

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

ISLAM AMONG THE MENJI COMMUNITY IN GHANA

BY
ALHAJI YAHAYA
10550310

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS DEGREE**

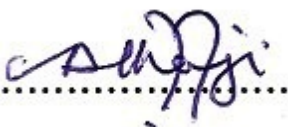
JULY, 2020

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the outcome of my own efforts, undertaken under the supervision of Hajj Mumuni Suleman and Dr. Hussein Ibrahim, lecturers of the Department for the Study of Religions. All sources consulted have been duly acknowledged.

STUDENT

ALHAJI YAHAYA

SIGNATURE.....

DATE..... **02-09-2020**


SUPERVISORS

HAJJ MUMUNI SULEMANA

SIGNATURE.....

DATE..... **02-09-2020**

DR. HUSSEIN I. IBRAHIM

SIGNATURE.....

DATE..... **02-09-2020**



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mohammed Yahaya and Mariyam Is-hak J.K, who have unfortunately not lived to see the fruit of their hard labour.

I, therefore, dedicate this thesis to their memory and to my lovely wife and children.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to register my profound gratitude to the Almighty Allah for His wonderful grace and mercy that has ensured the success of this thesis. Without the Guidance and Love of Allah this thesis would not have been possible.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Hajj Mumuni Sulemana, who has always played the role of a teacher, a mentor, and a father for reading through the work and correcting all the necessary grammatical expressions and ambiguous sentences while offering laudable ideas, suggestions and raising of constructive criticisms. His ample advice and guidance have encouraged me to work with assiduousness, especially the day he cautioned me on the progress of the work and indicated that I might not be able to graduate. This cautionary advice offered me the impetus to work harder. He has helped me think more critically and learn more about the research work than I ever imagined. I owed him profound gratitude.

Equally important is the academic support, suggestion and encouragement provided by my second supervisor, Dr. Hussein I. Ibrahim. His scholarly advice was motivational and helpful which enabled me to smoothly complete the work. My able supervisors gave the work a sense of direction.

Dr. Rabiatu Deinyo Ammah, the lovely mother, who helped refine the thesis topic cannot pass without mention. Similarly, the academic supports provided by Prof. George Ossom-Batsa, Dr. Nicoletta Gatti, Fatimatu N. Sulemanu and Prof. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, Head of Department, during the research were encouraging. Without the collective efforts of all the lecturers at the Department, this thesis would not have been successful.

I am sincerely appreciative of the invaluable support offered me by my lovely brother and friend, Mr. Abdallah Shaibu and his wife Mariyam Ibrahim, during my stay in Accra.

Among the many family members and friends who deserve mention in this work are Alhaji Zakariya Yahaya Bamba, Mustapha Yahaya Bamba, Alhassan Yahaya, Imam Abass Yussif, Yussif Mahmud, Osman Baba Idriss, Idriss Bamba, Abubakari Sadiq Ishak, Adams Hafiz Sina Pokupharma, Hamza Saeed Is-hak, Salamatu Is-hak J.K, Mariyam Yahaya, Adams Yahaya (J.J), Abdallah Yussif Sampson, Sulemana Baba Osman(chief), Shaibu Yakubu, Rashida Mohammed, Is-hak Mohammed Bamba, Muniru Mohammed, Mallam Sina Mohammed, Hawawu Mohammed, Alhaji Osman Mohammed, Suwaare Mohammed Bamba, Muniratu Mohammed, Hafсата Mohammed Khadija Kubira Mohammed, Hajara Salia, Memuna Seidu and Bosco Aboakye. In fact, I cannot mention all those who have in one way or the other encouraged and supported me during the study. What I can say is I appreciate their support and concern both spiritually and materially.

I also want to thank individuals and groups who have graciously received me into their institutions, and who have sat patiently with me as I asked many questions and inquired the memories of past and present events. I am most grateful to Imam Abdul Mumin (Ashanti Regional Imam), Sheikh Mohammed Aminu Bamba of Ejura, Amir Shuayb Abdul Malik, leader in charge of Ghana Mobile Preachers Association, Kumasi, Mr. Saeed Mohammed Owusu, Regional Administrator of Ghana Muslim Mission, Kumasi, Mr. Yussif Alhassan, Imam and Guidance and Counselling Coordinator of Islamic Senior High School, Kumasi, and Osofo Ahmed KYEI of Muslim Access Movement (MAM) Online. I wish to register my appreciation to the 'a'imah, 'Ulamāh, Chiefs, Queen mothers, women groups, Youth groups custodians of Africa Indigenous Religious leaders, Catechists,

respondents all of Menji, and leadership of Menji Graduate Association for their support and encouragement.

Finally, I am particularly thankful to my lovely wife, Khadijata Abubakari Memuna Seidu. As the deadlines approached and time was insufficient, I worked longer hours than usual and was away from home more than any of us wanted. They are always a ray of hope and joy in my life, for which I am eternally grateful. To my wonderful children-Sharif Yahaya Bamba, Mariyam Yahaya Bamba, Mohammed Yahaya Bamba Amina Yahaya Bamba Arahmata Yahaya Bamba and Sa'id Yahaya Bamba who still do not understand why Daddy always reads books and spends so much time pressing keys on the computer or laptop, thank you for your patience when I was busy and for your timely distractions when I was overtly focused on work. I love you all.



ABSTRACT

The folk wisdom says, ‘the nation which forgets its history is forced to repeat the same mistakes’. Islam got enhanced in Menji after the resettlement of some Muslims from Begho when the city was collapsed. Most literature traced the origins, spread and development of Islam in modern Ghana to Begho. Some gaps have been identified in the literary works reviewed. Since the Menji Muslims started practising Islam, what has been the influence of the religion on the socio-cultural lives of the Muslims? Thus, the study was set to explore the history and influence of Islam in Menji Community. Therefore, the design used for this research was a historical research based on conceptual framework of *Tarikh*. In selecting the sample for the interview, this study made use of the purposive sampling in order to select people who could respond appropriately to the questionnaires. These sampling procedures have been a conduit to relevant information on the history and influence of Islam in the study area. Different groups of people were purposively and randomly selected. These included Muslim Chiefs, Queen Mothers Linguists, ‘a’imah, ‘Ulamāh, women and men groups, Youth groups and practitioners of African Indigenous Religion.

The key findings from the research showed that the Ligbi ethnic group in the study area dominates the Muslim population in Menji. The Ligbi (Banda) forms an integral part of the Mande speaking ethnic groups. Also, the study revealed that Menji was one of communities established after the collapse of ancient Begho, a Muslim trade centre in the Bono Region of Ghana. From time immemorial, Islam has remained the predominant religion in the community. The Muslims in Menji have kept the faith and practice of Islam unwavering. The overall influence of Islam on Menji Muslims has been tremendous in terms of religious and socio-cultural lives. Key among the recommendations made was for Muslim parents to change their attitude towards secular education

and provide their wards with secular education. This will enable them compete favourably for employment and other opportunities in the present-day-society.

The study concludes that Muslim scholars should take up their Islamic duty of propagating the faith through logical and peaceful means and do so in conformity with new technologies. This is because Islam is a religion, if presented well and constantly through the right channels it will enhance the faith of the adherents and win the hearts of many non-Muslims.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AHR: | Ahafo Region |
| AIR: | African Indigenous Religion |
| AMD: | Atwima Mponua District |
| BECE: | Basic Education Certificate Examination |
| BR: | Bono Region |
| CMR: | Christian Muslim Relation |
| DA: | District Assembly |
| DDE: | District Directorate of Education |
| EEF: | Education Endowment Fund |
| IE: | Islamic Education |
| IJHS: | Islamic Junior High School |
| ISHS: | Islamic Senior High School |
| JHS: | Junior High School |
| MASS: | Menji Agriculture Senior High School |
| MDA: | Municipal District Assembly |
| MDG: | Muslim Doctrinal Group |
| MIPS: | Menji Islamic Primary School |
| MJHS: | Menji Islamic Junior High School |

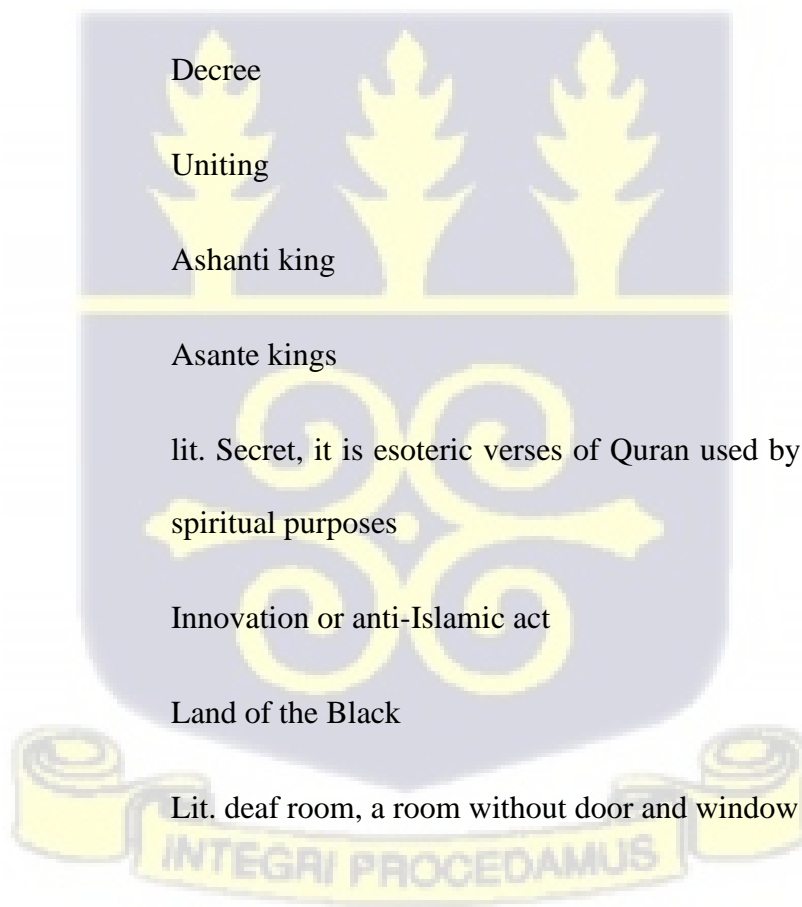


| | |
|---------|---|
| MMC: | Menji Muslim Community |
| MTH: | Muslim Traditional Healers |
| PTA: | Parents/ Teachers Association |
| QS: | Qur'ānic School |
| RC: | Roman Catholicism |
| RD: | Religious Denominations |
| S.A.W: | Salla Allahu °Alayhi Wasallam |
| SDA: | Seventh Day Adventist |
| WASSCE: | West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examinations |



GLOSSARY OF FOREIGN WORDS USED IN THE WORK WITH THEIR MEANINGS

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Abusuapanin:</i> | Family Head |
| Ahlus-Sunnah: | The embodiments/ practitioners of the Traditions of the Prophet |
| Ahmadiyyah Muslim: | Group of Muslims who follow Ahmed Ghulam doctrine |
| 'A'imah (Sunnis Imam): | Muslim Religious leaders/ Imams |
| Akan: | Twi language speakers |
| <i>Akhabābar:</i> | information |
| Al-Hajj: | A Muslim Male pilgrim who has performed Hajj |
| <i>Al-Qadar:</i> | Decree |
| <i>Aqd:</i> | Uniting |
| Ashantehene: | Ashanti king |
| Asantehenfo: | Asante kings |
| <i>Asrār:</i> | lit. Secret, it is esoteric verses of Quran used by Sufi Muslims for spiritual purposes |
| Bid'ah: | Innovation or anti-Islamic act |
| Bilad Sudan: | Land of the Black |
| Damnum: | Lit. deaf room, a room without door and window |



Dhawul-arhām: are the relatives who are connected through females, such as daughter son but it is in extremely rare cases that they get any share in the inheritance.

Dhawul-farid: are those who have to definite shares in asserts left by the deceased person, such as father and mother.

Du^ʿā: Supplication

Fidāʿu: lit. Ransom or redemption, performed by individual members at the funeral ground lead by an Imam

Hajjia: A Muslim female pilgrim who has performed Hajj rites

ʿIdda: Widowhood rites or Waiting period after divorce

ʿIdul- fitr: A festive occasion celebrated by Muslims on the first of Shawwāl and immediately after Twenty-nine (29) or thirty (30) Days of Ramadan fast.

ʿIdul-ʿAdha: A festive occasion celebrated by Muslims exactly within the first ten days in the month of Dhul-hijja in which scarifies of animals are done.

ʿIṭikāf means seclusion. It simply that which a Muslim performs voluntarily as a way of drawing near to the Almighty Allah and seeking His reward, as well as of following the example of the Prophet (S.AW).

Jāhiliyah: Ignorance

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Jibrill: | Archangel or Gabriel |
| <i>Khalīfat:</i> | Vicegerent |
| <i>Laylatul Qadir:</i> | Night of power or Decree |
| <i>Mahr:</i> | Dowry |
| Makarantah: | Qur'ānic School |
| Makkah: | A city in Saudi Arabia |
| Madrasah: | Quranic School |
| Mu'adhin: | An Islamic caller to Prayer |
| Nikah: | Marriage |
| Quran: | A divine religious Book of Islam |
| Ribat: | Fortress |
| Sadaaqa: | Charity |
| <i>Sadaqatul-fitr:</i> | Charity in the form of cereals or money measured and given out by all Muslims irrespective of age, gender, or status some few days to or on the day of ʿIdul- fitr. |
| Sajadah: | Prayer mat |
| Sall Allahu Alayhim Wasallam: | Blessing of Allah be upon him |
| Sīrah: | Biography of the Prophets and religious leaders |
| Shahādda: | Witness or Testimony |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Shawwāl: | Tenth month of the Islamic calendar |
| Shi'ites: | Followers of Ali |
| Suratul Yāsin: | The 36 th chapter of the glorious Qur'ān |
| Ta'lim: | The process of education that is based on teaching and learning |
| Ta'dīb: | A process of education that puts emphasis on nurturing good human beings with noble codes of conduct/ ethics approved by Islam, so that so that he or she may conduct and position him or herself in the society with justice |
| Tafsīr: | exegesis/ Commentary on the Quran |

Tahajjud:

Night vigil

Tarīkh:

History

Tasbah:

Muslim Rosary

Tijaniyya:

Sufi path founded by Shaikh Ahmed Tijani

Tribbiyya:

A process of education that gives emphasis on the physical and intellectual development of an individual

Ulamāh:

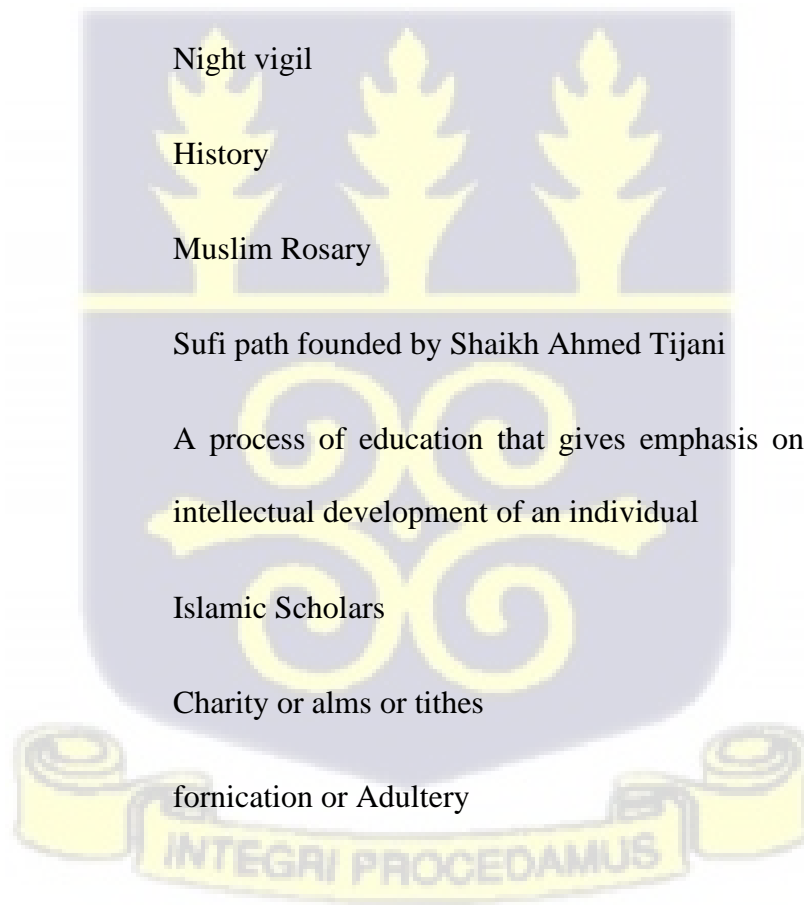
Islamic Scholars

Zakāt:

Charity or alms or tithes

Zina:

fornication or Adultery



LIGBI (BANDA) WORDS

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Al-Juma: | Friday |
| Almusa: | Thursday |
| Arawa: | Wednesday |
| Asram: | A traditional or local disease or sickness that attack toddlers or infants |
| Babariya: | Nafaana line |
| Bamba: | Crocodile |
| Broni Saa: | Whiteman's Chief |
| Duun: | Masquerading |
| Dyula: | Mande language |
| Faderige: | An amount of money given to a bride's father during her marriage |
| Fuglakankina: | Banda line |
| Gba: | Cultural performance done in the night with an intention to capture a witch wizard |
| Gbaapo: | Valley or mountain |
| Gbasakolima: | a staff for protection |
| Gumbe: | Local cultural dance |
| Jaako: | Wonder/Amazing |
| Jombene: | fire festival that marks the day Noah's Ark was secured or docked after the flood. During this festival fire logs are pelted on a large space while other religious activities go on in the mosque. It is celebrated in Muharam, the first month on the Islamic calendar. |
| Josora: | Shrine |
| Kkoromiedaara: | lakeside |
| Krubi: | Annual festival of Wangara/ Ligbi ethnicity |
| Kukulaya: | Flat Bowl |
| Lihadi: | Sunday |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Manajie: | Pawpaw |
| Mansa: | Maize Douhgnut |
| Naderige: | An amount of money given to a bride's mother during her marriage |
| Nafani: | An amount of money given to a bride's father during her marriage |
| Ngariyito: | lit. 'Tears food', prepared by the deceased family to be distributed to a selected group of people on the day of the death |
| Saakina: | Chief Palace |
| Sibit: | Saturday |
| Subbu Laafiya: | Unreal Islamic Healer or spiritual consultant |
| Suuna: | Borrowed proto- Hausa meaning naming ceremony |
| Talata: | Tuesday |
| Tibbu Laafiya: | Real Islamic Healer or spiritual consultant |
| Waliga: | A wooden slate on which some Muslims write some esoteric verses of the Quran to be washed off and used for spiritual purposes. |
| Wangara: | Dyula speakers |
| Yabga: | Local cultural dance |

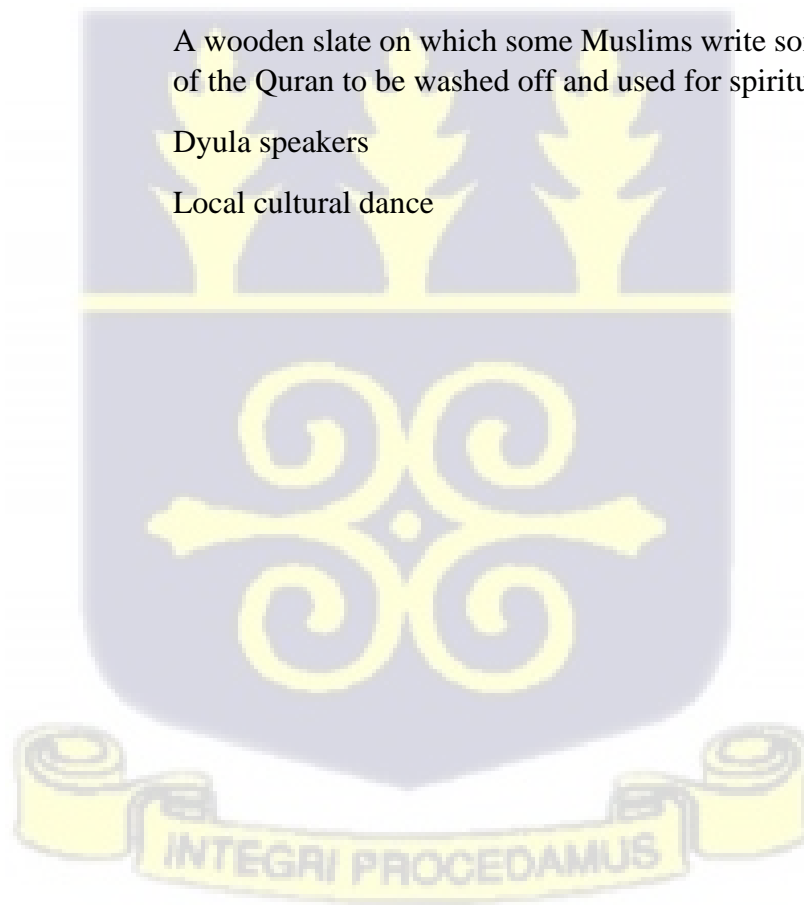


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CONTENT | PAGES |
|---|-------|
| DECLARATION | i |
| DEDICATION | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iii |
| ABSTRACT..... | vi |
| GLOSSARY OF FOREIGN WORDS USED IN THE WORK WITH THEIR MEANINGS..... | x |
| LIGBI (BANDA) WORDS..... | xiv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | xvi |
| LISTS OF FIGURES | xx |
| CHAPTER ONE..... | 1 |
| GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY | 1 |
| 1.0 Background to the study | 1 |
| 1.1 Statement of the Problem..... | 3 |
| 1.2.0 Aims and Objectives | 4 |
| 1.2.1 General objective | 4 |
| 1.3 Research Questions..... | 4 |
| 1.4 Scope of the Research..... | 4 |
| 1.5 Methodology..... | 5 |
| 1.6 Historical Approach..... | 6 |
| 1.7 Sampling Procedure..... | 7 |
| 1.8 Population Size | 7 |
| 1.9 Sample Size..... | 8 |
| 1.10 Method of Data Collection..... | 8 |
| 1.11 Interviewing | 9 |
| 1.12 Questionnaires..... | 10 |
| 1.13 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)..... | 10 |
| 1.14 Conceptual Framework..... | 12 |
| 1.15 Literature Review..... | 15 |
| 1.16 Limitations and Challenges of the Study..... | 29 |
| 1.17 Significance of the study..... | 30 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 1.18 Organisation of the Work..... | 31 |
| CHAPTER TWO | 32 |
| HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF MENJI AND ITS RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEWS, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES | 32 |
| 2.0 Introduction..... | 32 |
| 2.1 Geographical Location and Population..... | 32 |
| 2.2 Historical Origins..... | 35 |
| 2.3 Religious World view of Menji People | 44 |
| 2.4 Belief in the Supreme Being..... | 44 |
| 2.5 Religious Denominations..... | 45 |
| 2.6 The Roman Catholicism | 45 |
| 2.7 Christian-Muslim Relations | 46 |
| 2.8 Traditional Belief Systems and Practices of the people of Menji..... | 49 |
| 2.9 Marriage..... | 49 |
| 2.10 Polygyny | 52 |
| 2.11 Endogamy | 54 |
| 2.12 Betrothal Marriage..... | 55 |
| 2.13 Funeral Rites | 56 |
| CHAPTER THREE | 59 |
| THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN MENJI..... | 59 |
| 3.0 The Origins of Islam in Africa..... | 59 |
| 3.1 Islam in Modern Ghana | 61 |
| 3.2 The spread of Islam from Begho | 62 |
| 3.3 Islam in the Volta Basin..... | 63 |
| 3.4 Islam in southern part of Ghana..... | 64 |
| 3.5 Islam in Bono Region (Begho) | 68 |
| 3.6 Development of Islam in Menji..... | 75 |
| 3.7 Muslim Doctrinal Groups | 76 |
| 3.8 Institution of Imamship of Menji..... | 78 |
| 3.9 Establishment of Islamic Schools (Madrasah)..... | 80 |
| 3.10 Opening of Islamic schools in Menji for the development of Islam..... | 84 |
| 3.11 Provision of Magico-Religious Service | 84 |

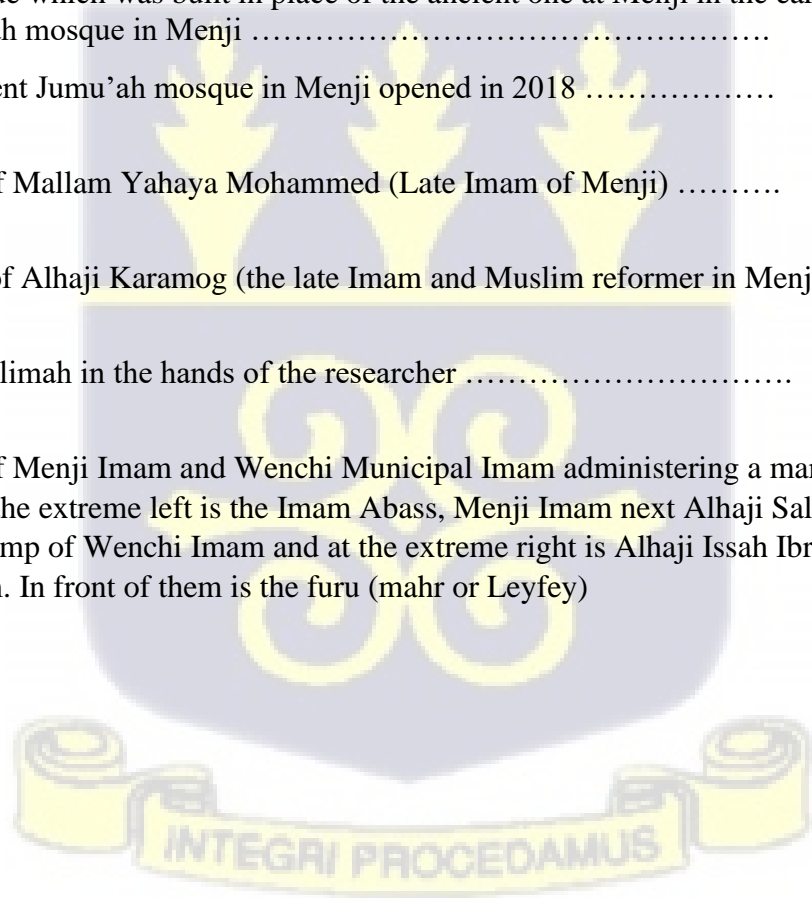
| | |
|--|-----|
| 3.12 Arrival of a Muslim Scholar in Menji from Kong | 88 |
| 3.13 Da’awah activity and development of Islam in Menji..... | 91 |
| 3.14 The role of a Mosque in the development of Islam in Menji. | 92 |
| 3.15 The Institution of the Muslim Family and the Development of Islam in Menji..... | 96 |
| 3.16 The Role the Muslim Women Plays in the Development of Islam in Menji..... | 97 |
| 3.17 Muslim Youth Associations and the Promotion of Islam in Menji. | 99 |
| 3.18 Chieftaincy and Islam in Menji..... | 100 |
| 3.19 Muslim Personalities..... | 103 |
| 3.20 Hausa Influence on Menji..... | 110 |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | 112 |
| 4.0 THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON THE PEOPLE OF MENJI..... | 112 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 112 |
| 4.1.0 The Influence of Islam on Menji Traditional Culture..... | 112 |
| 4.1.1 Religious Influence | 112 |
| 4.1.2 Pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) | 114 |
| 4.1.3 Religious Denominations and Groups | 116 |
| 4.1.4 Economic Influence of Islam..... | 117 |
| 4.1.5 Literacy | 119 |
| 4.1.6 The Arabic Language..... | 119 |
| 4.1.7 The State of Madrasah (Qur’ānic Schools) in Menji..... | 120 |
| 4.1.8 Linguistic Borrowing (Weekdays)..... | 121 |
| 4.1.9 Social Ceremony | 122 |
| 4.2.0 The Influence of Menji Culture on Islam in Menji..... | 122 |
| 4.2.1 Culture..... | 122 |
| 4.2.2 Islamic Marriage | 123 |
| 4.2.3 Widowhood Rites..... | 126 |
| 4.2.4 Culture and Festivals at Menji | 127 |
| 4.2.5 Jombene (Fire festival) | 129 |
| 4.3 Conclusion | 131 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | 132 |
| CONCLUSION, RESEARCH FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 132 |
| 5.0 Introduction..... | 132 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| 5.1 Summary | 133 |
| 5.2 Research Findings | 134 |
| 5.3 Conclusion | 135 |
| 5.4 Recommendations | 136 |
| 5.4.1 Academic | 136 |
| 5.4.2 Patoral | 137 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 137 |
| APPENDICES | 153 |
| APPENDIX ‘A’ | 153 |
| APPENDIX ‘B’ | 155 |
| APPENDIX C | 156 |



LISTS OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|-----|
| Fig.1 Maps of Menji Community and Ghana | 34 |
| Fig.2 Picture of Nasta Idriss, Custodian of traditional myths of Menji | 35 |
| Fig.3 Picture of Mallam Abubakar Sa'id (Abu Soldier), a veteran army of the Second World War of 1947 | 42 |
| Fig 4.A bride carried high on wooden palanquin during a marriage ceremony in Menji | 52 |
| Fig.5 Picture of Makarantah children at Mallam Alhaji Karamog Madrasah at Menji | 83 |
| Fig. 6 Pictures of Makarantah children at Alhaji Karamog's Madrasah at Menji | 83 |
| Fig.7 A sample of a Lasinad (chain of transmission) that is usually given to Tafsir Graduands as certificates | 90 |
| Fig.8 The first kind of place of worship built in Menji as a Jumu'ah mosque in 1800 | 95 |
| Fig.9 The mosque which was built in place of the ancient one at Menji in the early 1920's. It used to be the Jumu'ah mosque in Menji | 95 |
| Fig.10 The current Jumu'ah mosque in Menji opened in 2018 | 96 |
| Fig.11 Picture of Mallam Yahaya Mohammed (Late Imam of Menji) | 105 |
| Fig. 12 Picture of Alhaji Karamog (the late Imam and Muslim reformer in Menji) | 110 |
| Fig. 13 Gbasakolimah in the hands of the researcher | 115 |
| Fig.14 Picture of Menji Imam and Wenchi Municipal Imam administering a marriage ceremony in Menji. From the extreme left is the Imam Abass, Menji Imam next Alhaji Saliho Mohammed Suwaari, aide camp of Wenchi Imam and at the extreme right is Alhaji Issah Ibrahim, Wenchi Municipal Imam. In front of them is the furu (mahr or Leyfey) | 125 |



CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Background to the study

Islam is one of the Abrahamic traditions¹, about which most renowned scholars have expressed varied views. For instance, Derek Cooper states that Islam as the last universal religion, today, has over eight hundred million (800 million) adherents. He further states that in recent years, Islam has shown itself to be not only the most widespread religion in the world but also the most dynamic, attracting converts at a faster rate than any time in the last few centuries.² Esposito John postulates that although Islam is the youngest religion in the world, it has become in recent times the third religion in Europe and the America³. Yahiya Emerick simply describes Islam as a religion, a civilization, a state, a social system, as well as a philosophy.⁴ Contributing to the discussion, Fatimatu N. Sulemanu is of the view that 'Islam, as a way of life regulates every facet of a Muslim's life'.⁵

¹ The Abrahamic traditions are the three major monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

² Derek Cooper, *Christianity and World Religions, an Introduction to World's major Faith* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2003), 118. Muslims today are close to two billion in population

³ Esposito John, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), 1.

⁴ See Yahiya Emerick, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam, 2nd Edition*, (New York: Alpha, 2004),

⁵ Fatimatu N. Sulemanu 'Education As Tool For Sustainable Development The Role of Muslim NGOs In Ghana'' in *Religion and Sustainable Development* edited by George Ossom –Batsa-Nicoletta Gatti, Rabiātu Deinyo Ammah (eds), (Verticano: Urbaniana University Press, 2018), 244.

David Owusu-Ansa and Raymond A. Silverman claim that in fact, it was from Begho that Muslims who later settled at places such as Kong, Buna and Bonduku in Code d'ivoire and Namasa, Banda and Mengye (**Menji**) in Ghana originated.⁶

Many scholars have written extensively on the history of Islam in West Africa and Ghana. Most of these scholars attributed the spread of Islam in Ghana to the Dyula-Wangara ethnic group and the Hausa. Ivor Wilks postulates that the emergence and spread of Islam in Ghana was by the Wangara traders. He outlined that the Wangara was classified into nine (9) groups. One of such groups was the Banda ethnic group of which Bamba (Banda) forms part. The Menji people are part of the Banda (Bamba) ethnic group. Begho was one of the trading centres of the Wangara in Ghana.⁷ According to Holger Weiss, the destruction of Begho made the Wangara to relocate to several places including Menji.⁸ However, Jan G. Platvoet posits that Begho was not destroyed as suggested by Holger Weiss. Platvoet maintains that the trade in Begho declined as a result of redirection of the trade route to Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti Region.

Muslims are in the minorities in most villages and towns in the Tain District in the Bono Region of Ghana, where the ancient Begho was situated. This could be attributed to several reasons. Some of these reasons include: firstly, communities in the District did not have Zongo quarters. Secondly, most of the towns and villages did not have Makarantah (Islamic schools) system of education. Thirdly, the indigenous scholars did not put premium on Da'awah (propagation) in the

⁶ Raymond 'A' S. and David Owusu-Ansa, *The Presence of Islam Among the Akan of Ghana: A Bibliographic Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1989), 326

⁷ Wilks Ivor, *The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Forest*, In the History of Islam edited by Nehemiah Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 94

⁸ Holger Weiss, *Between Accommodation and Revivalism: Muslims, the State and Society in Ghana from the Pre-colonial to the post-colonial era*, (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society 2008), 53

environs. However, there was growth in the number of Muslims in Menji consisting of indigenes and migrants. Historically, the people of Menji, in addition to their indigenous traditional values, were culturally influenced by Islamic values and orientations. These Islamic values had caused the Muslims in the Menji community to abandon some of their traditional values.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Islam continues to be the dominant religion in Menji. The people are predominantly Muslims who considered Islam as heritage from their ancestors and have for several decades kept its faith and practice alive over the centuries. Strangely enough, this phenomenon has not attracted the attention of the great minds of history of Islam in West Africa and Ghana. This gap therefore makes the researcher to investigate into the activities of the Menji people in the development of Islam. Menji is deemed the most Muslim populated community in the Tain District. Prominent scholars had written extensively on the introduction and development of Islam in West Africa, modern Ghana and Begho. Available literature reviewed so far is based on discussions on trade and the presence of Islam and Muslims in Ghana, the Volta Basin and Begho. These literatures concentrate more on the introduction and development of Islam in Modern Ghana. Albeit Menji which is one of the communities that accommodated some of the Muslim traders at Begho after its dispersion gave rise to the domination of Islam in the town. The research is aimed at examining the influence of Islam on the people of Menji. It is against this backdrop that the researcher is exploring the influence of Islam on the socio-cultural life of the people of Menji.



1.2.0 Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective of the study is to explore the history and influence of Islam on the socio-cultural lives of the Muslims in the Menji Community

1.2.2 Specific objective

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- explore the history and development of Islam in Menji
- examine the influence of Islam on the socio-cultural lives of the Muslims of Menji
- assess the influence of African Indigenous Religion on the activities of Menji Muslims.

1.3 Research Questions

Since good research largely depends, to a great degree on good research questions, the following questions are employed to guide the researcher towards the realization of the objectives of the research.

When was Islam introduced to Menji community?

What is the influence of Islam on the socio-cultural lives of the people of Menji?

How has African Indigenous Religion influenced Menji Muslims?

1.4 Scope of the Research

The scope of the research is limited to Menji Community. This is informed by the fact that majority of the population of Menji are Muslims. The target population is the 'a'imah (Imams), the Muslim Chiefs, the Linguists, the 'Ulamāh' (scholars), the Queen Mothers, women groups, Mu'adhin (the

official who calls Muslims to prayer) and enlightened Muslim youth who are mainly students in tertiary institutions. The chief Imam and the Mu'adhin are chosen because the researcher assumed that these 'a'imah (Imams) and Mu'adhin will have insights into the development of Islam in the study area. It is also believed that most of the time historical records are handed over to successors of the 'a'imah (Imams). Historical narratives are also sometimes handed down to 'a'imah (Imams) by their predecessors. The 'Ulamāh (Islamic scholars) are carefully chosen based on their demonstration of adequate knowledge of Islam. In addition, these scholars are chosen because of their religious activities in the propagation of Islam within the community and beyond. The Chiefs, most often, are custodians of historical records. Since Menji is a dominant Muslim community, past and present chiefs have been Muslims. The researcher approached the chiefs and linguists of Menji and sought information on the histography of the area under study. Women in most communities are also the custodians of the history of their communities. Consequently, queen mothers and other selected women were interviewed.

1.5 Methodology

The study is a qualitative research in which the researcher examines a real-life, contemporary bounded or multiple bounded system.⁹ It facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using variety of data sources. This allows an issue to be explored through different perspectives. It also allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood.¹⁰

⁹ John W, Creswell, *Qualitative Enquiry and Research Design Choosing among five Traditions 3rd edition*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications,2000), 29

¹⁰ Pamela Baxer& Susan Jack, Qualitative case study, methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers, *The Qualitative Report 13 number 4* (2008): 544.

Shank defines qualitative research as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meanings. By “systematic” he means “planned, ordered and public, following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By “empirical” he means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. By “Inquiry into” he says meaning researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience.¹¹

Denzin and Lincoln are of the view that qualitative research involves an interpretative and naturalistic approach. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.¹² Qualitative researchers typically go into the field knowing the most likely sources of data, while not ruling out other possible data sources that might come to light as the data collection progresses. As a result, the research used the historical approach for the study.

1.6 Historical Approach

Best and Kahn state that history is employed to understand the past and try to understand the present in light of the past experiences and development. Historical analysis may be directed towards an individual, an idea, a movement or an institution.¹³ History considers the current and counter current of the present and past events with the hope of discerning patterns that draw them all together. It is not the accumulation of facts but also the interpretation of the facts¹⁴. This

¹¹ Shank G, *Qualitative Research Personal Skills Approach*, (New Jersey: Merrill Prentices Hall. 2000), 5

¹² Denzin N.K. & Lincoln, Y. S. *Handbook of Qualitative Research 2nd edition*, (Thousand oaks: Sage Publications 2000), 3

¹³ John W. Best and James V. Khan, *Research in education 10th edition*, edited by Amis E. Burviikovs, (Boston: Pearson education Inc.2006), 83

¹⁴ Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical: Research, Planning and Design 8th edition*, (Upper Saddle River N. J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall 2005), 16

approach is useful especially in chapter two where the researcher traces the origins of Islam in Menji community.

1.7 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling is employed in this study. Purposive sampling is the process of selecting a particular segment of the population to represent the entire population so that inference about the population can be made. Purposive sample, also refers to as judgmental sampling, is based on the conviction that the researcher's knowledge about the population can be used to select sample members.¹⁵ In purposive sampling, the researcher decides purposively to hand-pick participants who are judged to be typical of the population especially having knowledge about the phenomenon under study.

1.8 Population Size

Population refers to the target group that the researcher is interested in obtaining information from to draw conclusions. The entire Menji Community constitutes the population size of the study. This is informed by virtue of the fact that Muslims form a vast majority of the community. However, since it will not be possible for the researcher to use every member of the population as a respondent, the researcher employed purposive sampling techniques to meticulously select the sample size to represent the entire population to draw a conclusion.

¹⁵ Donald et al., *Introduction to Research Evaluation*, (Wadsworth Cengage Learn Belmont, C A 9400-3098 2010)

1.9 Sample Size.

This refers to the number of subjects that is finally used in a research. The sample size for the study is fifty (50) participants. Each of the participants was purposively selected to actively participate in the interview segment of the study. The sample frame purposively chosen for the study included the 'a'imah, the 'Ulamāh, the chief, the linguist, the Queen mother, the Muslim Youth, the Mu'adhin, women groups and practitioners of Indigenous traditional religions. The researcher has a reason for choosing each of the respondents. Each of these respondents was chosen based on his or her knowledge of development of Islam in the Menji Muslim Community.

1.10 Method of Data Collection

Data collection refers to the process of obtaining vital information pertaining to the main issues of the study for the purpose of demonstrating whether or not they are authentic.¹⁶ The researcher uses qualitative method of data collection and analysis in the research. As a result, data from both the primary and secondary sources were used for the research. Primary data was collected by the researcher who is responsible for data analysis; interpretation and reporting of the results.¹⁷ In this study, the primary sources of data collected included interviews and questionnaires. Osuala indicates that the merit of the primary source of data collection is that it assists researchers to obtain accurate information needed.¹⁸ The researcher selected people who could best help understand the phenomenon to develop detailed understanding that might provide 'useful

¹⁶ C. Nwana, *Introduction to Educational Research*, (Ibadan: Heinemann Education Book Plc: 2005)

¹⁷ Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research, Logic of Anticipation*, (UK Polity Press 2000), 183

¹⁸ Esogwa C. Osuala, *Introduction to Research Methodology, 3rd Edition*, (Onitsha: African-First Publishers Limited 2001), 137-138

‘information that might help people ‘learn’ about the phenomenon and give voice to the ‘silenced’ people.¹⁹

1.11 Interviewing

A data collection encounter in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another (a respondent) is termed as an interview. Interviews may be conducted face-to-face or by telephone. A very common important research method in multifaceted qualitative research has been open-ended interview. It is embarked upon in a conversational manner in interviewing. A qualitative interview comes into play when a researcher makes inquiry into a phenomenon by asking one or more participants general, open-ended questions and recording their responses.²⁰

The researcher used open-ended questions in this study so as to allow the participants to create the option for responding. The researcher adopted one-on-one type of interview to solicit responses. The one-on-one interview is the process of getting information in which the researcher asks questions to record responses from any one of the participants in the study at a time. One-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are unhesitant to express themselves, who are capable of articulating facts and who are ready to share information in a comfortable manner. The researcher used this type to collect data from the 'a'imah (Imams), Chiefs, Linguists, Mu'adhin, and Queen Mothers. Fifty respondents were targeted for the interview.

¹⁹ John W. Creswell, *Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* 4th Ed (Boston Educational Research: Planning: (Pearson Education Inc.2012), 206

²⁰ Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating*, 218

1.12 Questionnaires

Questionnaires play an indispensable role in a research process. A questionnaire is a collection of statements and questions on a paper to elicit specific information from respondents to answer research questions. This instrument is good for gathering data on opinions, attitudes and ideas of respondents.²¹ Questionnaires are sometimes referred to as SAQ that is self-administered questions. The researcher administered sixty (60) questionnaires. He retrieved forty-five of the questionnaires fully completed by the respondents. The rest fifteen could not be collected back for various reasons. A cross section of respondents could not complete the questionnaires while others misplaced their copies. Some of the respondents travelled out of the town.

1.13 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The researcher used focus group discussions in obtaining data from women groups and youth groups who were mainly students from tertiary institutions. A focus group interview involves the process of getting information from a group of people typically four or six participants put together. In this case, the researcher assembles six women or youth, throws a question to them and expects an answer from any one of them based on their knowledge of the phenomenon. This type helped in that if one participant had difficulty recollecting an important event any other participants who have knowledge of the phenomenon can take it up. According to Kumpepor, focus group discussion takes the form of exchange of views and opinions through discussions with a group or different sets of groups, which are recognized to be knowledgeable about the issues at stake.²²

²¹ Alfred Kuranchie, *Research Made Simple*, Catholic University College of Ghana (Kumasi: Bookworm Publications 2015), 122

²² See Kumekpor T.K.B, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Science*, (Accra Sonlife Press and Services 2002)

Twumasi asserts that this method is useful for issues that participants are very much familiar with and their views need to be solicited collectively. Hence, the researcher has to gather people who are well versed in the phenomenon to discuss the issues with those who have useful insights and suggestions.²³ Bryman suggest reasons for holding focus group discussion, which include:

- to have an understanding about why people think the way they do.
- members of the group who may bring forward ideas and opinions not foreseen by the interviewer
- discussants can be challenged, often by other members of the group, about their responses
- The interactions found in group dynamics are closer to the real-life sense making and acquiring understanding.²⁴ Focus group does not intend to analyze the group but instead provide a forum that enhances group discussion, to brainstorm a variety of solutions and to establish a mechanism of opinion formation.²⁵

The researcher sat before the respondents to ask questions. Being in the presence of the respondents has the tendency of decreasing the number of “don’t know” and “no answers” syndrome. Also, if a respondent misunderstands the intent of a question or indicates that he or she does not understand, the researcher can clarify matters, thereby obtaining relevant responses. Again, the researcher could observe the respondents as well as ask questions.²⁶ For each focus group discussion there were six members. One participant among the group was asked to answer most of the questions. Once a while, other participants of the group intervened to correct a particular information and also to share their views. The researcher selected the participants for the focus group discussion

²³ See Twumasi P.A, *Social Research in Rural Community*, (Accra: Ghana Universities Press)

²⁴ Bryman A, *Social Research Method, Second Edition*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2004) 248-8

²⁵ See Sarantakos S., *Social Research* 5th edition, (Houndemills: Macmillan Press 2005),

²⁶ Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, (Belmont: Woodsworth 2007), 265

based on their knowledge of the phenomenon. Two different focus group discussions were held. One was made of women and the other of youth.

1.14 Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual framework plays several interrelated roles in the progress of a research. Its overall purpose is to make the research findings meaningful. Conceptual framework allows the researcher to put together observations and facts into a chronological order. It is an effective mechanism for bringing together tenable facts, most often from different investigations. The conceptual framework can be a blueprint in giving the researcher a sense of direction in understanding of not only the ‘what’ of a natural phenomenon but also the ‘why’ of its occurrence. When a researcher fails to identify the conceptual framework underpinnings of the research variables it becomes difficult to put together research findings. Closely connected with this, Blaikie writes “Research without theory is blind and theory without research is empty”²⁷. Grant and Osanloo say that “without a theoretical framework, the structure and vision for the study is unclear, much like a house that cannot be constructed without a blueprint”.²⁸

As regards the above statements, this research will be embarked upon conceptual framework of Al-Kafiyaji’s concept of Islamic *Tarikh* (history). Al-kafiyaji defines *Tarikh* linguistically as the indication of time. In customary usage and as a technical form, *Tarikh* is the general fixation of time, for the purpose of relating to a time-section, either of the past or the present or the future.²⁹

²⁷ Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research, Logic of Anticipation*, (UK Polity Press 2000), 350.

²⁸ See Grant C. & Osanloo A: Understanding Selecting and Integrated a theoretical framework in Dissertation Research: Creating blueprint for House’. *Administrative issues Journal; Connecting Education, Practice, and Research* (2014)

²⁹ Al-Kafayaji, *al-mukhtasar fi IIm al-Tarikh*, (Delhi: 1979), 547

The origin of the word *Tarikh* which is now generally used for history is very difficult to trace.³⁰ Though its root form came into use in Yaman during the *Jāhiliyah* (ignorance period) yet in all probability it referred to time, not to history. Although the earlier meaning of the word *Tarikh* is obscure, yet some of the earlier Muslim historians have used the term ‘*Akhābar* (information) for history.’³¹ The word *Tarikh* so commonly used for history is derived from the Arabic word ‘*arkh*’ which means recording the time of an event and as such *Tārikh* is actually the time when a particular event took place.³² According to Ibn Khaldun “history refers to events that are peculiar to a particular age or race.”³³ Islamic history is the science which informs us about our heritage, which makes us conscious of links with the past; which makes us aware of the origins and which provides us with a sense of direction for the future. For instance, the Quran 40:21 states that

Have they not travelled in the land to see the nature of the consequences for those who disbelieved before them? They were mightier than Thee in power and (in the) traces (which they) left behind them in the earth. Yet Allah seized them for their sins and they had none to protect them from Allah.

History is an integrated narrative or description of past events or facts written in the spirit of critical inquiry into the whole truth. Mouly opines that ‘as used by the Greeks, history meant an enquiry designed to construct past events, in a sense that, historical research can be defined as a scholarly attempt to discover what happened’³⁴. In an attempt to explain historical research Sukhia states that historical research conducted in the study of any subject connotes an effort to recount some aspects

³⁰ Franz Rosentha, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, (E.J Brill Leiden,1952), 113

³¹ Rosentha, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 11

³² Ibn Manzur: *Lisan al-Arab, Vol III* , (Cairo 1985),481

³³ Ibn Khaldun, Abd al Rahman bin Muhammad, *Muqaddimah ibn Khaldun Vol. I*, (Egypt: Dar al Nahdah 1980), 50

³⁴ Mouly George J, *The Science of an Education Research*, (New Delhi: Eurasia publishing 1963),202

of the past life in other words the researcher attempts to give meaning to the facts in the light of a relevant study.³⁵ According to Bryant et al

Histories are powerful because they both create and reinforce collective identities. Without a history it is difficult to know where one is, where one comes from or where one is heading. It is difficult to belong or have direction. History is like a collective memory, which historians produce about the past... Having a history is important because what happened in the pass profoundly affects all aspects of our lives and will affect what happens in the future.³⁶

Historical studies are conducted to discover facts and ideas that are helpful in understanding the past and current situations, and to predict the future. The data gathered from the past explains what is happening in the present as well as being used to predict the future.³⁷ Ary et al, states that data gathered from past events help to understand the present and what is likely to be the situation some time to come.³⁸

History helps us understand the source of contemporary problems, tells us what they were, how they arose, and how events unfolded through time³⁹. The past is a source of experience. Ignorance of the past or forgetting it means a loss of an inexpressible value. The folk wisdom says, ‘the nation that forgets its history is forced to repeat the mistakes of the past’.

³⁵ Sukia S P and others, *Elements of Educational Research*, (Allied publishing Bombay 1963) 192

³⁶ Bryant et al., What is History? What is IS History? What IS History...and Why Even Bother with History? *Journal of Informational Technology*, 2003 28(1)1-17

³⁷ Nwandinigwe I. P, *Fundamentals of Research Methods and Statistics*, Second Edition, (Lagos: Sibon Book Limited

³⁸ Ary D. Jacob, et al., *Introduction to Research in Education* 6th edition (Belmont: CA: Wadson Thomas Learning 2002)

³⁹ Mason et al. (*A historical method MIS Research: Steps and Assumptions* (MIS Quarterly), 20 (3) (1997b), 307 -320.

According to Golder, the overriding of the historical method is that all evidence is approached critically in historical research.⁴⁰ The researcher intends to rely on the concept of critical inquiry in gathering data for the research. This is so because evidence would come mainly from historical sources such as textual documents, participant recollection of events and reflection upon them. In historical research, data are more static in nature and are already out there where they are opened to public scrutiny and criticism.

1.15 Literature Review

This study is focused on variables related to the introduction and development of Islam in West Africa, modern Ghana and Menji. For this purpose, relevant literature was extensively reviewed in an attempt to provide academic foundations for the research project. The literature reviewed provides scientific explanations for the research questions and enabled the researcher to verify his findings. A primary purpose of literature review is to establish what is already known about the study in order to precisely locate and define the area of new knowledge in the present study addresses itself. In many forms the purpose of the literature review will be similar. In other approaches, such as life history, the researcher needs to take into account the particular ways in which the literature is used and the order in which it should appear. In the process, gaps are detected and the need to fill the gaps becomes clear. The researcher's aim in the review process is to establish that the chosen area needs investigation and to provide a convincing rationale for why the study is necessary. This is to demonstrate that they have a sound theoretical and

⁴⁰ Golder.P, *Historical Method in Marketing Research with New Eon long- Term Market Share Stability*, Journal of Marketing Research 37(2) (2000)156-172.

methodological basis for the study.⁴¹ Walliman N. provides the following purposes of literature review. These are to:

- summarise the results of previous research to form a foundation on which to build one's own research.
- collect ideas on how to gather data.
- investigate methods of data analysis
- assess the success of the various research designs of the studies already undertaken.⁴²

According to Neumann, literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge is accumulated and that it is based on what is learned from, built on, and what others have done. Neumann indicates that the goals of literature review are demonstrating the researcher's familiarity with a body of knowledge that already exists about the phenomenon, showing the path of prior research and how the current project is linked to already completed research, integrating and summarizing what is known in and about his or her research, and learning from others. In line with Neumann and Walliman's views cited above, the researcher used existing literature to investigate the evolution and development of Islam in Menji by exploring widely accepted models. Consequently, a number of relevant works on Islam in West Africa and modern Ghana were consulted and reviewed.

Suleyman S. Nyang asserts that Islam is an important factor in human life. The spread of religion to the four corners of the world including Africa meant that the dawn of Islam in Africa was as a result of the rapid progress the religion made in the early decades of the Islamic faith. According

⁴¹ Judith Clare and Helen Hamilton, *Writing Research Transforming Data into Text*, (USA: Churchill Livingstone an imprint of Elsevier Limited 2004), 9

⁴² Walliman N, *Social Research Methods*. (London: Sage Publication 2006)

to Sulayman, the spread of Islam to the Maghrib gave rise to Arabization and Islamization of the religion. He asserted further that one of the fascinating factors that aided the realization of the Islamization process in North Africa was mercantile activities and the role of marabouts.⁴³ This work is primarily on the factors responsible for the penetration of Islam into Africa. The material is beneficial since it has educated the researcher by highlighting the differences and similarities between the spread of Islam in the Maghrib and sub-Saharan Africa.

Nehemiah Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels in contributing to the discussion on the dissemination of Islam in North Africa demonstrated that the religion made its way into Africa through two gateways, from the east and the north. According to the duo from the two main directions the carriers of the Islamic religion navigated across vast empty spaces, the water of the Indian Ocean and the desert sand of the Sahara. According to them, the Arab nomads who crisscrossed southward from Egypt to the Sudan and westward across North Africa in the 11th century contributed to the Islamization and Arabization of the Sudan and North Africa.⁴⁴ This book identified how and by what means Islam came to North Africa. Whatever the literature gap might be in the work would be very relevant to this study because it would offer or equip the researcher with the knowledge of introduction and development of Islam in West Africa from North Africa.

John S. Mbit in his book 'African Religions and Philosophy', recounts that the religion of Islam arrived in the Western Sahara through the trade routes and merchandise transactions between the West African states and the Muslims north. According to Mbit Islam began its penetration into

⁴³ Sulayman S. Nyang, Islam in African World in *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara*, edited by Pade Badru and Brigid M. Sackey,(Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2013),3

⁴⁴ Nehemiah Levtzion and Randall. L Pouwels, Patterns of Islamization and Varieties of Religious Experience Among Muslims of Africa in *The History of Islam in Africa* Edited by Nehemiah Levtzion and Randall Pouwels (Ohio University Press 2000),1-3

West African societies through the southerly direction, especially those on the edges of the Western Sahara. It was the traders who aided the spread of Islam in the Western Sahara. The Berbers who accepted Islam played a major role in the spread of the Religion in the Western Sahara.⁴⁵ Mbit's work is based on the development of Islam in the Western Sahara and Africa as whole. Nonetheless, this literature is useful to the current study because it gives substantial knowledge on Islam in Western Sahara which will enhance the current study.

Bari in his book 'The Holistic History of Islam in the Western and Central Africa' gives the geographical demarcations of the Western Sudan. He established that the western Sudan covers the savanna belt in the northwest of Africa. According to him, the Sudanese states cover the vast Sahara Desert in the north and the tropical rain forest of the Guinea Coast towards the south. He stated that the entire region traces its origin to an Arabic term Bilad-as-Sudan, thus Land of the Black. Bari asserts that the ancient Tekrur, Ghana, Mali and Songhai empires occupied the areas believed to be the geographical location of the Western Sudan. According to him these empires had administrative, political, and economic capitals such as Tekrur's Tekrur, Ghana's Kumbi Saleh, Mali's Niani and Songhai's Gao.⁴⁶ The book describes the Western Sudan and how Islam was introduced to states of Sudan. The book described generally the geographical and historical dimension of the introduction of Islam in the Western Sudanese states. The present study rather endeavoured to describe the socio-religious influence of Islam in Menji. This literature contributes immensely to the research in the discussion of development of Islam in the Western Sudanese

⁴⁵ John S. Mbit, *African Religions and Philosophy*, second Revised and Enlarged Edition, Heinemann International Literature and Textbooks a division of (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1969), 237

⁴⁶ Osman B. Bari, *The Holistic History of Islam in the Western and Central Africa*, Accra: Dezine Focus Limited 2015),22

states since it gives credence and an informed decision on how Islam penetrated into Western Sudan before it reached Menji.

Another related literature, which is very useful to the current study is Mervyn Hiskett's 'Development of Islam in West Africa'.⁴⁷ Hiskett seems to suggest that it was the Arabic writer and astronomer, Ibn Khaldun, who might have enough knowledge on the infiltration of Islam in Western Sudan. He however claims that the religion of Islam had been slowly penetrating into Western Sudan for at least 200 years. He noted that traders were very influential in the introduction of Islam in the Western Sudan. Some Islamic influences could have been coming into Western Sudan from as early as the 7th Century. According to Hiskett Islam came to the Western and Central Sudan not directly from Arabia where Prophet Muhammad (SAW) first preached it in A.D 610, but gradually from North Africa and Egypt, across the Sahara and then down into the Savanna. This book served as a relevant reference material to the work under study since it outlines the influence of Islam in Africa.

Clark in 'West Africa and Islam' asserted that Islam's maiden contact with West Africa was in the 7th Century. The religion was brought into West Africa by the great Arab conqueror Uqtba b. Nafi who led forces from their base in Qayrawayn into Southern Morocco and from there proceeded into the Western Sahara and Western Sudan. Clark postulated that the spread of Islam in West Africa was in stages. First was military expedition. Second stage was mercantile activities by the Berber Stock. Third stage was syncretic form of Islam which contributed to spread of the religion in West Africa. West Africa as a land of gold attracted many Muslim traders in North Africa to the commercial centres of the Western Sahara and West Africa. Clark says, 'it was in this way that

⁴⁷ Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, London, (New York: Longman Group Limited 1984),19

West Africa made its first contacts with Islam'.⁴⁸ According to him, Islam in ancient Ghana made impressive inroads. He stated that the capital of ancient Ghana was made up of two towns one of which was inhabited by the Muslims. This Muslim town was a big township with twelve mosques, one of which was used for Friday congregational prayers while the others were used for the daily prayers. The other town was the royal town which was situated six miles away. This town, too, hosted one mosque in which Muslim visitors used to pray. The king of ancient Ghana chose his interpreters his treasurers and most of his ministers from among the Muslims. The king was not himself a Muslim, but he appointed Muslims to top government posts.⁴⁹

In the Songhay Empire Islam saw considerable expansion. Clark asserted that Askiya Muhammad was very instrumental in the development of Islam in the Songhay Empire. Askiya Muhammad serving as the king of the empire sought the advice of a Muslim scholar, Al-Maghil from Tlemcen in Algeria. Al-Maghil's advice was relevant both to Askiya Muhammad and Islam in particular. The advice of Al-Maghil contained ideas and opinions which not only influenced the behaviour of Askiya Muhammad but the action of Osuman Dan Fodio of Northern Nigeria. Al-Mahil, also, advised Askiya Muhammad to rule and dispense justice according to the Qur'ān.⁵⁰ Clark's work is based on the history of Islam in the entire West Africa. The current work looked at the history of Islam in Menji. The book is very useful to the research because it is comprehensive enough to lay the foundation for the work on the development of Islam in West Africa. Though this literature is on the development of Islam in West Africa, it is very relevant to the study since it gives ample information on the spread of the religion in the West Africa region. The present study, however,

⁴⁸ Peter B. Clark, *West Africa and Islam, A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold 1982) 10-12

⁴⁹ Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 10-12

⁵⁰ Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 52

discussed the history, development and influence of Islam in Menji Muslim Community. Clarks work, moreover lays the foundation for the spread of history of Islam in Menji.

Mervyn Hiskett in the book 'The Development of Islam in West Africa' provides an in-depth historical account of Islam in the Voltaic Region. Hiskett notes that the detailed history of Islam in the Voltaic Region seemed tangle and difficult to follow, but the broad sweep of it is simple. He says, it first became as small wave of the tide of Islam that swept the Mali Empire and that the religion of Islam became firmly established as a result of a second, more powerful wave that came from Hausa land and Borno.⁵¹ He continues that 'the Hausa occupation of Salaga had important consequences for the propagation of Islam.'⁵² The book widens the scope of development of Islam to the entire West Africa. The present study limited the development of Islam to Menji Muslim Community as its scope. However, since the entire book is on the development of Islam in West Africa it would be very useful to the present study.

Ivor Wilks in his book 'Forest of Gold Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of the Asante' gives comprehensive information on Begho. He asserts that the Dyula in Begho did business with the Akan in the supplies of gold. Wilks gave accounts of the origin of the Wangara in Begho. According to him, 'they claimed that their ancestors left Mande Ka'bah to settle in a place called Bighu (French "Begho") ...'⁵³ Wilks states that the relative dearth of local writings on the history of Begho points to the fact that the town was a commercial entrepot rather than scholarship.⁵⁴ The book is based on the trade activities of the Dyula in the Begho trade centre and subsequent

⁵¹ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, 121

⁵² Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, 121

⁵³ Ivor Wilks, *Forest of Gold Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of the Asante*, (Athen: Ohio University 1993), 16-17

⁵⁴ Wilks, *Forest of Gold Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of the Asante*, 21

Islamization of the people in and around the place. The book also outlined that it was after the dislocation of Begho that a community such as Menji emerged. The literature gap identified in this book which the current study seeks to cover is the development of Islam in Menji. Despite the fact that the literature stated above concentrated on the introduction of trade and Islam in Begho, it serves as important sources of relevant information to the present study.

On the penetration of Islam in the middle Volta Basin, Holger Weiss in his book 'Between Accommodation and Revivalism' comments that Islam spread to the Volta Basin in the sixteenth century. Initially, the Volta Basin witnessed the creation of the first kingdom of Dagbon which had influence over much of the region. A further development occurred in the mid-Sixteenth century when a Mande calvary force moved into the region. Apart from the invasion of the warriors who established themselves as sovereign in the Mossi and Gbanya states, societies in the Volta Basin were affected by the expansion of trade networks.

The first to develop were the Mande trade networks. Since the seventeenth century, the Hausa trade network moved beyond Hausaland to the Voltaic Basin. A distinguishing feature of both trade networks was the principal group of traders, the Mande traders called Dyula, as well as the Hausa were Muslims. Both trade networks of the Dyula and the Hausa played instrumental role in the Islamization process in the Volta Basin. However, the Islamization process was slow as a result of the trade activities.⁵⁵ The book discussed the arrival of Islam in the Voltaic Basin through trade networks of two important ethnic groups that played a vital role in the spread of Islam in West Africa in general and Volta Basin in particular. The book is on introduction of Islam in the

⁵⁵ Holger Weiss, *Between Accommodation and Revivalism: Muslims, the State, and Society in Ghana from the Precolonial to the Postcolonial* (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, University of Helsinki 2008), 44

entire Volta Basin. The book is relevant to the study because it outlined the process of spread of Islam in the Volta Basin.

Adu Boahen states in his book 'Topics in West Africa History' that historians are still arguing about the origins of the Akan states. It is generally agreed that their ancestors first lived in the open country of modern north-western Ghana and north-eastern Ivory Coast, which is in the basin of the Black Volta. It is a text that provides the history of Kingdoms and ethnic groups in Ghana. The book accounts for the emergence of the Akan state in Ghana. It says that, while the Volta Kingdoms of Mamprussi, Dagomba, Mossi and Gonja were emerging in the regions between the Niger and the Volta, similar developments were taking place in the regions between the Volta and the basin of Pra and its tributaries of the Oda and Birim, where the Kingdom of Bono-Tekyiman (Techiman), Banda, Twifo, Adansi, Denkyira, Fante, AKyem, Akwamu and Asante arose. The book states that unlike the states of the Volta, the rulers as well as the subjects of these southern states formed one ethnic group called the Akan and speak the Twi language. According to the book, the first Akan state to emerge was Bono-Tekyiman.⁵⁶The researcher discovered that the book fully accounts for the emergence of ethnic groups and kingdoms in Ghana which include Banda. However, it did not state how Islam penetrated into the Banda state. Menji forms an integral part of the Banda state. The book will be very relevant to the study since it gives the researcher a vivid historical picture of the Akan states.

G.T. Stride et al., in their book 'Peoples and Empires of West Africa' postulated that when the Akan entered modern Ghana, they stayed for some time in the Banda hills and moved down to their permanent home in the basin of the Pra and Ofin rivers. It is stated further that three main

⁵⁶ Adu A. Boahen, *Topics in West Africa History*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1966), 58-59

trade routes between the forest and the Savanna appear to have been established. The book clarifies that Dyula traders operated from their main base at Begho in the Banda hills. Begho consisted of two sections: Muslims lived in one part and the Indigenous in the other. The writers state that the Dyula, who speak a Mande language exchanged forest products for goods from across the Sahara. These traders also settled in villages and towns in the forest where they could act as middlemen among the Akan.⁵⁷ The book mentioned some villages and towns in the area. The Muslim of Menji trace their origin from Begho. The literature traced the origins of the people of Menji and their sources of Islam. The study also discusses the influence of Islam upon the Muslims in Menji Community.

Fusein Muhammed in his Unpublished thesis, 'The early History of the Banda (Ligbi) and the Nafaana' posited that Ligbi is a Mande language. It is related to Dyula. Ligbi are also referred to as Weila, Gyogoh and Bamba. The name Ligbi was originally known as Dihyatul-Alkalbi. Dihyatul-Alkalbi was the name of their ancestor who came from Saudi Arabia. He was an adherent of indigenous religion and a successful trader. It was through trade activities that the Ligbi came to the Begho trade centre. During the days of the trade at Begho, the Ligbi imported beads, ceramics, bowls, smoking pipes and textiles produced with different symbols. They taught their neighbouring Bono how to dye cloth. According to him, Dihya was finally Islamized by the Prophet (S.A.W.) and become a commander of a unit of dispatching letters of invitation to Islam.⁵⁸ Though Fusein did not state how the Islam of the Ligbi in Menji developed over time, his work is still

⁵⁷ G.T. Stride, B.A & Caroline Ifeka, *Peoples and Empires of West Africa*, (Mayfield Road: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1978), 237-238

⁵⁸ Fuseini Mohammed, *The Early History of the Banda (Ligbi and Nafaana)*, An Unpublished Long Essay submitted to the Department of History, University of Cape Coast for the award of a Degree in Bachelor of Arts, 2013, 4

relevant because it gives the researcher the brief history of the people of Menji. The current work would cover the literature gap by outlining the development of Islam in the Menji Community.

The rapid spread of Islam from the Volta Basin to other parts of Ghana including Ashanti region had been steadfast. The pervasion of the sway of the religion in modern Ghana has been peaceful. There is not a community in Ghana that had accepted Islam through the sword.

Samwini in his book ‘The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 and its Effects on Muslims and Muslim-Christian, identifies the actual period of the presence of Muslims in Kumasi. He stressed on two main periods. First was large exodus of Hausa Muslim traders from Salaga to the south. The second was the natives of Muslims in Kumasi that is to say every Muslim found in Kumasi was seen either as a stranger from the northern territory or immigrant from the sister Africa countries. He observed several factors that led to the robust spread of Islam in Kumasi.⁵⁹ The book identified factors for the spread of Islam in Ashanti region. The present study reveals the role the people of Menji played in the spread of Islam in the Ashanti region. The book will be very important to the present study because the history of Bono region is closely connected to Ashanti region.

Mumuni Sulemana in his thesis work “Islamic Organisations in Accra: Their Structure, Role and Impact in the Proselytization of Islam” states some possible reason for the penetration of Islam in the south and Accra in particular. First was the Donko trade. Second was the Hausa troops that were recruited from Hausaland in Nigeria by the British colonial administration. Third was the role played by Muslim traders in the south especially in Accra. Fourth was the decline of the Salaga

⁵⁹ Nathan I. Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 and Its Effect on Muslims and Muslim-Christian*, A Thesis submitted to the school of Historical Studies, (University of Birmingham 2006), 32.

market and the also the Salaga civil war of 1892. Fifth was the immense influence of Officer Ali and Alhaji Br'a'imah whose instrumentality made it possible for the acquiring of land for construction of the first permanent mosque in Accra. The scope of Mumuni Suleman's work is the Islamic organization and their impact on the Islamization process in the south, especially Accra. The present study looks at the development of Islam and its influence on the lives of the Muslims in Menji. Mumuni Sulemana's work is very relevant to the present study since it lays the foundation for the smooth penetration of Islam in Accra from the Volta Basin.⁶⁰

Graft Johnson in his work "Historical Geography of Gold Coast, traced the genesis of Islam in Fante on the Coast and asserted that during the Asante campaigns, seventy Hausa soldiers were recruited by Captain Glover, Governor of Lagos, in the interior of Lagos. Amongst early Muslims converted by this missionary was one Benjamin Sam later known as Bonyaminer Sam and with another convert Mahdi Appah has been chiefly responsible for the spread of Islam in the country. The book outlined those who were responsible for the introduction of Islam in the coastal areas. Besides, the book is on the historical geography of Gold Coast and possible coming of Islam to Fantiland. The present study looks at the arrival and development of Islam in Menji. Nevertheless, the book is relevant to the study in that it states how Islam came to the south including the Coastal areas.⁶¹

Trimingham in his book 'the Influence of Islam upon Africa outlines the influence of Islam up on the social life of Muslims in Africa. He states that Islam broadens conceptions of communal relationships. This is accomplished primarily through the sharing of common rituals. He asserts in

⁶⁰ Mumuni Sulemana, *Islamic Organisations in Accra: Their Structure, Role and Impact in the Proselytisation of Islam*, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Department for the study of Religions 1996, 6-12

⁶¹ J. W .de Graft Johnson, *Historical Geography of Gold Coast*, (Headley Brothers 1929), 118

this book that Islamic rituals have great significance, not only in their religious context, but as a manifestation of Islamic thread linking communities connected in no other way. He explains that social life begins in the family where children receive not only their training in African ways, but also in how to inculcate the Islamic spirit and outlook very important in the Qur'ānic schools.⁶² The gap identified in this book is that it draws attention to a general influence of Islam upon Africa. The present work is limited to the influence of Islam upon the Muslims in the Menji community.

In his book 'Islamic Revivalism in contemporary Ghana, Yunus Dumbé highlighted two interrelated issues concerning the first coming of Islam into the Gold Coast, namely Islamization and Islamic revival. He explained that Islamization is about the spread of the religion as well as the scale of the proselytization. According to him revival had a stronger sense of enhancing the spiritual dimensions of the faith and practice among the adherents. He said that the Islamization of the people of Gold Coast was influenced by trading activities and the expeditions of Mande speaking-Muslims who were known in West Africa as Wangara or Dyula. He asserted that the migration of Muslims from West African countries also aided in the Islamization process in Gold Coast.⁶³ Yunus Dumbé's work is primarily on Islamization and Islamic revival in the Gold Coast. The current study looked at Islamization, Islamic revival and influence of Islam upon the Muslims in Menji.

Enid Schildkraut in his book, 'People of Zongo' states the origin and formation of the Zongo community in Ghana, and particularly the growth of the Zongo. He provided information on the earlier relationship between Muslims and the Northern empires which was facilitated by the influx

⁶² J. S Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, (Longmans, 1968), 85

⁶³ Yunus Dumbé, *Islamic Revivalism in contemporary Ghana*, (Stockholm: Souderton University, 2013), 24

of Muslims to the southern part of Ghana.⁶⁴ The book did not discuss the influence of the Islamization in Ghana. The present study looked at the development and influence of Islam in the Menji Muslim Community. The book is relevant to the study because it deals with the major occupations of the early Muslims in various courts and palaces in northern and southern Ghana.

David Owusu-Ansah in his article 'Prayer, Amulet and Healing' in a book entitled 'The History of Islam in Africa' edited by Nehemia Levtzion and Randall. L. Pouwels, said that prayers and amulets are two of the common means by which African societies have addressed illness. According to him through such agencies, the spiritual causes of sickness are appealed to, or confronted, to let go of afflictions. The theory of disease that are appealed to spiritual sources reflects a philosophical duality in which the outer signs of ailments are ascribed to hidden spiritual imbalance. He said that the explanation of sickness as presented above is not a suggestion that these societies have no appreciation of natural causation of illness. The present study looked at how Islamic Prayer and amulets were used to enhance Islamization in the Menji Community.

Suzanne Haneeth states in his book 'Whatever Everyone should Know about Islam and Muslims' that, central to the Islamic teachings and culture are the various obligatory acts of worship which are often referred to as the five pillars of Islam. These are the Shahādda, Salat, and Sawm (Fasting) during the month of Ramadan, the Zakat (alms) and the Hajj (pilgrimage). The purpose of Islamic worship is, thus, to strengthen the individual's faith and sense of submission to Allah, solidify his or her character, to discipline him or her for his or her role as Allah's faithful servant and steward on earth to make it possible and easy for him to live in a manner ordained by Allah, and to reinforce

⁶⁴ Enid Schildkrout, *The people of Zongo*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978)

the ties of brotherhood among Muslims.⁶⁵ The book emphasizes that the five pillars of Islam are central to Islam. The book did not outline how the five pillars of Islam could be used to develop Islam in a particular society or community. The present study outlines how the various acts of worship could be employed to enhance the development of Islam in Menji. Nevertheless, the book is relevant to the study since it gives the researcher enough grounds for the analysis of the five pillars of Islam for community development.

Ibrahim Amini is of the view that society comprises of families. According to him, Islam attaches great importance to real pleasure and prosperity of human beings through islamically balanced, highly ethical, well-educated and well-behaved families and happy homes. In all fields of human activity, Islam has laid down clearly and in detail the right and duties of all members of the family. The book is on marriage life in Islam. Even though, it is basically on marriage, the study would be looking at how Islam is developed and sustained in Menji through the Islamic marriage system. The book would indeed be very useful to the current study.

1.16 Limitations and Challenges of the Study

Exploring the historical or past events and occurrences needs people who are active participants of such events at the time of their happening. Since the history of Islam in Menji dates back to antiquity, the researcher anticipates that it would be a big challenge locating people who know the history of Islam in the Menji community. The contemporary witnesses might not all be alive. The researcher dealt with respondents to whom knowledge of past events were handed down to from the past generations. Again, inadequate availability of primary sources made it a hurdle to localize

⁶⁵ Suzanne Haneef, *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*, New Delhi Islamic Book Service, 2002), 199

the sources. In order to ameliorate this kind of limitation, the researcher relied on secondary data to fill in the gaps. Besides, the researcher anticipated that some of the respondents might not be available to respond to questionnaires on time. Some might also delay the answering of the questions. The measures that the researcher put in place to address the problems encountered in this regard were to look for alternative means in case a respondent unduly delays the process. An alternative possibility was to look for another respondent. Furthermore, the researcher anticipated the literacy limitation on the part of some respondents. In dealing with this literacy problem, the researcher looked for an interpreter or the researcher read and explained the questions to the understanding of the respondents in the languages they clearly understand.

1.17 Significance of the study

The outcome of this study might be the first comprehensive written document on the history of Islam in Menji. This study will, thus be significant in that it will be my modest contribution to knowledge on the histography of Islam in Menji. It will add to available literature in the development of Islam in Ghana. It serves as a foundation for further studies in the introduction and expansion of Islam in Bono Region in general and Menji in particular. It will be a pioneering piece of work as it will recommend further studies into the area, which the current study could not completely cover. It further highlights the strengths and weaknesses of Islam in Menji. The study will create anawareness of the people (Muslims) in the Menji community the need to play active roles in revitalizing the Islamization processes in the Tain District to attract more adherents into the fold of Islam. It will be in the best interest of the people of Menji to know that their ancestors in the Volta basin and Begho played important roles in the development of Islam. There is,

therefore, the need for the current generation to continue the strenuous efforts and legacies left behind for them by their ancestors.

1.18 Organisation of the Work

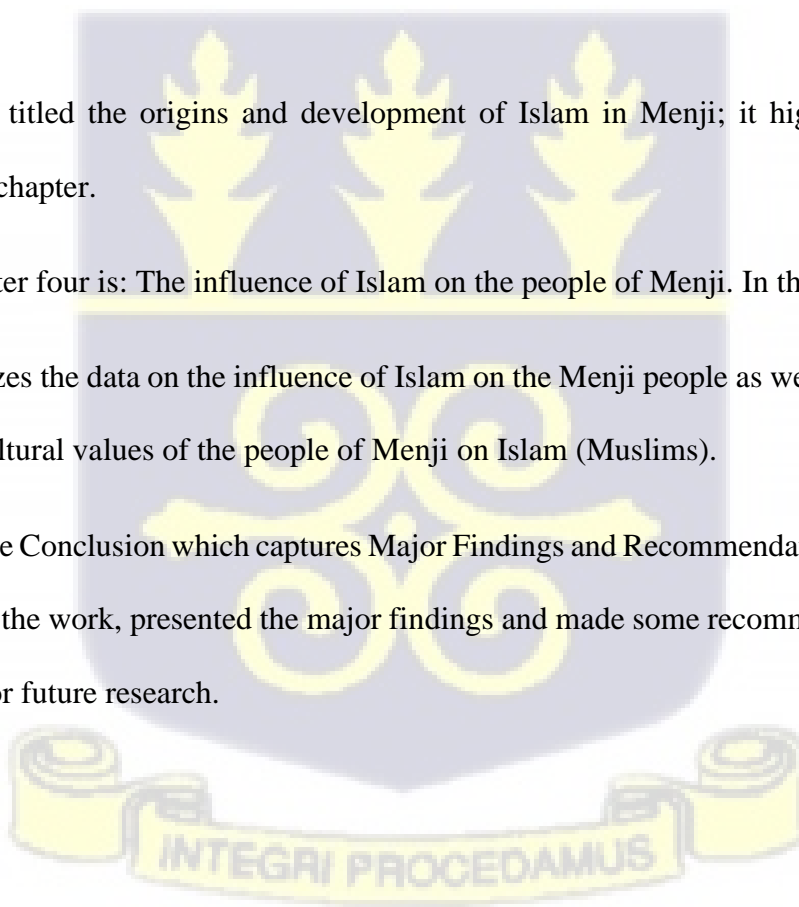
This work consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and it comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, the research objectives, the research questions, the scope of the research, methodology, conceptual frame work, literature review, limitations and challenges, relevance of the study, and the organization of the study.

Chapter two dwells on the historical origins of Menji and its religious worldviews, beliefs and practices, geographical and historical overviews of Menji, as well as the rites of passages in the community.

Chapter three is titled the origins and development of Islam in Menji; it highlights all issues discussed in the chapter.

The title of chapter four is: The influence of Islam on the people of Menji. In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the data on the influence of Islam on the Menji people as well as the influence of indigenous cultural values of the people of Menji on Islam (Muslims).

Chapter five is the Conclusion which captures Major Findings and Recommendations. It concluded and summarized the work, presented the major findings and made some recommendations as well as suggestions for future research.



CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF MENJI AND ITS RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEWS, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the geographical location and historical origins of Menji. It also explores the religious worldview of the people of Menji before Islam as well as their traditional belief systems and practices.

2.1 Geographical Location and Population

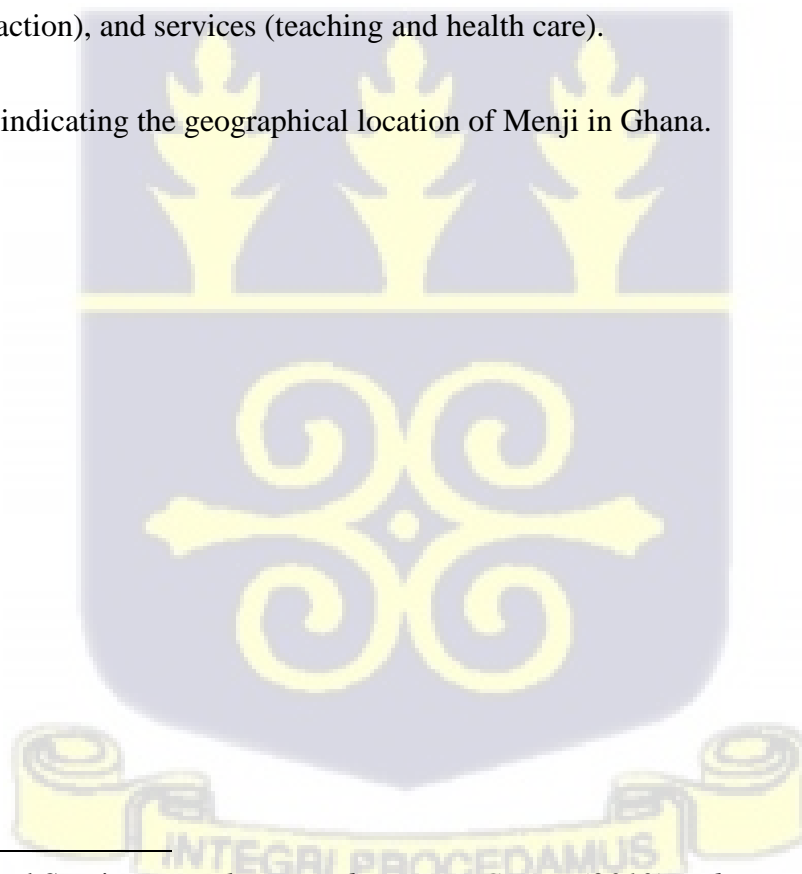
Menji is located in the Bono Region of Ghana which is one of the regions in the country. It is situated in the north of Nsawkaw, the capital of the Tain District. It is six miles from the District Capital. The Menji community shares boundaries with Nsawkaw to the east, Sampa to the west. It is also bounded by the Banda District and Bui Hydroelectric Dam to the North and Ivory Coast to the Northwest. It is geographically placed on the Wenchi-Sampa highway that links Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The Menji community is both in dispersed and lineal settlement patterns. It is divided into seven sections namely: Saakinah (Chief Palace), Kromiedarah (lakeside), Kukulayah (Flat Bowl), Josorah (Shrine), Jaako (Amazing), Fuglakankinah (Banda line) and Babariyah (Nafaanaline). Menji has a total population of about two thousand six hundred and thirteen (2613). Out of the total population of about one thousand six hundred and thirty-one (1,631) are males



representing 43.25% with about one thousand four hundred and eighty-two (1,482) females representing 56.72%.⁶⁶

Due to the bimodal rainfall pattern of Menji community, there is abundant food supply throughout the year. Information on climate and whether conditions help the people who are peasant farmers as to how to cultivate their crops in order to avoid late planting with its associated problems. Most of the lands are situated in the savanna woodlands. The lands are arable and very fertile for food crop production. Farming is the main occupation of most of the people in the community because of the location of the land. However, others engage in small scale activities such as Shea butter extraction, petty trading, kenkey mixing, teaching and provision of Health services and spiritual consultation. The occupation distribution can be grouped as agriculture (farming), agro-processing (shea butter extraction), and services (teaching and health care).

Below are maps indicating the geographical location of Menji in Ghana.



⁶⁶ Ghana Statistical Service: *Population and Housing Census (2010) and Tain District Planning and Control Unit (TPCU)*.

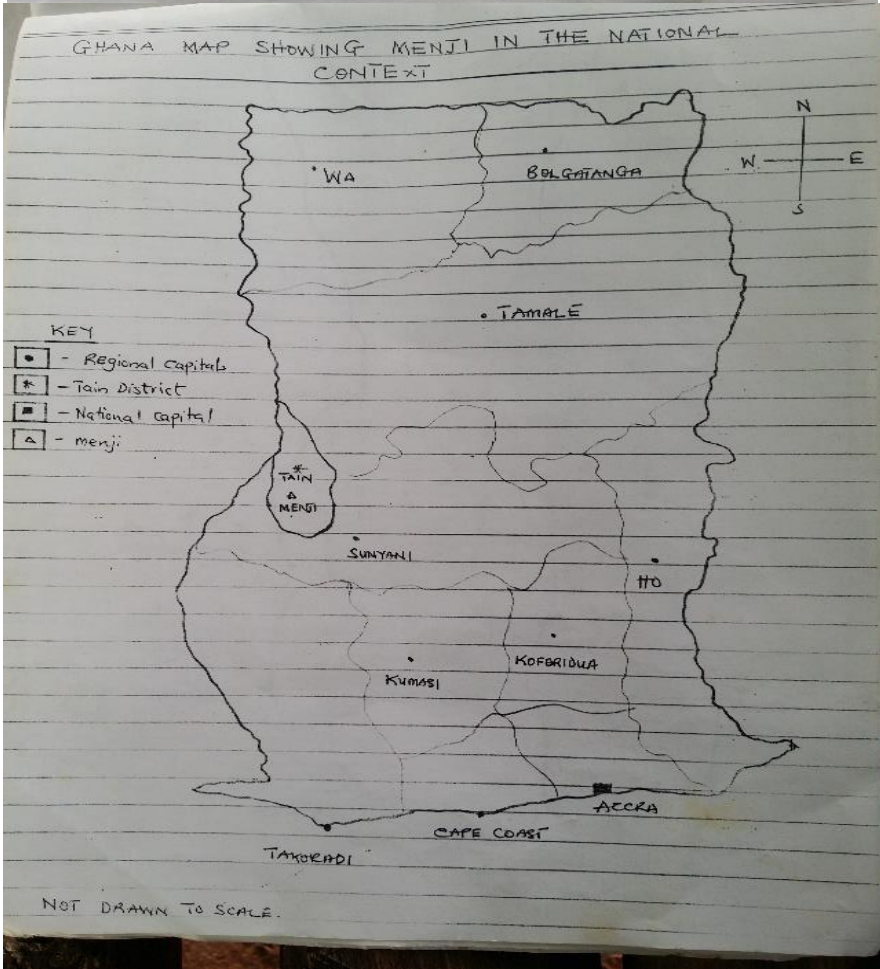
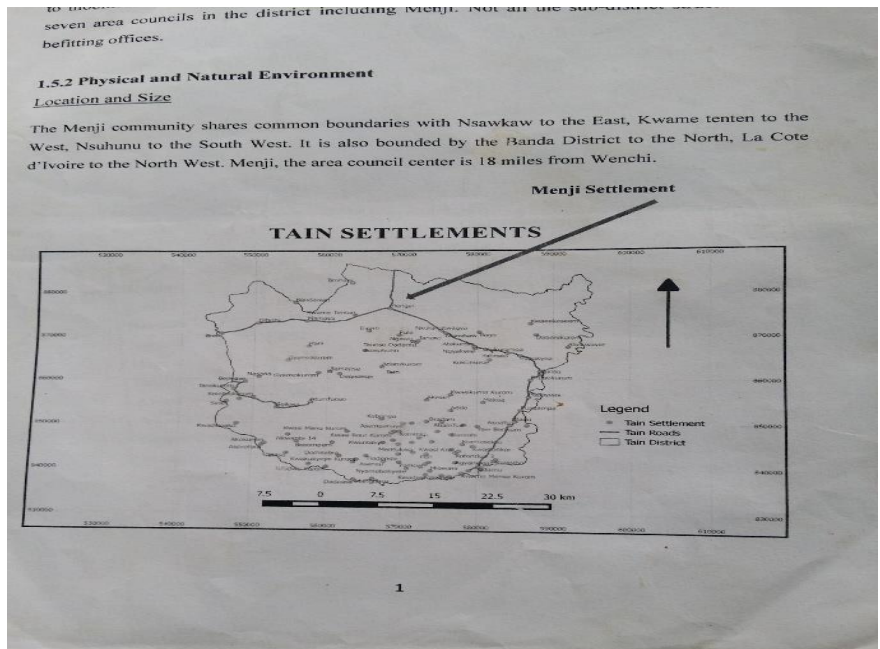


Fig.1 Maps of Menji Community and Ghana

2.2 Historical Origins

In an interview with Nasta Iddrisu, a custodian of traditional myths at Menji, she revealed that according to a myth of Menji, some of the people are believed to have descended from heaven or a hole at a place called Gbaapo (a hill at Menji).⁶⁷ Two groups of persons descended from the hole. The first group to descend was the Biyaa, ancestors of Bofie (a community about 8 k.m from Menji). The second group was the Bomo. On their arrival, the Biyaa not being Muslim was left at Bofie while the ancestors of Menji travelled across the River Biyaa to settle in Menji. The river, hence, serves as a boundary between Bofie and Menji. The name Menji is derived from a proto-Dyula word which is pronounced as Manajie. Manajie means Pawpaw. Non-natives of Menji later corrupted it to Mengye or Menji. Pawpaw is said to be the first food (fruit) the ancestor who descended from the heaven ate. This then became the name of the community.



⁶⁷Interview with Nasta Iddrisu, a custodian of a traditional myths of Menji, at Menji in her resident on Thursday, 21November, 2019 at 6:44 pm

Fig.2 Picture of Nasta Iddriss, Custodian of traditional myths of Menji

The indigenes of Menji are believed to be descendants of the Ligbi (Banda) clans of the Mande-speaking people. According to oral report, the name Banda was derived from the Gyaman word. The name came about as a result of a conflict that emerged between the Astantes and the Gyamans in the year 1880. The Ligbi assisted the Asantes against the Gyaman. The Gyaman was defeated in that battle. The Gyaman intended vengeance on the Ligbi for their solidarity with the Asantes. They first attacked the Ligbi during one night when the latter was supposed to be asleep. Consequently, the Ligbi in preparedness for the second invasion of the Gyaman always stayed awake during the night. Whenever the Gyaman attacked the Ligbi at night, they met the elders of the Ligbi awake and offering Salat and doing *Dhikr*. This made the Gyaman refer to the Ligbi in their language as ‘Benda’ meaning they do not sleep. Subsequently, this name became corrupted to Banda.⁶⁸

In an interview with war veteran (Second World War), Abubakar Sai’d, and an Islamic scholar, he confirmed the oral report presented by Fusein Muhammed in his unpublished Long Essay.⁶⁹ In 2012 the Ligbi of Menji argued strongly that the name Banda should not be used to describe the Banda District that was carved from the Tain District. This agitation came about when the Ligbi/Banda of Menji and its environ realized that they were excluded from the Banda District. Ligbi is a Mande language. It is related to the Dyula. Twi is their trade language and is taught in schools. Almost all Ligbi can speak and understand Twi. The Ligbi are sometimes referred to as Wela, Gyogoh, Banda and Bamba. According to oral report narrated by Abubakari Sa’id, a scholar

⁶⁸ Fuseini Mohammed, *The Early History of the Banda (Ligbi and Nafaana*, 2013, 4

⁶⁹ Interview with Abubakari Sa’id (Abu Soldier), a retired military, an Islamic scholar and custodian of Ligbi history, in Wenchi in his residence on 22nd November, 2019 at 9:17 am

and a custodian of Ligbi history, the name Ligbi was originally known as Dihyatul-al-Kalbi. This was the name of their ancestor who hailed or originated from the Arabian Peninsula. His real name was Dihya Ibn Khalifa al-Kalibi who was originally from Southern Arabia. Though Arab in descent, he was a pagan and a successful trader. He was a handsome gentleman and he was admired by a lot of people.⁷⁰ What is known however is that Dihya Ibn Khalifah al-Kalbi was among the young Muslims of the City of Madinah. Prior to entering Islam Dihya Ibn Khalifa al-Kalibi had a special place in the heart of Messenger of Allah, presenting him with gifts each time he came to visit him. And each time the Messenger of Allah would say ‘if you truly want me to be happy, then enter Islam and save yourself from the fire, calling him to Islam’.⁷¹ He was a famous merchant in the Arabian Peninsula. He bought goods from Africa and Sham (Syria) to Saudi Arabia to sell. When he arrived from any trek, he used to beat drums to announce his arrival as a form of traditional advertisement to attract attention of people to his goods. His business activities became renowned through the peninsula.⁷² Mallam Abu Sa’id Abubakari revealed that Dihya Ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi became a close friend to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). He often times brought his goods to the mosque on Fridays to be sold to the congregation. The Muslims patronized his goods to the point of abandoning the Khutbah. A verse of the Qur’ān was revealed to admonish Muslims to refrain from the habit of abandoning the Khutbah. Allah says,

⁷⁰ Interview with Mallam Abubakari Sa’id (Abu Soldier), a retired military and an Islamic scholar and custodian of Ligbi history, in Wenchi in his residence on 22nd November, 2019 at 9:17 am

⁷¹ Encyclopedia of the Companions, Tabaqat, 1:258-259, 276. 4:251; Masnad 6:262-263Hz Muhammad ve Islamiyet,7 (FEYYAZ Bilimve Gelsim Deregi

⁷² Interview with Mallam Abubakari Sa’id (Abu Soldier), a retired military and an Islamic scholar and custodian of Ligbi history, in Wenchi in his residence on 22nd November, 2019 at 9:17 am

“But when they see some bargain or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave you standing. Say:’ the (blessing) from the presence of God is better than any amusement or bargain. And Allah is the Best to provide (for all needs).”⁷³

One faithful day, Dihya Ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi arrived with the caravan from Sham and started beating drums and announcing his arrival while the Prophet (S.A.W) was delivering a sermon. Everyone went out to him except only twelve men who remained in the mosque.⁷⁴

The Prophet (S.A.W) decided to approach and talked to him that his commercial activities in the vicinity of the mosque were diverting attention of the Muslims from the sermon and also taking greater part of their time and preventing them from coming to the mosque early for Friday prayers.

One faithful day, Dihya came to the Prophet and told him that he wanted to embrace Islam. This happened after the battle of Badr. In order to display his relevance to Dihya the Prophet (S.A.W) took off his cloak extending it to him and placed it on it. Dihya kissed the cloak and placed it on his forehead. Then said his *Shahādda* and revealed that he was a Muslim. From that point on, Dihya remained by the Prophet’s (S.A.W) side during all important events, even being appointed as a commander of a unit. The most important event which would etch the name of Dihya in Islamic history was his appointment as the ambassador of the Messenger of Allah. Following the invitation to Islam, the Messenger of Allah decided to send letters of invitation to Islam to all of the tribes on the Arabian Peninsula and neighbouring nations. In line with this invitation, Dihya Ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi was given the duty of visiting Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor. This

⁷³ Abdallah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur’ān Text, Translation and Commentary*’ (Beirut Lebanon: Dar Al Arabia Publishing, Printing and Distribution) Chapter 62:11, 1548

⁷⁴ Al- Imam Al-Wahidi An-Naisaburi, *Reasons and Occasions of Revelation of the Holy Quran*, Edited by Haytham Kriedly, (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2012), 557-8

responsibility was carried out in the 7th Century of the Hijra during the month of Muharam (628). Dihya's main duty was to deliver a letter to the Busra Governor of the Byzantine Empire.⁷⁵

There arose a civil war in an Arabian town of Haibara which caused the dispersion of the Dihya Ibn Khalifa a-kalbi's family. The narrator of the story could not tell where Dihya Ibn Khalifa a-kalbi died. Some of the descendants came to Ethiopia. Later some of them migrated to Western Sudanese state and Mali to participate in the trading activities that existed there and also to propagate the message of Islam. Amadu Worofin al-Kalibi led the Kalibi family and before they got to Bamako, the capital of Mali, they made a stopover in Nyoro where they had to cross a river before they could continue their journey. While they were contemplating how to cross the river their leader found a broad wood across the river.⁷⁶ After crossing over, he turned back to take a better view of the log that aided them to cross over the river. Surprisingly, it was a crocodile. Since then they (Ligbi) vowed not to eat the meat of a crocodile. They were advised to accord crocodiles, respect bordering on veneration. Consequently, crocodiles became totems of the Ligbi clan.⁷⁷ The researcher interviewed Abubakar Sa'id (Abu Soldier) to ascertain the veracity of this oral report as presented by Fusein. He also recounted the history in confirmation.⁷⁸ It was from thence that the Ligbi adopted the name 'Bamba' as their surname. Bamba therefore refers to crocodile.

⁷⁵ Sahih Al- Bukhari Arabic – English Vol.6 Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Hadith No 6/4553(op. 75) (Riyaan- Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Publishers and Distribution 1997) 68/461

⁷⁶ Interview with Mallam Abu Sa' id 22nd November, 2019 in Wenchi at his residence at 9:17 am

⁷⁷ Fusein Mohammed, *The Early History of the Band Ligbi and Nafaana*, 2013, p.8

⁷⁸ Interview with Mallam Abubakri Sa'id, an Islamic scholar and a custodian of Ligbi oral history in Wenchi in his residence, on 22nd November, 2019 at 9: 17 am

For instance, in Menji, there is a pond that contains about two hundred crocodiles. These large voracious amphibious reptiles have been in the pond for the past fifty years.⁷⁹ The pond was constructed by the people of Menji in 1970 as a source of water. According to Obaa Yaw, the custodian of the pond, only one crocodile was deliberately put in the pond.⁸⁰ The pond is now considered as one of the tourist attractions sites in the Tain District because of the abundance of crocodiles in it. It is a belief of the Ligbi people of Menjit that whoever kills one of the crocodiles in the pond will die. A man who was travelling from Sampa in the early 1990s came across one of the crocodiles at a stream and shot and killed it. The dead crocodile was shrouded in white garment and buried by the Muslim chiefs of Menji like a human being. When this crocodile was carried for interment, market women selling different articles of trade all had to add a piece of their article of trade in the coffin. The market women did that in order to show their last respects to the crocodile which served as their totemic animal.⁸¹ Besides, it is a tradition in the community that when a dead crocodile is found and it is being carried to be buried market women selling different articles of trade have to add some of their articles in the coffin to show their last respects.⁸² It should be noted that this practice, indeed, is not Islamic. Rather it is a cultural practice of the Ligbi Muslims of Menji. Seeing Muslims involved in this kind of practice does not necessary mean that it is Islamic. Indeed, since the practice of burying dead animal as human has no basis in Islam, if the Ligbi Muslims in Menji do not desist from it their Islam will adversely be affected. The practice is is

⁷⁹ Interview with Yussuf Gausu, chief Linguist of Menji, on 20th November, 2019 at Menji at his residence at 9:30 pm

⁸⁰ Interview with Obaa Yaw, An African Traditional Religion Man and a custodian of the crocodile pond at Menji, at his residence in Menji on 6th December, 2019 at 8:44pm

⁸¹ A totem is an object or animal of a clan or tribe identified by their kinship to a common totemic object

⁸² Interview with Obaa Yaw, An African Traditional Religion Man and a custodian of the crocodile pond at Menji, at his residence in Menji on 6th December, 2019 at 8:44pm

heretical innovation which Islam abhors. Obaa Yaw said that the man who shot and killed the crocodile contracted some strange disease and died as a result, in Berekum. The indigenes of Menji have conditioned the crocodiles in the pond in such a way that when a particular song is sung, it stimulates the crocodiles to come out of their hideouts to the admiration of sight seers.

The Ligbi are commonly known as Bamba.⁸³ Mallam Abubakari Sa'id continued that it was through their migration from Mali that the Ligbi clans were left in places such as Kong, Gbono near Bonduku and Gbona (Buna) in Ivory Coast and Mande Kaba in Mali. Through the operations on the trade routes from the area of Ethiopia, and during the Ligbi stay in Mali that Malians for instance (Dyula), had a greater influence on the Ligbi in terms of culture. This Dyula influence made the Ligbi to lose their mother tongue. The Dyula used the *nisab* (lineage) of Dihya to address his family. For easier pronunciation, 'Kalbi' was shortened to 'Ligbi'. From about 1500 Ligbi traders crisscrossed the Black Volta from Gbona (Buna) to settle at Begho trade centre. After the dislocation of Begho they found settlements at the Banda hills and some came to settle at Menji.⁸⁴ From the above narrative, the researcher deduced that the oral myth that traced the origins of the ancestors (Bomo Kunadi and Musah Kunadi) of Menji to have descended from heaven or hole might have had a connection with the expedition of the Ligbi clan if indeed the myth is anything to go by. This is because the surname, Kunadi, which means 'good Luck' in Mande-Dyula language attached to the above-mentioned names clearly manifests that Momo Kunadi and Musah Kunadi were of Mande origin.

⁸³ Levtzion, Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa, 11

⁸⁴ Interview with Mallam Abu Sa'id in Wenchi at his residence on 22nd November, 2019 at 9:17 am



Fig.3 Picture of Mallam Abubakar Sa'id (Abu Soldier), a veteran army of second the World War of 1947

The Menji community was founded by Bomo Kunadi and Musah Kunadi from the seventeenth to nineteenth century as a small settlement. They were the first two Muslim chiefs to rule Menji. They were succeeded by Abu Zaidu Kunadi I. When Abu Zaidu Kunadi I died, he was succeeded by Gyape Abu Zaidu Kunadi. Alhaji Yussif Gausu stated that during the reign of Gyape Abu Zaidu Kunadi the status of Menji was enhanced. Menji had intimate relationship with the Asantehene during the reign of Gyape Abu Zaidu Kunadi. It is revealed in the course of the researcher's interviews that, it was Nana Gyape Abu Zaidu who founded Japekrom in the Sampa South District

of the Bono Region in the late nineteenth century. He administered both Menji and Japekrom through frequent visits to Japekrom and attending promptly to the people's calls whenever they did. He was acknowledged by all people from both villages to be a wise, powerful and generous leader (chief).⁸⁵ According to the chief linguist of Menji, Alhaji Yussif Gausu, "Gyape Abu Zaidu Kunadi was the first greatest spiritual mentor (Mallam) to Asantehene, Nana Opoku Ware I".⁸⁶ The Queen-Mother of Menji, Nana Hajara Abu, said that the relationship between Gyape Abu Zaidu Kunadi and Asantehene was so intimate that the former became the first chief to introduce yam to the latter. The Asantehene and the Asante state did not then have knowledge of yam.⁸⁷ This oral report was confirmed by the chief linguist of Menji and Alhaji Abdallah Osman (Frenchman) respectively.⁸⁸ Presentation of tubers of yam to Asantehene during every yam season has, thus, become a convention between the chief of Menji and Asantehene. In the Asante kingdom yam is called "die kofi a ne tiri firi Menji" meaning, yam has its head from Menji. This implies that knowledge of yam in the Asante kingdom originated from Menji.

Past and present chiefs of Menji persistently present tubers of yam to the Asantehene during every Akwasidae⁸⁹ in Kumasi. These tubers of yam are presented through the chief of Asem. The presentation of yam to the Asantehene by the chief of Menji, by extension, strengthens the unity between the two royals. It also consolidates the intimate relationship between the two. Gyape Abu

⁸⁵ Interview Hajjia Amina Yussif Donkor, Women group leader in Nafaanaline, on 17th November in Dansoman in Accra at her residence at 11: am

⁸⁶ Interview with Nana Yussifu Gausu, chief Linguist of Menji, on 20th November, 2019 at Menji at his residence at 9:30 pm

⁸⁷ Interview with, Hajara Abu, the Queen-mother of Menji, in her residence in Menji on 20th November, 2019 at 8:00pm

⁸⁸ Interview with Alhaji Abdallah Osman, an Ulamah, in his residence in Menji on 17th December, 2019 at 7:00am

⁸⁹ Akwasidae is a climax of a festive occasion that is celebrated by Asantehene every forty –two days of another important landmark in the Asante kingdom

Zaidu did not only render spiritual assistance to the Asantehene, but he also created an intimate relationship between Menji and Kumasi.

2.3 Religious World view of Menji People

The folks of Menji are Muslims, Christians or adherents of Indigenous Religions. However, the dominant religion in the community is Islam which is subscribed by about 90% of the population. Christianity constitutes 8% and Adherents of Indigenous Religions is 2%.⁹⁰ Notwithstanding the religious variations, the people co-exist peacefully and in unity. The religion of the indigenous people of Menji before the advent of Islam was indigenous African Tradition. As noted earlier, the ancestor of the Ligbi, Dihya Ibn Khalifa al-Kalibi was an adherent of indigenous tradition. Since he became a Muslim, all his descendants including the Ligbi (Banda) in Menji claimed Islam as their roots.

2.4 Belief in the Supreme Being

Religion generally is at the centre of African culture. Gyekye states that in African life and thought, the religious is not distinguished from the nonreligious, the sacred from the secular, the spiritual from the material. In all undertakings, whether it be cultivating, sowing, harvesting or travelling religion is at work.⁹¹ The Muslims of Menji believe in the existence of a Supreme Being called Allah, the creator of the universe and everything in it. He gives life. He has power to life and death. They believe that Allah has no likeness and none is comparable to Him (Quran 112: 4). It is worth

⁹⁰ A profile of Menji community in the Tain District of the Bono Region, A report on the third trimester field practical programme submitted by second Batch of group II, to the University for Development Studies (U D S) Tamale Ghana in partial fulfillment of the third trimester field programme of the University 's Degree Programs.

⁹¹ Gyekye K, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*, (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1998)

noting that the ancestor of the Ligbi was said to have been converted to Islam by the Messenger of Allah. Since the Islamization of their ancestor, the Ligbi started adopting Islam as their religion. The Muslims believe that Almighty Allah is the Supreme Commander of the Earth and Heaven and that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is the Messenger of Allah. They considered the Qur'ān as a divine book on earth. The other indigenous ethnic groups who are in minority in Menji (the Nafaanas) were mainly adherents of Indigenous Traditions prior to their reversion to Christianity or Islam. In addition to their belief in the Supreme Being, non-Muslims believe in other objects of worship that they regard as the vicegerents of God on earth. These are the lesser gods⁹², the divinities⁹³ and the ancestors.

2.5 Religious Denominations

There are some Christian Religious Denominations (CRD) such as Roman Catholic RC), Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and Presbyterians at Menji. Adherents of these religious denominations in Menji practise their faith without hinderance. The first Christian denomination to make appearance in Menji was Roman Catholicism.

2.6 The Roman Catholicism

In term of numbers of adherent, the Roman Catholicism is next to Muslims in Menji. It was established in Menji in late 1970s. The catechist of the church said that the main obstacle that impedes the growth of the church is Islam. Since its inception, the church building is the only glaring religious feature of the denomination in Menji. Recently the Seventh Day Adventist and

⁹² Spirit or gods that are conceived to control the world of nature and govern such natural phenomena as the sun, the rain, birth, death and fertility

⁹³ Some of the spirits are believed to dwell in springs, rivers, trees, and other natural objects. These are referred to as divinities

Presbyterian denominations made their presence at Menji trying to occupy part of the religious space. Some of the various denominations have built well-structured temples and churches to practice their religion while others use classrooms. The researcher noticed that the Christian denominations in Menji since their establishment have not opened schools. For instance, since 1970, the Roman Catholic Church was established, it has not been able to establish an educational institution in the community. Most religious denominations elsewhere win more converts into their fold through the establishment of schools. It is through schools that the doctrines of the faith are espoused. The African Indigenous Religion practitioners also have their places of worship in Menji. Since the inception of Christianity in Menji it is yet to win a single adherent from Islam. Yet people leave the fold of other religions to join Islam. The reason could be that the Muslims in Menji have understood the tenets of their faith and thus are not ready to leave it.

2.7 Christian-Muslim Relations

According to Mustapha Abdul Hamid, many of the conflicts in the world are either between Christians and Muslims or have Christian-Muslim undertones. Often times, adherents of these faiths promote conflict in the name of religion. Ever since the events of September, 11 2001 many Christians have tended to view Islam and for that matter, Muslims with suspicion.⁹⁴ According to John Esposito, historical dynamics have “often found the two communities in competition, and locked at times in deadly combat, for power, land, and souls.”⁹⁵ Hammudah Abdalati opined that in the name of religion unjustifiable wars have been launched, freedom of thought and conscience

⁹⁴ Muatapha Abdul Hamid, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: A Model for World Dialogue and Peace* Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies (IJOURLS) Vol.1 No 1 2011: p.21-32

⁹⁵ John L. Eposito, *The Islamic Thread: Myth or Reality*, (New York Oxford University Press 1992), 46

has been oppressed, science has been persecuted, the right of the individual to live to maturity has been denied, and man's dignity and honour have been flagrantly debased.⁹⁶ Saeed Ismaeel is of the view that the basic rule of Muslims is to call others to Islam by peaceful means and that the Muslim's feeling towards non-Muslims should not be less than mercy and sympathy for them. For this was the feeling of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as well as the feelings of all the Messengers of Allah.⁹⁷ He continued that a Muslim is required to feel proud of his religion and to demonstrate his or her pride, however, to be proud is different from being arrogant, aggressive or resorting to behaviour that can only agitate or provoke the impartial person. A Muslim should not blame others or look down upon them for not being Muslim. The focus of Muslims should be to invite to Islam with wisdom and good preaching and argue with them with best manners.⁹⁸

The Qur'an 3:64 read

Say: "O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God; that we associate not partner with Him; that we erect not from ourselves, Lords, and Patrons other than God. If they turn back, then say "Bear witness that we are Muslims (bowing to God's Will)".⁹⁹

This invitation to unity is to unite all human beings whether Muslims, Christians or Jews. This invitation is not restricted to in the era of the Prophet or some groups of the people of the Book. The glorious Qur'an speaks about the synagogue, temple, church and mosque in the same line

⁹⁶ Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus*, (Riyadh: Published and Printed by One seeking Allah, Islamic Teaching centre n.d), 29

⁹⁷ Saeed Ismaeel, *The Relationship Between Muslims and Non-Muslims second edition* (Toronto: AL- Attique international publicayons,2000),24

⁹⁸ Saeed Ismaeel, *The Relationship Between Muslims and Non-Muslims*, 2000 p.25

⁹⁹ Abdallah Yusuf Ali, 'The Holy Qur'an Text, Translation and Commentary' Chapter 3:64 p.139

because the Name of God is mentioned in all of them. As such they must be held in high esteem and respected.¹⁰⁰

With regard to Christian-Muslim relations in the Menji community, the research notes it to be very cordial and peaceful. In an interview with Jacob Yaw Kra, a 60-year-old member of the Roman Catholic Church he opined that albeit there are doctrinal differences, the relationship between Christians and Muslims has been peaceful. The two religious groups have coexisted peacefully. This kind of relationship is backed by several Qur'ānic verses that encourage Muslims to relate well with their Christian counterparts. The attitude of the Prophet towards the Christian faith and its leaders during his lifetime is a good example for Muslim of today to emulate. Allah advises Muslims to avoid engaging in ill-tempered argument with Christians. They are given the impetus to engage in healthy debates that promotes interreligious tolerance and understanding of each other's point of view. Allah says,

And dispute ye not with the people of the Book, except twith means better (than mere disputation) unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): But say, ' We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you, our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam).'¹⁰¹

Another instance is when Allah says he has made lawful for Muslims the food prepared by Christians and allowed Muslims to marry chaste Christian women. (Qur'ān 5:5)

The above-mentioned examples show that Christians and Muslims have in the past coexisted peacefully and ought to continue even today for the benefit of not only Menji but also Ghana at

¹⁰⁰ Muhammad H. Ibrahim, *New Analysis of Wahhabi Doctrines* Translated by Mansoor Limba (Qum: Affairs of Department Ahl-aBayt World Assembly 2006), 23.

¹⁰¹ Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān*, 29:46, 1043

large. Suzanne Haneef illustrates that what is common with the followers of the two faiths are the basic beliefs and the vast legacy of moral injunctions and principles of behaviour inspired by belief in the same Allah and the guidance conveyed by Jesus. This guidance should inspire in them friendship, sympathy, and appreciation for other's sincerity, simply "agreeing to disagree" on their differences.¹⁰² Also, the coexisting relationship between Christians and Muslims enhances sustainability of peace in Menji. This peaceful coexistence according to the researcher, emanates from the fact that the adherents of the two faiths considered one another as members of one big family. In one household in Menji one is likely to have the adherents of the three major religions in Ghana living together in harmony.

2.8 Traditional Belief Systems and Practices of the people of Menji

2.9 Marriage

Ibrahim Amini defines marriage as a natural necessity for every human being.¹⁰³ Marriage is the foundation of kinship ties. Kwame Gyekye notes that Marriage is the basic institution in every human society. It is a recognized social institution, not only for establishing and maintaining the family, but also for creating and sustaining the ties of kinship. Without the marriage there would be no family, nuclear or extended and therefore no kinship ties. Marriage is thus essential to the

¹⁰² Suzanne Haneef, *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*, New Delhi Islamic Book Service, 2002), 199

¹⁰³ Ibrahim Amini, *Principles of Marriage Family Ethics*, (Qum: Ansariyan Publications- 2002), 15

development and enlargement of kinship ties, which is a characteristic feature of African society.¹⁰⁴

Consequently, the Menji Community is sustained by marriage. Marriage is an important institution in Menji. Amini explains that marriage bears many good outcomes for a society of which the most important ones are the following:

- a. formation of a family through which one can find security and peace of mind.
- b. natural sexual desire is both strong and significant in marriage
- c. through marriage the procreation of mankind is ensured.¹⁰⁵

Depending on the tradition of a particular society, marriage is not contracted until certain rites are observed. In the Menji Muslim community, before a man and a woman are confirmed as duly married, they ought to have passed through certain customary rites and procedures. These rites and procedures look the same among the Ligbi (Banda) ethnic group in Ghana. Nukunya acknowledges that these rites include ‘the formal asking of the hand of the bride by the family of the groom, the marriage ceremony and ‘the payment of the bride-price.’¹⁰⁶

In the Menji Muslim community, once the selection of the bride is over, other rites follow. These are knocking, asking for hands of the would-be bride, payment of marital gifts and the marriage ceremony. The knocking is the maiden stage when representatives of the parents of the suitor first consult the parents of the woman to make their intention known. This stage involves the presentation of kola nuts. In contemporary time money is paid plus some packets of sweets in place

¹⁰⁴ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 2002,76

¹⁰⁵ Amini, *Principles of Marriage Family Ethics*,2002 P.15

¹⁰⁶ Nukunya G.K, Social and Political Institutions in the Ewes of Southeastern Ghana Vol. 1, *In the Ewes of Southeastern Ghana of a Handbook of Eweland*, ed. Agbodeka. 47-72, (Accra: Wolei Publishing Services 1997), 56

of kola nuts. If the items presented are rejected it means the parents of the bride do not accept the proposal. This could be because of some problems which needs to be investigated. But if the items are accepted then the consent of the bride would be sought. The agreement of the bride seals the initial stage of the marriage. Women in the community would gather at the bride mother's house and in accompaniment of drums move around the town to announce that their daughter's hand has been asked for in marriage. The bridal gift which includes the dowry and *Leyfey* (items such as pieces of cloths, veils, footwear, *Sajadah* (prayer mat), Kettle, and kola or packets of sweet are necessary requirements for a traditional marriage in Menji community.

The next stage is the final one which is known as asking of the hand of the would-be-bride for the actual marriage ceremony. Here, too, a garment of cloth, in addition to bag of rice, and one bag of cassava dough are presented to the parents of the bride. This is an indication that the parents of the groom proposed a date for the marriage ceremony. The next stage is the actual marriage ceremony which climaxes the entire marriage processes. This final stage is done in the patriarchal side of the bride which brings together both families. In the forenoon, around 5pm a ceremony is organised for the bride. She would be carried shoulder high or in a palanquin through the principal streets of the town. Young men from the house of the bride would be the first people to carry her. The significance of carrying the bride is to honour her for maintaining herself to this day. It is also a way of dignifying her for the respect and honour that she brings to the family. It is also to show that she is worthy of emulation by younger ladies. This custom helps many ladies to maintain their virginity for this particular dignified day. However, a lady or girl who could not restrain or control herself and gives birth out of wedlock is not given the same respect and honour of being carried shoulder high during her marriage. In the night of the marriage ceremony the bride is brought to

the suitor's room by a procession of women amidst drumming, singing and dancing. Below is the photograph of a bride carried in a wooden palanquin



Fig4. *Abride carried high on wooden palanquin during a marriage ceremony in Menji*

These rites show that in traditional setting, like other religions, marriage is so important that it is regarded as the only legitimate means by which a man or woman can satisfy their sexual desire. These rites in Menji are so well placed that they help reduce drastically teenage pregnancies, abortions and spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the community.

2.10 Polygyny

Polygyny is an uncommon marriage type in Ghana including the Menji Community. Mustapha Ibrahim distinguishes between polygamy and Polygyny. According to him polygamy means plurality of mates that is a man having concurrently more than one wife or a woman having more than one husband concurrently. Polygyny means a man having more than one wife concurrently.

He says most people make no distinction between polygamy and Polygyny.¹⁰⁷ Polygyny pervades many African communities. Mustapha Ibrahim established that polygyny has been in existence throughout human history, long before the advent of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.¹⁰⁸

Regardless of it being common in the Ghanaian societies and Menji in particular, the practice cannot be discussed without criticism. Nasta Iddrisu, a 90-year-old woman, who had once married two polygamous men at different times, had this to say, ‘the practice encourages unfair treatment of wives and children.’ She underscored the fact that some men do not treat their wives and children with equity. She said some polygamous men sometimes inclined totally to one of the wives and her children while paying no or little attention to the rest of their wives and children. She remarked that this injustice has led to fierce rivalry among wives which eventually damage consanguine relationships among siblings from the same father but different mothers.¹⁰⁹ The practice indeed brings about untold hardships on the family. The researcher is a victim of hardships associated with polygamous marriages. I am the first male child of twelve of my father’s children. After the death of my father, I had to be the bread winner of the twelve children including four wives left behind by my father. For the wellbeing and peaceful coexistence of the family, Islamic scholars have recognized some benefits of polygynous marriages. For instance, Mbiti indicates that despite the steady bickering and conflicts among the wives and children in such marriages, the practice has the ability to reduce unfaithfulness and fornication or adultery in societies where the practice is in vogue.¹¹⁰ Mustapha Ibrahim states that the reason behind polygyny among

¹⁰⁷ Mustapha Ibrahim, *Islamic Law of Marriage with reference to Quran and Hadith and special mention of some African Marital practices*, Part one Fifth edition, (published by Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Service and Printed by Depot Printing Press, 2003),45

¹⁰⁸ Ibrahim, *Islamic Law of Marriage with reference to Quran and Hadit*, 2003

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Nasta Iddrisu at Menji in her residence on 21st November, 2019 at 6:44pm

¹¹⁰ Mbiti J.S, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (Oxford: Heimann Publisher 198),140

Africans includes social, economic and religious factors. There is a general belief among Africans that Polygyny raises the social status of the family. Secondly, it increases the size of the family; some Muslims hold the belief that when they have several children, they (children) help them to accomplish certain duties either in the home or on their farms.¹¹¹ With the induction of Islam into Africa, many changes have taken place in the law of Polygyny at least for African Muslims. Islam has enhanced the practice and discarded the un-Islamic belief in it. For instance, Islam has limited the number of wives to four instead of the limitless number. In Quran 4:3 Allah says,

*'...Marry the women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one...'*¹¹²

The 'just' used in the above verse covers social, economic, sexual and financial justice. Many Muslims (men) have misconstrued the significance of or taken excuse in the above verse to marry more than one (wife) and to do injustice among them (women). Nonetheless, the Qur'ān makes it contingent on just and equity. Absolute equity may not be attainable, but such husbands are to strive hard to be equitable among their wives.

2.11 Endogamy

Endogamy and exogamy are other forms of marriage practised among the Ligbi ethnic group in Ghana. Exogamy is marriage to a person belonging to a tribe or group other than one's own as required by law or custom. On the other hand, endogamy is a form of marriage that is within one's own tribe or group as required by custom or law. Endogamous marriage is common among the Muslims in Menji. Muslims in the community take pride in the practice of endogamy. They marry

¹¹¹ Ibrahim, *Islamic Law of Marriage with reference to Quran and Hadith*. 63

¹¹² Abdallah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān Text, Translation and Commentary* Chapter 4:3 p.179

their close relatives such as cousins, nephews, and nieces. The researcher himself is married to the daughter of his maternal uncle. The study of endogamous marriages revealed clearly that it strengthens the continuity of the kinship ties. The demerit of it, however, is that it does not encourage the extension of the scope of family to incorporate other tribes. Islam prescribes those relations that are not allowed to be married. The Menji Muslims do not violate the Qur'anic prescriptions of marrying one's mother, aunt, sister etc. (Qur'an 4:23)

2.12 Betrothal Marriage

Betrothal marriages have firm grounds among Menji Muslims. This is a type of marriage which is contracted between the parents of a girl and a would-be husband without the knowledge and consent of the girl. Some circumstances led to this type of marriage in the olden days in Menji Muslim Community. Scarcity of women for marriage in the olden days compelled Muslims in Menji to practise betrothal marriage. Maternal uncles betrothed their female children to their nephews. The nephew used to carry fire fuel to the mother-in-law to indicate that he had interest in the girl betrothed to him. Another instance was that in those days when it was recognized that women from a particular home were hardworking, respectful and trust-worthy, they became scarce commodities. Therefore, people rush to see the parents and engage them in marriage for their sons. Sometimes some mothers adopt and look after the girls until they grow up and become the wives of their sons. This practice continues till date. Several marriages in Menji were contracted through betrothal. This type of marriage, which was successful in the olden days, however, has its own challenges in contemporary times. It delays marriages of some men and women alike. In some instances, the women who are betrothed grow up not to show interest in the men. Meanwhile the man might have patiently waited for the girl only to grow up to disapprove the marriage. Some

women, also, suffer same fate. They might have waited for some men for several years only for the men to come and tell them that they are no longer interested in the marriage.

Islam discourages marriage without the consent of the two parties. The betrothal form of marriage in Menji encourages early marriage of Muslim girls. It also deprives many girls of education. Some girls are taken away or dropped out from school into marriage. The head teacher of Menji Islamic Junior High School (MIJHS) complained bitterly about this form of marriage in Menji. He said that it is adversely affecting the education of several girls in the community since many of the students make early marriage as excuse to abandon schooling.¹¹³

2.13 Funeral Rites

Peter Sarpong states that in Ghana death is not seen as the end but merely as a transition from the physical world to the world of spirits or ancestors. The society does not consider it the final stage but rather as temporary exclusion of the individual from human society.¹¹⁴ Motahari Murtaza confirms that death does not mean total annihilation and obliteration, but a shift from one world to another world and from one stage of life to another stage. Human life continues after death though in a different form.¹¹⁵ He says, ‘a man at the time of his death gets into the custody of the Divine authorities who, receives him in full.’¹¹⁶ David Horton describes death as the separation of the soul from the body. He states that the Bible¹¹⁷ teaches that all humans will die.¹¹⁸ His line of

¹¹³ Interview with Asomah Frank, head teacher of Menji Islamic JHS, on 13th January, 2020 at Menji Islamic JHS at 12:58pm

¹¹⁴ Peter Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect*, (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974), 28

¹¹⁵ Motahari Murtaza, *Man and Universe*, translated by Musjtajab Ahmed Ansari, (Qum: Ansariyan Publications 2003), 5 96

¹¹⁶ Murtaza, *Man and Universe*, 595

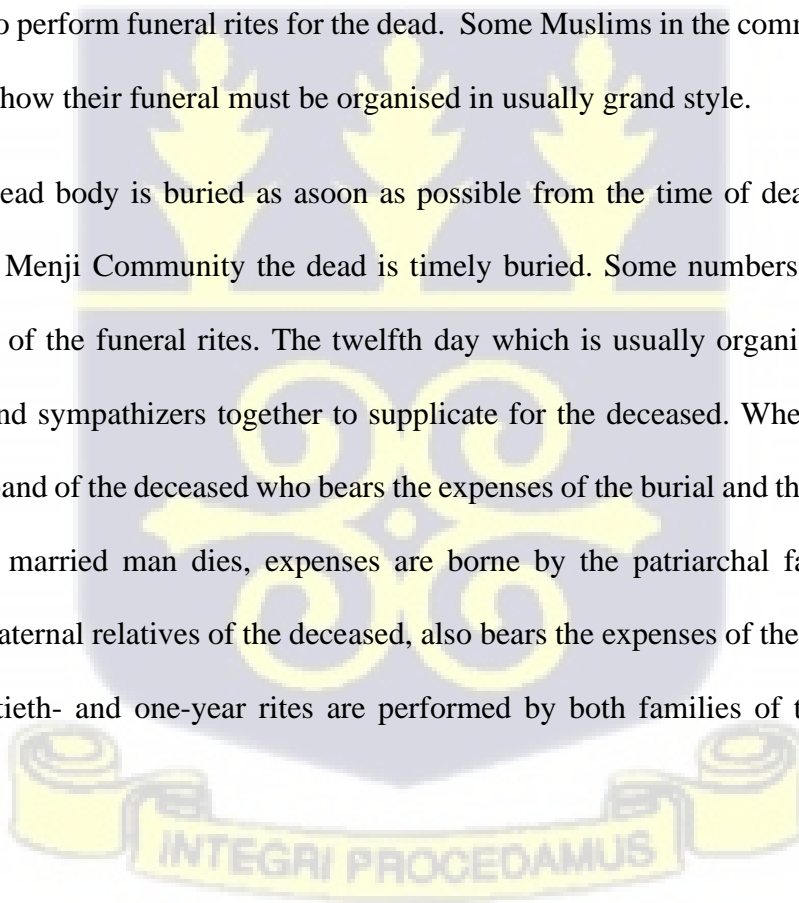
¹¹⁷ Hebrew: 9: 27

¹¹⁸ David Horton, *The Portable Seminary A master's level Overview in one volume*, (USA: published by Bethany House Publishers 2006), 192

argument hinges on the fact that death is an acquired trait, not a person's natural destiny. Death may be said of the body, but not of the spirit/soul.¹¹⁹ What can be deduced from the writings of these scholars is that death is a transition point from the present to the world of eternity. It also means that there is life after death.

Muslims in Menji community have the strong belief that there still exists some kind of link between the dead and the living. Consequently, a funeral is performed for people who leave to join the ancestral world. When one dies in Menji, one's relatives perform some funeral rites for him by offering prayers for the departed souls. Planning and preparation of the funeral sometimes take some weeks and months. The indigenes of Menji put high premium on the funeral rites. Their belief is that prayers and supplications said at the funeral reach the departed souls. Families think it is prestigious to perform funeral rites for the dead. Some Muslims in the community, as a result, give proposal of how their funeral must be organised in usually grand style.

Since in Islam dead body is buried as soon as possible from the time of death, the researcher observed that in Menji Community the dead is timely buried. Some numbers of days are often observed as part of the funeral rites. The twelfth day which is usually organised in grand style bring relatives and sympathizers together to supplicate for the deceased. When married woman dies it is the husband of the deceased who bears the expenses of the burial and the third day funeral prayer. But if a married man dies, expenses are borne by the patriarchal family-head of the deceased. The maternal relatives of the deceased, also bears the expenses of the seventh-day rites. The twelfth, fortieth- and one-year rites are performed by both families of the deceased. The



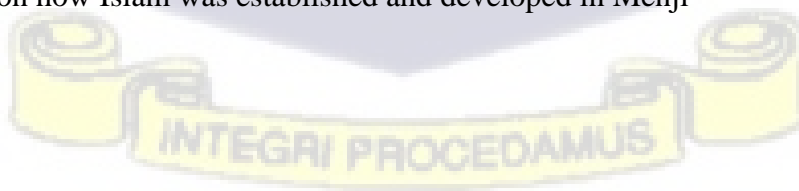
¹¹⁹ Horton, *The Portable Seminary A master's level Overview in one volume*, 2006, 166

apportioning of the days of funeral rites among the relatives deepens knowledge of the extended family ties.

The philosophy behind these funeral rites in the Menji community is based on the belief that the dead body goes through some stages in the grave. Each is considered a great ordeal. For instance, three days after burial is believed that the belly of the deceased starts swelling up. On this day the soul visits the body in the grave to observe its state. On the seventh day, the assumption is that the stomach of the deceased starts to rupture. The twelfth day is the final funeral; it is when family members, friends and sympathizers from far and near all come together to bid the departed soul farewell. It is believed that the soul returns home on the fortieth day to observe development or condition in the house after its departure. The one year closes up family supplications for the dead.

The Muslims of Menji believe that the soul needs supplications on each of these occasions. Life after death is not a concept peculiar to Traditional Religion. Islam, too, endorses it. Life after death or the Day of Judgement is one of the articles of faith in Islam. Muslims believe that they were created by Allah and sent to the earth to worship. At death they believe that they shall return to Him for judgment. It is against this backdrop that they endeavour to live by the injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān and the Traditions of the Prophet (S.A.W) so as to earn salvation and the favors of Allah.

This chapter which discusses the geographical location of Menji and addresses the historical background of the community as well as the belief and practices of the community, is a prelude to the next chapter on how Islam was established and developed in Menji



CHAPTER THREE

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN MENJI

3.0 The Origins of Islam in Africa

This chapter traces the origin and development of Islam in Menji which is located in Africa-Ghana. Islam passed through several places in Africa at different times before arriving in Menji. The religion did not come to Menji straight from Arabia. Javad states that the first continent Islam spread into from Arabia in the early Seventh century was Africa. He continues that today, almost one-third of the world's Muslim population reside in the continent.¹²⁰ According to a survey conducted by *Muslimpopulation.com* in 2018, the percentage of Muslim in Africa is 52.47%.¹²¹ Mbiti demonstrates that within a century after the demise of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) in A.D 632, Islam had swept across the whole of Northern Africa and engulfed the Horn of Africa stretching southwards along the east coast.¹²² The first country in Africa to have a strong grip of Islam during the life time of the Prophet (S.A.W) was Abyssinia in 615 A.D when Muhammad (S.A.W) advised a team of Muslims to leave for Abyssinia due to the severity of persecution on the early conversion to Islam. After the demise of the Prophet (S.A.W), Egypt was the first country in Africa to serve as a centre for Muslim and Islam.¹²³ The first contact of Egypt with Islam was during the year 641 A.D through the Muslim general, °Amr.b.al-°Ās.

120 Javad Haghnavaz, Spread of Islam in Africa, in *American International Journal of Research in Humanities Arts and Social Sciences (IJRHASS)* 14-368 published by International Association of Scientific Innovation and Research (IASIR) USA 2014 P.124

121 [Hptt/www.muslimpopulation.com/Africa](http://www.muslimpopulation.com/Africa).

122 Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 236

123 Hiskett, *the Development of Islam in West Africa*, 11

The Knowledge of Islam first came to West Africa along the desert routes from North Africa. The Trans-Saharan trade aided the spread of Islam in the Sahara. The trade was conducted by the Berbers particularly the Sanhaja. When the Berbers accepted the faith of Islam the entire traffic across the desert was in the hand of the Muslims. Muslim traders played important roles in the spread of Islam in West Africa. Most people of the Savanna belt received knowledge of Islam from traders and most of the earliest converts were influenced through this agency. Islam established its roots in the Western Sudanese states through peaceful conversion.¹²⁴

According to Peter Clark, Islam first touched Africa in the Eighth Century through the trans-Saharan trade routes from North Africa¹²⁵. This must have followed the visit of °Amr.b.al-°Ās in the 7th century. The contact between Muslims of North Africa and West Africans was facilitated by the conversion of the Sanhaja Berbers through trade.¹²⁶ The first Berber clan in the Western Sahara to play a major role in the Islamization process was the Sanhaja. One of the Sanhaja conversion to Islam was through the performance of the Hajj by their rulers and invitation of scholars to reform their Islamic heritage. One of such scholars was Abdallah Yasin.¹²⁷ The activities of the Almoravid Movement in the Western Sudan even though short-lived, contributed to bringing many people into the fold of Islam.

Soon, Islam extended to the Volta Basin. There is no doubt that the introduction and development of Islam in the Volta basin in Gold Coast, was necessitated by the consortium of Wangara and Hausa merchants. Clark posits that it was the Wangara or Dyula who were actively involved in the

¹²⁴ G.T. Stride, B.A & Caroline Ifeka, *Peoples and Empires of West Africa*, 1978, 133

¹²⁵ Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 8

¹²⁶ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana*, 25

¹²⁷ Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 15

ongoing trade. The main commodities the Dyula traded in were gold ornaments and kola nuts.¹²⁸ He asserts further that the Wangara Muslim traders established several entrepots on the trade routes. One of such staging posts already in existence was at Begho. According to Hiskett the trading adventure in gold and Kola nuts in the Gold coast made the Wangara/ Dyula settle in the Akan forest of Begho, near Wenchi, in the early fifteenth century.¹²⁹ Begho used to be the main trading centre of the Wangara.¹³⁰ The written sources available for the dissemination of Islam in modern Ghana all agree with the indisputable fact that Islam's first contact was in Begho.

3.1 Islam in Modern Ghana

With regards to the introduction and diffusion of Islam in modern Ghana, Clark traces the early penetration of the religion to the activities of Muslim traders from the Upper Niger region. According to him it was these traders who crisscrossed the trade routes linking Jenne and the Hausa land with the forest zone that brought Islam to Ghana.¹³¹ Muslim traders introduced Islam to Ghana through commercial entrepots they established in Begho in the northern edge of the Akan Forest in the Bono Region (Brong Ahafo). The history of Begho has engaged plethora of scholars to pay heed to it. It was the Dyula who exercised commercial influence over the town from the Fifteenth to Seventeenth Centuries. A Dyula centre from which many Muslim communities both in Ivory Coast and Ghana emerged, was Begho on the fringes of Ghana near Nsawkaw which is about six miles from Menji, a Muslim dominated community. Before the collapse of Begho it was one of the main sources of Muslim influence in the voltaic region. According to Ivor Wilks a Malian

¹²⁸ Clark. *West Africa and Islam*, 58

¹²⁹ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, 11

¹³⁰ Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 59

¹³¹ Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 58-59

warlord, Nabanga, was sent to occupy Begho after the fall of the Mali Empire. The Kamagate were among the first Dyula to settle there.¹³² While in Begho, the Muslims converted many people such as the Hwela who lived in and around Begho to Islam.¹³³ It was from this forest zone that the religion of Islam began spreading to the Volta Basin and eventually to other parts of Ghana. Islam was introduced to Ghana like many other parts of West Africa through trade rather than war. This goes to underscore the fact that these traders and clerics understood the peaceful nature of Islam which frowns upon the use of compulsion for propagation.

Islam spread to Ghana at different places at different times. Dumbe identified two related issues concerning the penetration of Islam in the Gold Coast, namely Islamization and Islamic revival.¹³⁴ He explains that Islamization is all about the process of the expansion and spread of the religion of Islam as well as the scale of conversion. Revival on the other hand, had to do with the strengthening and enhancement of the spiritual dimension of the faith and practices of the adherents. There were three main factors that accounted for the rapid spread of Islam in Ghana. The first was the spread of Islam in the Begho trade centre. The second was the penetration of Islam into the Volta Basin in this case the northern part of Ghana. The third was the dissemination of Islam to the southern part of Ghana.

3.2 The spread of Islam from Begho

There is no doubt that the first point of call of Islam in modern Ghana was the Begho trade centre in the Akan Forest zone in the then Brong Ahafo now Bono region. Since the majority of people involved in the trade at Begho were Muslims, the religion was disseminated in that part of the

¹³² Wilks, *The Juula and Expansion of Islam into the forest*, 59

¹³³ Wilks, *The Juula and Expansion of Islam into the forest*, 59

¹³⁴ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana*, 24

country. Samwini emphasized that *Bighu (Begho)* located at the northern part of the Akan Forest, was the entry-point of the Dyula commercial route from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was Nabanga who moved eastwards to found the Gonja kingdom in the lower Black Volta valley. In this venture, the Faqih Ismail Kamagate of Begho and his son Muhammad al-Biyad attached themselves to him (Nabanga). The latter became the first Imam of the new Kingdom. From then the influence of Islam began to spread in the Volta Basin.

3.3 Islam in the Volta Basin

Islam began to spread to the Volta Basin in the sixteenth century. Samwini elucidates that Islam got into Gonjaland in Ghana as far back as the sixteenth century. The religion of Islam was presented to the Dagomba and Wala by seventeenth century.¹³⁵ The Dyula and Hausa traders championed the Islamization process in the northern part of Ghana. The Islamization process was, however, slow due to the fact that trade and not Islamic propagation was the focus of the Muslims. Nevertheless, as a result of the trade, there was a constant interaction between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. The role played by the Dyula Muslims in the Islamization of the region was made possible through the trade contacts. In fact, the movement of the Mande in the diaspora facilitated the spread of Islam into the Volta Basin in the Gold Coast, now Ghana. There is no denying the fact that the spread of Islam in the Volta Basin was not done by the Mande alone but also the tremendous influence and interaction of the Hausa.

¹³⁵ Nathan Samwini I, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 Its Effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christian Relations*, (Berlin: LIT VERLAG, 2006), 22-28

3.4 Islam in southern part of Ghana

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Muslim presence began to be felt in the South. Unlike in the north, Islam in the southern part of Ghana was pioneered by the Hausa-Muslim traders who frequented and settled among the Gonja and in Kumasi even though the Dyula were the first to make Islamic contacts through the southern points of the trade routes of the Salaga market. Hausa influence indeed played a significant role in the spread of Islam in the South. Three events promoted Hausa settlement in the Gold Coast especially in the south. The first was the decline of the Salaga market, which linked the kola trade between Hausaland and Asante. The second was the decision of the British in 1872 to recruit police troops from among the Hausas in Nigeria. The third was the improvement in the road network, particularly the construction of railways. Hajj Mumuni Suleman added the fourth factor which is the Donkor/slaves that were brought to Accra after the Slave Trade. The Salaga market was regarded as the largest market Centre in the whole of West African sub-region for kola nuts and slaves. The market attracted many merchandises from far away places such as Timbuktu, Borno and Hausaland. The Hausa invasion of Salaga market was indeed important since it enhanced the coming of Islam to Asante.

Nehemiah explains:

The Hausa trade to the middle Volta Basin reached its peak in the nineteenth century. At the beginning of that century the Ashanti lost an important source of income by the abolition of the slave trade, and it had to pay in gold for transactions with the coast. It became more convenient for the Ashanti to buy clothing and other manufactured goods from the north, where they could pay in Kola.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 23

He continued that trader made their way to Salaga and back in caravans. As the caravan moved there was a Mallam in it that was a literate who kept records and prayed for a successful journey. Some of these Mallams left traces of Islam along the trade routes.¹³⁷ The first Muslims who settled in Kumasi were from Dagbon (Dagomba), Gonja and Mamprugu. They were the representatives and commercial agents guarding the interest of the northern kola nut traders. Since some of the Muslims were literate, they were recruited into various courts and palaces for their scholarly services. This is evident in the north and the Asante kingdoms. The important role played by these Muslim scholars in these courts and palaces, for example among the Asante, Dagbon and Gonja was the rendering services related to the magico-religious service and correspondences. Also, the scholarly role of these Muslims was accompanied with their spiritual powers.

The cordial relationship that existed between Muslim clerics and the Asantes became manifest during the reign of Nana Osei Kwame in 1777 after he recruited many Muslims into palace mainly to render spiritual services. Hiskett explains that since 1777, the royal court led by Nana Osei Kwadwo depended on Muslim literates and initiated a program of administrative reforms for his Kingdom.¹³⁸ The diplomatic contacts made by the Asante kingdom with Ouagaougou and other northern kingdoms mentioned above in the mid-eighteenth century also contributed to the Islamization of the south. It is worth noting that the southern zone includes Ashanti, Accra and the Fante coastlands. The early Muslims in Ghana settled in the Volta Basin, but many of the Muslims in the southern sector segregated themselves into small settlements known in Hausa as Zongos. These Muslims were immigrants from neighboring West African countries. According to Hajj Mumuni, Muslim traders constituted the pivot of the nineteenth century Muslims in Accra.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 1968, 23

¹³⁸ Hiskett, *the Development of Islam in West Africa*, 11

¹³⁹ Mumuni, *Islamic Organizations in Accra*, 12

Mumuni asserted that it was indeed difficult to trace the source of Islam of the Donko. However, available literature of the time indicates that these people were Muslims. By 1851, the slaves had established the first Arabic School on the Guinea Coast.¹⁴⁰ It is important to state that by 1841 there was Muslims presence in Accra. However, the influence of these Muslims was not greatly felt because of their social status as slaves in the Accra community.¹⁴¹ There were all indications that by 1865 there were some scores of Muslims residing in the James Town section of Accra.¹⁴² The Muslim traders, the Donko and the colonial administration, the British, played crucial roles in the spread of Islam in Accra. Islam gradually penetrated into Fante on the Coast. Islam made its first appearance in the Fantiland in late nineteenth century and the twentieth century. These periods marked the active and positive conversion of the Fante by different groups of Muslims. Among several factors that facilitated the process of advancement of Islam in the Fantiland was the contingent of a hundred Hausa police that were brought from Lagos to the garrison of Cape Coast Castle in 1872. With this deployment, a new dawn of Islam began in the Gold Coast. Upon the coming of the Hausa police in Gold Coast, seventy-two of them were stationed in Elmina in Cape Coast. Presumably, these Hausa police personnel were Muslim who began the practice of Islam in the Cape Coast. Before the emergence of Islam in the South including Cape Coast, Christianity was the dominant religion. However, Islam gained foothold in the extreme south especially among the Fante, through the pioneering work of Abubakar, a Nigeria national, and two of his Fante convert, Benjamin Sam and Mahdi Apah.¹⁴³ Even though there were foreign Muslim settlements among the Fante, the real propagation of Islam was executed by the Fante converts. This is to say

¹⁴⁰ Mumuni, *Islamic Organizations in Accra*, 7

¹⁴¹ Mumuni, *Islamic Organizations in Accra*, 7

¹⁴² Mumuni, *Islamic Organizations in Accra*, 12

¹⁴³ Pellow Debora, Muslim Segmentation: Cohesion and Divisiveness in Accra, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23: 3 1985

that it was the indigenous Fantes who embraced Islam that, in turn preached, the faith in the Fantiland to win more converts into the fold of Islam. The influence of Islam in the Fantiland was indeed tremendous in that Benjamin Sam, a catechist, became a Muslim as a result of his encounter in a vision of a strange figure in a Muslim dress in 1885.¹⁴⁴ All the Fante Muslims were under the spiritual leadership of Benjamin Sam and Mahdi Apah. Ben Sam died as a Muslim in 1917. After His death the Fante Muslims were all under the patronage of Mahdi Apah until the arrival of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission in Ghana in 1921.

The genesis of the Ahmadiyyah Mission in Ghana was generated by a dream of Yussif Kwasi Nyarko. After the dream of Kwasi Nyarko, a formal invitation was extended to the Qadian under the auspices of Mahdi Apah and his Fante Muslim elders for Muslim Missionaries. Maulvi Abdul Raheem Nayyar was the first Ahmadiyyah Missionary to arrive in Ghana in 1921 at Saltpond in response to the request of Mahdi Apah and his Fante Muslims. Maulvi Abdul Raheem Nayyar had to organise the Fante Muslims whose sole aim was to have in-depth understanding of Islam. The first major project of Maulvi Hakeem was to open a primary school at Saltpond in 1923 which was subsequently placed on the list of Government-assisted schools in that year. The Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission consolidated the spread of Islam in the Fantiland in particular and Ghana as a whole. The coming of Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission in Ghana in the Fantiland brought to three the number of Muslim communities in the Fantiland that is the Ahmadist, the Sunni Fantes and the Sunni settlers in Fantiland. The Sunni settlers came from northern Ghana. These three Muslim communities in Fantiland all worked towards the propagation of Islam.

¹⁴⁴ Humphrey F.J, *Ahmadiyyah, A Study in Contemporary Islam in the West African Coast:* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 117

3.5 Islam in Bono Region (Begho)

Islam in Bono region is more or less in reference to Islam in Begho. This is so because Begho was geographically located in the Bono region. The region used to be called Brong Ahafo Region. The name Bono Region came about as a result of a referendum in 2018 which carved two regions out of Brong Ahafo Region and eventually changed the name from Brong Ahafo region to Bono Region. Scholars, who worked on the heart of commercial activities and development of Islam in then Brong Ahafo asserted that the religion started in Begho. Begho was given different forms of spellings according to different ways of local pronunciations of the word “Begho”. A leading historian, Ivor Wilks, indicates in his *Tarikh al-Sudan* that Abd al-Rahman al-Sadi made a definite association between the western Sudanese commercial centres of Taghaza and Jenne, and Bitu.”Bitu”, “Beetu”, “Bew”, “Bighu” or “Begho” and developed a staging post on the northern fringes of the Akan forest as early as the fifteenth century. Mahir Saul states that the Mande immigrants had founded the important trade town of Begho at the edge of the forest near the Black Volta. At some points, however, this town was destroyed and many of its clerics and merchant families went to settle in the surroundings of Kong. In the seventeenth century, the Kong area was subjected to incursions from the east by the armies of Gonja and Dagbon, strengthening the position of the leaders who had ability of standing against them¹⁴⁵. It was Malian Wangara/Dyula Muslims who pioneered the business, in such commodities as gold and kola nuts¹⁴⁶. Wilks says ‘the Wangara did business with the Akan at Bitu, but it was Bitu that became known throughout the Western Sudan’.¹⁴⁷ It was at the advent of Islam into the northern part of modern Ghana in the

145 Mahir Saul, *The War Houses of the Watara in West Africa*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Boston University African Studies 1998), 544

146 Ivor Wilks, *The Wangara, Akans and Portuguese in the Fifteen and Sixteenth Centuries*, *The matter of Bitu Journal of African History*, 1982, 23:33-49

147 Wilks, *Forests of Fold, Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante*, 17

fourteenth century the Sudanese kingdoms began to grow in political and economic power because of the traders. Islamic influences were passed on to the Dyula-Wangara, and they, in turn, passed it further into the south of modern Ghana. To better understand the penetration of Islam into Ghana, the fourteenth century Western Sudan, dominated by the Mali Empire, needs exploration. The rulers of Mali were impressed by Islam through pilgrimage to Makkah. By the fourteenth century even though Mali was in a state of political decline, its principal trading classes, Dyula-Wangara, still showed great vitality, they had established merchant colonies in regions far beyond the limit of Mali political authority.¹⁴⁸ The Dyula-Wangara was diligent and founded a colony at Begho or Bighu for the purpose of trading, and this also became a centre of Islam.¹⁴⁹ According to Ivor Wilks, numerous Muslim communities exist today in the northwestern hinterland of the Akan states, the members of which call them, Wangara or Dyula. They claim common Malian origins, asserting that their ancestors came from Mande Kaba.¹⁵⁰ One of such communities is the Menji Community. Many of the Wangara or Dyula of the Akan hinterland, however, also identify themselves more specifically as Begho Dyula. They claim that their ancestors left Mande Kaba to settle in a place called Begho.¹⁵¹ Wilks emphasizes that the Wangara in Begho were of nine clans. He states that in 1966 Seku Khalidu Bamba referred to a work entitled Wasul Bighu¹⁵². Seku Khalidu Bamba claimed to be able to recite it from memory. Part of it narrates the migration from Mande:

¹⁴⁸ Ivor Wilks, Islam in Ghana: An Outline, “(*Ghana: Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 2, No.3 1962), 20

¹⁴⁹ Cherlsoon Yim: *Understanding Islam, Its History in Ghana, and an effective Evangelistic Strategy to Overcome Islamic Influence in Ghana* unpublished PhD thesis, Lynchburg, Vergenia, 2004 p.77

¹⁵⁰ Kaba or Kangaba on the Upper Niger remains to this day one of the most sacred centres of the Malinke-speaking peoples

¹⁵¹ Wilks, *Forests of Fold, Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante*, 17

¹⁵² The coming Together of the Bighu

Wasul Bighu: The coming Together of the Bighu, was from the nine-ethnic groups with different nisbas [patronymics]. The first Banba [that is, Bamba], second Kamaghatay third Timitay, the fourth Gbani, the fifth Jabaghatay, the sixth Tarawiri, the Kuribari, the eight Watara, the ninth Kunatay which is Kamara. The Kunatay are the the last Muslims in Bighu¹⁵³

David Owusu Ansah succinctly gives summary of Begho. He states:

Begho was a 15th century trading centre, located in the present-day Bono Region of Ghana. The exact date of its foundation is speculative. However, it is clear that Begho antedates the rise of both Asante and Gonja. Begho was possibly a Mande colony where Muslim traders from Jenne and the Niger came to trade for gold. By the late sixteenth century, traders in the area began to divert some of their commerce southward to the coast to meet the Europeans. A Leading historian in Ghana, Ivor Wilks is of the opinion that the Asante drive into northwest during the period of expansion was aimed at controlling this trade.¹⁵⁴

Levtzion notes that Begho was an old town that was recognized with this title, according to information collected by the French at Bonduku. The people around the old town pronounce the name as Be'o or Bi'u. He states that Begho is twenty–five miles southeast of Bonduku, preceded the latter as a commercial centre and an outpost of Islam.¹⁵⁵ According to Levtzion, the market of Begho developed with the arrival of two important Mande groups, the Ligbi and the Dyula. The Ligbi, defined as proto-Dyula, had migrated from the Upper Niger to the fringes of the forest, towards the region where modern frontiers of Ivory Coast, Guinea and Liberia meet. “The Dyula and the Ligbi were attracted to Begho by the presence of gold, probably that of the region of

¹⁵³ Wilks, *Forests of Fold, Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante*, 21

¹⁵⁴ David Owusu Ansah, *Historical Dictionary of Ghana fourth Edition*, (Laham: published by Rowman & Littlefield Laham 2014), 67

¹⁵⁵ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 8

Banda”¹⁵⁶. The tradition of the old town is still remembered by people still living in the vicinity. The site of Begho lies between Namasa and Hani. According to oral history the word “Hani” is an Akan patronymic which means “is that this place?” Namasa and Hani all share geographical boundaries with Menji, the study area.

Dyula traders operated from their main base at Begho in the Banda hills. Begho consisted of two sections: Muslims lived in one part and the African Traditionalists in the other.¹⁵⁷ The Dyula and Ligbi, who speak a Mande tongue and were active Muslims and traded in forest products. They took the forest commodities and exchanged them for goods across the Sahara. Ivor Wilks holds the view that the Kamaghatay were among the earlier of the Dyula to arrive in Begho.¹⁵⁸

Holger Weiss posits that the establishment of Begho served multifaceted purposes. Begho was used as a trade-cum-scholars network which linked West African centres of learning and trade with the wider world. The network gave scholars the opportunity to spread information and ideas, merchants to establish links of communication and trust and students to embark on a lifelong search for knowledge in the Islamic sciences.¹⁵⁹ Clark identifies two folds impact of Muslims in Begho. On the one hand, they contributed to the commercial development of the town, while at the same time, they converted people who lived in and around Begho to Islam.¹⁶⁰ In the view of the researcher, the commercial colony established by the Muslim traders at Begho creates a great avenue for economic emancipation. Again, the trade helped inspire the Islamization processes at Begho. According to Levtzion, about half of the Hwela who were converted to Islam around Begho

¹⁵⁶ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 9

¹⁵⁷ G.T. Stride et al. *People and Empires of West Africa, West Africa in History*, 238

¹⁵⁸ Wilks, *The Juula and Expansion of Islam into the Forest in The History of Islam in Africa*, 2000, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Weiss. *Between Accommodation and Revivalism* ,2008, 552-53

¹⁶⁰ Clark, *Islam and West Africa*, 59

adopted Islam and the Ligbi language. The Islamization process in the Begho made most of the chiefs adopt Islamic customs and beliefs while the subjects remained untouched. Since some of the pioneer Ligbi Muslims in Menji trace their origins to Begho, most of the chiefs are inclined to Islamic culture such as their way of dressing. There existed in Begho twelve mosques which enhanced the Islamization process. Interviews and documentary sources acknowledge that some practitioners of Islamic occults science used to fetch some soil from the remains of the Begho mosques to be used in the preparation of certain concoctions. For instance, Ivor Wilks says that in 1965 he spoke with one aged Seku Khalidu Bamba of Bofie¹⁶¹, a descendant of the last Imam of Begho, whose personal copy of the Qur'ān is still in existence. Wilks states that Khalidu Bamba described how as a boy in the late 19th century, regularly sent by his father to the ruins of the Begho mosque to collect soil to be used in the preparation of potions¹⁶². However, a place that used to have twelve big mosques could boast of only one in contemporary times in the new town around the ancient Begho. Islamization course at Begho in the Bono region made a positive impact as it was one of the contributions that led to the spread of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin.

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century Begho began to decline. This caused the inhabitants and the traders to relocate. Different versions from interviews and documentary traditions gave different reasons for the collapse of Begho. M Rard and J. Ki-zerbo proffered the following reasons that accounted for the total collapse of Begho it was a new factor that arose along the Gulf of Guinea and the slave trade and firearms. This single event is enough to explain why groups of Dyula went further and further into the Savannah areas where goods most demanded by the new dispensation were increasingly in high demand. Even though it was the Dyula who helped establish

¹⁶¹ Bofie is a community in the Banda District. It is located in the north of Menji. It is seven miles from Menji.

¹⁶² Wilks, *Forests of Fold, Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante*, 1993, 18

the great trading centre at Begho, the trade routes were soon linked to the one crossing present day Cote d'ivoire from Assinie to Bobo and Bamako through Sikasso. At the end of the fifteenth century the Gonja kingdom came into being, and at the end of the seventeenth century, after the destruction of Begho, Dyula refugees fell back into the Bron (ABron) Kingdom and founded the Bonduku.¹⁶³

A number of important circumstances gave rise to the activities of the Dyula from the seventeenth century onwards. The first was the fall of the empire of Gao. Second, the creation of the Asante Empire which constituted a major centre for the supply of gold, arms, salt and manufactured goods. Third, there were the voltaic Savannah societies which were quite densely populated. Compared to neighboring societies, most of which had no centralized political authority to enable them, supply slaves, cattle and gold that people of the coastal area needed.

At the latter part of David Owusu-Ansah description of the foundation of Begho, he revealed that Ivor Wilks is of the opinion that the Asante's drive into northwest during the period of expansion was aimed at controlling this trade. This implicitly, in the view of the researcher, means that the Asante moved into Begho not only to control the trade but also to tactically divert it to Kumasi. Jan G. Plavoet emphasized that the trade in Begho declined as a result of redirection of the trade route to Kumasi, the capital of Asante.¹⁶⁴ Levtzion indicates that the people of Begho dispersed as a result of an internal dispute. Rattray is of the view that,

Internal disputes as a reason for the dispersion of people who claim the same origin, is quite a common theme in African tradition. But even if one accepts that a dispute did occur, it was probably only the

¹⁶³ M.Rard and J. Ki-zerbo, *From the Niger to the Volta in General History of Africa. V. Africa from the sixteenth to the Eighteenth-Century* Editor B.A OGot (UNESCO 1992),355

¹⁶⁴ Jan.G Plavoet, *The Presence of Islam Among the Akan of Ghana in Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, publisher Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Accra 2012

last blow to a declining town, bringing to an end a longer process of dispersion. An internal dispute alone would not destroy a prosperous market town, and escalation of a dispute up to a devastating war is more likely in a demoralizing society, as the Civil War in Salaga in the last decade of the nineteenth century may suggest.¹⁶⁵

There is a particular hole at Begho from which most of the people in and around the area claimed to have come from. The researcher had the opportunity to visit the site in 2009 in the company of Tain District Assembly members. Many people often say that nature has bestowed on the Bono Region a special package of tourist attractions, if properly developed they will make the region a hub of tourism. One of the potential tourist sites identified by the Ghana Tourist Board in collaboration with Tain District Assembly in the District (Tain) includes Begho (Nsesrekeseso)¹⁶⁶. According to Agyei-Kodie Anane-Gyei, an author, near Wenchi is Hani, an ancient trade centre, reputed to be the best-documented archaeological site in Ghana. Some of the items date back to 1200 BC when the Begho people lived there. Excavations of various pieces show that centuries back the people lived a civilized life at the ancient city of Begho. It is estimated that between the 14th and 18th centuries Begho had contacts with the Arabs and other Southern Sudanese Empires. Historical items of the area that have been preserved till this day include smoking pipes terra cotta figures, hammers and grinding stones.¹⁶⁷

Remarkably, the researcher observes that Hani, the new established town after collapse of Begho, has a new congregational mosque in 2019. A Muslim peasant farmer residing in the town created

¹⁶⁵ Rattray R.S., *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, 2 vols. (London 1932), 515-16

¹⁶⁶ Ghana Statistical Service: *Population and Housing Census, District Analytical Report*, 2010

¹⁶⁷ Nana Agyei-Kodie Anane-Gyei, *Ghana's Brong Ahafo Region: The Story of an African Society in the Heart of the World*, (published by Abibrem Communications, University of Ghana 2015) 83.

a temporal place that was used for observation of daily prayers by a few Muslims who commuted to the town for their daily activities. Surprisingly, the indigenous people of Hani still observe certain Islamic rites. For instance, in the month of Ramadan¹⁶⁸ no noise making of any kind is allowed. The researcher believes that the absence of a congregational mosque at Hani probably emanates from the fact that the indigenes do not want to be reminded of the civil war between Muslims and their ancestors in Begho in the past. The Commercial situation at Begho in the Bono region preconditions the presence in this location of a well-structured social organization and well organised distinctive trade. Ivor Wilks asserts that it was at Begho that the Muslims who later settled in such places as Kong, Buna and Bonduku in Ivory Coast and Namasa, Banda and **Mengye (Menji)** originated.¹⁶⁹ Menji is about fifteen kilometres from the old Begho. The study looked at the development and influence of Islam in Menji after some of the Muslims in Begho relocated to the town.

3.6 Development of Islam in Menji

Geographically, Menji is located in the northwest part of the Bono Region and some 15 kilometres from ancient Begho. It is an ancient Muslim settlement in the Tain District. Ever since the Ligi ancestors of Menji brought Islam from *Gbaapo (valley)* and Begho to create the community, the Muslims in the town have practised the faith unabated. In actual fact, it was difficult for the respondents to mention the names of the pioneer Muslims from Begho who brought Islam to Menji apart from Bomo Kunadi and Musah Kunadi who were believed to have descended from heaven

¹⁶⁸ Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar in which Muslims all over the world observe twenty-nine or thirty days fasting. The month is considered a holy month in the Islamic cycle. Muslims remain holy and do a lot of worships in this month.

¹⁶⁹ Wilks, *Forests of Fold, Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante*, 16

or a hole. Islam continues to grow from strength to strength in Menji. As a result, Menji is the largest Muslim populated community in the entire Tain District. It is also one of the communities in the Bono Region that has practised Islam persistently from generation to generation. Presently, the community has an increasing number of Muslims from diverse ethnic backgrounds including the Ligbi (the indigenes), Nafaanas, Bono and Wala. A very prominent Islamic feature or landmark of the community is the mosque. The Menji community has four different mosques in four sections of the community namely, Josorah, Kukulayah, Kromiedaarah and Jaako, with one being designated a central mosque in which the Friday congregational prayer is performed. In an interview with Imam Abass Yussif, the Imam of Menji, he said that the Muslim population in Menji has greatly increased which calls for opening of an additional Friday congregational mosque.

3.7 Muslim Doctrinal Groups

Muslim doctrinal groups are a commonplace in almost all communities the world over. The Muslim doctrinal groups prevailing in communities are the Maliki, Ahlus-Sunnah, (Hambali), Shi'ites, Ahmadiyah and others. Though Menji is predominantly a Muslim populated community, only the Maliki doctrine is dominant in the community. From all indications, the religious orientations of the Muslims at Menji incline to the direction of this tradition. In an interview with Imam Abass Yussif, the Imam of Menji, he indicated that the pioneer Muslims of Menji belonged to the Maliki doctrine. Imam Abass Yussif said that the Muslims in Menji strictly adhere to that jurisprudence. He emphasized that in addition to the Qur'an and Hadith, most of the fiqh books available and being studied by the past and present Muslim scholars in the community are related to the fiqh of that doctrine. According to Imam Abass Yussif, though the pioneer Muslims in the community

were Maliki by orientation but some used to practise the Sufi (Tijaniyyah) brotherhood. In response to the inquiry of the researcher to know why Tijaniyah order is not longer in practice in the community since according to Imam Abass Yussif some used to practise the Tariqa, Imam Abass Yussif said several reasons are responsible for the lack of interest of the current generations of Muslims in the practice of Tijaniyah.

Some of the reasons mentioned by Imam Abass are inadequate understanding of the Tijaniyah order, possibility of secret practice of Tijaniyah by some Muslims and absence of order of initiation into the Tijaniyah fraternity by the pioneer members of Tijaniyah sect. In a focus group discussion with some youth numbering five, some of them confided in the researcher that they practise Tijaniyyah secretly. They said that the '*nasi*' (*write and drink*) work they are doing is part of Tijaniyyah practice. According to them, they do *Wird* (Dhikr) at some stipulated times. They said that they were initiated into the Tariqa (fraternity) by their Shuyukh some of whom are not from Menji. The response of these youth confirmed one of the reasons given by Imam Abass Yussif that there might be some Muslims who practise Tijaniyyah privately. Imam Abass Yussif was quick to say that there is no restriction on Muslim doctrinal groups in Menji. Any Muslim has the right to practice his or her doctrine without hindrances whatsoever from anyone. When asked if there are stringent restrictions on Muslim doctrinal groups or why there is only one Friday congregational mosque in the community even when the Muslim population has greatly increased which necessitates the need for a second Jum'ah mosque, Imam Abass Yussif responded there is nothing of such and that the Muslim opinion leaders in the community probably fear division among the



Muslims should there be another Jumu'ah mosque in the community. He added that if there is the need for it, it would be done.¹⁷⁰

3.8 Institution of Imamship of Menji.

The shi'ites consider position of the Imam to be a cardinal principle while the Sunnis consider it as a collateral matter.¹⁷¹ An Imam is the leader of prayer, for a particular occasion or a function.¹⁷²

Imam means a leader or one who leads. Imam is a person who has some followers whether he is virtuous or depraved.¹⁷³ Every mosque has one or two Imams. Likewise, every Muslim community has one or two persons appointed as Imam and Naa'ib (deputy Imam). In an interview with Ibrahim Abdallah, one of the family heads of the Imam Soorah (Imam House), who knows the history of the Imam institution in Menji, he asserted that the institution of Imamship in Menji began in Kromiedaarah. He said that the community did not immediately appoint an Imam upon its establishment since it started as a small settlement with fewer Muslims. The appointment of a permanent Imam for the Ummah in the community began in the 1790s after the Muslims Ummah in the community had been more than twelve regular residents. The first person to be appointed as the Imam in Menji was Nsiah Kassim.¹⁷⁴ Ibrahim Abdallah outlined the following criteria or procedure for selection of an Imam in Menji. Such Muslim must:

- a. be matured Muslim and of sound mind

¹⁷⁰ Interview, Alhaji Abass Yussif, Chief Imam of Menji, at his residence at Menji on 24th November, 2019 at 9:21 am

¹⁷¹ Ayatullah M. Murtafhare, *Man and Universe*, 2003, p.454

¹⁷²¹⁷²Cyril Glasse, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Revised Edition*, (Accra: E. P. P Book Service, 2005) 213

¹⁷³ Ayatullah M. Murtafhare, *Man and Universe*, 2003, p 455

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Ibrahim Abdallah, family head of the J'Ida Imam, at his residence in Kumasi on 21st June, 2020 at 1:00 am

- b. be able proficient in the recitation of the Qur'ān.
- c. come from the family of the Imam Soorah.
- d. be a male
- e. not be a slave
- f. not be born out of wedlock

These criteria are largely the classical criteria for Imamship in Islam. The institution of Imamship resides with the family of the Imam Soorah. Every Imam is elected from that lineage. The exception occurs when there is no learned male from the Imam Soorah family. Then the family head of the Imam Soorah will look for a suitably and qualified Muslim from the larger community provided that such a Muslim will not claim that by his appointment, his offspring too have right to Imamship in future. The selection of the Imam is done in consultation with the Muslim chiefs of the community. After an appointed person has unanimously been accepted, a day is scheduled for formal coronation.¹⁷⁵ In order to maintain and ensure the continuity of the institution of Imamship in the family of the Imam Soorah, some children from the family were sent outside Menji to places such as Jirini, Bonduku, and Wenchi to seek further studies in Islamic education. These places were all distinguished for Islamic scholarship. Appointment of an Imam in Menji in contemporary times has a slight variation from ancient times. Recently, a more knowledgeable person in Islamic teaching is preferred by the Imam Soorah family. Below is the table of past and present 'a'imah (Sunni Imams) of Menji.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Ibrahim Abdallah, family head of the J^eIdda Imam, at his residence in Kumasi on 21st June, 2020 at 1:00 pm

| NAME | POSITION | PERIOD |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Nsiah Kassim | Imam | 1790-1820 |
| Zakariya Kassim | Imam | 1820-1865 |
| Iddriss Sulemana Buni | Imam | 1865-19024 |
| Alhaji Mumuni Amadu Madugu | Imam | 1924-1965 |
| Alhaji Yahaya Mohammed | Imam | 1965-1977 |
| Alhaji Abdullahi Umar | Imam | 1977-2000 |
| Alhaji Mohammed Yahaya | Imam | 2000-2007 |
| Alhaji Abass Yussif | Imam | 2007 to date |

Table.1 Chronology of Imams in Menji Muslim Community Since 1790

3.9 Establishment of Islamic Schools (Madrasah)

Menji Muslim leadership lay much emphasis on the acquisition of Islamic education. As a result, efforts are put in the study of the scripture. Every parent would like his or her ward to be able to read the Qur’ān in its original language since a Muslim cannot perform the five daily prayers without reading or reciting some verses of the Qur’ān. As a result of this, Muslim children in Menji are sent to Madrasah to learn the basic recitation of the Qur’ān. Parents have committed themselves into taking their wards to the Madrasah. Thus, many of the youth can read the Quran. Since Islamic education is held in high esteem by Menji Muslims, some parents even sent their children outside Menji to pursue further Islamic education.

The first Islamic education a Muslim child acquires traditionally is the Qur’ān. In the Makarantah, children from four or five years of age learn to read and write. In a traditional Muslim town such

as Menji the voices of the chorus of children reciting the Qur'ān is the most characteristic neighbourhood sounds every morning from 6:00am to 10: 00am. In the Makarantah system of education in Menji, the children are taught how to read the Qur'ān, traditionally on a wooden tablet called *Lawth or Waliga* (a tablet on which some verses of the Qur'ān are written for children to learn). The lawth is whitewashed to make the surface smooth for easy writing or calligraphy. The ink used to write on the Lawth is made from the bark of a tree called *Gburobgaa* (local tree). This is boiled for some time until the liquid or mixture becomes thick deep black. The pen is called *kalembe* (pen). It is a sharpen reed with the point cut at an angle on the tip of the *Kalembe* for easy calligraphy of the teacher. After every lesson the Lawth is washed away for new verses to be written on. In teaching the children how to write, the teacher first of all shapes the calligraphic writing on the Lawth with a pencil for the children to trace. Shortly, the children become perfect in writing for themselves. In the Menji setting, the teacher is not paid any stipend for his tutelage. Sometimes the Makarantah students do assist him on the farm every Sunday. In recent times, the students no longer go to the Mallam's farm because most of the children these days are young and cannot be taken to farm to work. Iddrisu Ali, a Madrasah instructor says, 'our reward for teaching the children is in heaven'.¹⁷⁶ In an interview with Alhaji Saliho Idriss, the Mu'adhin of Menji, he said that Mallam Mahmud Zakariya was the first person to open a Makarantah (Arabic school) in Menji. It was difficult for him to tell a specific date or year in which the first Madrasah was established in Menji. However, he speculated that it is more than three centuries.¹⁷⁷ With time, several Madrasahs were opened in almost every suburb of the Menji community.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Iddrisu Ali, a Makarantahh instructor, in his residence in Menji on the 3rd of June, 2020 at 10:00am

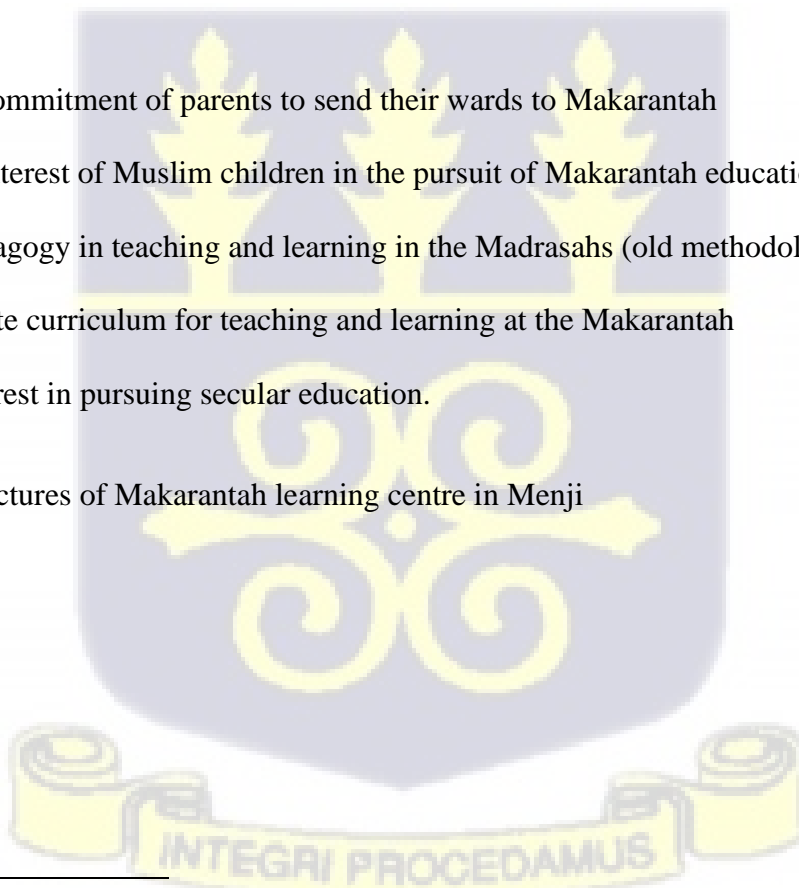
¹⁷⁷ Interview with Alhaji Saliho Tijani, the Mu'adhin of Menji, in his residence at Menji on 3rd June, 2020 at 4:00 pm

As Islam continued to develop in Menji, Makarantah and Islamic education centres were established in almost every suburb of the community. Such suburbs included Fuglakankinah (Banda line) being the first, Josorah (shrine), Jaako (Amazing) and Kukulayah (flat Bowl) and Kromiedaarah (Lakeside). These Qur'ān learning centres were established with the aim of developing Islam in the community. The Madrasah produced a great number of Muslim scholars. Among them were Mallam Yahaya Mohammed, Mallam Mohammed Yahaya, Mallam Abubakari Osman and the Imam of Menji, Abass Yussif among others. The researcher himself is a product of the Makarantah education in Menji. The current status of the Makarantah in Menji is pitiful. Almost all the Madrasahs in the community have collapsed. Abdul Hamid Umar Bamba, former Assemblyman, gave the following reasons for the decline of Makarantah education in Menji.¹⁷⁸

They are:

- a. lack of commitment of parents to send their wards to Makarantah
- b. lack of interest of Muslim children in the pursuit of Makarantah education
- c. poor pedagogy in teaching and learning in the Madrasahs (old methodology)
- d. inadequate curriculum for teaching and learning at the Makarantah
- e. high interest in pursuing secular education.

Below are pictures of Makarantah learning centre in Menji



¹⁷⁸ Interview with Abdul Hamid Umar Bamba, former Assemblyman for Banda line, in his residence in Techiman on 2nd June, 2020 at 9:00am



Fig.5 Picture of Makarantah children at Mallam Alhaji Karamog Madrasah at Menji



Fig. 6 Pictures of Makarantah children at Alhaji Karamog's Madrasah at Menji

3.10 Opening of Islamic schools in Menji for the development of Islam

The most essential knowledge, which a Muslim should seek before everything else is a sound understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. It is upon this knowledge that all his or her life and deeds will depend. However, secular knowledge is also of great importance and should not be neglected. The future of every religion lies in the educational progression of its adherents. Hence the Muslims in Menji have invested in the future of their wards in secular and Islamic education. They have established both Primary and Junior High Schools with the view of augmenting the existing Madrasah in the community. The Islamic schools which initially operated as private schools at Menji are now absorbed into the government mainstream since 2014 to enhance Islamic education in the town to ensure the progression of Islam.

3.11 Provision of Magico-Religious Service

There are spiritual consultants and traditional herbalists among the Menji Muslims. The spiritual consultants are Muslims who have explored the esoteric realms of Islam to offer healing services to the Menji community. They give spiritual assistance to their clients. Many people (Muslims and non-Muslims) travelled far and near to come to Menji for spiritual consultation and services against charms and evil machinations. Non-Muslims seek protection from the spiritual consultants in the form of charms and amulets against evils like witchcrafts. According to a respondent some non-Muslims traditional chiefs who are known to have consulted these *Mallams*¹⁷⁹ later converted to Islam. In an interview with Amina Yussif Donko, she said that one sub-chief, Akwamuhene of

¹⁷⁹ The term indicates traditional Islamic scholars, clerics, teachers and spiritualist

Menji called Sah Kwame, was converted to Islam after receiving spiritual assistance from the spiritual consultants¹⁸⁰. The traditional herbalists are Muslims who use herbs to cure people of various diseases in Menji. People come from far places to Menji to get their diseases treated through the herbal medicine practitioners. Some of the Muslim herbalists can reset fractured bones for their clients.

To this date, many youths of Menji are also involved in spiritual healing. Some do genuine spiritual work for their clients whereas others are fake who spiritually deprive people of their wealth and properties. The genuine spiritual consultation is termed *Tib Laafiya* (real Muslim spiritual healing). On the other hand, the fake consultation is called *subu laafiya* (unreal Muslim spiritual consultant). The *subu laafiya* group are more or less charlatans. They have adulterated the spiritual consultation with fraudulent practices. Consequently, the ‘fake Mallam’ has introduced new dimensions into the charms and amulet trends to swindle people of their wealth and properties. They do appear on private television stations in Ghana that have wider coverage to advertise their deceptive activities and products. The *subu Laafiya* in Menji is making the community lose its credibility in the sight of many would-be clients who come to the community for spiritual consultation. Many of the Muslim youths of Menji within and outside, who are supposed to work hard for their daily bread, resort to *subu Laafiya* activities for their livelihood. Even though some Muslim Youth of Menji undermine the spiritual consultation enterprise with their fraudulent activities, there are yet several genuine spiritual consultants in the community to assist people to achieve prosperity in life.

In an interview with the current Nkenkaasu Imam, Sualiho Saeed, he said that the spiritual consultation enterprise in Menji has helped develop the strength of Islam in the community. He

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Amina Yussifu Donko, Fantraso Women leader at Menji, the interviewed was conducted in their residence at Dakuman in Accra, on 17th November 2019 at 11:08 am

narrated how through spiritual consultation one of the chiefs of Menji built an intimate friendship with the Asantehene, Nana Kwaku Dua Panin (r. 1834-1869). He revealed an interesting story which the researcher transcribed at length below.

The narrative starts with Nana Kramo Ali B., Imam Siddik and Sufu Yaana. They were two compatriots from Burkina Faso from a village called Duba. They were inclined to spiritual powers in Islamic mystic practices. To supplement this realm of spirituality, these two men wanted an in-depth study of Islamic knowledge [Islamic law and exegesis]. The adventure took them to Bonduku where they heard of an Islamic scholar who was learned in Islam. This scholar was by name Kramo Mahma [Mohammed b. Uthman Tarawiri]. At Bonduku, they inquired of Kramo Mahma and were informed that he had left for Fugla (present day Banda) to educate people there. During their short stay in Bonduku they gained fame for their spiritual consultation. It was also at Bonduku that they came into contact with the Muslim chief at Menji, Nana Gyape Kunadi, who had been a close friend to the king of Asante. Nana Gyape Kunadi convincingly brought them to Menji to assist him in spiritual consultation. Kramo Ali insisted that they came to Bonduku purposely looking for Kramo Mahma and, so, wherever he had been they would wait for his return. It was there and then that Nana Gyape revealed to Kramo Ali that he had family ties with Kramo Mahma and knew where he stayed in Banda. Kramo Ali, thus, became convinced and accompanied Nana Gyape Kunadi to Menji. In those days one could not travel to Banda without passing through Menji from Bonduku. It was when Kramo Ali and his friend were at Menji that the Asantehene sent an emissary in the name of the then Nsumankwaahene, Kwasi Dunfeh, to the chief of Menji asking for the services of powerful Muslims to assist him in a war he was going to fight against the Hwa Sa. Nana Gyape then asked Kramo Ali and his friend to go with the Nsumankwaahene, but the two Muslims declined and insisted that they wanted to go to Banda to continue their quest

for Islamic knowledge. Nana Gyape accompanied Kramo Ali and his friend to Banda to meet Kramo Mahma. Upon seeing Kramo Mahma and telling him of their mission, the chief of Menji told Kramo Mahma of the request of the overlord of Asante kingdom. Kramo Mahma, recognizing his service in theory to the king of Asante since Banda was an Asante's territory, permitted Kramo Ali and his Friend to go to Kumasi to render their spiritual assistance to the king. They returned to Menji to meet the Nsumakwaahene still in waiting. Nana Gyape Kunadi and Kramo Ali together with Nsumakwaahene left for Kumasi. In Kumasi, Nana Kwasi Dunfeh led the entourage to a suburb called Asem. Nana Kwasi Dunfeh informed Asantehene that he has brought the Muslims from Menji.

The Ashantehene told Nana Gyape Kunadi and his friends that he was in war with Eweland and wanted spiritual assistance to win the battle. The battle was called Hwa Sa. The Ashantehene told them that he had consulted oracles. As a result, he would like to test the efficacy of Islamic mysticism. Ashantehene then assembled all the spiritual leaders for a spiritual examination. He built a small room and positioned in it a black cow at the blind side of each of the spiritual men. This room was called "*Danmum*". He then challenged each spiritual man to reveal to him the content of the Danmum. Konfo Denkyene who hailed from Wenchi was the first to be able to pronounce that the content of Danmum was a four- legged animal with "black colour". He was closer to the truth. He however could not identify the specific animal in the room. One spiritually inclined man after another performed their magical and spiritual prowess to identify the content of the room. When it was the turn of Kramo Ali, he took to his *Tasbah* (the Muslim rosary) and started chanting some portions of the Quran as prayers glorifying the name of Allah. Through these, he was said to have identified the object in the room as a quadruple with a "white colour". It is said that when the room was opened the animal has the exact features as described by Kramo

Ali. Kramo Ali had been able to alter the colour of the cow from “black” to “white”. The oral tradition continues that the Asantehene was surprised how Kramo Ali was able to change the colour of the cow. Kramo Ali was therefore appointed as the warlord to lead the expedition.¹⁸¹ This same story was reechoed by Osman Mohammed Owusu. Osman Owusu writes “this evidence consolidated the position of Akan Muslims and extended their influence in the social and religious areas in the Akan state”.¹⁸²

3.12 Arrival of a Muslim Scholar in Menji from Kong

To consolidate the Islamic faith further, Alhassan (Sina) Umar Touré, a native of Menji in 1910 invited an Islamic scholar from Kong (a town in Ivory Coast noted for Islamic scholarship). He was known as Karamog Mahma Saganogho. His task was to teach some few Muslims the Qur’ānic interpretation (Tafsīr) and other Islamic sciences. Alhassan Umar and some other Muslims in Menji learned the Quran and its meaning under the tutelage of Karamog Mahama Saganogho. They were able to learn the Qur’ān, the Quran exegesis, and other Islamic sciences for ten years after which Karamog Mahma Saganogho returned to Kong. The culture of Wangara learning had characterized the way of learning Islamic sciences in Menji. Since then, Dyula became the medium of instruction in Islamic scholarship in Menji. Karamog Mahma established among the pioneer Muslim scholars in Menji a teaching methodological tradition that has stood the test of time albeit the pressure of secular education and modernism. The Islamic education and sciences were built around the study of three major books, namely, the Tafsīr al-Jalalayn of al-Mahali (d.1459) and

¹⁸¹ Interview with Alhaji Sualiho Saeed, Imam of Nkenkaasu, in his residence on 26th December, 2019 at 1: 30pm

¹⁸² Osman M. Owusu, *Islam among the Akan: The Genesis and Consequences of Contemporary Doctrinal and Social Differences A case study of Kumasi*, Unpublished thesis submitted to the department for the study of religions university of Ghana 2010 p.52

As-Suyuti (.1505), the Mutwatta of Imam Malik (d.795) and Al-Shifa' fita^ṣrīf^ḥuqūq al-Muustafa (Healing through defining the Rights of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) of Al-qadi Iyad al-Yahsubi (d.114). These were the three major books that the pioneer scholars studied. Upon completion of Mutwatta of Malik and As-Shifa the students would then be introduced into the Tafsīr. It was the studies of Mutwatta of Imam Malik that made almost all Muslims in Menji to adopt the Malik orthodoxy. As stated earlier most Muslims in the Menji Muslim Community identified themselves firmly with the Malik *madhhab* (doctrine). Jalalayn is a Tafsīr book very common among many West African Muslims particularly the Dyula. It was Hajj Salim who introduced Tafsīr Jalalayn into West Africa. According to Ivor Wilks, As-Suyuti himself said that many Africans studied with him and obtained copies of his work.¹⁸³ The researcher thinks that Ivor Wilks' assertion might have accounted for the reason why Tafsīr Jalalayn is a major Tafsīr book among the Dyula and the Ligbi clans. Virtually all past and contemporary scholars in Menji studied Tafsīr Jalalayn. After completion of the Tafsīr Jalalayn, the graduands are accorded recognition by way of organising a special graduation ceremony where special *Namu* (turban) are put on the heads of the graduands to indicate that they have completed the exegesis of the Qur'ān. The graduands are also offered *lasiṇadu* (chain of transmission) or *Ijaza* (a certificate or license that qualifies them to also establish their own learning centres). The chain of transmission starts from the teacher showing where he attained his knowledge from. The list of the teachers (living and dead) contained in the chain of transmission almost run back to ten or fifteen generations until it gets to Muhammad (S.A.W) through Jibriel. In the olden days, women were not allowed to be students in the Tafsīr. They only attended the Tafsīr centres to listen to the words of Allah. In contemporary times women are allowed to be part of the Tafsīr and take part in the graduation as

¹⁸³ Wilks, *The Juula and Expansion of Islam into the forest*, 97

The pioneer Muslims in most of the communities in the Tain District such as Nsawkwa, Brohani, Seikwa, Badu and Kwame Teneten got converted through the Muslims of Menji.¹⁸⁴

3.13 Da’awah activity and development of Islam in Menji.

The innate nature of man in Islam is to believe in one God. Therefore, atheism or polytheism that is, (ascribing partners to God) is unacceptable in Islam (Q 4:48). Consequently, a person is born a Muslim, a believer, a submitter and attaching himself to any other belief is influenced by his or her immediate environment. It is thus the responsibility of every Muslim to have patience to do good deeds and spread the word of Allah to all those who would listen. Muslims are commanded by Allah to invite all non-Muslims to Islam so that perhaps, they may be guided to the truth. In Qu’ran 30:20, Allah says, “And say to the People of the Book, and those who read not: Do you (also) submit yourselves? If they do, they are in the right guidance but if they turned back, your duty is to convey the message”. The invitation to join the religion of Islam by words and deeds is incumbent on all Muslims and is referred as Da’awah. Guided by these injunctions of the Qur’ān, some scholars, ‘Ulamāh (Imams) and Muslims students of Menji all played a part in the propagation of Islam and the eventual acceptance of the message of Islam in the community. Da’awah played a very important role in the dissemination of Islam in Menji. Through constant Da’wah programs several adherents of Islam came to understand the real teachings of Islam. Historically, most of the new convert to Islam in Menji were introduced to Islam by exemplary life of the Muslims around them and also through the teaching of the ‘Ulamāh and the ‘a’imah (Imams). Through the Da’awah activities, scholars and ‘a’imah (Imams) of Menji had been

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Alhaji Saliho Tijani, the Mu’adhin of Menji, in his residence at Menji on 3rd June, 2020 at 4:00 pm

effective in bringing new converts, yet Da'awah programs are most often than not limited only to occasions for the rites of passage such as marriage and funerals. This is to say that the 'Ulamāh in the community often preach during funeral rites. Friday sermons delivered by the 'a'imah (Imams) also contribute immensely to the sustainability of the spirit of Islam of the entire Menji community, most especially the youth. There are no regular Da'awah programs in the various Mosques in the community. Therefore, the youth only listen to the words of Allah on Fridays. In recent times Muslim Daa'ee (caller to Islam) from other places frequent the community to do Da'awah.¹⁸⁵

3.14 The role of a Mosque in the development of Islam in Menji.

Several factors determine the development of Islam in every Community. One of such factors no doubt is the Mosque. The Mosque serves as a place of congregational worship. It also plays an important role in bridging the gap between rich and poor in terms of religion, ensuring the cohesion of the Community. Mosques all over the world act as community centres. They bring Muslims to pray together, learn together, help each other and give donations for various good causes, beneficial to the Community.¹⁸⁶ Several activities, apart from prayers, are performed in the Mosque towards the holistic advancement of Islam. The mosque should not be perceived only as a place of worship. It is place of acquisition of knowledge, a meeting place for Islamic activities, and so on. The first Mosque in Menji was built in 1800. It was temporary structure to cater for congregational Friday prayer. The congregational Friday prayer is an obligation on all Muslims, who gather to listen to the Friday sermon and then pray together. Until the late 1980s Friday

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Alhaji Zakariya, Islamic Scholar, at Menji in his residence on 28th November 2019 at 7:00 am

¹⁸⁶ Ahmad Abd al-Hamid Ghorab, *Islam and Daily Life, World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)*, (Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, 1990), 44

sermons in Menji used not to be interpreted. The Khutbah used to be read in its original Arabic text without it being given interpretation in the local language for the entire congregation to understand. The reason was that many of the pioneer °Ulamāh (Imams) could read only the Arabic text without understanding its meaning. Mallam Yahaya Mohammed who could read and understand the text did not bother to interpret Friday sermons during his reign as Imam of Menji. This was because he tried to follow the tradition of his predecessors. Mallam Mohammed Yahaya (Alhaji Karamog) was the first person to give interpretation to Khutbah during the Friday sermon in his capacity as a Naa'ib (deputy) when the substantive Imam, Alhaji Abdullahi Umar, became frail.¹⁸⁷

The researcher was told that the architect who designed the first mosque was called Mukhtar (the other name was not given). He came from Sudan through Ivory Coast to Gold Coast. This Mosque was a wooden structure reinforced with mud and plastered outward. The researcher was told that similar Mosques were built by Mukhtar in Banda Nkwanta, Malukwe, Bole and Laribanga in the Savana region then Northern Region. According to Imam Abass Yussif, after 1920 there was the need to expand the facility because of the growth in the Muslim population. Menji became the centre for congregational Friday prayer by Muslims from neighbouring settlements such as Nsawkaw (the District capital of Tain District), Brohani and Kwame Tenten, the need to expand the facility became imperative. Through the efforts of the Muslims in Menji, a larger mosque with a compartment for women was built to cater for the growing population in 1920. During the construction of a new Mosque, the ancient one was demolished. According to Ibrahim Abdallah,

¹⁸⁷Interview with Alhaji Zakariya, Islamic Scholar, at Menji in his residence on 28th November 2019 at 7:00 am

one of the family heads of the Imam Soorah in Menji, the ancient Mosque occupied a central location and, so there was no reason to leave it standing without demolition. It needed to be demolished to give way for expansion.¹⁸⁸ However, others thought that the old Mosque should have been preserved to serve purposes such as tourist attraction and relics for research purpose. In an interview with Siaka Mahmud, an eighty-year-old man, he said that some Europeans came to Menji sometime back and took pictures of the ancient mosque. Long after they had left, other Europeans came to Menji in the 1950s with the photograph of the ancient mosque looking for its location. Unfortunately, they were told that the mosque was demolished to make way for the current one. The Europeans were directed to where the mosque used to be located. According to Siaka Mahmud, the Europeans spread some powdery substance around the Mosque and took a photograph of the scene. The image of the ancient Mosque appeared beneath the current Mosque. Siaka Mahmud said that the Europeans blamed the Muslims in Menji for demolishing the Mosque. He said they further advised that people should not, henceforth, destroy ancient artefacts for purpose of research and tourism.¹⁸⁹ The researcher agrees with the assertion of the Europeans that the ancient Mosque should have been preserved. It could have served as a relic for this work. Below is the photograph of a kind of the ancient Mosque in which a congregational Friday prayer used to be performed in Menji.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Ibrahim Abdallah, family head of the J^cIdda Imam, at his residence in Kumasi on 21st June, 2020 at 1:00 pm

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Siaka Mahmud, Family head of Akwamuhene of Menji, in his residence in Menji on 5th June, 2020 at 10: 05 am



Fig.8 *The kind of place of worship built in Menji as a Jumu'ah mosque in 1800*



Fig.9 *The mosque that was built in place of the ancient one at Menji in the early 1920s. It used to be the Jumu'ah mosque in Menji.*

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS



Fig.10 *The current Jumu'ah mosque in Menji opened in 2018*

3.15 The Institution of the Muslim Family and the Development of Islam in Menji

In an interview with Nurudeen Osman, deputy Institute Manager, National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) Kumasi, Suame, a native of Menji, he said that the family is the basic institution in the structure of the community. The development of Islam hinges, to a large extent, on the strength of the community. When the Muslims uphold the principles of Islam there is the hope that the more the community expands the more Islam progresses. Muslims in Menji continue to increase from generation to generation. The growth of the Muslims in population in the Menji community brings in its trail the progressive development of Islam in the community. Virtually every household in Menji has one or more adherents of Islam. The Muslim family teaches its children the principles of Islam. The children, thus, grow up imbued with the doctrines of the religion. There is no way they will depart from the Islamic faith. The children have imbibed the teachings of Islam from childhood. It is a central teaching of Islam that the Muslim child should be commanded to perform prayer at the age of seven and should be reprimanded to observe prayer

at ten. Adherence to this Prophetic tradition by Muslims no doubt enhances the development of Islam in Menji.¹⁹⁰

3.16 The Role the Muslim Women Plays in the Development of Islam in Menji

Muslim women play important roles in the development of Islam since its inception. The dawn of Islam witnessed the liberation of women from oppressors. Saleh Fauzan Al-Fauzan pointed out that during the period of Jahiliyyah (period of ignorance) women generally lived oppressed lives particularly in the Arab society. When Islam emerged, it removed this oppression of women and returned them to their proper status as part of society.¹⁹¹ Jamal Badawi explained that men and women have the same religious and moral responsibilities. Each human being faces the consequences of his or her deeds.¹⁹² Rabi'atu Ammah asserted that Muslim women as nurturers have the responsibility to inculcate proper Islamic values in children and the power to change attitudes and mentalities with the correct methodology.¹⁹³ Against this backdrop the researcher examined the critical roles Muslim women in Menji played in the development of Islam. In an interview with Fati Bamba, Bono Regional Director, National Youth Authority, she indicated that Muslim women in Menji since time immemorial have contributed to the development of Islam in various ways. According to her, during construction of the various Mosques in Menji it was the

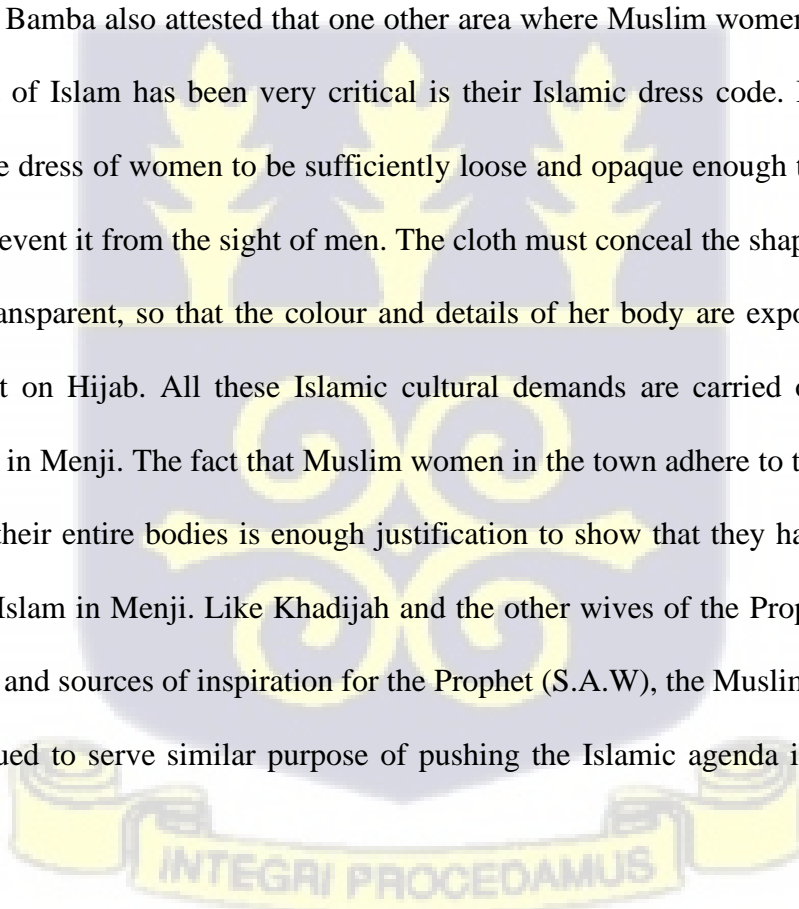
¹⁹⁰ Nurudeen Osman, deputy Institute Manager National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) Kumasi, and one of the university graduates in Menji, in his residence in Hemang in Kumasi on 21st June 2020 at 10.00am

¹⁹¹ Saleh Fauzan Al-Fauzan, *The Rulings Pertaining to Muslim Women*, Translated by Burhan Loqueman in English (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, 2003), 9-111

¹⁹² Jamal Badawi, *Gender Equality in Islam, Basic Principles* (Durban: Islamic Dawah Movement of Southern Africa (IDM) Publication 1999), 9

¹⁹³ Rabi'atu D. Ammah, "Ghanaian Muslims "Becoming Muslim "for Sustainable Development" in *Religion and Sustainable Development* edited by George Ossom-Batsa-Necoletta Gatti, Rabi'atu Deinyo Ammah, (Urbaniana University Press, 2018), 240

women who fetched water to assist their male counterparts. Again, she said that it was the women who brought up the Muslim children into adult. The proper upbringing of the children by the women prepares fertile grounds for the smooth development of Islam in the Menji Community. She, also, said when it comes to the decoration of the Mosques in Menji some women play immense roles. She cited one Zainab Amadu, as singlehandedly provided a big woolen carpet that covered the whole internal floor of the Menji central Mosque. There are some women in the community who play several other roles in the development of Islam in Menji. According to her, several women have enrolled into Tafsīr learning centres organised by the late Alhaji Karamog. Fati Bamba said, Muslim women in Menji use their resourcefulness to propagate Islam, resolve conflict between couple and individuals and raise funds to sustain the advancement of Islam in the community. Fati Bamba also attested that one other area where Muslim women's contribution to the development of Islam has been very critical is their Islamic dress code. Islam has made it obligatory for the dress of women to be sufficiently loose and opaque enough to cover her entire body and thus prevent it from the sight of men. The cloth must conceal the shape of her body and should not be transparent, so that the colour and details of her body are exposed. The Muslim woman must put on Hijab. All these Islamic cultural demands are carried out religiously by Muslims women in Menji. The fact that Muslim women in the town adhere to the rules regarding the covering of their entire bodies is enough justification to show that they have assisted in the development of Islam in Menji. Like Khadijah and the other wives of the Prophet (S.A.W) who became advisors and sources of inspiration for the Prophet (S.A.W), the Muslim women in Menji have and continued to serve similar purpose of pushing the Islamic agenda in the community.



According to Fati Bamba, the development of Islam in Menji could not be possible without the Muslim women, since beside every successful man there is a supporting woman.¹⁹⁴

3.17 Muslim Youth Associations and the Promotion of Islam in Menji.

The fortunes of every religion in any community cannot be the sole responsibility of one person or individual. Several actors come into play for the development of a religious body. Here, the religion of Islam would be no exception. While the 'a'imah (Imams), the 'Ulamāh and individual Muslims play major roles in the advancement of Islam in Menji, youth associations, Fun Clubs or organizations in the community have also contributed significantly to the development of the religion. In the last decade, new groups of Muslim youth associations, Fun Clubs and Organisations have emerged in Menji. An increasing number of young people in these associations have started engaging in voluntary social and religious welfare activities. Activities of these youth associations and Organisations are all aimed at promoting the image of Islam in Menji. Notable youth associations, Fun Clubs and organisation that are contributing to the enhancement of Islam in Menji are; Menji Future Builders Association, Menji Bandaman United Television (UTV) Fun Club and Al-Manar Foundation for Education and Humanitarian Services.

In a focused group discussion with two selected members drawn from each of the associations or organizations, Haruna Sina, vice chairman of the Menji Future Builders Association, claimed that since the Association was formed in 1990, they have engaged in a number of activities that seek to promote Islam in Menji. For instance, he stated that the Association bought a number of ceiling fans to be fixed in the central mosque. Every year the Association buys kettles for the mosque.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Fati Bamba, Regional Director National Youth Authority, in her residence in Sunyani on 22nd June, 2020 at 3:30pm

The Association organised its members for communal work during the construction of the present Central Mosques. Menji Future Builders Association constructed six black Boards for six classrooms at Menji Islamic Primary School. The secretary of Bandaman United Television (UTV) Fund Club, Amin Mohammed Bamba, said that the Club aided in the construction of *minbar* (rostrum on which an Imam stands during delivering of sermons) and laying of floor tiles in the present central Mosque in Menji. Abdul Hamid Umar Bamba, the president of Al-Manar Foundation for Education and Humanitarian Services, stated that the foundation assists orphans and widows in the Menji Community by rendering financial and material supports to these vulnerable individuals especially during Islamic festivities such as Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha. He said these strenuous efforts are geared towards the promotion of Islam in Menji.

3.18 Chieftaincy and Islam in Menji

Chieftaincy is an institution that has played a pivotal role in the socio-cultural evolution of the Muslims in Menji. The indigenes of Menji are sound Muslims who practise both the letter and spirit of Islam. Since time immemorial, Muslims have continued to express the Islamic uniqueness of the community. They have complete influence of the Menji town. When a stool becomes vacant in Menji, a new chief is nominated to occupy it. A stool becomes vacant when the occupant dies or is distooled or abdicates. The Abusuapanin (head of the royal family) selects a new chief who must be a nephew to the deceased or distooled or abdicated chief. In the absence of a nephew, a grandson is chosen. The nominee must be a male Muslim with good character and sound mind; he must not suffer from any chronic disease. The next stage is the introduction of the nominee to the queen-mother of Menji. The queen-mother presents the candidate to the kingmakers who are all Muslims for further consideration and approval. If they accept the candidate, the choice is upheld.

The Abusuapanin then presents kola and some amount of money to the chief Imam of Menji for benedictions in the central Mosque for commencement of coronation of the nominee as a substantive chief. A full Qur'ān is recited during the benediction. Instead of a sword which is usually a symbol for oath, the new chief is made to swear an oath of obligation and secrecy by holding firmly the holy Qur'ān in the right hand. Swearing by the Qur'ān signifies that the chief takes a solemn oath to be truthful to Allah and the throne. The appointment of Muslims as chiefs of Menji is another factor in the development of Islam in the town. This is because these Muslim chiefs often release lands free of charge for construction of mosques in Menji and other Islamic activities. Again, they assisted in the opening and running of Menji Islamic Primary School until it was absorbed by government. The Muslim chiefs are always in collaboration with the 'a'imah (Imams) in the development of Islam in Menji. Enstoolment of chiefs in Menji had been peaceful since, until recently when the status quo is being challenged through protracted chieftain litigation. A segment of the community, since 2014, has been demanding the abdication of the current chief on grounds of gross improprieties. The protracted chieftaincy dispute is affecting the relative peace of the community. Since February, 2020, the Tain Divisional Council mediates between the two factions.

The stool name of Menji Traditional Council is 'Nana ADISA (Iddrisu) I. Nana Adisa I. was not the first chief of Menji. However, he became a chief after the apprehension of the substantive chief, Nana Seidu Bakaa. In 1813, Nana Sedi Bakaa was arrested as the landowner, over a murder case at Kwame Tenten, which is found in the area of jurisdiction of Menji.¹⁹⁵ Hajara Abu, the Queen

¹⁹⁵ Oral report asserts that a meat monger with his wife used to come to Kwame Tenten. He mongered in bush meat. They used to buy bush meat from the area and take them to Kumasi to be sold. There was, also, a hunter in Kwame Tenten who became a usual customer. The hunter seduced the wife of the monger and had sexual intercourse with her. When the hunter realized that his sexual scandal was exposed, he surreptitiously killed the man (monger) in the bush and buried

mother of Menji, revealed that a European came to Menji and asked for the chief. He was informed that the chief of the town had been apprehended over a murder case. The European then appointed a grandson of Nana Seidu Bakaa, the former chief in police custody pending investigation, to succeed his grandfather for all cultural services. The new enstooled chief since then had been named “Broni Saa” meaning a Whiteman’s chief. The chieftaincy institution in Menji assumed top place during the reign of Nana Adisa I. The descendants of Nana Adisa Broni Saa have continued to be appointed as chiefs of Menji.¹⁹⁶ If there is a community in Ghana whose chiefs continue conventionally to be Muslims since the time imemorial, then it is Menji. The Muslim indigenes of Menji do not pay allegiance to any power in Ghana. Their occupation of the land is not under the powers of any kingdom in Ghana. The following communities, Brohani, Kwame Tenten and Jaro pay homage to the chief of Menji. They are obliged to pay tributes to the chief of Menji every year. According to Yussif Gausu, the Linguist of Menji, virtually all neighboring communities surrounding Menji such as Nsawkaw, Namasa, Banda, Suma and Brohani had ever brought lawsuits against the chief of Menji claiming ownership of the territorial lands of Menji. Each of the suits was battled in courts and won by the people of Menji. For the development of Islam in Menji every chief appointed to lead the community must be a Muslim.¹⁹⁷

him. The news of murder of the man was leaked out. Police launched a full-scale investigation into the murder case and as a result the landowner of Kwame Tenten who happened to be the chief of Menji was arrested and detained in police custody pending investigation. When Nana Seidu Bakaa was discharged he could not continue as chief. (Story narrated by Hajara Abu, the Queen mother of Menji, on 20th November, 2019 at 8:00pm in her residence in Menji)

¹⁹⁶ Interview with, Hajara Abu, the Queen-mother of Menji, in her residence in Menji on 20th November, 2019 at 8:00pm

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Nana Yussifu Gausu, chief Linguist of Menji, on 20th November, 2019 at Menji at his residence at 9:30 pm

3.19 Muslim Personalities

The development of Islam in Menji was progressively achieved by the collective efforts of many well-meaning Muslim personalities who devoted adequate time and energy to the service of Islam. Some of these Muslims were indigenes of Menji while others were non-indigenes. The researcher gives an account of the following personalities who are said to have contributed immensely to the development of Islam in Menji, these are: Mallam Yahaya Mohammed and Alhaji Karamog

From data collected ninety percent (90%) of the respondents in the study area state that Mallam Yahaya Mohammed's effort in the development of Islam in Menji is unmatched. Mallam Yahaya Mohammed was born in the late 18th Century. His father was a staunch Muslim who devoted his time in the service of Islamic scholars who came to Menji. Mallam Yahaya Mohammed began learning the holy Quran under the tutelage of his father. He was later taken to Banda to continue his Islamic education under Karamog Mahama. It was at Banda that he studied the basic Islamic Jurisprudential books such as Al- Khadari, Risalat, Ashimaawii, Ashifaa and Muwatta of Imam Malik. He commenced Quran Tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) lessons under Karamog Mahama at Banda. After the demise of Karamog Mahama, Mallam Yahaya proceeded to Wenchi and continued his Islamic studies under one of the pioneer students of Karamog Mahama who was also named after their tutor. When he graduated from the Tafsir studies he went to Kyebi in the Eastern region where he spent many years preaching and selling Islamic literature. He was the first Islamic spiritual leader to perform spiritual consultation for Nana Ofori Atta I. Later he came and stayed at Suame in Kumasi. In Kumasi, he was preaching and teaching Muslims the Islamic sciences. His stay here was short-lived as he was eventually invited by the Muslim Ummah at Kukuom in the Ahafo Region as an Imam. He had thus been the first Imam of Kukuom. While an Imam in Kukuom, the chief of Menji sent a delegation to invite him to be appointed an Imam at Menji. According to one

of his children, when he arrived at Menji he opened a Makarantah and started teaching the youth and the elderly some Islamic Sciences.¹⁹⁸ He played a pioneering role in the consolidation of the fortunes of Islam in Menji. According to Alhaji Abdallah Osman, the coming of Mallam Yahaya to Menji was timely because the people of Menji did not have adequate knowledge of authentic Islam. Alhaji Abdallah Osman remarks that it was Mallam Yahaya who preached against certain cultural intrusions into the practice of Islam in Menji. According to Alhaji Abdallah Osman, he was the first Islamic scholar to preach against such cultural practices as '*Duun*'¹⁹⁹ and Gba.²⁰⁰

The way the Muslims at Menji performed this kind of culture was mixed with some anti-Islamic tendencies. Gba is performed at midnight when everybody is supposed to be asleep. This was also said to embody some anti-Islamic influence. He condemned and consistently preached against these practices to the extent that Muslims in the town had no option than to abandon them.²⁰¹ According to the current Imam of Menji, Mallam Yahaya Mohammed was the first native and Imam of Menji to begin Tafsīr (exegesis of the Qur'ān) in Menji.²⁰² Mallam Yahaya Mohammed undertook numerous outreach Da'awah projects to propagate Islam at Menji and beyond. A number of his sons and grandsons are 'a'imah (Imams) in and around Menji. He had established a legacy of Imamate in his family at Menji. The current Imam of Menji is one of his grandsons.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Alhaji Zakariya, Islamic Scholar, at Menji in his residence on 28th November 2019 at 7:00 am

¹⁹⁹ It is a cultural display in which characters put on masquerade customs to disguise themselves from easy identification.

²⁰⁰ Cultural performance which is performed at night in which characters check witches and wizards from operating in the night

²⁰¹ Interview with Alhaji Abdallah Osman, Islamic Scholar, at Menji in his residence on 17th December, 2019 at 7:00 am

²⁰² Interview with Imam Abass Yussif, Imam of Menji, at his residence at Menji on 25th November, 2019 at 9:00 am

Mallam Yahaya Mohammed died in 1977 at Menji. He had solidly laid the foundation of authentic Islam in Menji. Below is the photograph of Mallam Yahaya Mohammed.



Fig.11 *Picture of Mallam Yahaya Mohammed (Late Imam of Menji)*

After his death one of his sons by name Mohammed Yahaya (Alhaji Karamog) continued the legacy of his father as an Islamic teacher and preacher. Mohammed Yahaya popularly known as Alhaji Karamog was named after the tutor of his father. Alhaji Karamog was born in 1944. He acquired his Islamic education under the tutelage of his own father at Kukuom and later at Menji.

He continued his Islamic education in Kumasi after the death of his father. He later returned to Menji where he was appointed as the deputy Imam. Alhaji Karamog, while a deputy Imam went to Wenchi to further his Islamic studies under Mallam Mohammed Suwaari in the late 1980s. As a result of his zeal for knowledge, he enrolled in the Ghana Institute of Languages in Kumasi to pursue Arabic proficiency. Alhaji Karamog settled in Menji to run the Makarantah of his late father. He imparted the knowledge he acquired to many students from far and near. He also opened Tafsīr session in Menji. The Imam of Menji who happens to be his nephew is one of his students. Alhaji Karamog felt a kind of religious zeal to preach Islam in Menji. While he carried out Islamic propagation activities, he was also conscious of the Islamic reform legacy of his father. Alhaji Karamog extended his Islamic Da'awah activities to places such as Kumasi, Techiman, Wenchi, Sampa, Bonduku, Kukuom and several other places. In a focused group discussion with some Muslim women in Menji, it came out strongly that it was Alhaji Karamog who preached against and abolished these unIslamic aspects of Muslim widowhood rites in Menji. These women contended that Alhaji Karamog had emancipated the Muslim women from such degrading traditional widowhood rites at Menji. Some Muslims in Menji claim to have accepted Islam from birth. However, they did not have adequate knowledge of the Islamic worship acts. Alhaji Karamog left no stone unturned to educate the Muslims of Menji until they came to understand and appreciate the actual teachings of the religion. He was the first Imam in Menji to translate the Friday sermon into Twi. The anti-bida'h crusade of Alhaji Karamog began in the early 1980s. He started preaching against the celebration of Krubi²⁰³ festival in the month of Ramadan in the 1990s.

²⁰³ Krubi is an annual festival that is celebrated by the Muslims of Menji every 27th night of Ramadan

Krubi is an annual festival that is celebrated by the Muslims of Menji every 27th night of Ramadan which is assumed as the Night of Power (*Laylatul-Qadr*). It is an annual festival which is celebrated by the Ligbi/Wangara community in Ghana. Krubi has an etymological meaning in Arabic. The word is derived from the Arabic word 'Qaruba' meaning drew or come closer. It simply means drawing closer to God. Historically, Krubi is a festival introduced to the Ligbi clan by the Kong people. It was instituted for the womenfolk on the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan which falls within the last ten days of Ramadan. The festival is deliberately introduced to prevent the women from sleeping so that they would be able to observe the Night of Power. Islamic scholars and some Muslim men would then confine themselves in the Mosque for '*itikāf*' purposely for the remembrance of Allah and the recitation of the Qur'ān. While men go for '*itikāf*' the women do the celebration. This practice continued until it became a festival for the Muslims at Menji. On the eve of the festival, the youth in the community come together to construct a wooden platform or wooden structure on which the girls in the community would sit for the celebration. On the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan around 9:00pm, almost all women in the community come with girls ranging from ages six (6) and above at the Krubi grounds amidst drumming singing and dancing. The girls would mount the wooden structure raised above the ground. To mount the platform, girls must dress up in indigenous *gankere* (Kente) cloth and they must plait their heads with a tangle of hair locally called *jomo* (hair jumbo). Parents buy for their girl-child a tail of a horse woven together as whisk. While the girls sit on the platform, they sway their whisks sideways singing and dancing. Their mothers also sing along to cheer up their children till 1:00am during which the Krubi ceremony would stop for the performance of the Night of Power.

On the other hand, the Night of Power is a very significant Night in the Islamic calendar. Muslims the world over seize the opportunity to worship God intimately on that Powerful Night. Muhammad Abdul Fattah contends that the Night of Power is a Night in the blessed month of Ramadan when the revelation of the Qur'ān began. Indeed, it was the Night in which Allah revealed the light of Guidance to humanity. The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Surah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. Almighty Allah says about this night, glorifies and honors this Nights as follows:²⁰⁴

*“We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power: And what will explain to Thee what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein come down the angles and the Spirit by God’s permission, on every errand: Peace! This until the rise of morn”.*²⁰⁵

The similarities between Krubi and Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power) are that, both are performed on the 27th night of Ramadan. The Krubi is performed in an anticipation of the Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power). Both have the intention of drawing closer to God. However, the differences between them are that, while Krubi becomes a festival Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power) remains an act of worship. The acts of worship performed in Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power) attracts Allah’s bounties, Krubi may not. Laylatul Qadir (Night of Power) is the night in which Allah revealed the light of Guidance to humanity.

²⁰⁴ Muhammad M. Abdul Fattah, *500 Questions and Answers on Islamic Jurisprudence*, Edited by Reima. Shakier (Egypt: Dar Al- Manarah,) 2011 p.177

²⁰⁵ Abdallah Yusuf Ali ‘*The Holy Quran Text Translation and Commentary*’ chapter 97 v 1-5 p.1765

It is based on the greatest virtues of the Laylatul Qadir that Alhaji Karamog criticized the celebration of the Krubi in the month of Ramadan particularly on the Laylatul Qadir Night. Albeit Alhaji Karamog's endeavor to stop the Krubi festival²⁰⁶ from being celebrated in the month of Ramadan met with strong opposition from the Muslim chiefs and elders of Menji, including some Islamic scholars in Wenchi. He staged a consciousness-raising crusade for the total realization of the laylatul-Qadar as stated in the Glorious Quran. He had done several arbitrations at Menji and its environs. He was affectionately admired by all manner of persons. He was articulate and eloquent. He settled disputes between couples, family members and individuals as the Qur'an eloquently states, "*if two parties among the believers fall to quarrel, make ye peace between them...*"²⁰⁷ Today many Muslims at Menji wished he is alive to settle the protracted chieftaincy disputes between two Muslim factions at Menji. Alhaji Karamog died in 2007 at Menji. Until his death he doubled as the principal Imam of Menji and Tain District. Alhaji Saliho concludes that after the death of Alhaji Karamog, morality at Menji began to decline. Miscreant behaviour of the youth became dominant and irresponsible acts of the elderly increased substantially.

From the discussions so far, it can be deduced that Islam received its greatest boost at Menji during the Imamate of Mallam Yahaya Mohammed and his son Alhaji Karamog. They have indeed strenuously moved the Islam of Menji to the highest level. Their concerted efforts at developing Islam made a prodigious growth both numerically and in their spirits of reforming or attacking the Bid'ah of Islamic orthodoxy. Through their tremendous efforts, Islam made a deep impact on the Menji Community. Below is the picture of Alhaji Karamog.

²⁰⁶ Krubi is a festival celebrated by the Ligbi/ Wangara people in Ghana.

²⁰⁷ Abdallah Yusuf Ali, 'The Holy Qur'an Text, Translation and Commentary' Chapter49:9 p. 1405



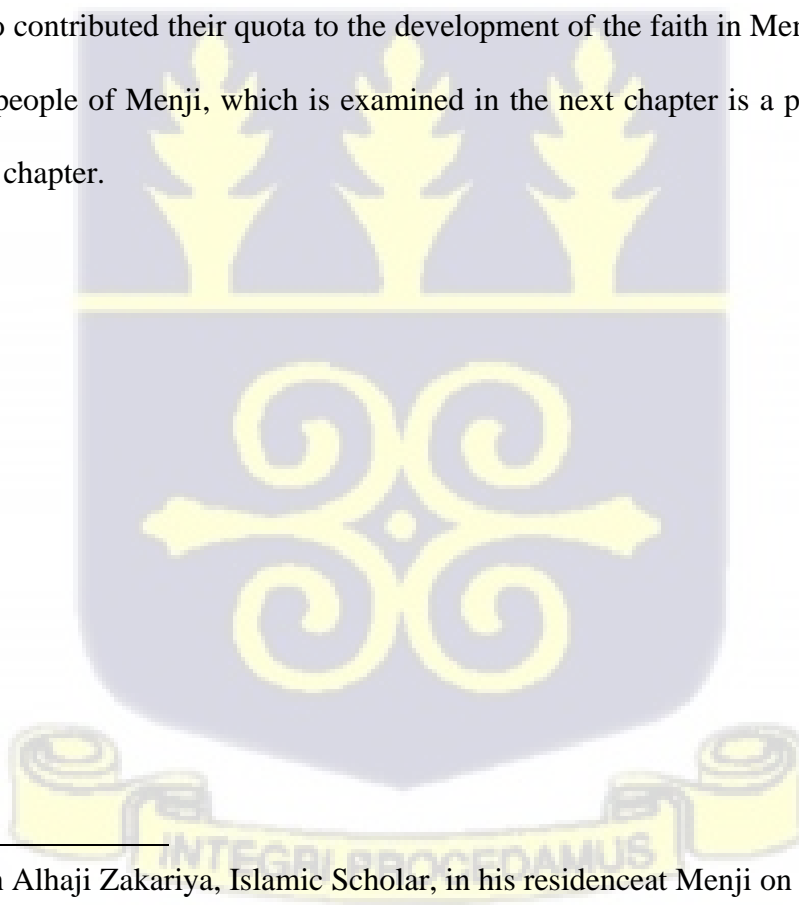
Fig.12 *Picture of Alhaji Karamog (the late Imam and Muslim reformer in Menji)*

3.20 Hausa Influence on Menji

The entire Menji community has three tribes-the Ligbi, the Nafaana and the Waala/Dagaare (settlers). The Ligbi is the most dominant tribe. The dominant spoken language in the town is Ligbi (Mande language). Menji has section of quarters for the Nafaana, and the Waala. Hausa speaking communities are spread throughout many Muslim settlements in Ghana. They speak the Hausa language. They practise Islam and enhance its development wherever they stay. However, there is no such Hausa influence at Menji. The researcher tried to find out why Menji Muslims have not been attractive to Hausa. Alhaji Zakariya Yahaya said that there were some groups of Hausa Muslims at Menji. According to him, the oral accounts he was told was that the Hausa folks in Menji were fond of swearing by God on trivial and irrelevant issues that did not necessitate taking an oath. He states that the pioneer Muslims in Menji Muslim Community detested that habit

because to them a Muslim does not have to swear by Allah on any trivial and irrelevant matters. The Hausa thought that they could not stay with the Muslims in Menji as a result, it caused those (Hausa) to move away to places such as Bonduku in Ivory Coast and Kintampo and Wenchi in Ghana.²⁰⁸

In conclusion, the chapter discussed the development of Islam in Menji. The discussion covered the origins of Islam in West Africa in general and modern Ghana in particular. The researcher did that to set up the historical antecedents of Islam in West Africa and eventually the coming of Islam to Menji. Several factors contributed to the development of Islam in Menji. The Muslims of Menji have continued to develop Islam in Menji through many Islamic activities. Muslim scholars (past and present) played a major role in the dissemination of Islam in the town. Some individual Muslim personalities also contributed their quota to the development of the faith in Menji. The influences of Islam on the people of Menji, which is examined in the next chapter is a product of analysis contained in this chapter.



²⁰⁸Interview with Alhaji Zakariya, Islamic Scholar, in his residence at Menji on 28th November 2019 at 7:00 am

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON THE PEOPLE OF MENJI

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the influence of Islam on the people of Menji as well as the impact of the indigenous culture on Islam in the community. To be able to do this, the researcher collected and analyzed data on the Islamic religious, economic and socio-cultural influences of Islam on the indigenous cultural values of the Menji Community as well as the influence of the indigenous beliefs and practices on Islam. It has been established that the introduction and development of Islam in the Menji Muslim greatly influenced the socio-cultural lives of the Muslims in the community. This chapter considers the different dimensions of the integration.

4.1.0 The Influence of Islam on Menji Traditional Culture

4.1.1 Religious Influence

Ever since the introduction of Islam in Menji, the religion has significantly influenced the religious values of Muslims in the community. Respondents were asked about the importance of the five pillars of Islam to their religious lives. 75% of the respondents answered that the five pillars of Islam constitute the fundamental principles upon which every Muslim community bases its values. The 75% of the Muslims in the Menji Community claimed that the five pillars of Islam have influenced immensely their social and religious activities. They underscored the importance

of the tenets of Islam in daily lives. In connection with the influence of Islam on Muslims, Ira Zepp states:

Islam prescribes guidance for all of life-family life, individual behaviour, business transactions, social relations, how to dress, and what to eat. It is natural, then to find prescriptions for religious obligations and practice. Much of the latter centers on the five pillars of Islam or duties of Islam. They are distinguishing marks of a Muslim and practised by all Muslims of whatever sect everywhere in the world. You could say that Islam is a house built on the rock of submission and supported by these five pillars- Shahada (Witness), Salat (Prayer), Sawm (Fasting), Zakat (Almsgiving), and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah).²⁰⁹

John Exposito notes that despite the rich diversity in Islamic practice, the five pillars of Islam remain the core and common denominator of Muslims globally as a way of life.²¹⁰

Islamic modes of worships have reduced the worship of traditional deities and divinities among Menji Muslims who embraced Islam. Suzanne Haneef states that, central to the Islamic teachings and culture are the various obligatory acts of worship which are often referred to as the five pillars of Islam. These are the Shahādda, Salāt, and Sawm (Fasting) during the month of Ramadan, the Zakat (alms) and the Hajj (pilgrimage).²¹¹ The Shahāddah has influenced them to abandon traditional divinities and instead devote themselves to Allah who is the only Deity that is worthy of worship as far as Islam is concern. Islam has been very influential on the culture of the Muslims of Menji.

²⁰⁹ Ira G. Zepp (Jnr), *A Muslim Primer Beginner's Guide to Islam*, (Maryland: Wakefield Editions Westminster, 1992), 109

²¹⁰ John L. Eposito, *Islam The Straight Path Revised Third Edition*, London: Oxford University Press 2005), 88

²¹¹ Suzanne Haneef, *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*, 199

4.1.2 Pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj)

Hajj has contributed in many ways to the growth and strength of Menji Muslims. The Hajj enables the pilgrims to acquire first and foremost the highly cherished title al-Hajj (Male) and al-Hajjiah (female). Barakah or the spiritual blessing which a pilgrim acquires after successfully completing Hajj is also highly valued because it significantly increases the reputation and religious status of pilgrims. Indeed, it is because of the achievement of this status that Hajj was and is still so prevalent, especially, among the Muslims in Menji.

A question of how relevant pilgrimage is to the development of Islam in Menji was posed to the respondents. 85% of the respondents responded that pilgrimage plays essential roles in the development of Islam in the Menji Community. Some of the respondents were of the view that the pioneer Muslims in Menji embarked upon the journey/Hajj by land through Sudan. According to these respondents, it took those Muslims some years to return to Menji. The first Muslim in Menji to perform Hajj was Alhaji Osman Mahmud in 1930. When a Muslim in Menji intends to embark on Hajj, he or she informs the Imam of the community of his or her intention. The Imam then announces the intention of the proposed pilgrims in the central Mosque. Afterwards, the Imam chooses a day the pilgrims leave Menji for Accra. On this day, Muslims in the community come out in their numbers to see them off. They walk with the pilgrims to the outskirts of the town. Relatives and pilgrims may shed tears because of the fear that some may not return or return not to meet their relations. Weeping characterizes Hajj journeys in Menji because of past experiences. 60% of the respondents recounted that in the past Muslims from Menji embarked on Hajj but did not return. Consequently, when one embarks on Hajj these past experiences haunts the people. At the outskirts of the town where the Imam and the Muslims stop to bid the pilgrims farewell, a particular staff called *Gbasakolima* (staff for protection) is placed

across the road and the pilgrims remove their footwear and walk across it. The Imam of Menji informed the researcher that the staff serves as a protection for the pilgrims against all misfortunes during the journey. It is worth noting that walking across the *Gbasakolima* is Bid'ah (innovation) that has no bearing with Hajj rites theologically. It was the pioneer Muslims in Menji who adopted the practice, and it has come to be part and parcel of the journey to Hajj in Menji. Below is the photograph of the *Gbasakolimah* in the researcher's hand.



Fig.13 Gbasakolimah in the hands of the researcher

The safety arrival of the pilgrims from Makkah to Menji is an ecstatic occasion. The pilgrims are supposed to arrive in Menji on Thursday evening so that they will be given a warm welcome on the following day, Friday. Once again, Muslims together with the Imam throng to meet them at the outskirts of the town on Thursday evening. The pilgrims will be welcomed and led to their residents on the same day. The pilgrims would be met in the central Mosque the following day after the Friday congregational prayer for the people to receive their (pilgrims) special

supplications (Du^cā). Any Muslim from Menji in any part of Ghana who returns from Hajj wishes to come to Menji because of the warm welcome that awaits him or her. The research discovered that Hajj has a significant influence on the Menji Muslims. 70% of the respondents claim that they wish to get the opportunity to go to Hajj not only for the spiritual bounties but also the feeling of euphoria attached to it when pilgrim returns. However, it should be emphasized that the euphoria should not be perceived as if it is part of the pilgrimage. It is rather a subsidiary that the Muslims have attached so much importance. It should not be taken that if a pilgrim does not partake in such welcome ceremonies the Hajj is invalid.

4.1.3 Religious Denominations and Groups

The research revealed that the Maliki Sufi jurisprudence is the only Doctrinal Group in the study area. The Menji community is devoid of any other Muslim doctrinal group such as Ahlus-Sunnah, Shi'ites, and Ahmadiyyah among others. The Muslims in the study area are oriented to the Maliki School of jurisprudence. With the trend of development of Islam in the Menji Community, the Maliki School may not continue to have absolute monopoly of the Muslim doctrinal space. The researcher foresees that the Ahlus-Sunna doctrinal group is making inroads into the community in future. This is because some of the Muslims from Menji are members of the Ahlus-Sunnah doctrine in several places outside Menji. All efforts are made by the Ahlus-Sunnah group to enter the Menji Community. Again, the research revealed that there is only one congregational Friday Mosque though the Muslim population in the community is tremendously increasing. This calls for the opening of additional Jumu'ah Mosques. No doubt if the Ahlus-Sunnah is able to penetrate into the Menji Community there will be the establishment of additional Jumu'ah Mosque for its members. Moreover, care ought to be taken so as not to ignite religious conflicts in the community

as it occurred in several places in Ghana. Doctrinal differences should be tolerated and accommodated for peaceful co-existence.

4.1.4 Economic Influence of Islam

Islam attaches a great deal of importance on work. In many verses in the Qur'ān and Ahadeeth (Hadith), it has been made clear that time should not be wasted. For instance, the Qur'ān directs a message to humanity that they should contribute positively to the earth that is they should work to make use of what is created for their own benefits. Allah Say, “that man can have nothing but what he strives for; and that (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight; then will he be rewarded with a reward complete”.²¹² The Prophet (S.A.W) is reported to have said “Allah loves the craftsman”. In another related Hadith He said, “No man has ever eaten something better than what he has earned; verily, Prophet Dawood (A.S) used to eat from what he earned.”²¹³ These Qur'ānic and Ahadeeth injunctions are recommendations given to the Muslim of Menji to work hard and earn a living through lawful means. Almost all the twenty-five prophets and messengers mentioned in the Qur'ān all engaged in one profession or the other. Ibn Abass said, “Adam (A.S) was a farmer, Nuhu (A.S) was a carpenter, Idris (A.S) was a tailor, Ibrahim (A.S) and Lut (A.S) were farmers, Salih (A.S) a trader, Dawud (A.S) a smith, Musa (A.S), Shua'yb (A.S) and Muhammad (S.A.W) tended sheep.”²¹⁴

In Islam, work is deemed as an act of worship itself. Imam Al-Ghazali mentioned in his book *Ihya'Ulum-Ad-Deen* (Revival of the Religious Sciences) that Prophet Issah (A.S) once saw a

²¹² Abdallah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān Text, Translation and Commentary*, Chapter 53:39-41 p.1449

²¹³ Ibn Qudamah Al-Maqdisi, *Mukhtasar MinhajAl-Qasidin*, 87

²¹⁴ Ibn Qudamah Al-Maqdisi, *Mukhtasar MinhajAl-Qasidin*, 87

man who had completely devoted himself to worship. When he asked him how he got his daily bread, the man replied that his brother, who worked, provided him with food. Prophet Issah told him, “That brother of yours is more religious than you are”.²¹⁵ Al-Ghazli also mentioned that the Prophet’s companion, Umar Ibn al-khatab (Allah be pleased with him), used to stress on this point further by telling people that: “Never should anyone of you think Du‘ā (supplication) for sustenance without work will avail him, for heaven never rains gold nor silver.”²¹⁶ Reflection on the above Quranic verses and Ahadeeth of the Prophet and companions give indication that the religion of Islam encourages economic sustenance of its adherents. The religion lays a lot of emphasis on work and the need for Muslims to work to earn their livelihood and be independent, self-sufficient and to uphold their dignity in the society or community. In line with this, Sukri Ahmed and Musa Yusuf state that,

Work is sacred because it is seen as a ‘duty “to build a strong national economy. One’s work is not an end to itself, but a means to destroy the non-economic dependent controls over the economy. Therefore, work constitutes the first pillar in the construction of a healthy economic system.”²¹⁷

The researcher discovered that the emphasis that Islam lays on work has influenced Muslims in Menji to engage in various sustainable economic activities for their livelihood. There are major economic activities that Muslim men and women do in Menji to be able to cater for themselves and their families. Majority of the Muslim-men, women and youth are farmers who are engaged

²¹⁵ Al-Gazali Abdul Hamid, *Ihya’ Ulumiddin*, 1988

²¹⁶ Al-Gazali Abdul Hamid, *Ihya’ Ulumiddin*, 1988

²¹⁷ Shukri Ahmed and Musa Y. Owoyemi, The Concept of Islamic Ethic: An Analysis of some Salient Points in the Prophetic Tradition, *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol.3 No. 20[special issue- October 2012], 123.

in cash crop production such as cashew. However, others engage in small scale industry activities such as shea butter extraction, petty trading, transportation and Kenkey making. Other Muslims in the community are engaged in services such as teaching and spiritual consultation. Many of the Muslim youth who are mostly the work force of the community have migrated to Kumasi endeavouring to learn one trade or another. Several of them are in the Suame Magazine as auto-mechanics and other artisanal trades. Some of the Muslims in Menji are into transportation contributing their quota to the development of the economy of Ghana. On the question of how Islam emphasises on work improve the living condition of Muslims in Menji? 80% of the respondents answered that recommendations of Islam on economic activities have significantly influenced the lives of Menji Muslims to work for their economic sustainability. Islam has, also, encouraged Menji Muslim youth to work in order to secure the means to contribute to the development of Islam through the construction of Mosques and other religious activities. Through work, the Muslims of Menji pay taxes for the development of Islam and Ghana.

4.1.5 Literacy

Islam introduced literacy as well as Islamic education in Menji. Literacy made it possible for scholars to preserve important documents such as writing of the dates their children were born and other literal works. Literacy also enabled Muslims in Menji to have access to the invaluable Islamic literature, sciences and philosophy which broadened their knowledge, improved and widened their horizon.

4.1.6 The Arabic Language

Islam is firmly rooted in Islamic culture. As the Qur'ān is learned and studied, the Arabic language is learned as well. The ʿUlamāh in Menji effectively studied the Arabic language and attain

proficiency in it without travelling to the Arab world. However, those ‘Ulamāh cannot read and write in English. For Muslims, Arabic is the language of their religion. The Qur’ān was written in Arabic. All Muslims are expected to read the Qur’ān and memorize at least parts of it for purposes of prayer.

4.1.7 The State of Madrasah (Qur’ānic Schools) in Menji

As a result of high premium Islam places on acquisition of knowledge, schools and educational centres have been established in Menji. Trimingham explains that social life begins in the family where children receive not only their training in African ways, but also in how to inculcate the Islamic spirit and outlook very important in the Qur’ānic schools.²¹⁸ The research has discovered that the invitation of Islam to the acquisition of Knowledge and dissemination of it urged the pioneer Muslims and Islamic scholars of Menji to establish these schools in the community so as to impart Islamic knowledge to the Muslim youth and the elderly. Islamic education has drastically declined in the Menji Community. A settlement that used to have about eight different Madrasah centres can now boast of three which are inadequately functioning well. 80% of the respondents blamed the fall of Islamic education in Menji on secular education since most Muslim parents now have preference for secular schools than Madrasah. Muslim wards used to attend Madrasah from Saturday to Wednesday. The number of days has been reduced to Saturdays and Sundays. When schools vacate instead of the children to stay and attend Madrasah their parents encourage them to go to Kumasi for “vacation”. On the cause of the fall of Makarantah education in Menji, 80% of the respondents put the blame squarely on secular education. However, the researcher has noticed some deficiencies in the Madrasah system in the town for instance, it lacks adequate curriculum.

²¹⁸ Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, 85

Secular and Islamic education complement each other in contemporary times. One of them should not be abandoned at the expense of the other as it is happening in the Menji community where secular education appears to be supplanting Islamic education. The Muslim children in Menji ought to take cognizance of the fact that when they pursue the two types of knowledge together, they stand to gain a lot of opportunities in contemporary times. There are several Muslims in the world who acquired both forms of Knowledge to enhance their status.

4.1.8 Linguistic Borrowing (Weekdays)

At the institutional level, Islam has consciously or unconsciously influenced the Muslims to the degree that they began to drop traditional words in their language in favour of borrowed Islamic nomenclatures. An illustration of this point is the names of the seven days of the week. As a result of Islamic influence, the Ligbi (Banda language) which is the major language in the Menji community adopted all the seven names of days of the week in Arabic, for instance, Sunday (Arabic Lahad, Ligbi Lihadi), Tuesday (Arabic Thalatha, Ligbi Talata), Wednesday (Arabic Al-Arba, ligbi Arawa), Thursday (Arabic Al-Khamsah, Ligbi Armusa), Friday (Arabic Al-Jumma, Ligbi Jumma) and Saturday (Arabic Asabit Ligbi sibiti).

Three stages become evident when Islam is accepted by a new convert. In the first stage, there is a superficial adoption of Islamic ways of life, and this is reflected in the borrowing of certain material elements associated with the Islamic culture such as the way of dressing, wearing of Muslim, that is, putting hijab and so on. In the second stage, actual elements of Islamic religious culture are adopted. Examples of such culture assimilation is Islamic marriage ceremony, naming ceremony and funeral rites. Most indigenous cultural practices associated with these ceremonies and rites have given way to Islamic cultural values in the study area.

The third stage is a way of transforming the person into a Muslim who is genuinely convinced of the Islamic teachings and principles and is willing to change his or indigenous traditional custom and habit to those of Islam. This is to explain that Islam expects one who accepts it to abandon all forms of animistic tradition. Among the Muslims in Menji, there are several persons who fall under one of these stages of Islamic influence.

4.1.9 Social Ceremony

In the Menji traditional society, chiefs are the custodians of the culture. They are responsible for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the community. However, practices such as naming ceremonies have tremendously been influenced by Islamic beliefs and practices. With the exception of the Akwamuhene, all the chiefs and Queen Mothers are Muslims. Consequently, some of the ceremonies associated with chieftaincy have been modified alongside Islamic practices. For instance, chiefs who are supposed to perform spiritual roles in accordance with tradition rather seek the services of the 'a'imah (Imams). At every public function or gathering the 'a'imah (Imams) are frequently invited to give supplications, instead of indigenous traditionalist, for commencement and closure of a function.

4.2.0 The Influence of Menji Culture on Islam in Menji

4.2.1 Culture

The Kong scholars (Karamog Mahma Saganogho and his people from Kong) who came to teach the people of Menji Tafsīr (Quranic exegesis or interpretation in 1910) did not only enhance the study of Islamic sciences, but also introduced some cultural practices into the community. The customs and traditions brought by them became part and parcel of Menji community and these

customs influenced the cultural traditions of the Ligbi in Menji. The pioneer Muslims in Menji did not make the teaching and learning of Islamic cultural values distinct from the culture. Rather, they promoted the Kong culture and infused it into the Islamic values. Some of the cultural and festival infusions are Marriage rites, funeral rites, Krubi festival, Duun (masquerade), Gba (local cultural dance), Yagba (local dance)²¹⁹ and Gumbe (local dance).²²⁰ Culture is an important building block in the development of every human society as well as every religion. Culture ought not to be viewed as a block to the development of religion. Culture can enhance religion. Certain cultures consciously or unconsciously have crept into Islam in Menji. Some of these cultural practices are considered as *bid'ah* (heretical innovation).

4.2.2 Islamic Marriage

According to Ira, marriage is not a sacrament in Islam; it is a social contract to establish a family unit, which in turn benefits the entire Muslim Ummah.²²¹ Before a man and a woman can be married, a dowry must be arranged for the wife. According to Muhammad Ali the Arabic word for marriage is *nikah* which originally means 'aqd or uniting. Marriage in Islam is a sacred contact which every Muslim must enter into, unless there are special reasons why he should not.²²² Muhammad Ali emphasizes that no particular age has been specified for marriage in Islam. In fact, with differences of climatic conditions, there would be differences as to the marriageable age in

²¹⁹ Traditional cultural dance which is danced by forming one long line where the dancers go side by side

²²⁰ Traditional cultural dance which is performed in a mixture of men and women together

²²¹ Ira G. Zepp (Jnr), *A Muslim Primer Beginner's Guide to Islam*, 1992, 137

²²² Maulana M. Ali, *The Religion of Islam a Comprehensive Discussion of Sources, Principles and Practices of Islam*, (Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam sixth edition (Revised)1990),445-446.

different countries. According to him the Qur'ān does not speak of an age in Islam.²²³ Allah has described marriage as (Qur'ān 30:24) thus “And one of his signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely those are signs in this for a people who reflect”. The holy Prophet (S.A.W) says, “Marriage is a tradition of mine; whosoever turns his face away from my tradition does not belong to me”. Menji Muslims are influenced by the Islamic call to marriage. For sustainability and continuity of the family in the community, the Muslims marry as Amini explains for procreation and formation of a family through which one can find security and peace of mind. Ibrahim Amini is of the view that society comprises of families. According to him, Islam attaches great importance to real pleasure and prosperity of human beings through islamically balanced, highly ethical, well-educated and well-behaved families and happy homes²²⁴ However, the Islamic marriage in Menji has some cultural intrusions. Some of the ‘Ulamāh in Menji acknowledged that certain traditional practices have infiltrated the Islamic marriage system and have been accepted as part of Islam. The “Mahr” or dowry is Islamic and is given to the bride as a bridal gift. According to Imam Abass Yussif, the Mahr is twenty Ghana cedis (Ghc20). This Mahr is not part of the money usually given to the bride’s parents. Besides, the Mahr is not part of the knocking fee. The knocking is often shared among the extended family. However, an amount of money is given, beside the knocking fee and the Mahr, to the parents of the bride. This amount of money is termed “*faderige*” (bride’s father clothes) and “*nafani*” (bride’s mother’s cloth) respectively. The *faderige* is given to the father-in-law while *nafani* is offered to the mother-in-law. The philosophy behind this money or gift to the bride’s parents is that it serves as compensation to the parents for bringing up the bride.

²²³ Ali, *the Religion of Islam*, 445-446.

²²⁴ Ibrahim Amini, *Principles of Marriage Family Ethics*, 2002, 15

During the presentation of these items as part of the Mahr, grooms usually display excessive profligacy. For instance, some grooms usually present about twenty pieces of cloths, ten pieces of veils and five pair of footwear in the Mosque. This exhibition of extravagance in the provision of the Mahr usually scares some youth from wanting to get into marriage. Consequently, the current Imam of Menji, Imam Abass Yussif, issued a directive that relatives of the grooms should refrain from presenting several items as part of the Mahr in the mosque. He advised Menji Muslims to reduce the Mahr to four pieces of cloths, four pieces of veils and two pair of footwear. It should be noted that the practice of *Faderige and nafani* has no basis in Islam. It is a concept introduced by the pioneer Muslims in Menji to honour the parents of the bride for the proper upbringing of their daughter. The gift is just a way of expressing gratitude indirectly or directly to the bride's parents. Parents must not request it in a case that they may be denied of it by the bridegroom. The *faderige and Nafani* are not part of the Mahr as recommended by Islam. Below is a photograph of Menji Imam and Wenchi Municipal Imam administering marriage ceremony in Menji. The bow in front of them contains some items constituting the Mahr. These material things consist of cloth, veils, footwears, Sajadat (prayer mats) and so on.

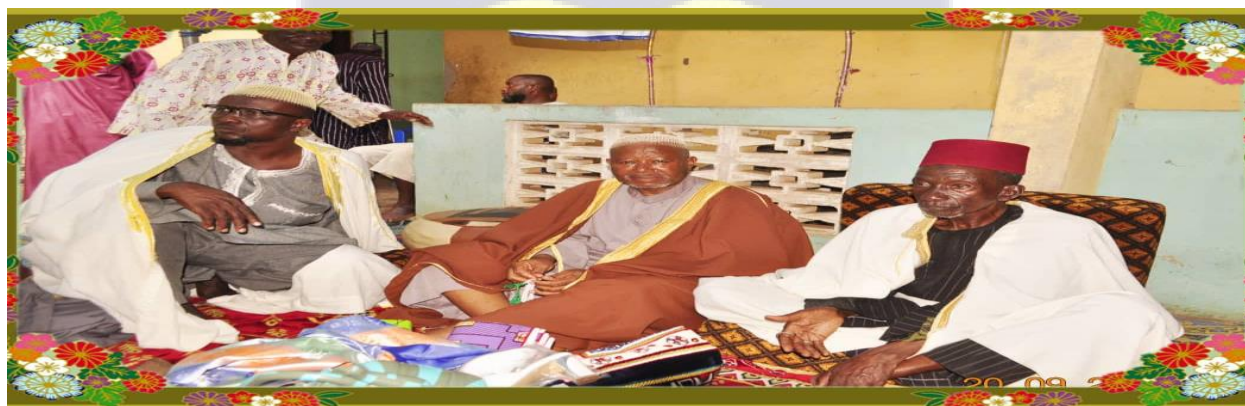


Fig.14 Picture of Menji Imam and Wenchi Municipal Imam administering a marriage ceremony in Menji. From the extreme left is Imam Abass, Menji Imam next Alhaji Saliho Mohammed Suwaari, aide camp of Wenchi Imam and at the extreme right is Alhaji Issah Ibrahim, Wenchi Municipal Imam. In front of them is the *furu* (mahr or *Leyfey*)

In Menji, after the marriage has been contracted and blessed in the mosque by the Imam, the bride is carried shoulder high or in a palanquin in the evening. It is a culture in commemoration of the marriage ceremony in Menji. The young men would exchange her in the carriage until the ceremony is ended. The ‘Ulamāh in Menji criticized this particular practice because it is against Islam. Consequently, the Muslims in Menji changed the practice of carrying of the bride on shoulder high to carrying her on a wooden palanquin as described in previous pages. Another tradition, which is innovation to Islamic marriage, by pioneer Muslims at Menji is involvement of kola nuts. During the process of the marriage ceremony in the mosque, seven pieces of kola nuts are tied together. These kola nuts are given to the groom and the bride to take before the consummation of the marriage. The kola nuts symbolize patience in marriage. Patience pays in the marriage institution. Kola nut is bitter at the point of chewing but sweet afterwards. Therefore, the phenomenon of sweetness and bitterness of marriage is equivalent to taking of Kola nut. The couple thus must be patient in their marriage relationship. The consummation of marriage in Islam does not depend on consumption of kola nut by the couple. The introduction of kola into marriage ceremony is a cultural practice of the Ligbi of Menji Muslims. It does not have any bearing with Islamic marriage. The practice is incorporated into Islamic marriage by the Muslims of Menji to teach the couple lessons on patience.

4.2.3 Widowhood Rites

Islam has made widowhood rites mandatory for all Muslim women whose husbands die. Widowhood rites are usually part of funeral rites in Islam. In Islam, women may mourn the death of their loved ones within three days or more. This period is considered long enough for a person to immerse himself in grief and sadness. The only exception to this duration is at the death of a

woman's husband. *ʿIddah* (widowhood) observed by Muslim women of Menji are characterized by some cultural practices. In a focused group discussion with some five female respondents, they said that there was a particular practice in the community on widowhood rites which the *ʿUlamāh* of the community are preaching against. The practice is that widows are compelled to bath with the remains of the water used to perform the ritual bath of their deceased husbands. Then again on the third day of the funeral rites some '*maasa*' (maize doughnut) or loaves of bread are given to the widows to eat. Any widow who refuses to take *the maasa* or the loaf of the bread had ever been unfaithful to the husband. The women said that the lesson embodied in this norm is to prevent the married Muslim women from engaging in promiscuity. A question of what mechanism is put in place by tradition to check their husbands was put to the women. The response is "it is onto them". In analyzing this practice, the women hold the view that the practice may be heretical innovation in Islam. However, the intent may be good. This concept of giving *maasa* to the widow to eat to indicate her faithfulness to the husband is *bidʿah* in Islam. It does not have any basis in Islam. However, as earlier on stated it is initiated as precautionary measure against illegitimate sex within marriage. In the candid opinion of the researcher, the practice is gender biased against women; there ought to be an equal measure to check the conduct of men with regard to illicit sex within marriage.

4.2.4 Culture and Festivals at Menji

The culture of every ethnic group is learned and transmitted through performances of that culture for the new generation to emulate. The people who observe cultural practices may grow up in that particular society learning these.

Conrad holds that,

Cultures as traditions and customs, are transmitted through learning that govern the beliefs and behaviour of the people exposed to them. Children learn such traditions by growing up in a particular society, through a process called enculturation. Cultural traditions include customs and options developed over the generations about proper and improper behaviour.²²⁵

Jennetta and Robert on the other hand define culture as a way of thinking and living established by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next.²²⁶ According to them it is based on communal life. Culture's collective values are expressed in its art, writings, customs and intellectual pursuits.²²⁷ The latter part of Jennetta and Robert's definition of culture agrees with Gyekye's explanation that 'African life is traditionally communal.'²²⁸ Since African society is a basis of communal life, people would like to converge annually to share ideas and do things in common. Thus, every African society has one or more religious or traditional festivals to celebrate periodically. Menji community is no exception. Festivals are celebrations of important events in human society which bring people from all walks of life together. Generally, traditional festivals are observed by the adherents of the indigenous religion to mark the important social and cultural event in the lives of the people. These are climaxed with a series of performances, entertainments, rites and rituals. Through these festivals, the values and beliefs of the people are demonstrated. They give meaning to the social, political and religious life of the people celebrating them. The traditional religious festivals in Menji have Islamic foundations. The festivals linked to Islam

²²⁵ Conrad P. Kottack, *Cultural Anthropology*, (University of Michigan: McGraw-Hill Companies Inc., 2002), 4

²²⁶ Jennetta R. Benton and Robert D. Yanni, *Arts and Culture, An introduction to the Humanities* 3rd edition, (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall Pearson Education Inc. 2008), 5

²²⁷ Jennetta, Benton and Yanni, *Arts and Culture, An introduction to the Humanities*, 2008, 5

²²⁸ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 2002, 17

are Id al-fitr and Id al-Adha, Jombene (fire festival) and Krubi festival. These are the few indigenous and Islamic festivals which Muslims at Menji fully participate.

4.2.5 Jombene (Fire festival)

The Jombene is celebrated to commemorate the day Prophet Nuhu's (A.s) Ark is said to have arrived at mount of Jude. 60% of the ^oUlamāh said that when the Ark rested on the mountain the crew in it came out making torches of fire for recognition of a dry land. Muslims in Menji celebrate it annually on the ninth night of Muharam, first lunar month of the year. The youth of the town carry logs of fuelwood and throw them on empty spaces such as football fields. The 'a'imah (Imam), ^oUlamā'u, chiefs and elderly confine themselves in various Mosques for supplications for blessing of the new Islamic year. It is during this night that the 'a'imah (Imam) and ^oUlamāh predict the good and bad happenings of the New Year. After the prediction, the ^oUlamāh or 'a'imah (Imam) often prescribe to the chief of the community what he and his elders should render as-Sadaqah. Some number of cowries or its equivalence in monetary terms would be recommended for male and female adults and children to offer in *as-Sadaqah* (charity). The prediction aspect that characterized the Jombene is unislamic because no Muslim knows tomorrow.

The following day, that is, the tenth of Muharam is recommended for fasting in Islam. The youth in the community organise themselves into groups and move from house to house to request for as-Sadaqah. Previously it used to be the various Makarantah (Islamic schools) in the community that send out their students to do the request for as-Sadaqah. The trend has changed. Every group of people mostly the youth organise themselves to do it.

Jombene has some significance for the Muslims in Menji. According to 65% of the respondents, the following are some of the importance of the fire festival. Firstly, the

predictions prepare them for the unfolding occurrences in the year. For instance, if in a particular year the prophesy goes that elephant would destroy a lot it means that there would be several road accidents in the year. Each year's prophesy comes along with its sacrifice paid or taken by every member of the community. Sometimes it's the chief of the community that bears the sacrifice on behalf of the whole community. The sacrifice is paid in order to prevent the unfortunate occurrences from happening or lessen its negative effects. Secondly, the festival reminds the Muslims in the Menji community of the historical flood that drowned the Ummah of Nuh (A.S). In that case they would be cautious that they do not become victims of the wrath of Allah. Thirdly, the festival, according to 75% respondents, is an occasion when wealthy people show mercy by giving out charity to the less privilege in the community. It is during this occasion that people in the community especially the Madrasah students go from house to house soliciting for charity. Fourthly, it serves as a year of exorcism. The sacrifice that the 'a'imah (Imams) and or Mallams recommend to be offered are all used to exorcise undesirable events in the community. Muslims from Menji living in and outside the community are often eager to know what has been prophesied about the year. They show eagerness in the payment of the recommended charity wherever they are in the country and beyond. Muslim showing eagerness to inquire about the future is not accepted in Islam. One respondent told the researcher that he had experienced one demerit of the fire festival in Menji. He said that the throwing of fire sometimes causes destruction to properties. According to him some youths are abusing the festival. He states that in some years past, fire from the festival set his building ablaze.

The celebration of the fire festival rekindles the spirit of Islam in the Menji Muslim community. They gather in the Mosques and the 'a'imah (Imams) and 'Ulamāh recount to them the story of

Nuh (A.S) and why his Ummah was destroyed by a flood. The Muslims also get some sermons from the 'a'imah and the 'Ulamāh after the prognostication. 75% of the respondents claim that the charity that they give and receive during the festival tremendously influenced their lives. The celebration of the fire festival has stimulated the habit of sharing and giving charity. Through the celebration, Muslims in Menji have gained knowledge of what happened to a particular Ummah in the past and the lessons that they (existing Muslims) can learn out of it. The Islamic principle in the Jombene is still maintained. However, what might be an innovation is the prognostication that is associated with the occasion. The Prophet (S.A.W) might not have celebrated this festival as it is celebrated today in the study area.

Marriage ceremony, funeral rites and religious festivals such as Krubi and Jombene contribute enormously to the promotion of religious and social unity among the Muslims in the study area. These ceremonies, rites and festivals often bring the people together to do things in common.

4.3 Conclusion

As Islam develops in Menji, the Muslims in the community adopted religious practices and ethical values. They pray in Arabic, worshipped in the mosque, made pilgrimages and gave alms. They are taught to regard themselves and all other Muslims as part of a single community. Alongside these new customs, the Muslim preserved some of their traditional practices. The Muslim carry out the traditional practices as long as they do not contradict with the tenants of Islam. The people of Menji continued to keep alive their cultural values alongside with their religious practices. The pioneer Muslims continue with the test of passing the cultural values, the religious and behavioral patterns down to the younger members of the community so that the continuity and conformity with the traditional values as a way of preserving the traditional practices. This is because through

culture, various cultural values and religion of the people can be preserved. In this chapter the influence of Islam on the Muslims in the Menji community has been analyzed. From the foregoing discussion it is realized that Islam has a significant influence on the indigenous cultural Traditions in Menji and vice versa. Efforts should be geared towards elimination of cultural practices, ceremonies and rite which are incompatible with Islam.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, RESEARCH FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the discussions of the research. It also gives an outline of the research findings. It further draws suggestions and recommendations from the analysis of the data which will contribute to the development of Islam in Menji.

5.1 Summary

Chapter one consists of the general introduction of the work by outlining the background of the study, statement of the problem, the aims and objectives, the general objectives, the specific objectives, the research questions, the scope of the research, methodology, sampling procedure, and methods of data collection. The chapter also looked at the conceptual framework of the research which served as the springboard for generating the research theory. Again, it thoroughly reviewed relevant literature which provided foundations on which to base the findings pertinent to the work. Furthermore, the chapter dealt with the significance of the study, limitations, and challenges and finally the organization of the study.

In chapter two, the researcher discussed the historical origins of the study area, its religious worldviews, geographical location, and demography. Also, the chapter discussed the beliefs of the Muslims in the study area as well as others such as Christianity.

Chapter three examined Islam in modern Ghana, Islam in Begho, the development of Islam in the study area, Muslim personalities and Muslim doctrinal groups and among others.

Chapter four presented the analysis and discussion of data on the influence of Islam on the people in the study area and the influence of African Indigenous Religion on the activities of Muslim. The chapter also examined the religious and economic influences of Islam on the Muslims in the study area. Socio-cultural influences of Islam on the Muslims were discussed in the chapter by looking at literacy, establishment of Madrasah (Quranic Schools), marriage, and widowhood rites. Again, the chapter explored Islamic influences on culture and festivals in the study area. It also examined effect of Islam on indigenous cultural and traditional values in the study area. The chapter looked at the influences of African Indigenous Religions (AIR) on Islam.

Chapter five concludes the research by highlighting on the major research findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Research Findings

After the data analysis covering the research questions, this research work presents the following findings:

1. The Menji Community was established as a result of the dispersion of Muslims from the Begho trade centre in Ghana.
2. The Muslim of Menji, who are predominantly the Ligbi ethnic group, are of two groups. One group claimed to have descended from Heaven to establish the community. The other group, too, claimed to have migrated from the Arabian Peninsula through to Mali to Ivory coast, Begho and finally to Menji via Banda.
3. Islam has been in the study area for over hundred years.
4. The Maliki school/doctrine is the only Muslim Group in the study area.
5. Muslims in the community control the affairs of the study area hence a person cannot be appointed a chief or Queen Mother if he or she is not a Muslim.
6. Muslims in the study area have greatly contributed to the development of Islam through various religious activities such as Da'awah and other Islamization projects. For instance, the spiritual consultations that some Muslims in the study area have contributed to the conversion of many of their clients to Islam.
7. There is a drastic fall in both secular and Islamic education in the study area. The youth of the community who are the future 'a'imah and 'Ulamāh do not put premium on education.

8. The study revealed that Islam has had tremendous influence on the religious, economic and socio-cultural lives of the Muslims in the study area. Through Islam, the Muslims have had the impetus to engage themselves in various trades and works for their livelihood. Through their work they generate incomes to be able to pay zakat and other state taxes for the development of Islam and Ghana.
9. Historically, the people of Menji, in addition to their indigenous traditional values, were culturally influenced by Islamic values and orientations. These Islamic values made the Muslims in Menji to abandon some of their traditional values.
10. The lackadaisical attitude of the Muslim parents and youth to education and especially Islamic education, and in the wake of collapse of virtually all the Madrasah schools, is a threat to the future of Islam in the community.
11. Some of the youth resort to fraudulent means for livelihood. Many of them are into fake spiritual consultation enterprises with the view of swindling their clients out of their (clients) hard earned wealth and properties. Meanwhile, most of these youth in the spiritual consultation enterprise who claim to use esoteric Quranic verses for their spiritual consultation cannot read the Quran. Those are the Madrasah dropouts.
12. The activities of African Indigenous Religion have influenced Islam in the study area. For instance, during scarcity of rain, the custodian of the African Indigenous Religion performs his ritual at the request of the Muslim chiefs in the community.

5.3 Conclusion

This study focused on the history of Islam among the people of Menji community. Consequently, the overall objective of the study has been to explore the influence of Islam on the socio-cultural

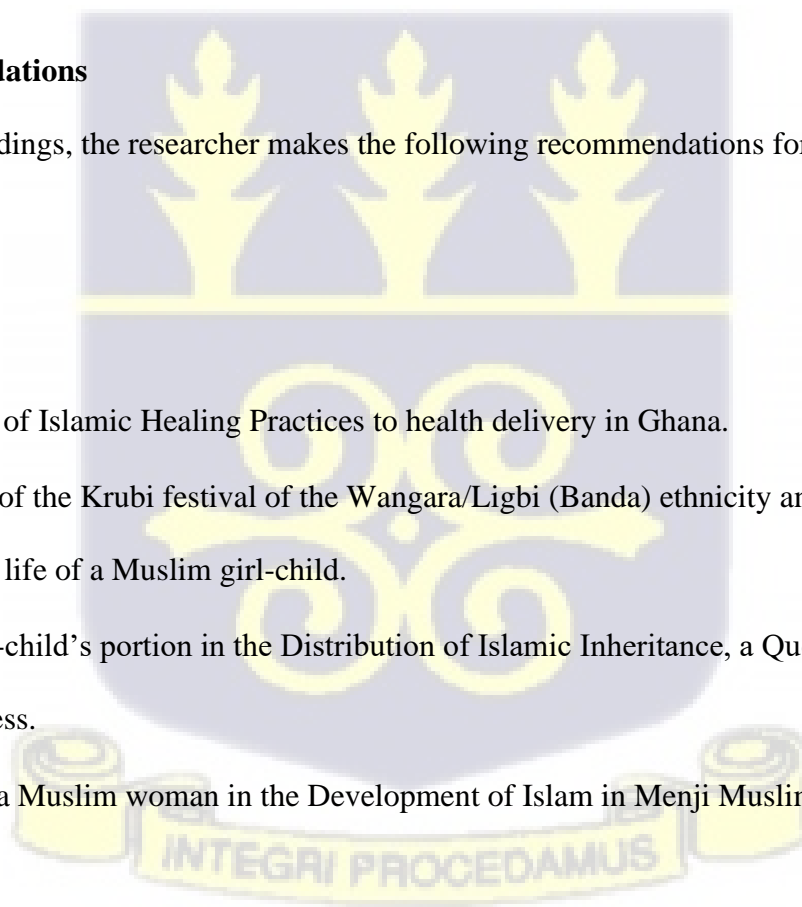
lives of the Muslims in the community. The specific objectives of the study have been to explore the history and development of Islam in Menji; examine the influence of Islam on the socio-cultural lives of the Muslims of Menji; and assess the influence of African Indigenous Religion on the activities of Menji Muslims. The concept of *tarikh* was, thus, used as the conceptual framework for the study. This study has shown that Islam has been in the Menji community over centuries ago. This study has shown that ever since the introduction of Islam in Menji, the religion has made substantial influence on the socio-cultural life of its adherents. The study discovered that the 'a'imah and the 'Ulamāh contributed immensely to the development of Islam in the community. They still have to play their roles to sustain the spread and development of Islam in the area. The study has shown that the Muslim chiefs of Menji have played a major role in the progress of Islam.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations for academic and pastoral actions:

5.4.1 Academic

- The efficacy of Islamic Healing Practices to health delivery in Ghana.
- The essence of the Krubi festival of the Wangara/Ligbi (Banda) ethnicity and the promotion of the chaste life of a Muslim girl-child.
- Muslim Girl-child's portion in the Distribution of Islamic Inheritance, a Question of Gender bias or fairness.
- The Role of a Muslim woman in the Development of Islam in Menji Muslim community.



5.4.2 Patorial

- The Muslim opinion leaders in collaboration with the 'a'imah (Imams) and the 'Ulamāh should establish Islamic institutions and improve existing ones.
- The proprietors of the Madrasahs should revive the Madrasah educational system and design adequate and proper curricular for teaching and learning of basic Islamic education.
- The 'a'imah and 'Ulamāh should not confine or limit their sermons and Islamic propagation messages to the scope of the mosque because little did the world know tha there would be a worldwide plague that would eventually suspend congregational prayers in the mosque. Since March, 2020 performance of daily and Juma'a (Friday congregational) prayers in various mosques in Ghana in particular and in the world in general, have been suspended until further notice as a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in the world. This was done to avoid social contact and also deepen social distancing in order to contain the spread of the disease.
- Ghana Tourist Board in collaboration with Tain District Assembly should establish museum at Begho for preservation of historical relics and artefacts to boost tourism in Ghana.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdalati, Hammudah, *Islam in Focus*, American Trust Publications, 1993.

Abdul-Hamid, Mustapha, Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: A model for world dialogue and peace, *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 1, no. 1, 2011.

Adum-Kyeremeh, Kwame, *Asante Rule as a Factor in the Emergence of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana Research Review* 7, no.1, 1970

- Ahmad Abd al-Hamid Ghorab, *Islam and Daily Life*, World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Riyadh, 1990
- Ahmad, Shukri, and Musa Yusuf Owoyemi, The Concept of Islamic Work Ethic: An Analysis of Some Salient Points in the Prophetic Tradition, *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 3, no. 20, 2012.
- Al Fauzan, Saleh Fauzan, *Rulings Pertaining to Muslim Women*. Darussalam, 2003.
- Alfred Kuranchie, *Research Made simple*, Catholic University College of Ghana (Kumasi: Bookworm Publications 2015
- Ali, Maulana Muhammad, *The Religion of Islam*, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore USA, 2015.
- Al-Imam Al-Wahidi An-Naisaburi, *Reasons and Occasions of Revelation of the Holy Quran*, Edited by Haytham Kriedly, Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2012
- Al-Imam Zain-ud-Din Ahmad Bin Abdul Lateef Az-Zubaidi “*Sahih Al-Bukhar, Summarised Arabic-English* “3/2017, Translated by Muhammad Muslim Khan, (Riyadh- Saudi Arabia: Maktaba Dr-ur-Islam Publishers and Distributors, 1996
- Al-Kafayaji, *al-mukhtasar fi Ilm al-Tarikh*, Delhi: 1979
- Allameh Sayyed M.H Tabataba’i, *Islamic Teachings an Overview*, Translated by R. Campbell, publisher Imam Hussain Foundation, 1999
- Al-Wahiddi An-Naisaburi, *Reasons and Occasion of the Holy Quran*, (Beirut: Dar A-Kotob A-Ilmiya, 2012
- Amini, Ayatullah Ibrahim, *Principles of Marriage Family Ethics*, Lulu Press, Inc, 2014.
- Ammad Ibn Yazid al-Qazawayni, *Sunan Ibn Maja*, Vol. 1, 18 edited by Muhammad Fuad Abdal-Baqi Cairo: Darlhya al- Kutub al- Arabic n.d

- Ary, Donald, Lucy Cheser Jacobs, Christine K. Sorensen Irvine, and David Walker, *Introduction to research in education*, Cengage Learning, 2002.
- B. Bari Osman, *The Holistic History of Islam in the Western and Central Africa*, Accra: Dezine Focus Limited, 2015
- Bari, Osman, *A Comprehensive History of Muslims & Religion in Ghana: Covers Leadership & its Perceptions, Advent of Islam and Growth of Muslim Communities in Ghana*. (2009).
- Baxter, Pamela, and Susan Jack, *Qualitative case Study Methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers.*" *The qualitative Report* 13, no. 4 (2008): 544-559.
- Benton, Janetta Rebold, and Robert DiYanni. *Arts and Culture: An Introduction to the Humanities: Combined Volume*. Prentice Hall, 2012.
- Best, John W., and James V. Kahn, *Research in Education*, Pearson Education India, 2016.
- Blaikie, Norman, and Jan Priest, *Designing Social Research: The logic of anticipation*, John Wiley & Sons, 2019.
- Boahen, A. Adu, *Topics in West African History*, London: Longman, 1966.
- Bryant, Antony, Alistair Black, Frank Land, and Jaana Porra, *Information Systems history: What is history? What is IS History? What IS History? ... and Why Bven Bother with History?* 2013.
- Bryman A, *Social Research Method, Second edition*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2004
- C. Nwana, *Introduction to Educational Research*, (Ibadan: Heinemann Education Book Plc: 2005
- Clarke, Peter B, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, 982.

Creswell, John W, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative*
Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.

Creswell, John W, and Cheryl N. Poth. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research dDesign: Choosing
among Five Approaches*, Sage publications, 2016.

Derek Cooper, *Christianity and World Religions, an Introduction to World's Major Faith* (New
Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2003), 118

Donald et al, *Introduction to Research Evaluation*, Wadsworth Cengage Learn Belmont, C A
9400-3098, 2010.

Dumbe, Yunus, *Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana*, Södertörns högskola, 2013.

Encyclopedia of the Companions, *Tabaqat*, 1:258-259, 276. 4:251; *Masnad* 6:262-263Hz

Muhammad ve Islamiyet, 7 (FEYYAZ Bilimve Gelsim Deregi

Esogwa C. Osuala, *Introduction to Research Methodology*, 3rd Edition, (Onitsha: African-First
Publishers Limited, 2001

Esposito, John L, *Review of Islam: The Straight Path*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Esposito, John L, *What Everyone Needs to know About Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Fadwa EL Guindi, *Birth Rituals: A Cross-Cultural View*, (London: Research Gate, 2016

Fatimatu N. Sulemanu' 'Education as Tool For Sustainable Development The Role of Muslim
NGOs In Ghana'' in *Religion and Sustainable Development* edited by George Ossom –
Batsa-Nicoletta Gatti, Rabiatu Deinyo Ammah (eds), (Verticano: Urbaniana University
Press, 2018

Fisher, Humphrey J. Ahmadiyyah, and J. Ahmadiyya, *A Study in Contemporary Islam on the
West African Coast*, 1963

Fuseini Mohammed, *The Early History of the Banda (Ligbi and Nafaana)* An Unpublished Long Essay, submitted to the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, 2013

Ghana Statistical Service: *Population and Housing Census (2010) and Tain District Planning and Control Unit (TPCU)*.

Gilland, D. S, *African Traditional Religion in Transition: The Influence of Islam on Africa*, 1971

Glassé, Cyril, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

Golder, Peter N. *Historical Method in Marketing Research with New Evidence on Long-term Market Share Stability.* *Journal of Marketing Research* 37, no. 2, 2000.

Gyekye, Kwame. *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*. Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996.

Hamilton, C. J. H., and C. Judith, *Writing Research Transforming Data into Text*, London, Churchill, 2003

Haneef, Suzanne. *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*. Adam Publishers, 1999.

Hghnavaz, J., *Spread of Islam in Africa American, International Journal of Research in Humanities Arts and Social Sciences* 6, no. 2, 2014.

Hiskett, Mervyn, *The Course of Islam in Africa*, (London: Longman 1994).

Hiskett, Mervyn, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, London: Longman 1984.

Horton, David, ed, *The Portable Seminary: A Master's Level Overview in One Volume*. Baker Books, 2018.

[Hptt/www.muslimpopulation.com/Africa](http://www.muslimpopulation.com/Africa).

Ibn Khaldun, Abd al Rahman bin Muhammad, *Muqaddima h ibn Khaldun Vol. 1*, (Egypt: Dar al Nahdah, 1980

Ibn Qayem El-Jozeya, *The Prophetic Medicine*, Translated by Adel- Qadar Ibn Adel- Azeez, Dar- A-Ghadd Al-Ghadeed Al-Mansoura, 2003

Ibrahimi, Muhammad Husayn. *A New Analysis of Wahhabi Doctrines*, Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly, 2007.

Ifeka, Caroline, *Peoples and Empires of West Africa: West Africa in History, 1000-1800*. Nelson, 1971.

Imam Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, with explanatory and belief Biographical Sketches of Major Narrators Vol. 11 (Islamic Book Service, Fourth edition, 2005

Ivor Wilks, *Islam in Ghana: An Outline*, Ghana: Ghana Bulletin of Theology 2, No.3, 1962.

Izard, Michel, and Joseph Ki-Zerbo, *From the Niger to the Volta, General history of Africa 5* 1992.

J spencer Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, Oxford at the Clarendon press 1959 p.14

J. W .de Graft Johnson, *Historical Geography of Gold Coast*, Headley Brothers 1929 .118

Jamal Badawi, *Gender Equality in Islam, Basic Principles Islamic Dawah Movement of Southern Africa* (IDM) Publication 1999

James, George Alfred, *and Interpreting Religion the Phenomenological Approaches*, of Pierre Däniel Chantepie de la Saussaye, W. Brede Kristensen, and Gerardus van der Leeuw." 1995.

- Jan.G Plavoet, *The Presence of Islam Among the Akan of Ghana in Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, publisher Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Accra, 2012
- John L. Eposito, *The Islamic Thread: Myth or Reality*, New York Oxford University Press, 1992
- John W. Best and James V. Khan, *Research in Education*, 10th edition, edited by Amis E. Burviikovs, (Boston: Pearson education Inc., 2006
- John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* 4th Edition, p 218
- Joseph Dupuis, *The Journal of Residence in Asante*, London: Frank Cass 1924.
- Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, (Revised.ed), London, Longman 1995.
- Kumekpor, K. B., *Research methods and techniques of social sciences, Accra-Ghana, Sonlife*, 2002.
- Kwame, Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction, Accra, Ghana: Sankofa Publishing*, 1996.
- Leedy, Paul D. and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research*, Pearson Custom, 2005.
- Levtzion, Nehemia, and Randall L. Pouwels, *Introduction: Patterns of Islamization and Varieties of Religious Experience among Muslims of Africa*, 2000
- Levtzion, Nehemia, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: a study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-colonial Period*, 1968.
- Lewis, Ioan M., ed., *Islam in Tropical Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at the 5th International African Seminar, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and January 1964*. Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1966.

Lincoln, Norman K. Denzin Yvonna S, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage, 2005.

Lugira, Aloysius Muzzanganda, *African Traditional Religion*, Infobase Publishing, 2009.

Mbiti, John S, *African Religions & Philosophy*, Heinemann, 1990.

Mouly George J, *The Science of an Education Research*, New Delhi: Eurasia publishing, 1963)

202

Mumuni, Sulemana, *Islamic Organizations in Accra: Their Structure, Role and Impact in the Proselytization of Islam*, Unpublished M. Phil thesis in Religions, University of Ghana, Legon (1994).

Mustapha Ibrahim, *Islamic Law of Marriage with Reference to Quran and Hadith and special mention of some African Marital practices*, Part one Fifth edition, Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Service and Printed by Depot Printing Press, 2003

Nana Agyei-Kodie Anane-Gyei, *Ghana's Brong Ahafo Region: The Story of an African Society in the Heart of the World*, (published by Abibrem Communications, University of Ghana 2015),.83.

Nehemiah Levtzion, *Islam and Muslim Chiefs*, London Oxford at the Clarendo press, 1968

Osanloo, Azadeh, and Cynthia Grant, "Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house"." *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and rResearch* 4, no. 2, 2016

Osman M. Owusu, *Islam among the Akan: The Genesis and Consequences of Contemporary Doctrinal and Social Differences* A case study of Kumasi Unpublished thesis submitted to the department for the study of religions university of Ghana 2010

Owusu-Ansah, David, *Historical Dictionary of Ghana*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Paul D. Leedy and Ormrod, J.E., *Practical Rresearch: Planning and Design*, Pearson Education 2014,

Pellow, Deborah, *Muslim Segmentation: Cohesion and Divisiveness in Accra*, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, no. 3 (1985): 419-444.

Peters, Francis E, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places*, Princeton University Press, 1996.

Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilaal, and Jameelah Jones, *Polygamy in Islam*. Islamic Books, 2005,

Rabiatu D. Ammah, “*Ghanaian Muslims “Becoming Muslim “For Sustainable Development”* in Religion and Sustainable Development edited by George Ossom-Batsa-Necoletta Gatti, Rabiatu Deinyo Ammah, Urbaniana University Press,2018

Rattray, Robert S. "The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland: (Some Results of a Two-year Anthropological Survey of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast)." *Journal of the Royal African Society* 30, no. 118 (1931): 40-57.

Robinson, David, *Muslim Societies in African History*, Vol. 2. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Rosenthal, Franz, *A History of Muslim Historiography*. Brill Archive, 1968.

Ismaeel, Saeed, *The Relationship Between Muslims and Non-Muslims*, Al Attique Int'l Islamic Publications, 2000.

- Al-Bukhari, Sahih. "Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan." *Dar Al-Salam, Saudi Arabia* (1994).
- Samwini, Nathan, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950: its Effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christian Relations*, Vol. 7. LIT Verlag Münster, 2006.
- Sarantakos S, *Social Research*, 5th edition, Houndemills: Macmillan Press 2005
- Sarpong, Peter, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*, Accra, (1974).
- Şaul, Mahir. "The War Houses of the Watara in West Africa." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31, no. 3 1998
- Schildkrout, Enid, *People of the Zongo: The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana.* (2007)
- Shakeir, Reima Y., ed. *500 Questions and Answers on Islamic Jurisprudence*. Dar Al-Manarah, 2006.
- Shank, Gary D, *Qualitative Research: A personal Skills Approach*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, 2006.
- Shillington, Kevin, *A History of Africa*: JD Fage. Macmillan International Higher Education, 1995.
- Silverman, Raymond A., and David Owusu-Ansah, *The Presence of Islam Among the Akan of Ghana: A Bibliographic Essay*, *History in Africa* 16, 1989.
- Sukhia, S. P., P. V. Mehrotra, and R. N. Mehrotra, *Elements of Educational Research*, 1964.

Sulayman S. Nyang, Islam in African World in Islam in Africa South of the Sahara, Badru Pade, and Brigid M. Sackey, eds. *Islam in Africa south of the Sahara: Essays in gender relations and political reform*. Scarecrow Press, 2013.

Trimingham, J. Spencer, *Islam in West Africa*, Clarendon Press 1959.

Twumasi, P. A, *Social Research in Rural Community*, Accra: Ghana Universities Press

Walliman N, *Social Research Methods*, London: Sage Publication 2006.

Weiss, Holger. "*Between Accommodation and Revivalism: Muslims, the State, and Society in Ghana from the Precolonial to the Postcolonial Era*, *Studia Orientalia* 105, 2008.

Wilks, Ivor, *The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Forest*, in: Levtzion, Nehemia und Randall L. Pouwels (Hrsg.), *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens, 2000.

Wilks, Ivor. "*Forest of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante*, Athens." (1993).

Wilks, Ivor. "*The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Fores*, *The history of Islam in Africa*, 2000.

Wilks, Ivor. "*Wangara, Akan and Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. II, The struggle for trade*." *Journal of African History*, 1982

Yahiya Emerick, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam, 2nd Edition*, New York: Alpha, 2004

Yasin, F. B. R., and M. Jani. Islamic education: The philosophy, aim, and main features." *International Journal of Education and Research* 1, no. 10, 2013.

Yim, Cherlsoon. "*Understanding Islam, its History in Ghana, and an Effective Evangelistic Strategy to Overcome Islamic Influence in Ghana*, 2004.

Zepp, Ira G, *A Muslim Primer: Beginner's Guide to Islam*, Vol. 2. University of Arkansas Press, 2000.



LIST OF RESPONDENTS

| NAME | STATUS | DATE OF INTERVIEW | PLACE OF INTERVIEW | TIME OF INTREVIEW |
|------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Imam Abdul Mumin | Ashanti Regional Imam | 4 th January, 2020 | In his residence at Suame-Kumasi | 4:00 pm |
| Alhaji Abass Yussif | Menji Chief Imam | 25 th November, 2019, | at Menji in his residence | 8:32 am |
| Nana Adisa IV | Chief of Menji | 21 st November, 2019 | at Menji in his residence | 8:30 am |
| Alhaji Saliho Shaibu | Imam of Nkenkaasu | 26 th December, 2019 | in his residence in Nkenkaasu | 3:00 pm |
| Sheikh Aminu Bamba | Islamic Scholar and Muslim reformer | 20 th and 21 st March, 2020 | in his residence at Ejura | 30 and 12: 30 pm |
| Mallam Shuayb Abdul Malik | Amir and leader in charge of the Muslim Mobile Preachers Association | 20 th March, 2020 in | at Old Tafo 45 in his residence | 10:00 |
| Saeed Mohammed Owusu, | ASHanti Regional Secretary, Ghana Muslim Mission (GMM) | 20 th March, 2020 | in his office at Abrepo in Kumasi, | 12: 30 pm |
| Sheikh Issa Abdallah Ladan, | Imam and Counselling and Guidance coordinator | 20 th March, 2020 | Islamic Senior High School | 2:00 pm |
| Mr. Asuma Frank, High School | the head teacher of Menji Islamic Junior | on 13 th January, 2020 | in the staff common | 12:30 pm |
| Mr. Yussif Alhassan | Head teacher of Menji Islamic Junior High School | 13 th January, 2020, | in his office at the school | 1:30 pm |
| Alhaji Sualiho Tijani | chief Mu'adhin of Menji Central Mosque | 24 th November, 2019 | in his residence at Menji | 8:40 pm |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|----------|
| Abdullah Osman | Muslim Traditional Healer | 24 th November, 2019 | in his residence at Menji | 10:30 pm |
| Alhaji Abdallah Osman | Ulamāh in Menji | 17 th December, 2019, at 7: 00 am | In his residence at Menji | 7: 00 am |
| Alhaji Zakariya Yahaya, | Ulamāh in Menji | 28 th November, 2019, | in his residence at Menji | 8: 30 am |
| Obaa Yaw | custodian of African Indigenous Religion | 8 th December,2019, | in his residence at Menji | 8:30 pm |
| Abubakari Saeed, | Ulamāh and Rtd Military of Ghana Armed force | 22 nd November, 2019 | in his residence at Wenchi, at 9: 20 am | 9: 20 am |
| Naster Iddrisu | Custodian of oral report in Menji | 21 st November, 2019 | in her residence at Menji | 6:44 pm |
| Alhaji Yussif Gausu, | Chief Linguist of Menji | 20 th November, 2019, | in his residence at Menji | 9: 30 pm |
| Hajara Abu | Queen Mother of Menji | 20 th November, 2019, | in her residence at Menji | 8: 20 pm |
| Hajjia Donkor | Abusuapanin of Akwamuhene of Menji | 17 th November, 2019 | in her residence at Dansoman in Accra | 11:00 am |
| Abdul Hamid Umar Bamba | former Assemblyman at Menji Banda line | 5 th December, 2019 | in his resident at Menji | 8:00 am |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|-----------|
| Yahaya Zakariya Cisse | Custodian of Islam History in Kumasi Rtd Health worker at KATH | 3 rd January, 2020 | in his residence at Afari-Akrofrom near Kumasi | 3:50 pm |
| Saidu Idriss | Abusua panin of Menji | 21 st November, 2019 at 11:30 pm | in his residence at Menji | 11:30 pm |
| Fati Bamba | Regional Director National Youth Authority | 22 nd June,2020 | in her residence in Sunyani | 3:30pm |
| Nurudeen Osman | Deputy Institute Manager National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) Kumasi, | 21 st June ,2020 | in his residence in Hemang in Kumasi on 21 st | 10.00am |
| Siaka Mahmud, | Family head of Akwamuhene of Menji | 5 th June, 2020 | in his residence at Menji | 10: 05 am |
| Ibrahim Abdallah | Family head of Menji Imam Soorah | June, 2020 | in his residence at Tafo in Kumasi | 1:00 pm |
| Muniru Mohammed | Spiritual Consultant | 29 th November, 2019 | In his residence at Menji | 3: 40 pm |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Abu Mohammed | Islamic Studies teacher | 3 rd June, 2020 | In his residence at Menji | 5:00 pm |
|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|

Table. 2 List of Respondents



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 'A'

INTERVIEW GUIDE TO SEEK TO INQUIRE INFORMATION FROM PURPOSIVELY SELECTED RESPONDENTS IN THE MENJI COMMUNITY.

Introduction:

Alhaji Yahaya is my name. I am a student of the University of Ghana conducting research on the topic: "Islam among the People of Menji Community". I am currently gathering information to enable me proceed with my thesis on the above topic. The research is part of the requirement for an MPhil program in the Department for the study of Religions, University of Ghana. This interview, thus, is meant to solicit your views on the history of development and influence of Islam in Menji community. Your views will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves and are exclusively for academic purpose.

Your assistance is much appreciated.

INTERVIEW GUIDES

- Who are the Ligbi of Menji?
- What is the major occupation of the Ligbi (Banda) people of Menji?
- How did the Ligbi people come to settle in Menji?
- Before the advent of Islam in Bono Region, what was the religious life of the Ligbi (Banda) people of Menji?
- Where was Islam first point of call of Islam in Bono Region?
- By what means was Islam brought to Begho?
- Who brought Islam to Menji and by what means?

- What are the cultural practices and festivals of the Ligbi Muslims of Menji?
- How has Islam influenced the socio-cultural lives of the Menji Muslims?
- In what way has Islam contributed to the economic development of the Muslims in Menji?
- How has Islam been influential on the African Indigenous belief system of the Menji Muslims?
- How has African Indigenous Religion influenced the activities of Muslims in Menji?
- To what extent has Islam contributed to the development of Islamic education in Menji Muslim community?
- How many major ethnic groups are there in Menji?
- Who are the chiefs and Queen Mothers of Menji?
- Are the chiefs and Queen Mothers of Menji Muslims?
- If yes, how do Muslim chiefs and Queen Mothers combine Islamic practices with the traditional cultural practice of chieftaincy?
- How has Islam developed since its inception in Menji?
- How is Islam in Menji different from Islam elsewhere in Ghana?
- What other religious denominations are in Menji apart from Islam?
- What is the Christian-Muslim relationship in Menji?
- Does Islam have any negative influence on the Menji Muslims?
- What is the role of Muslim women in the development of Islam in Menji?



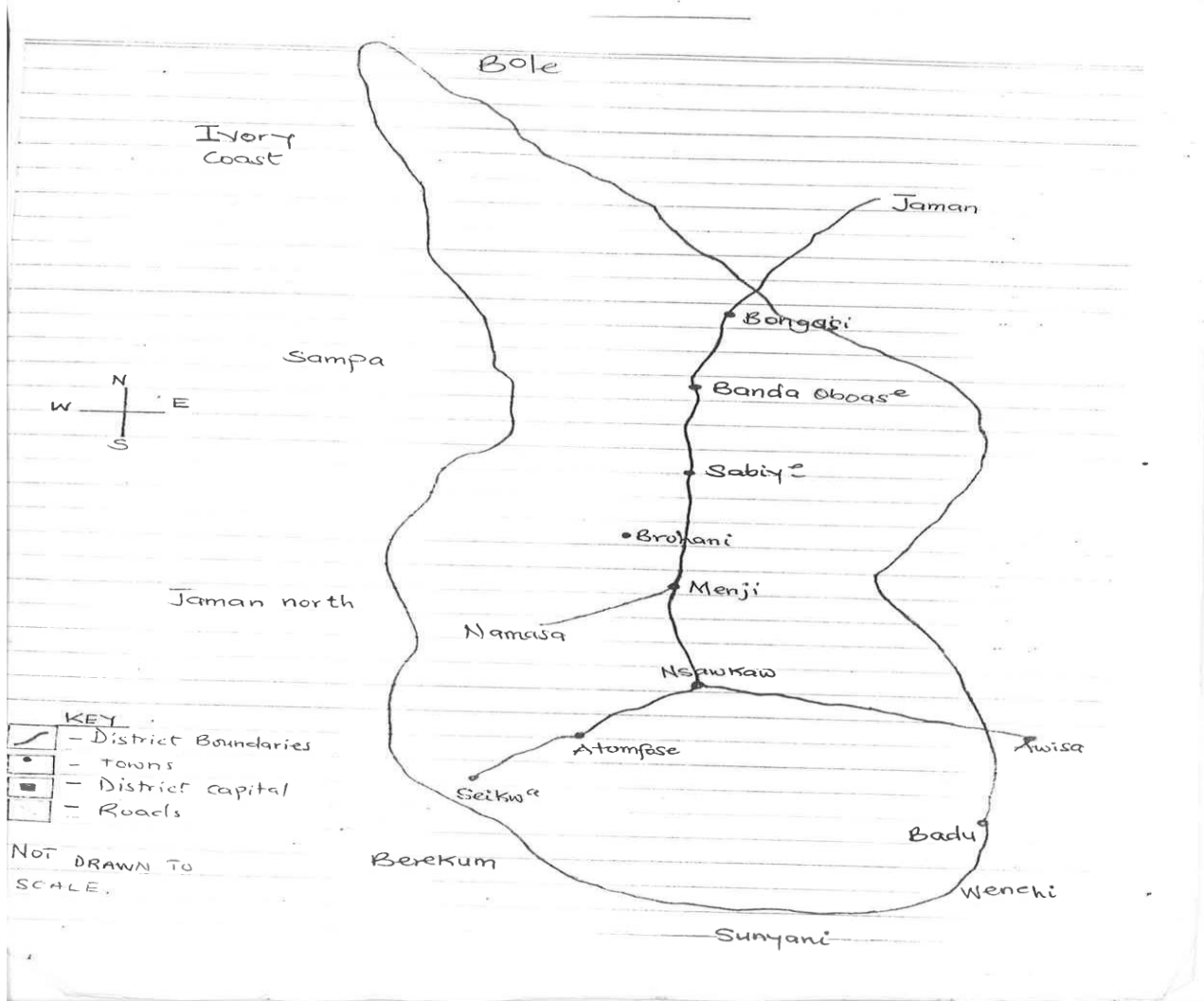
APPENDIX “B”

INTERVIEW GUIDE TO SEEK INFORMATION FROM IMAM ABASS YUSSIF

1. Please give a brief Biography of yourself
2. What is your educational background (Islamic and secular)?
3. What is your occupation and routine religious activities?
4. When did you become an Imam of Menji?
5. Who was your predecessor?
6. What is your viewpoint on Islamic reform?
7. Do you deem your Da’awa enterprise as a recipe for reforming the Ummah?
8. What are the key issues your Da’awa agenda addresses?
9. What has been the influence of your Da’awa activities in Menji?
10. How do you target non-Muslim in your Da’awa activities?
11. What is the status of Makarantah education in Menji?
12. Why did Menji Muslim community establish Menji Islamic Schools?
13. Are they government mainstream or private?
14. What is the status of the schools?
15. What is your view of the higher education of a Muslim girl-child?
16. What is your view on the religious implications of the restriction of congregational prayers because of Coronavirus pandemic in the world?



APPENDIX C



Map of tain district showing the location of menji

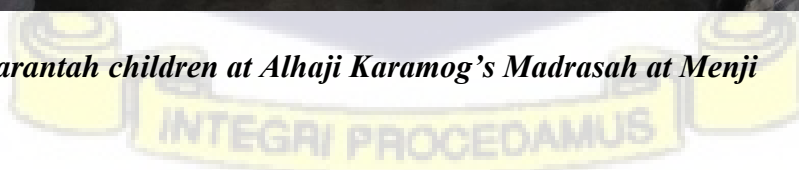




Old way of carrying a bride shoulder high in Menji Muslim community during marriage ceremony



Pictures of Makarantah children at Alhaji Karamog's Madrasah at Menji





Pupils of Menji Islamic Junior High School with their head Teacher



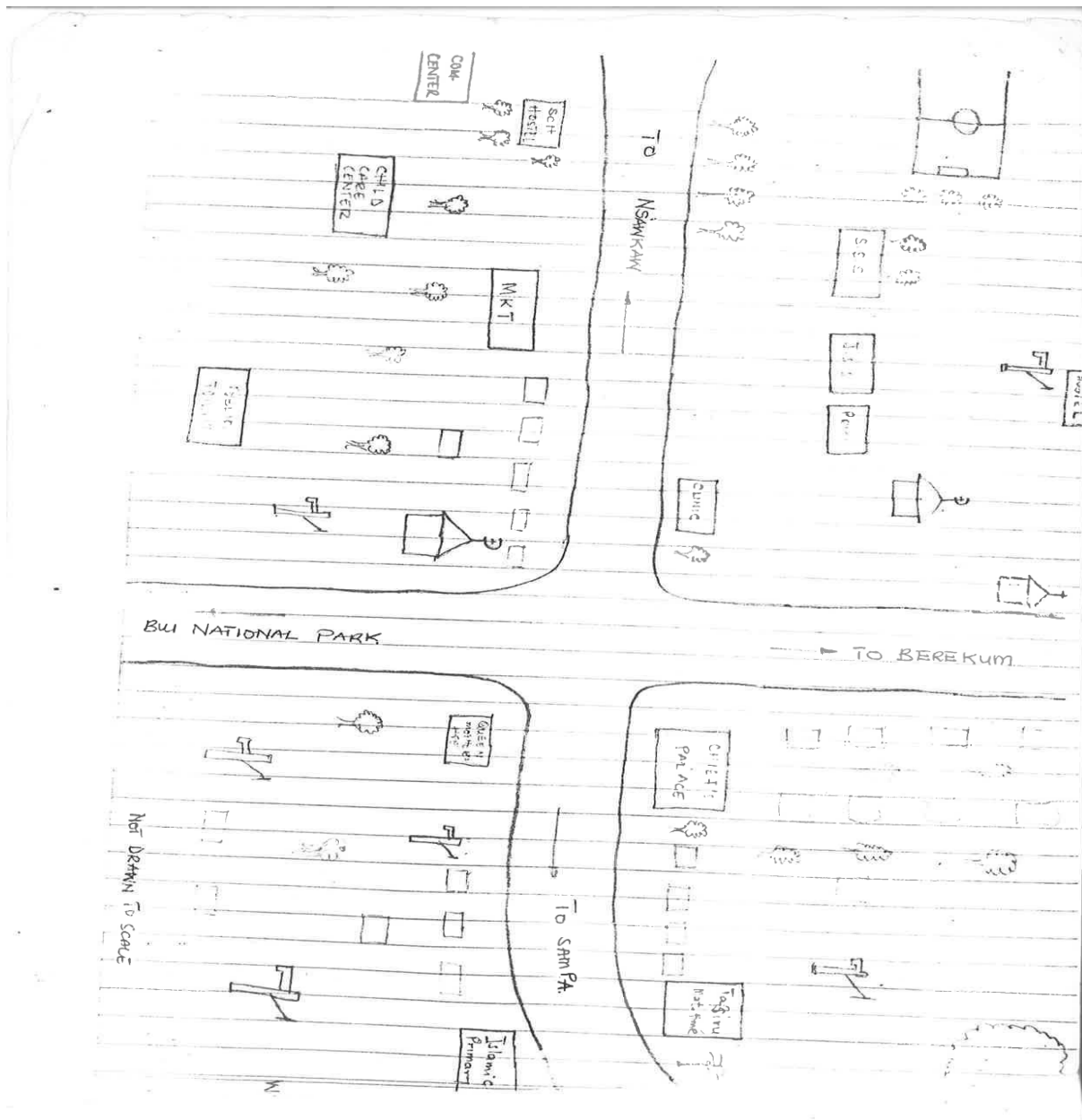
Picture of Menji Traditional Council at a Twelfth day funeral ground of Mame Abiba Thahir at Menji. From the extreme right is Alhaji Yussifu Gausu (Linguist) followed by Saliho Hamidu (Abusuapanin of Saakinah), next is Siaka Mahmud (Abusuapanin of Akwamuhene), followed by Yussif Musa (Rep of Gyasehene) followed by Alhaji Ibrahim Qadari (Chief of Menji, Adisa IV) and at the extreme right is Osman Yerikaah (Rep of Benkumhene)



Scenes of Krubi Festival in Wenchi



Pictures of Krubi festival ceremony



Direction to menji

FAMILY TREE OF MENJI

