** His first effort was in making sure that those rural Kambari women who often came to the Market not decently dressed have changed. He formed a committee chaired by the incumbent Sarkin Nasko, Alhaji Husaini<sup>54</sup> who went around on Kambari market days with new clothes chasing any Kambari woman wearing *Kabali*<sup>55</sup> and replacing it with *Atamfa*. He also mobilized his tribal Malams and sponsored them to undertake *Da'wah* among their people.

(c) **Sarkin Nasko Alhaji Hussaini Nasko.** Among the major contributions of Alhaji Hussain to the spread of Islam in Kambari land and for the transformation of Kambari people include; (i) He was the first to lead the team in charge of distributing clothes to Kambari women. (ii) He was the first person to publicly reveal the secrets of *Magiro* in a Radio programme aired by the Radio Niger, Kontagora. (iii) He went to the scene of *Bukin Gwatali* with an axe and machete and broke the drums of *Magiro* and set the hut ablaze. (iv) He undertook the task of orienting women about the secret of *Magiro*. (v) He also discourages his subjects from selling their land for the purpose of erecting any other place of worship apart from Mosque. (vi) He set up a committee named *Kungiyar Da'awah*.<sup>56</sup>

(d) **Alhaji Idris Haruna Salka.** On his return from Zaria where he studied, he set out for the task of propagating Islam among the Kambarin Salka. Other Malams in the town that joined him were; the then Chief Imam of the town, Liman Haruna, Malam Bawa from Kontagora, Malam Abubakar Bagimbane, Malam Ja'afaru Na'bi etc. These people moved from one village to another inviting pagan Kambari to Islam. Through his efforts, more than four hundred pagan Kambari embraced Islam.<sup>57</sup>

(e) **Ibrahim Nasamu.** He is among the indigenes of Argida that worked tirelessly to sow the seed of Islam among Kambarin Avadi. He used to go on preaching tours alone and in company, conducting lessons for the new converts, etc. Through this, he was able to convert many to Islam. He was among the pioneer members of *Da'wah* group in the area that goes from one ruralite to another preaching and converting. Through his efforts, there were mass conversions at Unguwan Makera and Maibinda near Gamji.<sup>58</sup>

(f) **Malam Musa Abubakar Maginga.** Malam Musa pursued his Islamic education at the ancient city of Zaria for twenty-eight years. General Gado Nasko convinced him to come back home and teach his people. On his return, he undertook the tasks of teaching and preaching in Nasko area. He established an Islamiyyah school named Nurul Islam is currently the Chief Imam of Nasko, an official of *Izalatul Bid'ah wa Iqamatus Sunnah* and member of *Da'wah* Committee in Nasko.

(g) **Malam Ibrahim Kwado.** He was the first to embrace Islam in Wando according to my informant.<sup>59</sup> He built a mosque at Wando and exerted efforts in stopping *Magiro* outings in his area. At times when they came out for *Magiro* ritual, on passing through his compound, he would pour hot water on the entourage. During the festival of *Gwatali*, he prevented them from passing through his house. He was frequently reported to Sarkin Salka about his hateful attack on *Magiro* yet he remained adamant. When the officials of *Magiro* in the area felt unsafe due to Ibrahim's activities, they moved their *Magiro* away from the area.

(h) **Sarkin Yauri Muhammadu Tukur.** The Emir assisted preachers by giving them protection and permitting them to enter the nooks and corners of his emirate. He was the leader of Jama'atul Nasrill Islam. He distributed bicycles to the preachers to ease transportation for them.<sup>60</sup> The efforts of the emir were also complimented by the efforts of Sarkin

<sup>53</sup> The emir doesn't give preference to the non-Muslims when it comes to given responsibility like village or district headship. Some among rural royal family do even convert to Islam for them to qualify for enthronement where vacancy exists.

<sup>54</sup> Haruna Garba, op.cit

<sup>55</sup> *Kabali* is a traditional mini-skirt that covers from the region of waist to below the knee usually worn by the women while coming to the market or appearing in public.

<sup>56</sup> Sarkin Nasko Alhaji Hussain op.cit.

<sup>57</sup> Alhaji Idris Haruna Salka, Chief Imam of Salka in an interview at his residence in Salka

<sup>58</sup> Malam Ibrahim Nasamu interviewed at his residence in Argida

<sup>59</sup> Alhaji Tanko Shugaban Izala Salka, op.cit

<sup>60</sup> My informant was among the beneficiaries of the bicycles so distributed in Wara area by the emir.

Ngaski, Sarki Zakari who often settled cases among the contending Malams.<sup>61</sup> Also supported in the move was Hakimin Kwakwaram, Malam Tahiru (late). The Hakimi used his position and wealth in the development of Islam in his territory.

(i) **Sarkin Yauri Shuaibu Abarshi.** During his reign, he discovered that the local courts and village heads were extorting money from the pagan Kambari whenever their cases are brought before them. He sympathized with the innocent pagan Kambari and took drastic measures to arrest the situation. Among the measures he took was setting up of a two-man committee, made up of Malam Umar Wali Wara and Alkali Hamidu from Gebbe to review such court cases where the pagan Kambari were cheated. This indeed made many to be impressed and to embrace Islam. Sarki Shuaibu also prevailed on the Sarakuna about their loathsome behavior towards the preachers as well as the security officials who were often used by the traditional rulers to molest or extort the preachers.<sup>62</sup> Sarki Shuaibu discouraged building of Churches in his emirate.

#### iv. Muslim Organisations and Committees

Prominent organizations that have contributed greatly in the diffusion of Islam in Kambari land include among others the following:

(a) **Jama'atul Nasril Islam (J.N.I).** The organization was launched in 1962 and was introduced in Yauri on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1972. In its efforts to spread Islam in Yauri Emirate, *Jama'atu Nasril Islam* (JNI) established Islamiyah schools using the houses of all the Imams throughout the emirate as classrooms<sup>63</sup>. In Kontagora Province, JNI was introduced on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1973.<sup>64</sup> It was introduced in Wara in 1980 and another Malam from Yauri, Malam Umar Aule and Malam Abubakar Yusuf Sarkin Malamai used to regularly visit the group. Some groups of Malams led by Malam Hassan organized preaching tours under the umbrella of JNI.<sup>65</sup> They also go with clothing materials and money usually donated by the Muslims.

(b) **Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah wa Iqamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS).** This organization was founded by Shaykh Isma'il Idris Jos in 1978. In Wara, Izala was introduced in 1980 by my informant<sup>66</sup>. They set up on preaching tours to Islamize the pagan Kambari in their midst. In Salka, JIBWIS set up a committee known *Kwamitin Wa'azi* as for preaching and conversion tours on weekly basis from village to village<sup>67</sup>. In Nasko, the teachers of *Madrasatul Nurul Islam* formed *Kungiyar Da'wah* with the aim of propagating Islam among Kambari living in the rural areas of the Local Government. The association with the full support of Sarkin Nasko Alhaji Hussain, roam Kambari settlements for possible conversion.<sup>68</sup>

(d) **Kwamitin Yada addinnin Musulunci.** This is a committee responsible for the propagation of Islam that was launched in 1999 in Kontagora Emirate. The major activities of the committee are; (1) inviting non-Muslims in the emirate to Islam. (2) Educating the newly converted Muslims about Islam and its practices and (3) socializing the pagan tribes and drawing their attention to the benefit of accepting Islam<sup>69</sup>. The committee converted more than twenty-one thousand people to Islam in the emirate.<sup>70</sup>

(f) **Avadi Development Association.** The Association was formed in Rijau Local Government of Niger State. It formed a *Da'wah* Committee undertaking *Da'awah* work from village to village. The committee also goes with clothing materials, detergent and soap as gift to the new converts who do not have befitting clothes to observe Salat as Muslims<sup>71</sup>.

#### 5. CONCLUSION:

In this paper, an attempt was made to give a picture of the condition of Islam in Kambari land. In the discussion, it was made clear that Islam has been in the area for a long time and it spread widely through the activities of Muslim

<sup>61</sup> Misunderstanding used to occur between Malaman Izala and Malaman Darika over issues that used to generate heated debate and tensed atmosphere. The Sarki would call the parties involved and settled their differences.

<sup>62</sup> The security officials refer to here are the policemen deployed to various district and villages in the emirate who collaborated with the traditional rural to cheat the Kambari people in his emirate.

<sup>63</sup> Adamu Musa, op. Cit. P. Although one of my informants in Wara who was also among the malams employed for conversion work gave a contrary view that they were not given any allowance but he was personally given a bicycle to ease his roaming.

<sup>64</sup> No. GEN/97/313, Kontagora, 28/07/1972 *Jama'atu Nasril Islam*. Niger State Archive, Minna

<sup>65</sup> Limamin Izalah, Wara

<sup>66</sup> Malam Umar Wali Wara interviewed at his residence in Wara

<sup>67</sup> Alhaji Tanko Salka, Shugaban Kungiyar Izalah, Salka

<sup>68</sup> Malam Haruna Garba interviewed at his residence in Nasko

<sup>69</sup> Ka'idojin Daukar Aiki na Da'wah, official letter giving to every Da'awah worker on employment

<sup>70</sup> Yakubu, Aminnu, M. *Da'wah* Activities in Kontagora Emirate; A study of Kwamitin Yada Addinin Musulunci 1999 – 2008, M. A Dissertation, Islamic Studies Department, UDUS, 2010, P.

<sup>71</sup> Alhaji Isyaku Usman Culture interviewed in his residence at Rijau

migrants from the already Islamized states mostly through teaching, preaching and role modelling rather than by war. This therefore, debunked the impression that Islam was spread by the sword. Today, Islam is receiving a boost among Kambari people not only in terms of mass conversion but in other areas like strict adherence to *Shari'ah* and shunning away from customs that contradict Islam as well as advancement in religious sciences.

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