USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO
(PHOTOGRPADE SCHOOL)

A HISTORY OF MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES IN ANKPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE FROM 1979 TO 1992

A Dissertation Submitted to the Postgraduate School, USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO, NIGERIA

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my Mother Mallama Hawa’u Ahmed and the entire people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
In my search for knowledge and experience in life, I am reminded more and more just how Allah has been helpful to me. This work in particular and my degree in general wound not have been possible if not for the reassurance and help I got along the way. Mariam Abubakar (my lovely wife) never doubted me, she gave me the support I needed to accomplish what I only envisioned. My Supervisors are truly my inspiration. Prof. Muktar Bunza, Prof. Ahmed Bako and Prof. A.G. Yahaya. I hope their life endeavors will meet with the same loving guidance.
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GLOSSARY

Aboloja - Christians
Amabakpa - Muslims
Afor - Market
Attah - Father
Aljenu - Spirit
Bishop - Senior Priest in charge of the work of the work
Church - A building where Christians go to worship
Ebo-Omi - Water Deity
Efane - Shrine
Ekpe - Palm Tree
Ekpa - Name of a Tree
Ifa - Soothsayer
Ibegwu - Spirit of the dead
Oja’ji - Edge of a River
Oja - Association
Parish - An area that has its own Church and that a priest is responsible for.
Onu - Chief
Udama - Together
Uwazi - Propagation

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Fig 1 Map of Kogi State Showing Ankpa Local Government Area.........................
ABSTRACT

This work examines the History of Muslims-Christian activities among the Igala people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, from 1979 to 1992. The work examines the activities of Christians and Muslims. It also shows the relationship between all the religions that exist in the area since 1979 and ends up in 1992. The work defines the geographical location of the people of Ankpa. It has also discussed the advent of Islam and Christianity in the area. It examined the features of Islam and Christianity. The work highlighted the facilitating factors, mode and way of interaction. It gives suggestions and draws a conclusion. In the finding, it is discovered that in Ankpa Local Government Area, Muslims, Christians and traditional religion have been in peace since the introduction of the religions into the area but
sometimes intra-religious violence do occur among them. The secret of this success is discovered to be hinged on mutual respect, accommodation, tolerance, dialogue and understanding among the religions in the area. Both Secondary as well as Primary sources were used to accomplish the write-up.
CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State was created out of the Igala native authority (INA) in 1979.\(^1\) The Local government underwent a political sub-division when Omala and Olamaboro Local Government Area were carved out in 1989 and 1991 respectively. Ankpa local Government Area has a population of 267,353 according to the 2006 National census.\(^2\) Igala is the main ethnic group but has equally absorbed other ethnic groups such as the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Agatu and migrant Fulani.\(^3\)

The main religions of the inhabitant are Islam, Christianity and traditional religion. The name Ankpa originated from the Red Scenery called ‘EKPA’ meaning ‘RED’ later turned to be known and called Ankwa by the Hausa migrant and Ankpa by the Colonial masters.\(^4\) From the earliest, both religions adopted a gradual, quietist attitude towards the culture of the people which saw them integrate, intermingle and contribute immensely to the development of the society.\(^5\) Muslims, Christians and traditional religion engage themselves in activities that promote good understanding between them.\(^6\) The attitude of flexible engagement with others was generally effective in Ankpa Local Government Area because all the religions presented non-violently and largely without compulsion.\(^7\) Through the positive religious activities

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\(^1\) E. Edimeh, “The legacies of Attah Ayegba Omi-Idoko: A Concise History of IgalaLand” Ankpa: CUCA, P 15
\(^2\) Kogi State Ministry of Information, Lokoja, Retrieved on 29/10/13
\(^3\) Nak/Lokoprof/751/S.2, Onuates in Ankpa Districts
\(^4\) Ibid
\(^5\) A. Usman, 65 years, A Farmer interviewed in Ankpa on 30/12/14
\(^7\) Ibid
which include marriage ceremonies, festivals and funerals are attended by other followers of religions depending on interest and commitment.\(^8\)

Before the coming of Islam and Christianity in the 19\(^{th}\) century to Ankpa Local Government Area the inhabitant are traditionalists. People travel from other areas like Imane, Olamoboro, Omala and Enjema to Ankpa to a water deity called ‘‘Ojaji’’ meaning (head of a River) which they believe to solve their problems like diseases, witchcraft and other spiritual attack in the communities.\(^9\) In Ankpa Local Government Area, the activity between the followers of these religions is cordial but sometimes crises do occur between them. They are all duty bound to serve the community when a call for such work arises. In this way, the people interact cordially together. Islam and Christianity have played a very important role in the History of the people and the coming of both religions to the area has changed the pattern of living in the area by bringing social changes and positive transformation to the people.\(^10\)

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

The basic factor that necessitated this research is to examine the activities of the three major religions of Igala people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi from 1979 to 1992. The researcher will establish the transformation that occurs among the religions and the coming of Islam and Christianity to the area within the period of this study and the level of its consciousness among the people. The igala people of Ankpa went out in search of Islam and Christianity or were the religions brought to them in their locality, the mode of interaction between the followers of the religions and what

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\(^8\) Ibid
is the mode of interaction between the followers of the religions. Thus the research will addresses the issues that are related to the impact of Islam and Christianity on the traditional culture of the people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

1.2 **Significance of the Study**

A research of this nature is very significant in a number of ways. First, it serves as a source of valuable information to Muslims, Christians and Traditional followers in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. In addition to that, it will contribute to the existing literature and debates on the activities of the religions and their pattern of relationship in Ankpa. Furthermore, it will serve as an instrument for easy spread of both religions in the area, it will help both religions to inculcate good morals in accordance to the teaching of their religions. It will also create a balance of understanding between Muslims, Christian and Traditional followers in Ankpa.

1.3 **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this work is to critically study the activities Muslims, Christian and traditional religion in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State from 1979 to 1992. Therefore the research is designed to achieve the following objectives.

a. To examine the activities of Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion in the Area.

b. To find out the History of Islam, Christianity and traditional religion in Ankpa Local Government Area.

c. To present to the public the traditional culture of Ankpa people

d. To examine the impact of Islam and Christianity on the traditional culture of the people in the area

e. To examine the status of their religious beliefs and practices before and after the introduction of Islam and Christianity in Ankpa Local Government Area.
1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study primarily restricted to the Muslims-Christian activities in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. Ankpa Local Government is located in the North Eastern part of Kogi State, it is surrounded by Benue State to the East, Olamaboro Local Government Area to the South, Dekina and Bassa Local Government Area to the west and River Benue to the North. The work covers a period of thirteen years from 1979 to 1992. The year was chosen as the starting point of this study because it was the year the Local Government was created out of the Igala native authority (INA). The 1992 was the terminal end of this study because it marks the influx of Muslims and Christians in religious propagation and activities.

1.5 Sources and Methodology

During this research, a number of primary and secondary sources were extensively used because it formed a very significant part of the sources in writing this dissertation. Library materials and data are extracted from the books and articles, seminar papers, newspapers, proceedings and relevant websites were also visited. The primary sources such as Memoranda, Reports and letters were obtained from the various Research centres such as Kogi State College of Education Library Ankpa, Arewa House Archives Kaduna (AHAK), National Archives Kaduna (NAK), Kogi State University Library Ayingba, Abdullahi Fodiyo Library Complex of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Sokoto State Library Sokoto, Waziri Junaidu History Bureau Library Sokoto, Al-Hikma College of Arabic and Islamic Studies Ankpa and Arewa House Library Kaduna.
1.6 Literature Review

Literature review enhanced the researcher’s understanding of the old and new interpretation of historical studies. Also it gives the opportunity to make new interpretation that will be relevant to historical studies and knowledge. However, part of the literature looked into is Boston *The Igala Kingdom*, the work is found useful to this study though it is more anthropological. It gives some details in the cultural background of the Igala people and also gives the details of Igala traditional festivals.\(^{11}\) However, the book is relevant to this study but did not show emphasis on the state of religious activities of the people.

Another book found relevant to this study is the work of Okwoli titled *A Short History of Igala*, the author shows in details the political History of Igala and Christian activities in Igalaland.\(^{12}\) But little attention is given to the state of Islam in Igalaland and traditional religion among the people.

Mckenzie examines one of the earliest inter-religious encounters among ATR, Christianity and Islam in West Africa. The majority of existing literally accounts of inter-religious encounters are of those between either Christianity and Islam, or Christianity and ATR. Mckenzie’s work is one of the very few works that addresses interfaith interactions among all three belief systems. Samuel Ajayi Crowder was one of the West African most distinguish Christian of the 19\(^{th}\) century. The book records his encounters and the attitudes he developed towards ATR and Islam. It starts by providing information about Crowder’s family background, childhood and the early period of his Christian work and stance against ATR and Islam. His exclusivist approach was evident throughout his career as an Anglican priest and as Bishop of

\(^{11}\) J.S. Boston, *The Igala Kingdom*, Ibadan, 1968, Pp20-50

West Africa. Although, the book records inter-religious interactions which occurred several centuries ago, its contribution is a foundational resource for this study, and for the general spectrum of interfaith encounter and dialogue. Through Crowther’s own words in his writings and in publications about his life and work by other writers. It gives comprehensive accounts of Crowther’s exclusivist and flexible approaches in inter-religious encounters mainly in Sierra Leone and some region of Nigeria. The two faith traditions under study were linked together by Crowther for good or ill—since it was clear that in the lives of the people as a whole they were also inextricably interwoven.

Awolalu’s book titled, The Encounter Between Africa Traditional Religion and other religions in Nigeria gives readers an account of the advent and interaction of Islam and Christianity with ATR in Northern Nigeria. Awolalu shows that Islam has proven more tolerant of ATR than was Christianity.

Mahdi, in his paper titled Islam, Rulers and Society in West Africa to C. 1804 A.D. described trade as the important vehicles for the spread of Islam in West Africa. By 13th century, Islam had established a strong foothold in the Sahel Savannah belts of West Africa. He pointed out that succeeding centuries witnessed its spread and development in the part of this region, with the regions between Senegal and Niger valleys Islam entered through peaceful means by the activities of traders and itinerant scholars. The important aspect of this paper to this work is the introduction of Islam and its development in West Africa, activities of traders and itinerant scholars and the peaceful propagation of Islam. In Ankpa Local Government Area, the same method

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was adopted by the traders from the Northern part of Nigeria that spread the message of Islam to the people.

Folala and Adediran in their book titled Islam and Christianity in West Africa argued that, the West African inhabitants are predominantly Negroes but there are some Caucasoid stocks like the Berbers, Tuaregs and moors on the Northern fringes. They either live in the forest or in the Savannah Zones. The dwellers of the Savannah zone can be divided into two. First, we have the western Sudanese comprising people who inhabited the old empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Secondly, the central Sudanese comprising peoples in the various Hausa states and the Kanem-Borno Empire. Their main occupation was Agriculture and they engaged in long distance trade, especially in North Africa.  

Taye’s article titled A Historical Perspective in the Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria Since 1914 demonstrated how Islam was spread and consolidated in Nigeria, strategies used for conversion include ‘‘traders as agents of propagating Islam’’ the wandering Muslims and itinerant traders combined herbal medicine and prayers. They preached peacefully along with trading. Islam expanded fast in urban centers and some major trade centres became Muslim dominated areas. Organized Missionary endeavor was another method used. They used open air preaching and the Mallams interpreted the Qur’an to hearers. They build Mosque and Arabic schools, and used learned scholars or Mallams as teacher and Preachers.

Ayandele’s book The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria The book also shed more light on how the Christian Missionaries adopted different method in propagating their

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religion. Education and health was a major method used. The Missionaries established mission schools and organized adult literacy classes in addition to building hospital and medical centres. The philosophy of catch them young was adopted as primary and secondary schools were established, conversion made through teaching and preaching in schools, Hospital, and medical centres were established and Chaplains or preachers appointed as Minister to the sick people. Full time Missionaries and preachers appointed who established Churches and organized open air crusade, revival and teaching to win people to their religion. The relevance of this work to this study is that the method was adopted in Ankpa Local Government Area by the Catholic missionaries. But the issue of adult literacy was not popular and adopted in this period because the people of this area are in their dark ages where education was no longer important for old aged men and women except the young and children.

Another book found relevant to this work is Ekechi’s Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914, he observed that for years the protestants missions especially the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) maintained an unchallenged missionary influence on the lower Niger. The absence of competitor seems to have made the CMS somewhat complacent. It is indeed clear that the Society thought that it could develop operations at its own rate and according to its own needs. But the situation change in 1885 when the catholic Mission joined the missionary enterprise. And with the advent of the French Roman Catholic Missionaries, the illusion of security was shattered, the claim that Niger territories were the “unquestioned spheres of English National life” was challenged. He further explained that in 1886, Archdeacon Henry Johnson expressed very strong apprehension regarding what he

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called the impeding invasion of the CMS sphere of influence by Roman catholic Missionaries. This book makes a comprehensive contribution to this work.

Trimingham, in his book “The Influence of Islam Upon Africa” made a comprehensive assessment of Islam in African continent to which Ankpa Local Government belongs, he noted that Islam penetrated to Africa in four phases. But the third phase which discusses the spread of Islam was more relevant to the work, this period witness Islamic reform and marked the influx of clerics imbued with a new conception of Islam. The importance of this phase is that it brought about Islamic reformers who portrayed the uniqueness of Islam among other religious.

Another work of great benefit to this work is “Bunza’s Christian Missions Among Muslims, Sokoto Province, Nigeria, 1935-1990 made a valuable contribution on the emergence of Islamic State in Sokoto and its relation with non-Muslims, linked Christian Agenda and its Strategy, and, the Spread of Christianity and Islamic challenge in Sokoto Province are also addressed by the author. Bunza’s work helped the researcher to understand the missionary activities in Northern Nigeria where Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State belongs.

Another important work of great benefit to the research is Hajar’s “The First Immigration: Immigration to Abyssinia.” Although, History is the main focus of the Author, it is very relevant to the research by showing the first established Muslims-Christian activities in the early period of Islam.

21 Ibid P 81
Samad’s book “Islam and Christianity” also made a compressive analysis of the Qur’an and Bible, Prophet Muhammed and Jesus (May peace be upon them), the doctrines of Islam and Christianity, and finally the moral teachings of Islam and Christianity.24

Another interesting article worthy of review is Bunza’s “Muslim-Christian Relationship in Nigeria.” he categorized in three phases pre-Colonial, Colonial and post-Colonial. He is of the opinion that the major cause of religious violence in Nigeria is feelings of domination by the minority ethnic group by the Hausa/Fulani Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Bunza also discussed in his article the nature of relationship between the Muslims and the Non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria especially Sokoto Caliphate where both faiths have been peacefully co-exist without disharmony. The last phase of the article highlights the problems and possible solution to inter-faith encounter in contemporary Nigeria.25

Andrew’s article, titled “Africa as the Theatre of Christian engagement with Islam in the 19th Century” gives an account of the cordial engagement between Islam and Christianity and other religions. He discusses the impact of missionary activities in Nigeria and the changes it brought to the people, and the African traditional religion.26

The work is very relevance as part of the objectives of this research because of its valuable contribution in studying the activities between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

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Joseph’s book entitled “History of Igala Kingdom C. 1534-1854: A study of political and cultural integration in the Niger Benue Confluence Area of Nigeria” discusses the nature of settlement patterns of Igala people. The head of the family with his wives, children, relatives and friends stay together in one family house, and this kind of arrangement promote peace and harmony among the people despite their differences in religious affiliations.27 This book help the researcher in understanding that the people of this area from the same family background can belong to any religion of their will.

Early 1960s, the mutual relationship between the people of Nigeria has changed especially in Northern Nigeria where Muslims and Christians for a long period of time have been living together in a peaceful and harmonious co-existence.28 But despite the break up, some states are still leaving together and the activities of the people are well managed.

Mailafia’s paper titled “Grassroots Mobilization for sustainable peace and communal integration” discusses the important of neighborhoods safety and co-existence in Kaduna and Jos Cities.29 It is well known that some groups of individuals in the city were supplied with dangerous arms against their neighbors but it’s the responsibility of individuals to checkmate their community when the need arises.30

Missionary activities headed by James, Thomas Edward in Gbebe and Lokoja towards the end of the 19th century introduced the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in carrying out their evangelistic activities, destroyed some aspects of tradition and

30 Ibid P.8
culture of their host communities. They held Euro-Christian views and acted by them. Studies show that during colonial period, racism of missionaries had negatively affected African culture and traditions.\textsuperscript{31}

Niven’s “\textit{the war of Nigerian Unity}” stressed that Nigeria has a remarkable number of Muslims and Christians and everyone takes religion very serious and the number of those careless of religion is so small compared with the bulk of the population in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{32} The importance of this work to this research is that it assists the researcher to understand how communities should adopt friendliness in their daily activities.

A book entitled, “\textit{The Political History of Religious Violence in Nigeria}” by Agi was also found important to this study. In chapter five of the work titled Religious Violence: The colonial Experience, 1914-1960’ is an indispensable work to this research. The author shares with general public the efforts towards the promotion of harmonious Muslim-Christian relations. He discusses among other things, the gulf between Islam and Christianity and recommends some techniques on how to narrow this gulf in other to promote inter-relations. This book is of paramount importance to this study especially in the discussions on the measures that should be taken to prevent the possibility of religious crisis between Muslim and Christian in Nigeria as a whole.\textsuperscript{33}

Hussein’s article titled “Coexistence and Confrontation: Towards A Reappraisal of Christian-Muslim Encounter in Contemporary Ethiopia” shows the cordial relationships between the Christians and the Muslims in Ethiopia. But the situation changed during the Italian occupation of the Country between (1936-1941). The

\textsuperscript{31} AHA, C.M.S. Missionaries of African Origin and Extra-Religious Encounters at the Niger -Benue Confluence, 1885-1880, PJSI/34/195
regime under Haile Sellassie took some negative action against the Ethiopian Muslims Chiefs which led to a conflict over a mosque construction. In Nigeria, series of religious conflicts were due to favoritism either from the government or traditional rulers against other faiths.

Rowan’s article titled, “Islam, Christianity and pluralism” note that all the faiths should be considered equal in spite of being different patterns of Worshiping God. He pointed out that the Qur’an and the Bible discusses extensively on the relationships between them.

Zeki’s article, “Said Nursi on Muslim-Christian relations leading to world peace” was also found relevance to this study. The author examined some major chapters of the Holy Qur’an that discusses the relationship of the two world great religions. The best Qur’anic verses on human relationship seem to be indispensable for any dialogue between the adherents of any religion in the world. Allah says, ‘O Mankind we have created you male and female and made you into nation and tribes so that you may know one another, the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is he best of conduct, God is the Knower and the aware.

Another literature worthy of review is Ayinla’s “The Role of Islamic studies in Conflict Resolution”. The paper examines the historical development of Islamic studies in peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria, and the role of Islamic studies in schools and tertiary Institution is to prepare young people into a peaceful society.

The relevance of this work to this research is that it helps the researcher to understand the problems that sore Muslim-Christian relation in Nigeria. Also help the researcher to establish the fact that religious crises and conflicts have nothing to do with beliefs. It has to do with some social factors that are taken into consideration such as ignorance of religious teachings, intolerance and prejudice.

Johnson’s “Advancing Muslim-Christian Dialogue Today” was also found relevance to this study, and the writer critically studied the relationships of Muslims and their host communities in the United States of America after 9/11 attacks, an event that contributed to the raising up of Muslims-European tension. He suggested that both Islam and Christianity will change Europe in coming decades, through the experience of living with one another, social and cultural environment, interacting with each other in multi-faith settings. Though the paper did not mention anything about the Inter-faith dialogue in Nigeria but it can give us a direction of achieving our own aims of this study.

Jude’s article entitled, “the Emergence of an Igala group in the lower Niger Region: A case study of the Ebu people C.1500-1900 A.D” examined how the strategic location of the Igala people on the sides of the two great rivers brought them in contact with various peoples and locations. The article did not mention anything about Christians-Muslims activities of the people but shows the mutual relationship and activities of the people with other tribes in the region.
Muzafar’s *Group Conflict and Co-operation and their social psychology*” discusses extensively on Inter-Group Conflict and their consequences in the society. He described Inter-Group Conflict as a great danger to any community or nations who are struggling to achieve equal rights.\(^{40}\) He argued that aggressive behavior towards other groups is a result of aggressive impulses accumulated by members owing to their Individual frustrations that lead to conflicts.\(^{41}\)

My problem with the book is that the author did not study in detail the activities of religions but it helped the researcher to understand inter-group relation which is also vital to this research.

A published book titled “*Koro and Gbagyi Subgroup Relations in Central Nigeria*” by Mailafiya A and Lawrence G was found relevance to this study, Chapter two of the book titled “perspectives of Inter-Group Relations” the authors carefully studied the various ethnic-groups in Central Nigeria and their long history of relationships before the colonial period. The various ethnic-groups in Central Nigeria had common cultures, farmlands and markets, hosted same festivals, Inter-married, but the colonial boundaries and forced integration, system of economy and infrastructural development allowed people to start develop feeling of belonging to one group or another.\(^{42}\) This is applicable to the area of my study where people lived together as one entity without any history of conflict either religious or ethnicity.

Tesemehi’s article titled, “The Relationship between the Sokoto Caliphate and the Non-Muslim peoples of the Middle Benue Region” discusses in details the peaceful encounter between the Sokoto Caliphate and the Non-Muslim people of the Middle Benue region. He pointed out that the religious leaders of the Caliphate carried out

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\(^{41}\) Ibid P 14

\(^{42}\) A. Mailafiya and A. Lawrence, “*Koro and Gbagyi Subgroup Relations in Central Nigeria*, Gabdel integrated Services, 2008, Pp 13-32
their religious duties peacefully in the area, the history of wars between them was not a religious battle but for economic pursuits.\textsuperscript{43} The importance of this article is that the people propagated Islam and Christianity to this area are foreigners, this means that they are not indigenes of the area but quickly adopted some basic activities of the inhabitants which makes preaching more easier for them.

Mazrui’s “\textit{African Islam and competitive Religion: Between Revivalism and Expansion}” noted that, the major threat to Islam and Christianity in Nigeria is Western materialism.\textsuperscript{44} He described Nigerians as people who look backward to their ancestors but look forward to the new faiths, Islam and Christianity.\textsuperscript{45}

Shedrack’s book titled, “\textit{Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State}” was found relevant to this study. The author described the crises in Plateau State as a non-religious conflict but a competition of political control and indigeneship, furthermore, the relationship between the ethnic, religious and cultural affiliations is no longer cordial.\textsuperscript{46} The only way activities of Muslims and Christians can be achieved in Nigeria is to eliminate ethnicity and promote inter faith activities from the grassroots.\textsuperscript{47}

A book titled, “\textit{West African Traditional Religion}” by T.N.O. Quarcoopome, examined the structure of African Traditional religion and its relationship with Islam and Christianity and the need for individuals to study and practice the tenets of their faiths. He described Traditional religion as a peaceful practice in any society of its

\textsuperscript{44} A. Mazrui, ‘‘African Islam and Competitive Religion: Between Revivalism and Expansion’ In \textit{Third World Quarter}, Volume 10, No.2, April 1988, P.506.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid 510
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid
existence.\textsuperscript{48} He further argued that Africans find themselves in an alien culture which many do not understand and African religion has been misconceived, misrepresented and misunderstand.\textsuperscript{49} But my argument with the book is that traditional religion is practiced in the area before Islam and Christianity was introduced and the majority of people that were converted are traditional followers.

Peter’s article titled, “Islamic reform in contemporary Nigeria: Methods and Aims” discussed extensively about the relationship between Christians and Muslims before the Jihad of Usmanu Danfodiyo in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{50} Anyway, the author did not discuss the activities of any religion in the area of study. Aasi’s “Muslim Understanding of other Religions” is another outstanding contribution to this study, the author makes a critical survey of Ibn Hazm’s \textit{Kitab al-Fasil fi al-Milal wa al-ahwa’wa al-Nihal}. He stresses the historical fact of Muslim interaction and their disposition to fruitful co-existence with people of diverse religious world views and philosophies, with adherents of various ideologies and persuasions, and emphasized that the Muslims are obliged by the Shari’a the honor the civil, communal and religious rights of other communities.\textsuperscript{51} The relevance of this work to this research is that it helps the researcher to clearly see how Muslims view and perceive people of other religious faith. Also its difference with this research is the fact that it focuses directly on the comparative study of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and Asian religions. This research, on the other hand, attempts to study the aspects of activities between Muslims and Christians in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid
\textsuperscript{50} C.Peter. “Islamic Reform in Contemporary Nigeria: Methods and Aims’ Third World Quarterly, Volume 10, Number 2, April, 1988, Pp 519 – 535
\textsuperscript{51} G.Aasi. “Muslim Understanding of Other Religions. International Institute of Islamic thought, Islamabad (Pakistan), 1999, Pp 30-50
Makarfi, Hassan and Yauri in their article titled “Relationship between Muslim and Non-Muslims in contemporary Nigeria: A Muslim point of view” They outlined the model of relationships that existed between Islam and other religions in Nigeria since the amalgamation in 1914. The paper identifies ignorant of the followers of both faiths as the major causes of religious intolerance in Nigeria.52

A published book titled, “African Religions and philosophy” by John Mbiti was also found relevant. He described Islam and Christianity in Africa as a foreign religion because both faiths were introduced to African continent, so there is need to practice them carefully and peacefully.53 Amechi’s Article “Religion as an instrument in Rural Development” the author describes religion as a link or relationships between the humans and the divine being, the purpose of religion is to promote peaceful co-existence among people of different groups. Religion also provides humans with moral values and creates enabling environment for development.54 This article was found relevance to this work because the basis of this research is to study Muslim-Christians activities in Ankpa Local Government Area which is set to create enabling environment between the religions in the area.

Hambali’s “Islam in Africa” Historico-philosophical perspectives and current problems” described the penetration of Islam and Christianity to Nigeria as gradual and peaceful process. The coming of both religions to Nigeria was more accommodating because Muslims and Christian missionaries did not forced their

52 Makarfi et al, ‘Relationship Between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Contemporary Nigeria: A Muslim Point or View’ National Seminar on Muslims and Islamic Scholarship in Nigeria in The 20th Century, Centre for Islamic Studies, Series 3, UDUS, 2004, P.63
54 M. Amechi. “Religion as an Instrument in Rural Development’ In Journal of Arts and Humanities, Volume 7, Number 1, 2010, Pp - 44
convert to the new faith in their area of evangelism. A paper presented at the 70th Islamic vacation course by Bugaje Bilal, entitled “Islamic consciousness and the demand for change: a call for a return to Islamic message and method” the paper was found relevant to this research as it provides us with more explanation on relationships between Muslims and Christians. He explained that most of the prophets in the Bible are also recognized by the Qur’an. The paper did not discuss the activities of Muslims and Christians but its contribution to this study is important, it gives the researcher a link to identify ways and method of interfaith activities in Nigeria.

Kukah’s article, “Religion and the politics of National Integration in Nigeria” was also found relevant to this study. He pointed out that religion can be the only way to have a united Nigeria, if individual understand the tenets of their belief. But, the major problems faced by the country are associating religion with politics. Politician takes this advantage to achieve their political aims; he also argues that why the Muslims and Christians in other states of Nigeria are not encountering problems except Northern Nigeria. He concluded that politicians were behind or sponsored most of the religious conflict in Nigeria. The article serves as a guide for Muslim-Christian relation in Nigeria, but the book is unable to cover in detail the activities of the major religions in Nigeria, which this research study is trying to cover in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

58 Ibid
Another article seems relevant to this study is Isawa’s “The management of Ethno-Religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria: Toward a more peaceful and harmonious Geopolitics”. He described the ethno-religious conflicts in the North as unfortunate ranging from Maitatsine conflicts in Kano in 1980, to the invasion of Borno State, (Nigeria) in 2004. The relevance of this work to this research is that it gives the researcher an insight into the state of activities between Muslims and Christians generally in the North and Hausaland in particular before this period. Generally, the author did not study the activities of Muslims and Christians in Ankpa local Government Area of Kogi State which these researches intend to study.

A book titled, “West Africa under colonial Rule” by Crowder was also found relevant. The author argued that, during colonial rule Christianity has more favor than Islam because of its close links with the occupying powers. The paper shows the relationships between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria under colonial rule. The period covered in the book did not witness the activities of the European colonialist in the area under study. But the knowledge has been useful to this research, specifically, when discussing religious practices of the people of Nigeria.

Robinson’s “Christ in Islam and Christianity” the representation of Jesus in the classical Muslim commentaries shows prophet Mohammad (SAW) relationship and activities with the Christians, the first encounter was when Monk Bahira advised prophet uncle Abu Talib to take very good care of him because of the Jewish

This can also help us to create a very peaceful atmosphere with other believers.

Another literature worthy of review is a book titled “Inter-group relations in Nigeria during the 19th and 20th Centuries” by Muhammad and Adeoye, the book discusses extensively on religious violence and its implications in Nigeria since 1980s. The authors described religious and ethno-religious disturbances in Nigeria for the past twenty five years as alarming and poses serious threat to the country, the most painful aspect of the conflict is the destruction of lives and properties worth millions of Naira.

Tibia’s book entitled “Islam between culture and politics”. He describes Islam as a peaceful religion but its politicization by other individuals in the society posses threat to other believers. He argued that some believer preach out of context against other religions. The followers of the faiths have not looked into their cherished tradition for theological ideas and moral values that promote the welfare of the society and the individual.

Gyekye pointed out that social ethics is very important in Muslims-Christian relation. Despite the two faiths were introduced to African continent there should be regard for history and culture of the people.

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64 Ibid
Chukwudifu’s article titled “Dialogue” The author sought to examine the leadership problem in Nigeria by providing an intellectual basis for understanding. The failure of previous attempts to address the problem and the consequences of this failure. It also seeks to highlight the urgent need to evolve sound and enduring solutions so as to terminate the cyclical movement of the leadership problem and resolve the National dilemma arising there from. He emphasizes that the only means of peace and harmony in a multi-religious country like Nigeria is through dialogue. This article also contributed to this work but does not really address the issue of interfaith activities in Nigeria.

Arinze’s “Meeting other Believers” opined that, one of the biggest challenges for believers in the world today is that of inter-faith relations in particular. Given the history of conflicts and the collective memory of grave injustices on both sides, the followers of these two faiths are laden with the burden of that history. Another important work that contributed to the research is Sidney’s “Christian-Muslim Relation in Historical Perspective: Debate only in the best way”. The author highlighted the intertwined texts of their scriptures, Jews, Christians and Muslims, have always have relations with one another. In the Islamic instance, even a cursory glance through the Qur’an reveals that this scripture convey the mind of its readers a familiarity with the Torah and the Gospel. This lecture is important to the work, because it has given the researcher a clear understanding of how Muslim and Christian have developed mutual engagement and activities between each other from time immemorial.

68 G. Sedney, “Christian Muslim Relations in Historical Perspectives: Debate only in the best way”, A Lecture Presented at the University of Richmond, March, 2009. Pp 5-10
Lateef Adegbite, a Muslim scholar presented a paper on “The Role of Religious Leaders in Conflict Resolution”. He suggested that religious diversity does not destroy the potency of religions. A careful look at the teachings of different religions reveals that there are many values they share in common. In order to produce a better understanding and regard for other religions, he proposed that all practitioners “must be taught the elements of their own religion as well as those of other faiths in their community”.  

“How to improve the relationship between Islam, Christianity and Traditional African Religion” is an essay by Wande Abimbola, he argued that, If they were serious about religions, ethnic and cultural harmony and peace will be essential “for the leadership of Islam and Christianity in Africa to accept the validity of Traditional Religion” in his view, all the faiths in the World are valid. He pleaded with Christians and Muslims to put into practice the tolerance and respect they preach, by tolerating and respecting other religious faiths.  

Eghosa and Rotimi in their work titled A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria pointed out that there are three forms of religions in Nigeria; they are Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion. Out of the three, the traditional religion is the least politically active, made up of several hundreds of ethnic groups and subgroups, villages, clans and kin groups. And involving the worship of different gods and goddesses. In some parts of Kogi, Kwara and Nassarawa States. Masquerade activities associated with traditional religion have been a major source of conflicts.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE PEOPLE OF ANKPA

2.0 Introduction

Ankpa Local Government Area has its headquarter in the metropolitan town of Ankpa with its outlying areas including Imane, Emere, Enjema and Ojoku. The area is located in the East towards the Igala-Idoma border and Igboland respectively. Igala land which is called (Ane-Igala) is regarded to be the territory where the bulk of Igala speaking people belongs.\(^{72}\) The kingdom is skirted on two sides by the great waterways that divide Nigeria into its natural and cultural regions, the River Benue and River Niger.\(^{73}\)

The Igala people constitute one of the three major ethnic groups in the present day Kogi state. In fact the largest ethnic group, others being Ebira and Okun. Igala is also one of the nine major ethnic groups in Nigeria.\(^{74}\) Out of twenty one (21) Local Government Areas in the State The Igala speaking people have nine (9) LGAs which consist of Ankpa, Idah, Bassa, Dekina, Ibaji, Igalamela, Ofu, Olamaboro and Omala Local Government Area.\(^{75}\)

2.1 Geographical Location of Ankpa Local Government Area

Ankpa Local Government Area is located approximately between longitudes 7° and 55° North and latitudes 7° and 45° East and covers an Area of about 1,200 square kilometers.\(^{76}\)


\(^{73}\) Ibid

\(^{74}\) F. Egbunu, History of the Igala Speaking People.....................Ibid

\(^{75}\) F. Odiniya, The History and Traditions of Okenyi, The Igala Cultural Heritage, Ankpa Cuca, 2008

\(^{76}\) Http://en.m.Wikipedia.org/Wiki/Ankpa
Boston believes that the people live in an area of transition between the high forest conditions of the coastal belt richly endowed by natural habitat and drier conditions of the savannah belt. The rainfall lasts from April to the end of September or October, while dry season lasts from end of October to the end of March or early April. The amount of rainfall is heavy and the effects of hamattan can be severe, most especially from November.\textsuperscript{77} The people are deeply involved in the system of contacts and common political, economic and cultural interests engendered by the riverain network, the main pattern of settlement run inland from the capital Idah in the south-west corner of the Kingdom, the Igala have withdrawn from the rivers in the region of the confluence itself and from the south bank of the Benue to make way for various immigrant groups.\textsuperscript{78}

The mobility of the traditional pattern of settlement of the people cannot be over-emphasized, although this situation is changing rapidly today with the establishment of a permanent network of improved communications. In the past hamlets were often short-lived, with an average life span from two or three generations, and in this period of their existence it as common for their composition to alter considerably owing to the abandonment of homesteads and the establishment of new living sites in other hamlets and villages.\textsuperscript{79} The influence of this pattern of dispersal and population movement on the social life and political institutions of the people is less obvious, but it is probable that the characteristics emphases of the social and political system.\textsuperscript{80}

Igalaland could be said to be a sort of terminus. It is located strategically at the natural cross-roads in Nigeria. Owing to this reason, it has been influenced both positively and negatively by trends of events as it is pulled in different directions. By and large,

\textsuperscript{77} J.S.Boston, ”The Igala Kingdom” Ibadan Oxford University Press, 1968, P4
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid
\textsuperscript{79} J.S. Boston, The Igala Kingdom………………Ibid
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid
it has enjoyed some degree of encounter with the Yoruba, Edo (Benin), Jukun, Idoma, Nupe, Igbo, Hausa, Igbirra, Bassa-Kwomo and Bassa-Nge. This experience naturally left certain imprints on the tradition or culture of the Igala people. To some extent, its central positioning may account for the land being considered a cultural melting pot. Yet, it might not be quite true to conclude that Igala is totally a conglomeration of other ethnic groups. Igala existed as an entity on its own before the other cultures were assimilated into its mainstream.

See Map on page 27 showing map of Kogi State showing Ankpa Local Government Area

See Map on page 28 map of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.
Map of Kogi State showing Ankpa Local Government (the study area)
2.2 Historical Background of the People
It has been established through linguistic and archeological studies that there has been an antiquity of human existence in the area of the Niger-Benue confluence. People like the Igala, Ebira, Idoma and even Yoruba have been identified with the area for millennia back. Although it is not considered relevant in this work to dig into the long standing controversies over the origins of the Igala people of the Niger-Benue region judging from available historical evidence. It is clear that the people especially the Igala, Ebira and Idoma were indigenous to this area.  

Ukwedah claimed that the ancestors of the people of Ankpa did not migrate from anywhere, but originated from the vicinity of the Oja’ji in Ankpa. Although, the worship of the water deity favored the rise of the early settlements, the factor of fertile land in Ankpa which attracted the people from far and near led to early migrations into the area making for considerable herogeneity in its peopling. Most of the available books on the History of Ankpa people are mainly anthropological in nature and they were written by colonial administrative officers. Ismaila explains that there are numerous traditions about the origin of the people. He described one of the traditions that ascribed the origin to a Yoruba chief who was given a piece of land to settle the ruler of Igala called Oghuchekwo. This tradition maintained that the separation between Igala and Yoruba is long enough to allow their fairly considerable linguistic differences. Ocheje argued that the origin of the Igala are diverse, he

\[84\] B. Ismaila, “The Role and Contribution of Muslim Organizations to the Development of islam in IgalaLand, M.A. Thesis, University of Jos, 2005, P 3  
\[85\] Ibid
traced the Igala origin and connection to the Jukun tribe. The Jukun link with the Igala is another strong tradition that immediately call for serious attention, stories about the jukun origin of kingship, for instance, cannot be waved aside. That there were certain Jukun immigrants who came among the Igala at some stage of the development of the Igala Kingdom, it is a common knowledge that the present ruling dynasty is Jukun. But scholar like Egbunu who specialized in Igala History disregard the evidence and clears the waves that Igala fought the Jukun for their freedom which the Igala won. Egbunu explained that the late Attah of Igala, His Royal Majesty, Aliyu Obaje had ever explained that the Igala came from Ethiopia where there is an ethnic group called (Gala) and through the empire of Mali to Jukun Land, before they finally arrived their present location. This evidence has been proved by other studies to be a historical misrepresentation since the historical evidence to validate such a position is inadequate. He also maintains that the earlier migration into Igalaland was about 12th century A.D. led by Amina, queen of Zazzau and Warrior, who fought her way to Idah the Capital of Igalaland with Hausa and Nupe followers. Boston believes that the central geographical location of the Igala people has exposed them to a wide variety of linguistic as well as cultural influences from other ethnic groups in the country. Among these are Ebira, the Bini, Igbo, Hausa, Idoma and the Yoruba ethnic groups. But the most significant relationship is that of Igala and Yoruba people. According to Acheneje, Abutu Ejeh, migrated from Wukari to Idah and founded the Igala Kingdom in the 7th Century. He had two sons Atiyele and Ayegba, Atiyele was not going on well with his elder brother Ayebga. Atiyele then

86 Ibid. “History of the Igala Speaking People: Op Cit
87 A. Musa, Oral interview, Ankpa, 2/6/14, 65 Years
89 Ibid
90 J.S. Boston, Op cit p 5
migrated eastward of the kingdom to establish Ankpa while Ayegba succeeded their Father as the Atta of Igala.\textsuperscript{91} Atiyele also had a son in Ankpa called Oguchekwo who was later bestowed with a chieftaincy title as the Onu of Ankpa.\textsuperscript{92}

According to Agbeyo, the origin of Igala people can be traced to Yemen. This account shows that Igala people came from Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula or Middle East. This account also highlighted that the Igala, Yoruba and Jukun all came from that part of the World.\textsuperscript{93} To the researcher’s views and analysis, all these claims form a set of views from different scholars about the origin of the people. These differences and the existence of different theories are essential features of Igala oral tradition. With the above discussion it is clear that the origin of Igala is connected with three different groups: the Jukun connection, Yoruba connection and Benin connection as well as the Yemen connection. But the most widely accepted by many Igala and scholars is the Yoruba connections because of its linguistic and cultural similarities. Although the linguistic differences between the Igala and Jukuns for instance show that no cognitive words exist between them but there is no doubt about the political relationship that existed between the Igala and the Jukuns. Other theories like the Benin and Yemen connection are invalidated due to historical evidence.

### 2.3 Political Organization of the People

The nature and form of the early clan organization of Ankpa people in Igalaland denotes the nature of its settlement patterns. Leadership of any kind is headed by the most elderly person in that section. In Igala culture, leadership is normally started from house level. In each house, the is called Ogijo Uyi (house head) who is always the oldest male in the house. He controlled the household and equally represented his house at the meetings of council of elders. Every decision reached at the council of elders.

\textsuperscript{91} I. Acheneje, Oral interview, Ankpa, 27/10/13, 75 years
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid
\textsuperscript{93} O. Agbeyo, Oral interview, Ankpa, Opposite Catholic Church, 24/2/2013, 65 years
elders were usually communicated to household members. The political organization of the Igala people was a centralized state system. The Attah Igala is the traditional paramount ruler of the people. “Attah” means the father and the custodian of the Igala people, traditions and customs. Tradition holds that the Attah was a priest king. He was in charge of the Igala sacred objects, shrines and festivals.

The Attah resided at Idah which is the cultural center and headquarter of the entire Igala Kingdom since inception. It is from here the whole Kingdom is administered. However, from time to time, he also delegated powers to other chiefs, whose duties to settle disputes between their own subjects and administer their chiefdoms.

A lot of changes had been introduced over the year into Igala traditional council. Before then, there were nine Onus (Chief) representing Attah outside Idah metropolis who are strategically stationed in their respective local areas. This Chiefs collected tributes from their respective subjects and rendered the accounts to Attah. The chiefs were,

i. Onu Ankpa
ii. Aboko Onu Akpa
iii. Onu megwa
iv. Ogenyi Onu Ankpa
v. Odoma Onu Ankpa
vi. Ochai Onu Ankpa
vii. Ohionugba
viii. Onu Ojokwu
ix. Ochai Onu Ojoku

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94 F. Egbonu, “Igala Traditional Versus Modernity. Afro-Orbis Publication Limited Nsukka,
95 Ibid
M.A. Thesis, Op Cit Pp 82-85
97 Ibid
This is the situation of Ankpa traditional council since 1979. But the number of these traditional chiefs has been increased with almost every community irrespective of history, having their own traditional ruler.98 Another change in the traditional council was the appointment of Ejehs as the traditional authority in every local government areas except those that are very close to Idah, for example, the Ejeh of Ankpa. The stool of Ejeh is a recent innovation in other parts of Igalaland. It was only Ankpa that had an Ejeh as its paramount chief but due to certain political logistics known to the Royal families and the Kogi State Government, the office of the Ejehs in other Local Government Areas was introduced.99 Such LGAs with new Ejehs include Dekina, Ofu, Olamaboro and Ibaji.100 The Chiefs or traditional rulers generally had stipulated functions. Such duties range from the socio-cultural and economic to the spiritual or religious. Socio-culturally, they acted as custodians of traditions and culture. It is incumbent on them to explain customs of the people to the younger generation and enforce such.101 They act as the links between the living and the dead and are fathers of the community. They preside at festivals and important public gatherings of their territories, they are the custodians of the land and take care of the land for the people, they help in making laws in their respective communities, and they also maintain peace, order and security in the community. Economically, they assist the local and state governments in collection of taxes from their subjects. They also assist the government in mobilizing the rural populace for rural development.102

98 O. Attai, Oral interviewed in Ankpa on 30/3/13, 45 years
99 F.Egbunu, “Igala Traditional Values Versus Modernity”, Op Cit
100 Ibid
102 Ibid
And from the spiritual angle, they help in the maintenance of religious harmony in their domain. They are also custodians of the moral norms and customs of the people. This is the structure of Igala traditional council under the period of this study from 1979 to 1992. The Attah of Igala is the Chairman of kogi State traditional council.

2.4 Economic Activities of the People

The Igala people of Ankpa employ cultural knowledge in producing certain needed goods, which are both domestic and commercial purposes. Participation in these economic activities is based on age and sex. In Ankpa, the men are involved in most of the commercial activities while the domestic needs are produced by Women. The following are different types of indigenous technologies in which the men, Women and Children are involved respectively.

The Men are involved in producing Baskets, Wood carving, Blacksmithing, Weaving of Mats, Granaries and Fans. They are also involved in the weaving of grass roofing sheets and the preparation of herbal medicine. These activities are important because they bring more income as well as help in meeting the needs of the people.

Ankpa local government is made up of an agrarian population, where the economy and social life revolve around Agriculture. The people are active farmers. Major crops

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103 P.Y. Edibo, “The Role of Traditional Rulers in the Local Government Administration” A Paper presented at the Induction course for the Top Local Government functionaries in kogi State by the Department of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, 8th-9th of May, 1997, Pp 49-60
104 O. Attai, Oral interview, Op Cit
grown are Cocoyam, maze, yam, and Cassava. Homestead livestock management is practiced by most individuals in the communities. Food processing is entirely done by women. Also, marketing of farm produce is in the hands of women. However, some people are civil servants who are employed in government establishments only. There are very few industries and private organisations that employ the services of people. Despite the unique history of the people they have not had fare sharing in national development. The commonest occupation in Ankpa is teaching and Farming. Most of the schools in various zones are predominantly handled by teachers of Igala origin, due to unavailable Private and Government establishments to generate employment for the teeming youths. Those around the riverside areas are predominantly fishermen and their wives are actively engaged in processing and selling of fish, Ankpa local government is blessed with natural and mineral resources, crude oil was recently discovered in the southern part of the town. The country has been benefited from the Coal mining in (Odagbo) Okaba in Ankpa Local government Area Since 1967. Good Waterways have served as a veritable means of transportation and also encouraged social and economic interactions between the people of Ankpa and other tribes. The most common economic trees are Palm Tree (Ekpe), Locust beans, Mahogany, Iroko, White wood and Raffia Palms. Because of the favorable vegetation, farming and hunting became highly profitable.

According to Ibitoye, farming is the predominant occupation of the people of Igala tribe. Mixed cropping is the predominant type of farming in the State. The land use pattern is fallow-cropping system operated with hoes and cutlasses. After cultivating a

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108 Ibid. “Economic Conditions Of IgalaLand in The 1930s” P 19
109 Ibid. P 13
piece of land for between 3 to 5 years, it is left to fallow for some years and farmer
shift to a more fertile land. An average farm family in the community cultivates
several plots of land totaling between 2 to 3 hectares. The farm holdings are usually
fragmented typical farm. Family may have an early yam and rice plots in the fadama,
cassava, grains and late yam in the upland.110
The cultivation of food crops in Ankpa such as cassava, maize, sorghum, rice, yam,
cowpea, groundnut and melons predominate the agricultural practice of the people.
Economic tree crops such as oil palm and cashew are commonly grown especially in
Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. Though the main occupation is crop
farming, a lot of fishing activities on rivers Niger and Benue are carried out. Irrigation
is widely practiced along the riverine areas during the dry season, grown vegetable
crops such as tomato, Okra and peppers in large quantities. It is also common practice
to find each farming family keeping one form of livestock or the other such as
poultry, Sheep and Goat on a small scale.111
the essence of development in a man is his dynamic relationship with his
environment. Thus, it is no surprise that agriculture was and still is the most important
economic activity of the people, both from the point of view of the number of those
engaged in it either on a full or part time basis, the prestige accorded the occupation
and the extent of its antiquity as an integral part of the people’s culture.112 Several
leading scholars have attested to this. For example, Ukwedeh asserts: ‘Farming was

110 J.S. Ibitoye, “The Impact of Cooperative Societies on Rural Development in Ankpa Local
Government Area
of Kogi State, Nigeria. National Association of Science, Humanities and Education Research Journal
111 Ibid. P 199
1918
the universal and single most important means of earning livelihood. The limits of farmlands determined the extent of a clan’s territory.\textsuperscript{113}

Odigwe and Nzemeke seem to suggest that the Igala were famous in the manufacturing of crafts for water transportation. They regularly stayed away from home for such long periods for the purpose of trade on the Niger, which is why some scholars called them ‘River Nomads’.\textsuperscript{114} The River Niger was the high way through which Igala people of Ankpa influence reached the Oshimili people in Igbo land who settled along the Niger Valley. Igala canoe men carried trade in salt, which flourished between the Delta peoples and the Oshimili Districts. Thus, the possibility of Igala settlements having existed in the Oshimili towns cannot be ruled out. There is some evidence suggesting that this actually happened, the people of Igbokenyi, on the eastern bank of the Niger, just across the river from Illah (an Oshimili Settlement) on the western bank, claim that some Igala people founded their place. A dialect of the Igala language is still spoken in Igbokenyi to this day.\textsuperscript{115}

Ochefu also observes that: The measure of a man’s success was neither the size of his compound nor the number of his wives and children, but more importantly, the size of his farm and his yam and grain barns among the Igala communities.\textsuperscript{116}

Then too, as we observed elsewhere in Archival record, in pre-colonial times, the economy of Igala hinged primarily on agriculture. Trade and a variety of local crafts supplemented this. It should be noted, agriculture was the most advanced and therefore remained the matrix in which the other economic activities were set.


\textsuperscript{114} A. Odigwe, and A. Nzemeke, “Igala Influence on the Oshimili People of Igboland in Pre-Colonial Times”: In Nsukka Journal Of The Humanities, N0 12, 2002, Pp 170-175

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid

Consequently, following an annual cycle, farmers cultivate yam and cassava which were still the staple food crops, coco-yam, water-yam, sweet potatoes, guinea corn, millet, groundnut, beans, bambara nuts and cowpeas. Indeed the act of the exchange of goods and services amongst themselves on the one hand, and between them and their neighbours on the other, arose as a consequence of differences in location and physical environment and variations in the nature and degree of resource endowments. One obvious result of this is the preponderance of markets in the land, Markets of all sizes. These were Afor, Eke and Ede Market was throughout Igalaland and was generally held at four-day intervals. Trade in the land was largely based on the buy and sell of local products, mainly food crops and a considerable amount of manufactured metal and wood works. The Igala also participated in the regional trading and commercial activities in the Niger-Benue confluence area such as Fish, Baskets, Hoes and Knives etc. It is important to observe here that trade and commerce were important and functional channels through which the people interacted among themselves and between them and other ethnic groups in Nigeria like the Yoruba, Benin, Idoma and Nupe. Before and even after the advent of the British, but for now it suffices here to demonstrate the diversity of their economic activities and level of contact with other groups.

2.5 Cultural Activities of the People

According to Boston, the Igala have been exposed to a variety of cultural influences in the same way as the development of the people's culture reflects the history of a long period of contact with other peoples. These people included the Yoruba, Igbo, Edo, Jukun, Nupe, Ebira and Idoma. He added that the connection with Yoruba

117 Nak/Lokoprof/2, Igala History, Rites and Ceremonies, 1930
118 Ibid
119 Ibid
120 J.S. Boston, The Igala Kingdom Op Cit, P 1
which is the most significance because of its similarities in language. A close affinity between the Igala and Yoruba can be traced in language, political and social institutions, the Igala tradition and culture are tied to the influence motivated by fear, the fear of the unknown, perhaps the fear of the metaphysical world, the fear of the spirit and the spirit essence and such fears are quintessentially rooted in the people's existence. The fear of the unknown leads to deep-rooted reverence, religious piety and deep sense of protection from the gods, the spirits, the ancestors and above all.\textsuperscript{121} The gods and the ancestral spirits are either ironically represented with clay or wooden sculpture in form of (deity), Okwute (ancestral staff), egwu (masquerade). Masquerades are believed to be ancestral spirits who have returned to the mortal world in order to entertain, pass judgement, guide, and guard, conduct the people in order to transform the mortal world, and above all, to perform rituals.\textsuperscript{122} Fedelis also puts among the Igala, dialectical differences are noticeable, yet the people are one. Such dialects are: the Idah dialect, central dialect, the Dekina dialect with Bassa-Ebira influence, the Ankpa dialect with Idoma influence and trans-Niger Anambra dialect (in odolu and Ibaji) with Ibo influence.\textsuperscript{123}

According to Ismaila, Igala people of Ankpa celebrated two important festivals from time to time these festivals are Ogani and otegwu festivals.

2.6 Festivals Celebration in Ankpa

Festivals are typically joyful occasions that people celebrate at a particular time in the form of singing and dancing. Such events as harvest time, the beginning of the rain

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid
\textsuperscript{123} F. Egbunu “Igala Traditional Values Versus Modernity” Op Cit
that planting commences, the birth of a child, deaths, victory over enemies and so forth, all call for celebration in Africa.\textsuperscript{124}

\textbf{Ogani Festival in Ankpa}

According to Arome, Ogani is a popular festival performs by the people of Ankpa, this festival is celebrated in Ankpa town. And the festival is restricted only to Angwa people of Ankpa who are historically Hausas. The origin of this festival can be traced to the Hausa-Igala community in Angwa area of Ankpa. The people of angwa in Ankpa are dominantly Hausa settlers from Kano and other part of Hausa land. This festival is celebrated by the people of Angwa and a day is normally set aside by the elders of the community for the festival which is normally held on Afor Market day.\textsuperscript{125} On the outing day, the Akpata believed to be that of the dead ancestors are paraded round the town during the festival. The celebrants are dressed in rags, painted their faces in different colours. Some of them weared masks and others carried cow horns which is the symbol of the festival. The status of the cow horn is erected at the centre of Angwa Area of Ankpa.\textsuperscript{126} The people see the festival as a very important occasion that reflects their way of lives. The festival is another act of ancestral remembrance which is being celebrated by the Angwa people till today.\textsuperscript{127}

\textbf{Otegwu Festival}

\textsuperscript{124} J.S. Mbiti, \textit{An Introduction to African Religion}, London, Heinemann, 1975
\textsuperscript{125} I. Arome, Oral interview in Ankpa, on 15/12/2013, 43 years
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, I. Arome, Oral Interview Op cit
Masquerade phenomenon in Igala is as old as Igala. The Igala hold masquerade in high esteem. The masquerade phenomenon is one of the most sacred in Igala culture.128 Among the Igala, women, children and the uninitiated males cannot behold the knowledge of the arts and science used in putting the masquerade together or to conjure it from the land of the spirits. The African concept of masquerade is not the same as the western definition of masquerade. The New International Webster's defines masquerade as; "A social party composed of persons masked and costumed; also, the costumes that disguises, worn on such an occasion. Secondly, A false show of disguise and thirdly, formerly, a form of dramatic representation".129 In Africa, and particularly among the Igala, masquerades are the ancestral spirits that have come back to the world in order to perform several roles such as Music and dance, conscientization, sensitization, ritual displays, and above all, to bring in spiritual messages from the immortal world to the natural world.130 Miachi in his view of

Masquerade phenomenon in Igala culture states that

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\text{There is a constant interaction and active movement between the worlds of the living through which the dead keep surveillance of the activities, and look after the welfare of the living. In the interaction, the dead are encountered with Physically and are consulted directly through the Masquerade. The power and the authority of the dead are the masquerades as well.}^{131}
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Otegwu festival in Igala land literally means liberation for the dead. This festival is celebrated annually in every community in Ankpa Local Government Area, although

128 J. Rabiu, Oral interview in Ankpa on 3/6/2014, 42 years
129 International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language (Encyclopaedic Edition), (n.d)
130 F.U. Egwuda, “Oloja Masquerade Performance of Igala as Theatre of Transition”, Department of Theater and Film Studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 2008, Pp 140-150
the time varies from one community to another. However, it usually takes place during the dry season after the harvest of the farm produce. During the period, people made sacrifices and pray in order to appease their ancestors whose guidance and protection they seek for the family members within and outside their family home. Ismaila described the importance of the festival as a moment off re-union which strengthens family relations, ties and unity.\textsuperscript{132}

According to Iyeteke, the festival is an important occasion in the lives of the people. Thousands came out to watch the ancestral masquerades which they believed to be their ancestors from the world of the dead. The massive coming out of masquerades is lively and interesting because it attracts a lot of people most especially the youth who are delightful in the chase and beat on their spectators. The masquerades also go from one family compound to another to pay courtesy visits on the occasion of the festival. They perform dance to entertain the family who give them gifts in cash or kinds.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{132} B. Ismaila, Op cit, P 15
\textsuperscript{133} M. Iyeteke, Oral interview, Ankpa, on 16/12/2013, 47 years
CHAPTER THREE

ACTIVITIES OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS FOLLOWERS IN ANKPA

3.0 Introduction

Religion believed and practices though diverse, exist in all known human society ranging from the very simple to the most complex. While some religious worship a single supreme being, others are polytheistic. Religious rituals and prescription are no less varied than religious believe. A ritual may be a ceremony of adoration and supplication addressed to an all-wise, all-knowing, ever present and merciful one. It may be a way of propitiating a being that would otherwise bring evil upon the community. It may be a solemn and quiet assembly or it may include dancing, sexual rites, and the release of feeling. Religious emotion runs the very joy to self-abasement, ecstasy and peace of mind. When we speak of African Traditional Religion, we mean the indigenous religious believers and practices of the Africans. It is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Africans, and which is being practiced today in various forms and shades and intensities by a very large number of Africans. There is no doubt that before the advent of Islam and Christianity in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State there was an indigenous religion known as traditional religion. The traditional Igala people of Ankpa believed in the existence of a supreme being, which they call ‘Ojo’ Odobagagwu (Almighty God) who is the creator of the universe and everything within. He is also the giver of laws that operate in the universe, and for fear of being punished, people try to observe the taboos of the land. This implies total obedience to the supreme being and his agents.

134 J.O. Ajayi and B.D. Oluwafemi, Religious Practices and National Development, Social Science Published online July 20, 2014
135 Ibid
3.1 **Activities of Traditional Religious Practitioners**

The activities of the traditional religious followers in Ankpa Local Government Area before the introduction of Islam and Christianity is similar to the practitioners of traditional religions like most Nigerian communities. For example, in Hausa land the worship of the Supreme God, as well as spirits possession and exorcism (Bori) were practiced in all parts of Hausa land. Male adults dominated religious practices, although women were the main actors, practitioners and entertainers especially in the Bori- spirit possession. Hausa land started becoming largely Islamic particularly in the political sphere in the 1490s during the reign of Sarki Muhammad Rumfa of Kano, who demolished shrines and erected mosque in their places. However, the power of the traditional religion and practices persisted, and despite conversion to Islam, many still visit traditional occultists when facing difficulty in life, especially seeking magical and mystical powers.

According to Egbunu, the traditional Igala believed in the existence of spirits, gods and goddess. But this spirits are under the power and control of God the Supreme Being. There is belief in the existence of both malevolent and benevolent spirits, the former wreck havoc on the victims in the event of any offence against them or their clients but the benevolent spirits are said to be sources of favor and good fortune of their votaries. All manner of misfortune, such as ill-health, bad harvest, death, evil dreams and accident are attributed to angry gods or spirits of ancestors. Aye discussed that the gods are believed to be worshiped in shrines, rocks, hills and rivers. Sacrifices, prayers, libations and offerings are made by practitioners of the traditional religion each day. There are always ritual chiefs, priests and diviners of each

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136 F. Egbunu, “Igala Traditional Values Versus Modernity” Op Cit
community whose duty is to perform the necessary rituals\textsuperscript{137}. He further explained that spirits are nondescripts, immortal and invisible entities. This is because they do not possess material body through which they could be seen but they may incarnate into any material thing in order to make themselves seen for any reason or purpose\textsuperscript{138}. The traditional religious followers in Ankpa however experienced the activities of spirits through many folk stories which described them in human form, though some times, these descriptions are exaggerated created by the elders to teach special lessons.

Since spirits are invisible, these spirits are thought to be ubiquituous, so that a person never sure where they are or not. The worshiped spirit does not have any family or personal ties with human beings, so cannot be regarded as the living dead. That is why people fear them, although intrinsically speaking spirits are strangers, foreigners and outsiders in the category of things\textsuperscript{139}. But some traditional followers did not agree with the statement that spirits are strangers or did not have any ties with the people because it is the people ancestors who are believed to be spirits that protect them, provide food and even wreck havoc whenever they are abuse or neglected\textsuperscript{140}.

These study reveals that traditional religion followers in Ankpa belief in the omnipotent gods whom they call ‘Ojo’ or Ojomachala; the veneration of the spirits of departed ancestors, the propitiation of an innumerable host of spirits or ‘Ochu’ (witchcraft). The worship of Ojo is carried out at shrine known as ‘IDIO’ or OMIA usually a small round hut containing a mould of earth possibly decorated with

\textsuperscript{137} E. Aye, Oral interview in Ankpa 2/2/2015, 67 years old
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid
cowries; or a stick roughly carved at the top or a calabash bound round with sting or cloth and decorated with feathers\textsuperscript{141}.

Sacrifices are made and ‘Ojo’ (god) is called for any kind of assistance. Connected with the direct worship of ‘Ojo’ is another small shrine containing a pillar of red clay, often with a very small calabash let into the top; this is apparently a phallic emblem and is known as ‘IDODE’ at it sacrifices are made by persons who desires offspring\textsuperscript{142}.

In Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, every compound where traditional follower exists. The Idio is found and it might take other forms, consisted of a large flat stone at the foot of a tree in the middle of the compound. According to Agaba, a traditional herbalist stated that traditional followers in Ankpa believed that after death the spirit of the departed person lives on and is able to help his descendants. The spirit appears to be regarded as embodied in a calabash filled with ash and bound with cloth or string which is known as (EGU, or EBEGWU). It is kept in a small hut or under a small thatched shelter. A household may have several of these. A man must know who represented his father, ‘EJA’ represented the spirit of his wife's father, and ‘OWARIKA’ was that of his mother. They appear to have names, and they were treated with great respect, and constantly sacrificed are made to them asking for advice and assistance\textsuperscript{143}. Another traditional follower who wants to remain anonymous lamented that the uses of calabash played a very important role in the activities of the traditional practitioners; the calabash appears to be filled with ash taken from the calabash of the ancestor of the person whom the calabash is to personify. Connected with its veneration is the dress known as ‘EGWAFIYA’ a long

\textsuperscript{141} Nak/Prof 2445/The Igala Religion, 1949.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid
\textsuperscript{143} I. Agaba, Oral interview at Ankpa on 2/2/2015, 63 years old
dress of native cloth covering the wearer from head to foot. When the man dies some will assumes this dress follows the body to the grave possibly bearing the calabash of the deceased's ancestor; at the top of the grave places a small stick with a roughly crave top. The egwafiya is treated as something very secret and none will say much about it because of fear of any form of attack.\footnote{Ibid}

He further explained that innumerable spirits or ‘Ochu’ are believed to frequent to houses, trees and stones. As they are bringer of evil and sicknesses, (EAWA and OGA), they must be placated by sacrifices and warded off by charms. The great protection against them is the Udi, the familiar calabash bound with string or cloth and decorated with feathers, to it sacrifices are made. All these calabashes are indifferently known as ‘Chebbo’, similar to udi is the ‘UDAIN’ a flat stones in a hut in a market place which is believed to be spirit which brought or stopped rain fall.\footnote{Ibid}

The reason of this Udain in the market place is that rainfall especially in the rainy season stops market activities and even causes damages to goods. But whenever there is sign of rainfall the diviner consulted the Udain to stop the rainfall until the market is closed.

\subsection*{3.2 Traditional Sacrifices}

Sacrifices play a central part in the traditional religion of the people of Ankpa. In the relations mediated between men on the one hand and the world of gods and the spirits on the other, sacrifices are a principal factor. When the people of thought of offering sacrifices, where the idea came from and who first instituted sacrifice is debatable. What can be said with certainty is that the sacrificial systems of the people must stem from that consciousness common to all peoples that supernatural powers do exist, and that man is either in a good or a bad relationship, the offered expresses gratitude to
gods, to the spirits, and probably to his ancestors, seeking favour from them all through gifts, offerings, communion and thank offerings.\textsuperscript{146}

When the relationship is bad it is hoped through sacrifices to ward off evil and dangers. To seek favour from the gods, the offerer has to come before the specific deity, offering what the deity likes, and this must be done regularly. For example, at the time of the yam harvest, Yoruba people will first offer yams in a ceremonial manner to the divinities of the farm (especially the god of fertility) and to ancestral spirits. The belief is that these divinities and ancestral spirits made the crops yield well. Sometimes a sacrifice is offered at the graveside of a deceased father. Libations of wine and water are made, and kola nuts are offered (which may be shared among those parents. The purpose is communion and fellowship with the living dead.\textsuperscript{147} As Idowu stated, here is an affirmation of the belief in the existence and power of the departed ancestors. As the living drink and eat together, so also the invisible ancestral spirits, it is believed, will be well disposed to the living.\textsuperscript{148}

Offerings are undertaking by the traditional followers in Ankpa to show appreciation to the divinities for success in any undertaking. Women who had sold well in the market, the person who had been blessed with a much desired child, one who has received a special mark of divine favour, all want to show their thanks to ‘Ojo’ whom they believed to be the dispenser of their special blessing. A votive sacrifice conveys the idea of a covenant. A woman may promise to bring a gift of anything if she

\textsuperscript{146} M. Alue, Oral interview, Ankpa, 19/2/2015. 65 years old  
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid  
conceives a child. It is the strong belief of the people that whatever is vowed must be fulfilled or pays a serious consequence.\textsuperscript{149}

3.3 Ceremonial Activities of Traditional Followers in Ankpa

Birth

Birth is a natural phenomenon but in the traditional life of the people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State is something different, shortly before the child is to be born the father ancestral ‘Chebbo’ is hung over the door of the hut where the woman is to be confined. After the child is born divination is resorted to ascertain whose spirit the child is inheriting in other that it may be given the name of that person. A sacrifice is then made to that person's spirit and the child is called by his name. The other women of the compound attend the mother in her confinement and when the child is born the oldest women due to their experience bathes the woman and gives her a concoction of leaves pounded and boiled in water for her to drink, then later a fire is lit under the mother's bed and the baby is placed on the bed. Three months after the birth the child is again named, dust from its father ancestral chebbo is rubbed down the child's nose and its name is pronounced. A cloth is given to the child and local beer drink is held in its honour.\textsuperscript{150} A traditional birth attendant named Ache who married to Ankpa from Idoma tribe in Benue State also shared her experiences, she narrated that birth must take place outside the hut. As soon as the child is delivered a bell is struck and a birth song is sang counseling the child if the father or mother are under any spell or course but there are no reply to the song. Seven days after birth, charms consisting of ash from its fathers ancestral chebbo wrapped in leaves are tied to its neck and to its left ankle.\textsuperscript{151} The mother may not cohabit anyone

\textsuperscript{149} M. Alue, Oral interview, op cit.
\textsuperscript{150} M. Enaba, Oral interview in Ankpa on 3/2/2015, 71 years old
\textsuperscript{151} N. Ache, Oral interview in Ankpa on 3/2/2015, 76 years old
for a year after the child is born. If the child dies the mother must leave apart for three months, and for three months after the child birth both the father may not eat food prepared by the mother.152

Marriage

Marriage institution is universal in order to encourage the continuity of human race. The traditional practitioners of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State are not exempted from this divine law of marriage. Thus, a marriage institution is highly respected and welcome development among the traditional followers ever before the coming of Islam and Christianity in the area. Marriage is a major social institution among the people that has respect in their culture.153 When a boy reached a marriageable age he looked round and decided which girl he wanted for a wife and told his father who made the necessary arrangements for him. If the family had agreed to the offer, a money dowry is paid otherwise it will be decided how long the boy was to work for his future father-in-law before the marriage date is fixed. Elizer who shared his experiences narrated that after his father accepted the girl he proposed for marriage, he worked for his father-in-law’s farm for five years, when completed. During the period his future wife already living with him and bear him children. When the term ended the dowry was paid and the girl was brought to her husband house officially by night.154 Ishado also went through the same process of traditional marriage in Ankpa. He pointed out that he went to his father-in-law’s farm for six years before he finally married his wife, sometimes his friends accompany him to the farm and big hectre of land is giving to them to finish within few period of time.155

This process of marriage among the traditional followers at that period is to test the

152 Ibid
154 A. Elizer, Oral interview in Ankpa, 7/1/2015, 73 years old
155 H. Ishado, Oral interview in Ankpa, 7/1/2015, 71 years old
physical power of the man to confirm his ability to farm and feed his wife and children. And also when the wife died, the corpse of the dead wife is sent back to her own town or village for burial but her property goes to her husband and children.

Rufai also clears the wave about traditional marriage in the area. The bridegroom had to work in the prospective bride father’s farm for a period ranging between four to five years.⁵⁵⁶ (though Elizer and Ishado gave five to six year’s services) as the bride-price. It was only after the satisfactory completion of this bride wealth service that he could be allowed to marry his wife and take her away to his house, all these contributions is accepted because the process is depending on the family who you ask a girl hands in marriage.

**Death and Burial**

Death is a natural phenomenon which often occurs. Though the believe of the traditional followers is that when one dies he has gone to join his ancestors. Thus, the death of a dear one is an occasion for sadness among the people as it is a moment of grief among different people in the world. According to an informant when an elderly person died, his body is washed and dressed gorgeously, and made to seat as if he is alive, the people gathered at the deceased house to sing various cultural songs and dancing accompanied by consumption of alcohol.⁵⁵⁷ Achem also shed more light in the issue, an ordinary man is buried about three days after death but a chiefs body is opened and the entrails taken out and placed in a jar, and the body then smoked and laid on the

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⁵⁵⁷ O. Maha, Oral interview in Ankpa 7/1/2015, 71 years old
bed in a hut which is then sealed up, actual burial will not take place until sometime after possibly until his branch of the family inherits the title again.\textsuperscript{158}

The grave is deep and consists of a round shaft opening at the bottom into a rectangular chamber large enough to take a recumbent corpse which is buried wrapped in a blue cloth, the feet to the North, and head to the south. Facing east so that he may see the sun and get up to work in the farm, a woman will be facing west for she stays up late preparing food. Over the grave a small thatched shelter is built, but the ordinary grave is usually in the clearing near the compound but some of the title holders have special burial place like the Attah of Igala.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{158} P. Achem, Oral interview in Ankpa, 7/1/2015, 71 years old
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid
Witchcraft

The belief in witchcraft or more correctly in demoniacal possession is more prevalent among the traditional followers. Traditional followers in Ankpa will not go a day's journey without consulting some spirits through the diviner, or fortune teller and so every event in their lives. Appeal is made to the unseen to settle their course of action and help them in good or evil. When unusual amount of sickness or a number of deaths occur in a family, witchcraft is at once suspected and the inevitable diviner is consulted by the ‘Onu Fen yi’ or head of the family. According to Akpai, this an important point in native custom of the traditional followers since it means that, in every in every case of trial by ordeal for the purpose of finding out whether an accused person is really a witch or wizard as the case may be, sometimes the whole household or in the compound accompany by the Onu fenyi to the diviner, known as the Obabo. He presents the Obabo with a white cock and some lime, he also gives him four kolas and some small red peppers (Igala ‘Ata’ or Alligator pepper) which he masticates and then expectorates over the Ifa and the Ebbo on which it has been placed.

On the next day the Obabo consults the Ifa previously described and asks what the cause of the death or sickness was. If the Ifa reveals that the cause was witchcraft, the families are called together, and the Onu fenyi tells them and call on the guilty person to confess. However, the fact that the traditional religious followers in Ankpa though believe in the existence of spirits, are not being taken captive by this belief so that they do not consider other materialistic elements in the universe.

\[160\] B. Akpai, Oral interview in Ankpa, 18/1/2015, 71 years old
\[161\] Ibid
Rain-Making

In the case of a failure of rain the ‘Ebbo’ called ‘Ane’ is consulted by means of the 'Ifa' a charm which consist of bundle of sticks from different trees, bound round with thread and soaked in the blood of a black goat to prevent evil coming to the people. The diviner will placed it in a hole with a mould of stones 2½ feet high over it. The stones are said to prevent sickness. Atadoga explains that when consulted the' Ane' blood is required. In former times a human being was sacrificed by being hit on the head with a club and then buried close to the ‘Ane’ his throat being first cut and the blood poured over the mould. But later the sacrifice was replace by goat, palm oil and water are poured over the 'Ane' then rain is expected to come the next day.162 There are still traditional followers in Ankpa who still believed in the control of rainfall with different charms. Also, they are paid in rainy seasons at occasions in other to prevent rain or they personally contacted the organizer of the events and threaten to course rain to fall. In this respect money or beer drink is given to them to stop the rain.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the Supreme Being has a strong place in the life of traditional religious followers in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. The spirits are regarded as an uncreated, self existent, unchanging and reliable being whose power transcends all power. He is seen as the creator, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent being who is immortal and directs human affairs. He is worshiped in most places without a temple and without an image attributed to him because he is beyond human understanding and is unique showing that there is none like him Therefore, the followers of African traditional ontology in Ankpa believe in the supreme being divinities and spirits. Spirits exist and played crucial role in the entire life of the traditional followers. Also, the activities of the traditional followers played a very

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162 E. Ataloga, Oral interview in Ankpa, 8/1/2015, 73 years old
important role among the believers because it is transferred from one generation to the other.
CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF MUSLIMS IN ANKPA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the development and activities of Muslims in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. Islam was first introduced to Ankpa by the scholars from the Northern parts of Nigeria who were foremost traders but also propagated the religion of Islam. The introduction and spread of Islam in Ankpa is due to the direct and indirect activities of individuals who are learned in the religion and are prepared to propagate or proselytized it in areas where Islam is still unknown. In the area of this work which is Ankpa Local Government Area one category of such Muslim scholars will be identified, the itinerant or migrant Mallams who came in from outside the geographical zone of the Niger-Benue confluence either as traders cum scholars or as scholars per se. Some of these Mallams remained behind to preach and teach the new converts the tenets and demands of their new religion, as well as lead them in prayers. A good number of them also founded Qur’anic and Ilmi schools in which children of the converts were educated in the Islamic sciences. Others from this group only stayed for some period of time during which they taught, preach and traded in their Asiri, charms before they returned home.\footnote{A.R. Muhammed, “History of the Spread of Islam in the Niger-Benue Confluence Area: Igala Land, Ebira Land and Lokoja C. 1900-1960” Ph.D Dissertation, 1986, Op Cit.}

4.1 Development of Islam in Ankpa

As explained above Islam first reached Ankpa through Hausa Mallams. In Hausa land, Kano was undoubtedly the first Hausa state to embrace Islam through the Wangarawa traders from Mali.
According to Rufai, Ali Yaji 1349-1385 was the first Habe ruler of Kano who accepted Islam.\textsuperscript{164} by 1493, the King of Katsina, Muhammadu Korau accepted Islam while Muhammadu Abu brought Islam to Zaria. Nupe Kingdom that lives to the immediate North of the confluence came in contact with Islam during the last decade of the 17th century.\textsuperscript{165} The confluence area where Ankpa Local Government Area belongs has been a strategic point for commercial activities due to the River Niger and Benue and being the headquarters of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) and its constabulary for many years which allowed the troops of West African Frontier Force (W AFF) to be stationed in the confluence and most of them were Hausa Muslims.\textsuperscript{166} The exact date of penetration of Islam into Igala land was uncertain.\textsuperscript{167}

According to Adeniyi, many factors were responsible for the rapid spread of Islam among the Igala. Some of these include trade and commerce, also the activities of Ayegba Oma Idoko, the famous Attah Igala, the Fulani jihad and the immigrant Hausa Muslims. It should be noted that Ayegba Oma Idoko's reign witnessed a conflict with the Jukun. As Ayegba was faced with imminent defeat, he sought the assistance of Islamic preachers from Kano, who told him to sacrifice his most beautiful daughter Inikpi to avert the disaster ahead. After Inikpi had been buried alive to save the Igala Kingdom, the Islamic preachers prepared a strong medicine that they cast into (Inachalo) River near the Jukun's camp. The result was the miraculous rise of fishes and when the Jukuns ate them they were greatly weakened and poisoned. Ayegba eventually defeated the Jukuns in the battle. Attah Ayegba thus

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{164} Ibid
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid
\textsuperscript{167} U. Mohammed, “The Growth and Development of Missionary Activities and Their Impact on Lokoja Town in the 20th Century: A Historical Perspective” \textendash Op Cit}
gave official recognition to the religion of Islam, but he himself was not converted before his death.\textsuperscript{168}

Later on, after about six months, other Rausa Muslims came from the same Bebeji in Kano, for Ogwu eche (charm-making) and were settled at Angwa Jammah. Attah rewarded them for their services by recognizing them as Islamic priests and they acted as scribes at the Attah's court. All the Rausa Muslims, especially those at Angwa Ayegba, also became responsible for cleansing the Attah's palace of evils. This was done annually through their established Muslim festival called Ogani festival. Also, wives were given to them in marriages; the wonders they performed and how God accepted their prayers influenced the people to start learning the Qu'ran and other Islamic practices. These, coupled with other influences mentioned above helped the spread of Islam to towns and villages in Igalaland.\textsuperscript{169}

It should be noted that one of the striking consequences of the jihad of Sheikh Utman Ibn Foduye was the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate. Later, territory, the caliphate expanded not only through the success of the jihad against Gobir (1804-1808), but mostly through the launching of the jihad and some notable Muslims Jama'ah (the followers and supporters of Sheikh Uthman Ibn Foduye) throughout Hausa land and beyond. The leaders of these movements had received authority from Sheikh to carry out a jihad in their various communities; each leader was named ‘Naib’ deputy and was given a flag as a symbol of authority and respect from the

\textsuperscript{168} M.O. Adeniyi, Islam in Igala Proverbs, Anyigba \textit{Journal of Arts and Humanities}, Volume 4, Published by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. December, 2005-2007. The Atta of Igala, Ayegba Omi Idoko, C.1614-C1634. Invited some Muslims from Babeki, Kano to prepare (Ogwu) charms fro him so as to win the war against the Jukuns. Having got the victory, Attah Ayegba persuaded them to stay and they were given Igala wives. They settle at the site that became known as Angwa Yoga under the clans of Otete, Omodoko, Oweje, Ebutu, Otukubi and Utoloko.

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid
Sheikh. Among them was Umar Nagwamatese, a flag bearer sent to the western part of the caliphate consisting Nupe land, Kambari and Gbagyi land.170

In Ankpa Local Government Area at the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed an influx of Mallams. Particularly from Nupe land and Hausa land who started to open Qur’anic schools in many parts of the regions. Though a few of them, especially those who settled at Ankpa, came basically for trade.171 Ankpa Local Government Area also witnessed the arrival of more and more itinerant scholars who were keen to establish the Qur’anic schools during this period. Another factor that contributes to the development of Islam in Ankpa Local Government is the battalion of the West African frontier force (W AFF) between 1904 and 1934. (This period is outside the scope of this work).

The battalion was mostly made up of Hausa speaking officers and men who were also predominantly Muslims. The stationing of this military unit in the town was said to have attracted various professionals including Mallams mostly from Hausa land to the town. Some of these Mallams apart from providing prayer services to the members of the unit also find time to preach and teach the Qur'an to the people of Ankpa.172 Two scholars who made outstanding contributions to Islamic scholarship in Ankpa and its surrounding villages in the first decades of the 20th century included Mallam Abdulrahman and his brother Mallam Muhammed both Nupe from Bida. Mallam Abdulrahman the senior was said to have left Bida in about 1900, after having completed his Islamic studies for Igala land with the aim of propagating Islam in the

171 Y.Jibrin, Oral Interview in Ankpa, 23/2/2013, Director college of Arabic and Islamic studies Ankpa (CAISA) 78 years.
area. He reportedly settled first at bagana but later moved to Ofugo in Ankpa Local Government Area.

His preoccupation in each of the towns where he sojourned was the preaching of Islam and the teaching of the Qur'an. Abdulrahman junior brother Muhammed Idris left Bida for Igala land in search of him after having lost contact with him for some years. He traced him at Ofugo where he tried to persuade him to return home but Mallam Abdulrahman objected on the ground that he had been teaching the people of Ofugo the Qur'an. People come to him for conversion to Islam and that he would rather continue doing his Godly work. Mallam Abdulrahman instead succeeded in convincing his junior brother to stay with him to complete his Islamic education.

After graduating, Mallam Muhammed Idris left for Ankpa town in about 1910 to found his own Islamic school. The school soon attracted students from both the indigenous people and the Hausa settlers. He was later appointed as the deputy chief Imam until 1923 when the incumbent, Mallam Ibrahim, a Hausa scholar died he succeeded him as the chief Imam. Mallam Muhammed Idris also died in 1955. Another cleric (Mallam) that came to Ankpa to spread Islam was Sherifu Abubakar who came from Bebej i in Kano and later settled down in Angwa-Ede in Ankpa metropolis. The communities still needed more awareness about the religion of Islam. Nevertheless, these guest was received and accommodated by the then ruling chief of Ankpa known as Oguchekwo. He was also allowed to observe his religious duties, such as prayers, fasting and teaching children the holy Qur'an. Thus, at the end of the day he converted many people to Islam. Then, gradually the religion of Islam became spread among the Ankpa communities while others remain adamant to their traditional practices.

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173 Ibid
174 Ibid
Yakubu, pointed out that the spread of Islam in Ankpa was a gradual process as Islam first reached a village called "Ibado Akpcha" which is along the trading routes of the Hausa traders from the North. Trade is one factor of inter-group relations that has brought together people of different ethnic and linguistic background and religious persuasions but has made indelible imprints on the culture and History of the people. One area where trade has helped and pivoted the spread and growth of Islam is Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.\(^{175}\)

According to Salisu, Islam reached Ankpa Local Government Area about seventeenth century A.D. through the effort of scholars and traders from the far North and the Middle Belt Area. Indeed, Islam reached the area in the period through another scholar known as Ali Angama Angama means your problems have been solved). And the reason why he was called Angama is that when he prayed for a certain problem it will be solved. The royal family of Ankpa invited him from Kano to their domain to pray for the peace and stability of the area. And he came and resided with them, he later married one of the daughters from the royal family who was called Anija. The woman became the mother of Idris. Idris was given a sound Islamic education (Qur'an and Hadith) among others. Mallam Ali lived in Ankpa until he became old. Then he decided to go back to Kano because of the fear that he might not receive proper burial after his death this is because there were only few Muslims in the area. Therefore he went back to Kano but left behind his wife and son. Meanwhile, Idris took over from his father and started teaching Qur'an and Hadith. With this, Islam and Arabic recitation started to spread to other parts of the area through the graduates of

\(^{175}\) J. Yakubu. Oral interview, Ankpa, 23/2/2013, 81 years.
this local Qur'anic School. The article did cover all the information about Muslims and their activities in Ankpa Local Government Area at that period and also the author did not expand much the coming of Islam to the area.

The development of Islam in Ankpa can also be traced to Mallam Yakubu Gando who traveled from Kano to Ankpa toward the end of 19th century. He established Islamic Schools and was one of the leading Imam and the leader of the Muslim ummah. During his time many people were converted to Islam even though he was not permanently resident with the people. After he finally left Ankpa, his students continued with the preaching. Mallam Adamu, one of his students later succeeded him as the Imam. Mallam Adamu later expanded the Qur'anics schools to Okaba, Ojoku and Ajobe all under his personal supervision. The contribution of Mallam Adamu to the spread of Islam in Ankpa cannot be overemphasized. After the introduction of Islam to the area, the local Qur'anic School system was introduced and spread to various communities. The schools are aimed at inculcating Qur'anic values of getting the pupils to recite as many chapters of the Qur'an as possible. Later on, Islamic scholars at various areas in Ankpa decided to establish Islamic Schools. The first ever Islamiya primary institutions was established at Ankpa, Idah and Dekina. At Idah, the capital of Igala Kingdom the Arabic primary school was found in 1968

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179 H. Sulaiman, Oral interview in Ankpa on 7/6/2014, 47 years. He is among those Scholars that travelled from Ankpa to Kano for Islamic Knowledge.
180 Ibid
while the idea of establishing similar school at Ankpa was conceived as a result of the establishment of Jama'at Nasrul Islam (JNI) in 1973.  

4.2 Activities of Muslims in Ankpa

The development of Islam in Ankpa was a gradual process, to consolidate the spread of Islam in the area different Muslim organizations began to emerge to foster the continuous development of the new religion. Among these organizations were Izalatu Bid'ah wa Iqamat As-sunnah and Tijaniyya order.

4.3 Jama’tu Izalatu Bid’ah Wa Iqamat As-Sunnah

Izala is an Arabic word which means eradicating or to eradicate impurity. Jama'atu means organization. Therefore Jama'atu Izalatu Bid'ah wa Iqamatu As-Sunnah means the Islamic organization that fights for the eradication of innovation and establish the practical ways and models of the prophet (SAW). According to Mallam Abbas a member of the group in Ankpa confirmed that the idea of the introduction came from one Mallam Yusuf Umar who came from Sokoto in 1980. When he arrived Ankpa he noticed that there are many practices among the people that are incompatible with the tenets of Islam. Some of this practices are marrying more than four wives, the Muslim scholars organizing lectures once in a year (only during Ramadan) and some Muslims are still consulting herbalist and diviners, celebration of 8th and 40th days of a dead Muslim. These made him to organize lectures at Ankpa central mosque located at Owelle road condemning the acts. The preaching made him to come into conflicts with some scholars because those scholars engage in the anti-Islamic activities mentioned above.

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181 M. A. Makoji, Op Cit
182 M. Abbas, Oral interview, Ankpa, 13/2/2015, 53 years.
However, Mallam Yusuf Umar decided to write a letter of invitation to other learned Muslims in Makurdi to visit Ankpa and establish a base. The branch of Izala group in Makurdi having heard this complain decided to come and observe the situation first in order to see to what extent they can assist in carrying out this activity.\textsuperscript{183} A man called Abdul Wahab of No. 3 Zaria road Ankpa now late was the first to arrive Ankpa from Makurdi and during this period the Izala group has started gaining ground in other villages. Abdul Wahab started preaching in Ankpa central Mosque but later on he was stopped from this activity the reason was that he preaches against their wishes. So he vacated the Mosque and decided to dedicate his house for daily prayers and the society's secretariat. Meeting'S and religious activities continued in his house and the first Juma'at prayer was observed on the first of September 1989. After a long period of controversy on who was to be the Imam, one Al hajj Idris Tahir who was an Islamic studies teacher of Government secondary college Okaba in Ankpa was finally appointed and he led the first Juma'at prayer which attracted people from different parts of Ankpa and this paved way for the establishment of Izala mosque in Ankpa by 1989. \textsuperscript{184}

Another member of the group Mallam Ali attributed that the group has produced the highest number of scholars in Ankpa. Islamic scholars were trained in and out of the state to be able to achieve the aim of reforming the society of innovation. The groups was known for their awareness and enlighten programes, they organize preaching on weekly basis in the villages. They established Islamic schools to provide Islamic education to Muslim adults and children. Some of the schools established by the

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid
group in Ankpa are Islamiya School Ankpa, Islamiyya School Ajobe and Ofugo.\textsuperscript{185} Izala group has contributed through their various activities to the development and consolidation of Islam in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

4.4 Activities of Tijjaniya Brotherhood in Ankpa

The Tijjaniya brotherhood is another Islamic organization that Vias introduced to Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State in the decades of the 19th century. The organization through their various religious activities has contributed to the development of Islam in the area. The Mallam responsible for the introduction of the order at Ankpa is known as Mallam Abu Keffi although much is not known about him. However, he was the first muqadam at Idah Local Government of Kogi State and that he later gave the muqadamship to Mallam Muhammed Idris, a Nupe Mallam settler at Ankpa.\textsuperscript{186} Muhammed Idris had already been initiated into the order at Bida before he left for Ankpa. He established the first Tijjaniya Zawiyaa in the town and it is the largest Tijjaniya Zawiyaa in the area. He died in 1953 as the chief Imam of Ankpa. Anyway, the period of his death is out of the scope of this work but his contribution cannot be neglected. Shortly before his death he bequeathed his responsibilities as the muqadam of the order to his eldest son Al-hajj Abubakar liman. It was under the leadership of Abubakar Liman that a strong Tijjaniya link developed in Ankpa and its environs. When Sheik Ibrahim Niass visited Okene in 1953, delegates from places around the Niger-Benue area came to Okene to welcome him. Those from Ankpa were led by Abubakar Liman.\textsuperscript{187} During his tenure they were also

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid
taken to various villages in Ankpa division to help initiating people into the Tijjaniya sects.

According to Nasiru, a member of the group, as of 1970s the activities of the group continue to improve among other groups in Ankpa. One of the major achievements of the group is the establishment of Jama'at Nasru- Islam primary School in Ankpa and the young Muslim congress (YMC) in secondary schools. Also, the group was the first to introduce the celebration of Maulud Nabiyy (the birthday of Prophet Muhammed) in Ankpa. Among their programs is the building of Mosques and visitation to their members in other villages in Ankpa metropolis.188

4.5 Factors Responsible for the Spread of Islam in Ankpa

Islam recorded a phenomenal growth in Igala land, Ankpa specifically due to some important reasons these include the following:

Itinerant Mallams

The Mallams that were moving from one locality to another in order to spread and preach the religion of Islam articulated specifically for the growth of Islam Igala in Kingdom and its environs. They travelled at their own expense from one town to another and taught people about the religion of Islam. Most of them were 'Hausa Traders who are also Mallams’ from outside the Kingdom, for example, Sherifu Abubakar who came from Kano. And a number of them were Hausa Mallams and some were from Nupe land. Most of them did not stay long. They used to leave one of their students behind to teach the community the holy Qur’an.189

Role of traders

188 M. Nasiru, Oral Interview, Ankpa, 21/1/2015, 63 years.
189 J. Lawal, Oral interview in Ankpa, Ankpa, 23/2/13, 47 years.
In the early stage of Islam in Ankpa, trade was the means of propagation of Islam to the area. Traders either in Kola nuts, onions, and the like. This compelled them to travel from one big Market town in Igala land to another for trade, and thereby spread the knowledge of Islam. Here we may add that Muslim Missionaries sometimes followed the traders, by Missionaries we are referring to that class of Muslims who saw teaching and proselytization as parts of their primary assignment in life. They might be involved in trading, Agriculture, or industry in order to sustain a living, the missionaries was basically concerned with preaching Islam to unbelievers in the area.

**Emphasis on Scholarship**

Because of the emphasis Islam places on the pursuance and acquisition of knowledge, the Muslims cannot help but spread knowledge as well as to teach others. Most of the Mallams at this period taught without reward, as most of them lived on sadaqa (charity). There was proliferation of Muslim scholars especially among the Igala Mallams, many of them were teachers in Qur’anic schools. This type of school was initially held in a semi-circular formation, the teacher or Mallam would be surrounded in a semi-circle by his pupils. They usually used ink (Ta'ada), slate (Alo) and pen (Al-qalami). Rotation learning usually predominated and the session was held three times in a day, starting from Saturday and ending on Wednesday. There was also Walimah reminiscent of convocation day in contemporary institutions marking the end of the recitation of the holy Qur'an. Some of these schools still survive until today.
Open-Air Preaching (Public Lecture):

This is another significant factor that contributed to the growth of Islam ill its early stage in Igala land, because there was massive open air preaching which the Muslim scholars embarked upon in towns and villages. This open-air preaching was seen as the most popular means of disseminating Islamic knowledge, which they called Wazzi (preaching). It was often ubiquitous during the month of Ramadan fast and continues up until today. Non-Muslims are usually convinced and converted into Islam during this period. The Muslims on their part are more conscious of their preaching. Time is sometimes given for questions and answers.

Dedication to Islam

Another factor is that the Mallams were dedicated to Islam, promoted contact and cooperation among their Muslim members, promoting the importance of western education, fostered mutual help, propagated Islam and raised Islamic awareness among their members. They organised series of activities and participated fully in all the social activities of their members such as: naming ceremonies, marriages, funerals and the likes. They voluntarily used to come forward to donate money or labour as the case may be towards the development of Islam. They thereby raised the religious tone of the Muslim community and promoted community development projects, for instance: the rebuilding of the Mosque, clearing of ground for the festival prayers and they made the religion of Islam fashionable and popular. The more the population of Muslims increased the more the association expanded. These

194 M. Alih, Oral interview in Ankpa, 7/6/2014, 52 years
195 Ibid
197 Ibid
198 J. N. Ukwedah, “History of Igala to C1839 A.D. with Special Reference to the Rise of Attah Kingship” Op Cit
associations helped in the progression and consolidation of Islam in Ankpa Local Government Area.

**Muslim Ceremonies:**

The IdL Maulud and Walimat Al-Qur'an etc, all these Muslim gatherings serve as an avenue to preach Islam to people and make them conscious of the religion. Children sometimes dance round the town at the admiration of the on-lookers there by drawing the attention and attraction of others to the religion. Sometimes, they do this with pomp and pageantry (colorful ceremonies) and people are entertained.  

4.6 **The Role of the Indigenous Scholars**

Superficially, the indigenous scholars equally played a very significant role in the propagation, developing and spreading of Islam among the Ia1a people of Ankpa. Though, it is cleared that the traders were the first to set the pace for Islam in the area, however, the indigenous scholars took the responsibility of carrying out their primary assignment which is to preach and teach the religion of Islam in the area. In view of this, one of the first notable scholars of Ankpa origin is Mallam Audu Borno. He left Ankpa for over ten years to Borno State in search of Islamic Knowledge, after completed his school and returned home, he established an Islamic school which he teaches the people the Qur'an. He also organizes lectures in front of his House every evening which attracted a quite number of people. Added to the above exercise, he also carried out some religious rites and obligation, such duties included naming ceremonies, marriages, and funeral prayers as well as other Islamic activities were presided over by him.

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200 Ibid
201 M. Zakariya, Oral interview in Ankpa, 13/2/2015, 71 years.
202 Ibid
Mallam Audu Ajobe, he is Igala from Ankpa, a Muslim scholar and a preacher. He is Ahl- Sunnah (the follower of the tradition), he used to preach between Magrib and Isha’i prayer every day and on friday before the Juma'at prayer outside the Juma'at Mosque. Also he carried out his da'wah work in his village Ajobe and other neighboring villages. Mallam Zakariya is another indigenous Islamic scholar who contribution to the activities and development of Islam in Ankpa. He preaches after every Subhi prayer and between Magrib and Isha’I prayer every day. Also he carried out his da'wah activities in neighboring villages. Other indigenous Mallams that contributed to the activities of Islam in Ankpa were Mallam Salman Adam, Ustaz, Muhammed Sani Harun, Uztaz, Idris Ojoku, Mallam Ibrahim Muhammed and Mallam Momoh Saidu. These groups of Mallams have contributed immensely to the development of da'wah activities in Ankpa Local Government Area.

4.7 The Problems Encountered in the Area

Transportation Problem

It is noted that the History of religion in Nigeria is wide, thus, the story of the opening up of its vast area by various forms of transport, resulting in religious growth which at the end stimulated a great or largely acceptance of the religion of Islam. For sure, one can go further to say that in the twentieth century, the impact of Islam in the area under study is the History of its extension and development by means of road transport.

203 Ibid
204 A. Salisu, Oral interview in Ankpa, 22/2/2015, 78 years
205 Ibid
Furthermore, though roads were not constructed to serve the purpose of spreading Islam, the scholars and the Muslim traders made use of these available facilities in their process of spreading and propagating the religion of Islam into Ankpa communities. But then, it was stated that before the construction of the roads by the government, there were no road network. The people then had to follow some bush paths on their assumption of the geographical location of an area or the town they wanted to visit.

**Communication**

One of the problems encountered by those involved in spreading the religion of Islam in Ankpa was that of communication, which made it difficult for interaction between the people of Ankpa and the introducers of Islam to the area.\(^{207}\) However, the means of communication was through gesture that was a situation whereby an individual would move his limb or body especially hands to give an expression of feeling.\(^{208}\) Thus, they were able to communicate with the people of Ankpa through this, they able to spread and introduce the religion of Islam in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

### 4.8 Impact of Islam on the Traditional Culture of the People

It is to some extent worth recalling that before Islam was introduced to Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, the said people were traditional believers as discussed in my previous chapter. The Impact of Islam in Ankpa Local Government Area is that it paved for the massive conversion of traditional followers to Islam. More so, after the subsequent

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\(^{207}\) Ibid  
Islamization

of the people most of them abandoned their ancestral tradition.

It can be said without hesitation that Islam is not against any culture, custom or tradition as long as no element of the culture contradicts the teaching of Islam. The decision of Islam not to stipulate any specific dress for its adherents, even those saddled with responsibility such as Imam, Qadis, etc, illustrates this better. All that Islam has done is laying down rules and guidelines along side its teaching. Any culture, custom or tradition that fall within the framework provided in these basic guidelines can be conveniently described as Islamic, while anything outside that may be viewed as un-Islamic.\textsuperscript{209} The issue of dressing still provides us with a good example. Islam opposes transparent or tight dress, whether of a man or woman that exposes the shape of one's body. A man is expected to wear comfortable clothes that covers his shoulders and reaches at least his knee. As for a woman, Islam believes that every part of her body is attractive or sensitive to men be covered, with the exception of her face and palm, according to Imam Malik. Imam, Abu Hanifah added feet as well. Women, therefore, are expected to wear clothes that cover most of their bodies. If their clothes meet these basic guide lines, then they can be described as Islamic, no matter whether or not they are worn by an African, Asian or

European. Festivals and dancing also pre-date Islam. There were various festivals among Arabs which they had long observed before Islam, most of which were connected to their religious beliefs. For example, when the Prophet (SAW) came to Medina he found that the people of Medina had two days that they regarded as festival days. He told Muslims that Allah had replaced these two festivals with ‘Idul-Adha and ‘Idul-al-Fir’. These festivals have eliminated all excess, waste and other ungodly practices such as nude dancing that characterized them before the advent of Islam. Similarly, it has been a human tradition to mark the arrival of a new baby, a marriage, etc., with feasting and dancing. Islam does not object to them. In fact, Islam strongly encourages a feast for both naming and marriage, provided that any un-Islamic element is not introduced. Islam regards them as signs of gratitude to Allah. Some scholars, like Imam As-Shafi'i and the Zahrites, regard it as an obligation to slaughter a goat to mark a marriage on the ground that the Prophet had instructed Abdul ai-Rahman b. Awf to mark his marriage with a goat. As for dancing, there is controversy, as some scholars frown on it. However, the majority opinion is that it is allowed, provided that men and women are not dancing together or are not in the same hall. In fact, some Muslim religious groups have adopted dancing as part of their mode of worship. Islam forbids nude dancing, even if the person is with other of their own sex. Today, however, an exception must be made because of the way music and dancing has
been commercialized. No Muslim scholar who accepts dancing will condone how it has been seriously corrupted.  

After the introduction of Islam to the area, the people became cautious of their way of dressing. The wearing of hijab by Muslim women is now common in the communities. Another achievement by Islam in the area is that, the Muslim youths in Angwa area are now rejecting the idea of Ogani festival as un-Islamic.

4.9 Conclusion

The first contact with Islam by the people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State was through the activities of the Hausa traders who patronized the Markets of the area in the earlier centuries. By the twentieth century some Muslims from Bebeji in Kano came to Ankpa through ‘Ibado Akpacha’ for trade and also providing assistance to the people in prayers. Ankpa Local Government Area however did not witness direct attacks from the jihad of Sheikh Uthman Ibn Foduye but after the jihad in (1804-1808) the Niger Benue confluence began to witness influx of cleric Mallams from the North and Nupe land.

Another factor that necessitated the spread of Islam in Ankpa was the stationed of the African frontier force in the area. Most of the officers are Hausa Muslims from the Northern part of Nigeria began to teach the people the religion of Islam. The area also witnessed the establishment of Qur’anic and Ilm schools towards the end of the twentieth century. It was the above factors that were responsible for greater success of Islam in the Area.

210 A. Nuhu, Islamic Scholar, Oral interview, Ankpa, 7/3/2015, 48 years.
CHAPTER FIVE
CHRISTIAN MISSION AND THEIR OPERATIONS IN ANKPA

5.0 Introduction

Christianity was another religion that played a very important role in the lives of Igala people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. But before the introduction of the religion to the area towards the end of the 19th century many indigenes have converted to Islam from traditional belief. Christian missionary activities in Nigeria began as far back as 15th century with the Portuguese Merchants. The missionary activities that have a significant impact in Nigeria were that of 1842-1846, which marked the influx of Christian missionary to Badagry.\footnote{E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*, Longman, London, 1966, Pp 1-30.} Thus, established themselves in the Nigerian area, and then expanded the activities to most parts of Nigeria including Igala land and Ankpa Local Government area of Kogi State in particular.

The expedition of 1841 headed by Dr. William Baikie assisted by Crowder was the first Christian mission to arrive in the Niger-Benue confluence. The Christian missionary activities played a very important role in the exploration of the interior of the middle belt area.\footnote{C.O.T. Ugwu, “Religion and the Development of Human Values in Nigeria”. Being a paper presented at Imo State University, Owerri, 2007, Pp 34-51} In 1886, the Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M) came to Lokoja and established the first monastery.\footnote{Ibid}

5.1 The Coming of Christian Missionaries to Ankpa

In Igala land, the Christian missionary activities was not successful as quite a number of efforts by missionaries to build schools and churches failed at Gbobe and Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State. They also made several efforts from their base

\footnote{Ibid}
at Onitsha in 1902 to introduce Christianity among the Igala people but because of uncooperative attitude of the people the efforts failed. In 1904, reverend father Sanahan came to Dekina Local Government Area of the State to join reverend father Joseph, a bible teacher and preacher with the aim of converting people to Christianity but the mission station was closed down in 1905 due to lack of cooperation from the inhabitant. In 1934, the Catholic missionary activities resumed in Igala land with the establishment of primary schools which was regarded as the most effective means of winning the Igala into Christianity. Anthony Korath, a German missionary, reopened preaching centres in the area. He engaged in vigorous pastoral preaching visiting Ankpa and its vicinities such as Imane and Ojoku, celebrating masses for Catholic soldiers at the Ankpa barrack and for the converted indigenes who were converted to Christians in their sojourns elsewhere and Igbo traders residing within the area. The missionary also visited Idah in the same year and set up camps, establishing Idah as the headquarters of their missionary enterprise and the rejuvenated Catholicism in the area. Idah therefore became the citadel of Catholicism where the first parish in the area now Idah catholic diocese was established.

Christianity finally came to Ankpa in the 1930 when some Canadian priests under the leadership of Dilisle reopen preaching activities in Ankpa town, this process marks the beginning of building primary schools at Ankpa, Idah and Ayangba by 1950 Christian missionaries were given special respect because they encouraged the development of western education in Ankpa community. Western education introduced to Ankpa Local government created a class of literate youth which led to social changes and development of the community. Furthermore, the period of 1950

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214 P.E. Okwoli, *Short History of Igala*. Ilorin: Matanmi and Sons, 1973
215 U. Mohammed, Op Cit, Pp 30-35
216 Ibid
witnessed progress in the history of Christianity in Ankpa. This led to social, cultural, educational and religious development in the area. In 1967, Roman Catholic mission primary school and St Charles College Ankpa were established. Ankpa missionary clinic was also established for provision of medical services in the same year. The clinic was the first missionary health care services to be established in the area which serves the entire community but later converted to a general hospital.

5.2 Activities of Christian Missions in Ankpa

The extent to which procedures in the spread of Christianity in Ankpa is different from those employed by Islam, the secondary purposes of the mission is providing education, medicine, and in addition to the primary evangelistic task. The major factors that foster the spread of Christianity in Ankpa include:

Efforts of the Catholic Church

The spread of the gospel message of Christianity in Ankpa was the emergence of churches in the area. But the first church to emerge was the Catholic Church towards the end of the 19th century. The missionary activities that came to Ankpa brought Christian message and the establishment of schools to the area.

*For the Roman Catholic Missionaries, education was the best means by which Catholic influence and prestige could be firmly established in Nigeria. Indeed, for some extremists, the schools were the only hope for the realization of their missionary aspirations and objectives.*

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217 O. Ocheje, Oral interview, A Christian Community Leader, Opposite Catholic Church Ankpa, 2/6/13, 63 Year old

Education was an important tool of evangelization for the missionaries. They drew up two phases of evangelization: the first phase which is the Christian village phase intended to create entirely villages made up of converts to Christianity and the second phase which is the village school phase. Recognizing education as the best instrument for evangelization, Shanahan ordered schools built in every village under his jurisdiction. While the Christian village phase was not very successful, the village school policy was highly successful. The outcome was an upsurge of Catholic primary schools throughout Ankpa and its environs.

Western Education remains another positive factor which Christianity aided in Ankpa Local Government area, with the establishment of Primary and post Primary schools in Ankpa and its environs. Although the missionary established schools which helped in spreading western education, the native most especially the Muslims deprived their children from acquiring western education for the belief that nothing but infidel ideas will be inculcated into the lives of the children. Therefore, it brought about a wide gap between the faiths in Ankpa and other parts of the area. First set of missionaries that came to Ankpa was Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M), Mr. H.R. Philips superintendent of education visited Ankpa School in 1978 inspected the school and discovered that only 22 students were on the role, 19 students present and the remaining went out for assessment work.219

Another Christian leader maintained that the missionary normally came from their mission station in Onitsha visiting Ankpa for humanitarian services, like provision of cloths for children, medicine and sometimes food items. Although Islam gained the upper hand due to some basic differences inherent in the two religions and the various

219 Nak. Loko Prof/8, Reports on Ankpa, Op Cit
approaches adopted by the missionaries toward converting traditional followers tended to have favored Islam in term of acceptability to the peoples ways of life. Islam, for instance, in Ankpa Christianity whose demand is that of a sharp break with the past. The Christian missionaries made an outright condemnation of the people traditions and culture since they believed the latter to be 'primitive' elements which needed to be civilized.220

The Christian Missions demonstrated greater zeal in construction of schools in 1950 and 1960s in the confluence area. This was the period when the people were becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of western education as its products were now occupying special positions in the society. These developments tend to favor the interests of Christianity. In order to protect their religious interest, the Muslims reacted to the situation in various ways including reshaping their traditional approaches to the education of their children and organizing themselves for more effective propagation of Islam.221 The Missionaries preached not only a new religion but a revolutionary social ethnic that life could be separated into spiritual and secular. Most of their converts accept the secular ways of European or American society. This type of social life opposed to African traditional religion and Islam. When the individual matters only in relation to the community as a whole and when life was a total religious experience, because of this; Christianity destroys the very foundation of African society.222 The activities of the Christian in Ankpa Local Government has not affected any changes in the Muslim areas, both religion were

221 Ibid
allowed to carry out their numerous activities in the communities as far is not in violent situation.\textsuperscript{223}

Mr Arome, a Pastor in Ankpa portray that the Local government Area harbors any religion but with a peaceful preaching and activities. Also we respect each other religion to promote peaceful co-existence, he gives an example being a pastor of church he has attended numerous Islamic occasion and activities in Ankpa Local Government Area.\textsuperscript{224}

\section*{5.3 Challenges Faced by the Missionaries in the Area}

The struggle by the Christian missionaries to win convert in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State posed numerous challenges to the missionaries. In Ankpa, Islam was the first religion that was introduced, due to this factor Islam was at advantage over Christianity. The itinerant Mallams who propagated Islam to the area were African; such African Mallams moved freely with the people, lived with them and studied their aspirations. All these enabled them to carry out their mission much more successfully than their Christian counterparts who were mostly Europeans with limited contact with the people and regarded them as aliens and their ideas as odd.\textsuperscript{225} Even in the case where some Africans were priests they behaved more or less like their European employers, they estranged themselves from the lifestyle of their own people and looked down upon them with contempt.\textsuperscript{226}

Emmanuel confirmed that the problem faced by the missionaries at that time in the area was that the people perceived the religion as the faith of the colonial power with

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\textsuperscript{223} Ibid 24 \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{224} A. Arome, Oral interview, Ankpa, 3/7/13, 43 years \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{226} I. Omaga, Oral interview, Ankpa 15/2/2015, 52 years
\end{flushright}
its very much abhorred taxation system embittered the Africans toward it. Most of the people believed that converting to Christianity would strengthen the colonial rule while avoiding it on joining Islam would weaken its hold. Another problem faced by the missionaries in Ankpa was the effort in trying to smoother the traditional culture of the people in favour of Christianity. However, this was not allowed to grow unchecked, the traditional followers opposed in many ways in Ankpa, however refused to convert to Christianity which they considered their cherished values and way of life as evil and unwholesome. He concluded that his friend told him his father, though closely associated with Christian clergy and laity and even helpful in the building of Christian church, steadfastly refused to become a Christian and died as a pagan.227

5.4 CONCLUSION

Christianity was spread at Ankpa by the missionaries towards the end of the 19th century. But their operations were not successful compared to their Muslim counterparts, due to the fact that the people believed Christianity is the religion of the colonial masters. It is a matter of fact that western education and the first hospital in Ankpa as a whole was a handmaid of evangelization. This was especially true for the people. Yet very few of them were able to take advantage of the school. Perhaps, the people were too poor to build their own schools at the period. They were therefore completely dependent on the mission schools. The Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M.) was in favour of churning out catechists, priest and teachers who would facilitate the evangelization drive. Nevertheless, the people of Ankpa owe a wealth of gratitude to the missions who pioneered Western education in their region. But for the missions, it would have been impossible for the government and even the people to establish

227 Y. Emmanuel, Oral interview, Ankpa. 16/2/2015, 58 years
schools because of financial constraints. Perhaps the people would have waited for long before the introduction Primary and secondary education in Ankpa.
CHAPTER SIX
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS FOLLOWERS IN ANKPA

6.0 Introduction
This chapter focuses on the relationships between Muslims, Christians and traditional religion followers in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. For clear understanding of the relationship between the Muslims followers of Ankpa and the Christians alike in Ankpa, there is need for one to trace the historical relationship between the traditional Igala people of Ankpa and the Muslims before the introduction of Christian religion. This will give one a better foresight in understanding what then could mean the relationship between the Muslims, Christians and traditional religion as from when Islam and Christianity was introduced to the area.

6.1 Relationships Between the Religions in Ankpa
Inter-religious relations may be considered a challenge to one's faith but one cannot run away from such a challenge. Through this challenge, we may find that our faith can grow. Most adherents may force this challenge upon themselves considering it to be a very rational observation, that is, one which may turn them around from believing that their religion is the only right one and been unable to acknowledge that there is truth in all other religions. On the contrary, they should be able to contemplate that if these other religions have survived for thousands of years and are followed by hundreds of millions of people, even a billion people, there must be some truth in them or if not, they would not have spread and lasted to date. Man owes it to himself to search everywhere for this "Universal Truth. This Truth is a message about God in the world that goes beyond the specific language of any particular theology or
religious tradition. Thus every religion of humanity is the inheritance of every individual human being.\textsuperscript{228}

From Hamza's account, it is paramount that the coming of Islam and Christianity to the area changed the attitudes and culture of the people but some among them that remained adamant in the traditional religion have been living in peace with each other. Hence, the both religion does not give room for forceful conversion. Nevertheless, a number of people in Ankpa accepted Islam and Christianity but the majority of the people are Muslims because they are accounted about seventy percent in the area. However, the reality is that the state of relationship between the religions in Ankpa is cordial, normal and peaceful because there have never been any case of religious uprising between them. Couple with this, they attended each other's ceremonies, such as naming ceremony, marriage ceremony as well as when a new house is build and the owner either Muslims, Christians and traditional believer, everyone in free to attend the opening ceremony depending on his/her own will. And also if there is sorrow like death involving either party, they rush to condole one another, at times they assist each other with some food stuff or meals in other to lessen the hardship of their mourner. They also attend each other burial rites as well.\textsuperscript{229}

The feature of inter-relatedness of the people is demonstrated in their corporate activities remarkable and note worthy. The community sees to the regulation of the people. That is, it is expected to obey the norms and behave properly, and otherwise he will be termed non-conformist or deviant, capable of threatening the survival of


\textsuperscript{229} Y. Hamza, Oral Interview, Ankpa, 26/2/2015, 50 years.
the society. There is no individualism of the people's nature and culture of togetherness, individualism means being selfish, self-centered and self-sufficiency. The traditional religious follower of Ankpa believes that their religion is a religion of love and tolerance. The traditional practitioners of Ankpa allowed Christians and Muslims to settle in the society without any problem. Some of the traditionalist still did not see anything wrong in the existence and survival of the other religions alongside theirs. Discrimination is not in the character of the traditional religion. As Badey states:

*Traditional Religion has the capacity to co-exist and sustain itself with Islam and Christianity; because it created the socio-cultural environment in which Islam and Christianity are now shining ... it has the ability to imitate. Above all, it has the ability to remain independent in the face of assault by highly bureaucratized religions. This is because it links the past and present with the future.*

In Ankpa, traditional religion tends to play the role of the umbrella religion. In spite of all these the government pays very little attention to traditional religion. The local Government has neglected traditional religion in which cultural values of tolerance are embedded. Traditional religion cannot be said to be unimportant. It has helped in the development of the spiritual lives of the people of Ankpa, either through itself or by tolerating the existence of other religions Christianity and Islam, which some people now erroneously see as the only religions capable of shaping the moral lives of the people. But morally, good lives were shaped by the indigenous religion.

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230 S. Okpanachi, Oral Interview, Ankpa, 26/2/2015, 71 years.
According to Oguche, adherents of Islam and Christianity have over the years been fighting each other and themselves. Most scholars have argued and concluded rightly that Christian and Muslims antagonism has nothing to do with the faiths. Rather, the antagonism has political undertones. In the face of this, the traditional followers in Ankpa, Christianity and Islam, has refused to be manipulated by politicians or religious fundamentalist. Both religions in Ankpa have refused to allow anybody to hide under its canopy for their selfish, ethnic, regional, sectional and tribal interests. No one religion is self-sufficient, religions need to co-exist, lean and imbibe good qualities of other religions to achieve the necessary truth. In short, this calls for ecumenism. This is clear indication that no single religion can claim absolute knowledge of truth and that a lot can be gained from other religions. Believers with different opinions and convictions are necessary to each other. Here are the emphasis is still on tolerance and/or togetherness for further achievements. The belief that makes a religion a worthy religion is the belief in a God of all people not selected people. Traditional religion in Ankpa can be looked down upon, yet it possesses a mark very vital to both individual and collective progress.232

6.2 Inter-Religious Cooperation and Dialogue in Ankpa

Muslims, Christians and traditional followers have attributed the success of Ankpa Local Government Area unique culture of religious tolerance and cooperation to several social factors. The people of Ankpa share similar familial background. It is not unheard of to find Muslims, Christian traditional believer in the same clan and family. Some Muslims join their Christian relatives, friends, and neighbours in celebrating Christmas, Easter, and various church festivals. Christians also participate in the celebrations of major Muslim festivals such as Idul-Fitri and Idul-Adha also

traditional followers because they live together, they share resources. Inter-marriage is another factor that has contributed to the success of religious tolerance. For the Muslims, Islamic law makes provision for the marriage of a Muslim man to a Christian woman because Christians fall under the analytic category of “People of the Scriptures”. For several decades, inter-marriages between Christians and Muslims were common practice in Ankpa. In most cases, some couples make arrangements to have their wedding solemnized in both a church and a mosque on the same day. The ceremony takes place in the bride's place of worship first, followed by that of the groom with friends and relatives belonging to both faith traditions in attendance. Schools and colleges are composed of Muslim and Christian students. In the current educational system, Islam, Christianity, and traditional religion in Ankpa are only taught under the subject, Christian's religious knowledge and Islamic religious knowledge in living memory, state functions normally begin with Muslim and Christian prayers.²³³ According to Ekele, Christians, Muslims and traditional followers enjoy vibrant social relation in non religious matters. For example, they interact as members of the same family, same associations, business associates, and co workers in the Public and Private sectors of the economy as well as in the market places. The relationships at these levels are normally cordial and pleasant. There are instances of Muslims and Christians planning, founding and running together the same business in Ankpa. Ankpa women association comprises both Muslims and Christians. The setting is always characterized by sense of mutual trust and respect among the members in spite of their faith differences. That is what religion is designed to achieve for mankind.²³⁴

²³³ S. Ujah, Oral Interview, Ankpa, 3/3/2015, 50 years old
²³⁴ O. Ekele, Oral Interview, Ankpa 2/3/2015, 56 years.
As Max Stackhouse asserts "The neglect of religion as an ordering, uniting and dividing factor in a number of influential interpretations of globalization is a major cause of misunderstanding and a studied blindness regarding what is going on in the world. “At various times in the not too distant past, the recognition of the indispensability of religion in the development discourse has given rise to changes of attitude leading to a series of dialogues between religion and various agencies concerned with the promotion of sustainable development. For instance, within the context of the food and energy crisis of the 1970’s. Major world religions met at the Interreligious Peace Colloquium on Food and Energy and declared food and energy a basic human right. They issued a statement urging structural changes in world societies in order to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. Lessons of that conference bring to the fore the complexity of such simple acts of charity like feeding the hungry as well as the interdependency of the basic organs of society for the realization of integral development: technological, economic, ideological and political will, religious and cultural values for world peace.235 The mode of relationships is seen in the way the people live together as an entity. They stay in the same family house, share family discussion together and hold political position in the community in spite of their different religions affiliations. They have interaction in different ways through customs, social activities, education and dialogue. In Ankpa Local Government Area, Traditional age group, community and social services join the people together

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This however, does not mean that all involved in international development are convinced about the relevance of religion to development agenda. Some still think religion is divisive and dangerous working fundamentally toward a different agenda driven by tradition and immutable theological approaches. Some people think globalization and modernization shakes and changes traditional religious structures. While others think technology and media brings new challenges and opportunities to faith institutions. A good number of technocrats also assume religious Institutions are gradually withering because of secularism. See Katherine Marshall, “Development and Faith Institutions, Gulfs and Bridges,” Gerrie ter Haar, ed., Religion and Development: Ways of Transforming the World (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 27-53, for a study of the uneasy relationship between religion and development.
irrespective of their religious affiliation. They are all duty bound to serve the community when a call for such work arises. In this way, the people interact together. Ankpa is a society of different people with different religious ideologies but united for the sake of their welfare. As a group therefore, they are duty bound to interact together despite the fact that they have different religions learning. Ademolekun highlighted five ways the people of Akoko land interacted despite their religious differences. One, the people of Akoko land have interaction by attending or participating in the religious activities of each religion. Example of the type of interaction we have in view is the attendance and participating in religious festivals of each religion such as harvest and special services. Christians attend Harvest festivals of Muslims on invitation and vice versa without any discrimination.

Two, the children of the same family may belong to three different religions, yet they interact together at home when they return back from their different places of worship. In this way, one would see that family solidarity is much more important than religions solidarity thus tolerance and understanding exist among the religionists.

Three, Political ideology join the people together. There are people of different religious affiliations that belong to the same political camp not minding their divergent religious views.

Four, Family Union and solidarity shared among Akoko people is an avenue for interaction. There are avenues for meeting in the society for social and political activities. Five, The Quest for peace, unity, development and stability in the community necessitates interaction among Religions organizations. Akoko in Yoruba community as part of Nigeria Nation, is a multi-religions and pluralistic society.

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236 B. Joshua, Oral interview, Ankpa 13/3/2015, 61 years old.
therefore, Religions interaction and good relation is a mandatory obligation for peace and unity.237

6.3 Inter-Religious Marriages in Ankpa

In Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, marriage was an ancient institution among the people which is considered as an approved union between Man and Women or between a Man and Women, which brings their families into a relationship that is arranged for the purpose of companionship, economic relation as well as procreation. Before the introduction of Islam and Christianity, the systems of marriage in Ankpa were subjected to the traditional method of marrying.238 The concept of courtship which is new is accepted by most people, many families tolerate it because they have no absolute control over their sons and daughters. Similarly, while parental consent is always very important in marriage, many will go ahead and marry even without the consent of their parents.239

Every religious institution enjoins man and woman to marry.240 Inter faith marriage, traditionally called mixed marriage, is a type of marriage that involves different partners professing different religions.241 A marriage of a Christian and a Muslim or traditional religion is the perfect model for inter-religious relations and activities.242

238 M. Ugbede, Oral Interview, Ankpa 7/6/14, 44 years
240 Ibid
242 Ibid
Ojoru, a Christian woman but her late father Idakwo was a traditional believer who married to a Muslim in 1990, when they decided to get engaged his family was totally against their marriage. Even though they had to go through a lot of difficulties they decided to get married. After the birth of the first child the parents decided to make a contact with their son and his new family. In other words, they accepted his marriage with the woman.\(^\text{243}\)

Another respondent Mrs. Grace who converted from Christianity and married a Muslim, in the beginning their path seemed to be straight and even. But eventually her husband started insulting her and even beating her up. In other words, she was forced to convert to Islam; however, even that she did not help to save the family. As a result they got divorced. She now lives alone with her young daughter, but she does not think that religious discrimination and lack of understanding are present in every family. It all depends on the meaning that the family gives to religion.\(^\text{244}\)

Idachaba was a man who grown up without either being a Muslim or Christian because his late parents are traditional followers, but later on he decided to attend church with his friends. He enters courtship with a Muslim lady for about two years, later decided to marry her. But the families of the lady disagree at the initial stage for the fear of converting their daughters to Christianity, due to the pressure from both parents, he decided to embrace Islam. But it took a very long time before the parents of the girl to bless these marriages due to the pains of loosing their daughter to another different faith because of love; but they are now leaving happily as a family.\(^\text{245}\)

\(^{243}\) I. Ojoru, Oral Interviewed at Ankpa, on 5/6/14, 49 years old
\(^{244}\) M. Grace, Oral Interviewed at Ankpa. 2/6/14, 51 years Old
\(^{245}\) A. Idachaba, Oral Interview, Ankpa, on 3/3/2015, 57 years
Inter-religious marriage brings people of different faiths together in a covenant of marriage. It also attempts to reconcile their teachings of marriage, divorce and even inheritance. However, inter-faith marriage has given the significant traditional societal endorsement it enjoys, is quite often beleaguered and over whelmed by challenges ranging from the need for dispensation. Kenneth asserted that the phenomenon of marriages between Christians and Muslims has existed since the beginning of Islam, almost 1400 years ago. Churches in Central and East European countries have had some measure of ministerial experience of this phenomenon, because parts of this vast area belong to the Ottoman Empire. During that period Muslims settled in this area, while indigenous people were converted to Islam. For the religions in Igala land, marriage involves not only interpersonal relations but also promotes inter-community relations. In marriage, the communities involved share their very existence. In reality they become one people, one "thing" (Udama) as the people themselves would put it. Their own personal identity and identification are equally extended especially through the expected children.

Makolo who converted to Islam and married to a Christian lady, argued that in Ankpa local area of Kogi State inter-faith marriage is already part of their life because both faiths interacts with each other freely without any form of discrimination. Many reasons have been suggested to explain the increase in interfaith marriage, such as globalization and increasing secularization. Young people may grow up with neighbors of different faiths and cultures, they come across more at school, university and work, and they travel more widely than their parents did. In addition, they may be

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246 Ibid
249 I. Makolo, Oral interview in Ankpa on 7/3/13, 47 Years
less involved in organized religion, and even if they do belong to one, they may question both its rules and the authority of religious teachers and leaders. And interfaith marriages is not confined to young people alone, more mature couples, including those who are marrying for a second or third time, may have partners of a different faith. Sometimes, it seems, the very fact that someone is different makes them even more attractive. But while sometimes those who marry 'out' can feel marginalized and even ostracized, mixed couples can also act as bridges between different communities, an example of the good relationships we need between different faith and ethnic groups against the backdrop of world conflict, interfaith marriages and their children are visible flesh and blood reminders that there's no going back to a past of distinct ethnic and faith groups. For the religions in Ankpa, marriage involves not only interpersonal relations but also in the final analysis of inter-community relations. It is very common to hear pastors during weddings addressing the new couple in words highlighting the social ethical expectations of people. Adhering to the principles of African Religion, the pastors advised the couples that through their marriage, their families and clans are also united, so that what is done to their families and clans are also done to all. The marriage also means that the partner's responsibilities are not limited to them alone but have a much wider application. Their own personal identity and identification are equally extended especially through the expected children.

251 Ibid P 182
252 O. Attai, Oral interview, Ankpa, Op Cit
254 Ibid
There is a little known story about Muslims and Jews in World War II that helped to create a code of honour that still exist in History. While other occupied European countries folded under the Nazi party's power and had their Jewish population systematically sent to concentration camps, Albania resisted Adolf Hitler’s orders and refused to hand over their own Jewish citizens. This move helped to found a sort of ethical code in Albania, called ‘Besa’ that still survives today. Besa, meaning 'to keep promise' spurred the mainly Muslim population of Albania to protect their persecuted countrymen and women as well as Jewish refugees. The Albanian Government provided many Jewish families with false papers so they will not leave in hiding and open their borders to Jewish refugees. Not a single Jewish was taken from Albania to a concentration camp.

Ali Sheqer, whose father rescued Jews, says that the Albanians risked their own lives to save and shelter Jews from Hitler's regime. “Why did my father save a stranger at the risked of his life and the entire village? My father was a devout Muslim. He believed to save one life to enter paradise,” Mr Sheqer says. Albania, the small country nestled between Greece and Macedonia, was the European country that experienced a growth in its Jewish population during World War II, with up to 1800 Jews moving to Albania during the period.255

In Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, despite the religious differences of the people they protect each other against any internal or external aggression. Normally, they are families where you found people believing in the three religions but their mode of relationship is cordial and normal.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter engaged in a discussion of the relationships between the three major religions in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. The conjugal relationships of Muslims, Christians and traditional religion in marriage covenant promote religious tolerance. Attempt has been made in this chapter to establish the fact that there is Religions Interaction among the people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State. The advent of Islam and Christianity in the area is pointed out. The features of Islam and African Christianity are identified. It highlights the facilitating factors, mode and ways of interaction. It is the opinion of this chapter that there is religions interaction among the people as pointed out in the body of the work. It is discovered that Muslims, Christianity and traditional religion followers have lived in absolute peace since the introduction of the religions into the area. It is noted in this chapter that Religious friction has not degenerated into bloody clash or disturbance of peace in this area in spite of religions diversity among the people. This definitely is due to understanding, accommodation, tolerance and dialogue among the religions.
General Conclusion

Attempt has been made in this work to establish the fact that there is mutual religious interaction among the people of Ankpa local Government Area of Kogi State from 1979 to 1992. It is clear that trade, Missionary activities, education, migration and settlement of Muslims in non-Muslim areas as well as colonial rule were some of the important factors for the spread and acceptance of Islam in the non-Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria. Trade has always had a special place in Islamic civilization. Muslim traders and merchants introduced Islam to most of the non-Muslims areas in Northern Nigeria in the course of their business activities, married local women who, with their children, relations and neighbours became Muslims. This process is very wide-spread. In the non-Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria, colonial, as well as Islamic education played a vital role. Islam and Christianity strengthened its roots after education had been adopted as an essential means of communication among the local people. Indeed, Islamic teachings and Christian education helped its spread and success. Spiritual and religious traditions are sources of values that can defend dignified life for all. These traditions need to be explored. The people of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State need new ways to understand particularity, universality and plurality; one must learn to live his faith with integrity while respecting and accepting each other as they are. Muslims, Christian and Traditional religions activities and relations in Ankpa can be a reality. In the beginning, there was peace. At a point, there was a rupture which has been affecting inter-religious relations. Records of such histories are preserved so that they serve as reference codes for the present and future generations. But some Muslims and Christians are learning but not learning fast; others are not ready to learn. This issue therefore can only be hypothetical: if the Muslims and the Christians are ready to learn from the positive
part of history and adopt the recommended attitude towards Muslim-Christian
relations, then Muslims, Christian and traditional followers can be a reality.

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