

# Imamship Tussle in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Original Article

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## Abstract

The selection of Imams has been in existence since the advent of Islam in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The selection takes two dimensions. These are the ones without any problem and those associated with problems. Our focus here is on Imamship tussles that are linked with the appointment of Imams in the State. This will be a continuation of our article on the appointment of Imam in Ekiti State in print. The information used here cut across the three Senatorial districts of the State. That is, Ekiti Central, Ekiti South and Ekiti North. Ikere-Ekiti was chosen in Ekiti South, Igbemo-Ekiti in Ekiti Central and Ikole-Ekiti in Ekiti North Senatorial Districts. The objective of the study is to supplement the existing literatures on the Imamship Tussles in Nigeria. The topic is divided into introduction, composition of Nigeria, creation of Ekiti State, the advent of Islam and Imamship tussles in State. Findings reveal that Imamship tussles in State include the biasness of the Imamship Committees and appointment of the interested person in the position of Imam as an Acting Imam. Among the recommendations are the appointments of learned people in terms of Islam to Imamship Committee and punitive measure for the violators of the State executive order.

**Keywords:** Imamship, Tussles, Committee, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

Nigeria functions with a system of three levels of governance - Federal, State, and Local. Ekiti State, along with five other states, including Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Gombe, Nasarawa, and Zamfara, were established by the late General Sani Abacha's government on October 1, 1996. Ekiti State was separated from the original Ondo State (Y. O. Balogun & Balogun, 2021; Omotoso, 2009). The state was created based on the clamour and agitation for it by some leaders of the state (Oke & Adu, 2018). The area includes the original twelve Local Government Areas that constituted Ekiti zone in the previous Ondo State of Nigeria. The twelve Local Government Areas were restructured to sixteen Local Government Areas for effective take-off, and to make government closer to the people of the State. Ado-Ekiti was made its capital (Jumoke, 2011; Owolabi et al., 2021). The state comprises majorly Christians and Muslims who live together without any friction (Oluwafemi & Suriadi, 2024).

Ekiti is a collective name that is used to refer to the land and people of the sub-ethnic group of the Yoruba. The name was coined and attached to them from the time immemorial. The name sounds topographical in description. Samuel Johnson states that Ekiti indicates hilly country. Likewise, A.O. Oguntuyi opines that the term "Ekiti" was derived from "Okiti" which means hilly outcrops. The Okiti later blended to Ekiti. Olomola (2005) asserts that the rugged hills of relative height dominate Ekiti and many other Yoruba communities in the hinterland. He states that the outcrops of these Yoruba hills are very pronounced at Imesi-Ile, Okemesi, Efon Alaaye, Ilawe, Ikere, Ilupeju and Itapa-Ekiti, Nigeria. Isola states further that



if this countryside is named Ekiti because of hilly environment, the name should have equally applied to most of upper Ogun in Ogun State, Ijesa in Osun State, Kabba in Kogi State and Akoko in Ondo State which are studded with hills (Oguntuyi, 2007). One thing that is peculiar to a name is that once an area has adopted it, other areas may not be interested in the name again. If they want to adopt it, it will be with modifications like the case of Ado and Agbado, Imesi-Ile and Okemesi, all in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

As to the date of arrival of Islam in Ekiti State, there are two contradictory views. The first view by Gbadamosi puts the penetration of Islam to Ekiti in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1840-1908). He states that there was yet little or no trace of Islamic activities in Ekiti between 1840 and 1860. He attributes the late arrival of Islam to Ekiti and other Eastern parts of Yoruba-land (Ilesa, Ondo, Okitipupa) to the little contact which these areas had both at the periods of war and peace with the Muslim centres to the West and North. He highlights two major factors that were responsible for this little contact. These are:

- 1) The areas were self-contained agricultural communities, and they did not have much external trade with the partially Islamized parts of Yoruba-land. Their products such as kola nut, cocoa and coffee were carried out of the areas of production whereas the people themselves were less dispersed and the areas had few or no migrants or settlers from the Islamized centres.
- 2) Ekiti in particular showed opposition to Islam because of the incessant raids from the nearby centres of Islam, Ilorin and Bida. Ever since 1840, Ilorin had been the more persistent and serious invader of Ekiti people. The Ekiti people had to resist not only the Ilorin but also the Ibadan invaders who had come in the guise of Ekiti helpers. Peace had to be secured not by their acceptance of Islam, but a mixture of effective military check and diplomacy of the later decades. Therefore, opposition to Ilorin in Ekiti was regarded as the rejection of subjugation to Hausa/Fulani authorities of Ilorin and to the religion they professed.

Gbadamosi claims further that the rapid spread and growth of Islam in Ekiti and other Eastern parts of Yoruba-land actually started towards the end of the nineteenth century (1892-1908). At that period, the series of the Yoruba wars had ended, giving way to peace and further development of trade. Also, a good number of these internal slaves had accepted Islam during their captivity at Epe, Ilorin, Iwo, Ibadan and similar environments. As they returned home, they proved very useful in spreading Islam in their respective towns and villages (Gbadamosi, 1978).

The second view is from Agbetola who says that Islam spread to Ekiti-land in the eighteenth century. He used Ido-Faboro-Ekiti as his starting point, a place where Islam was first brought during the leadership of Olojido Okeoro in the late 1700s. It is claimed by him that by the year 1836, Ekiti had a Muslim leader in Ado-Ekiti named Ali Atewogboye, who ruled from 1836 to 1886. He opines that this king had accepted Islam before his ascension to the throne in 1836 (Shittu-Agbetola, 1988). Kareem (2001), states that the acceptance of Islam by this king before his ascension to the throne is an indication that Islam had been known at Ado-Ekiti during the reign of his predecessor, Ewi Owaroloye (1808-1836) or even earlier than that. In a further research, Kareem opines that the fact that the presence of Islam had been felt in Yoruba-land in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and that there had been trade contact between the people of the North Africa and those of Yoruba-land of which Ekiti is inclusive, is an indication that Islam might have probably got to Ekiti in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He buttresses his point with the fact that Otun-Ekiti has been known as an ancient commercial centre since 1578 (Egharevba, 1968; Kareem, 2008). Up to date, people of Kwara State, especially from nearby towns and villages

are still patronizing the Otun market held after every five days. Otun has been and is still a place where some Muslims from far and near purchase rams and goats for Muslim festivals and ceremonies.

In every Muslim Community, there must be leaders. The number one of such leaders is the Imam (Warraich, 2021). He is the spiritual head as well as a political leader. He could be nominated, selected or appointed on the basis of Shari'ah (Adeleke, 2018). The varying viewpoints that resulted in the appointment of the Imams resulted in the split of the Muslim community into the Shi'ite and Sunnite Muslims (Zeidan, 2021). Ever since the inception of Islam in Ekiti, there had been the selection and installation of one Imam or the other. Many of the earlier Imams were nonnatives. For example, the first Imam in Ikere-Ekiti, Alfa Abdul-Qadiri Tapa, was a native of Bida, Niger State, Nigeria (Zumratul Hujjaj Ondo State, 1988). He was unanimously selected by the Muslims of the town. In Ikole-Ekiti, Sheikh Shidi who was the first Imam was a native of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. He too was appointed without any problem or schism among the Muslims of the town (Sulaiman, 2011). The same concept applied to Ayinla in Iworoko-Ekiti. He was a native of Ilorin in Kwara State, Nigeria but was commissioned to be leading the Muslims in prayer before a substantive Imam, Akerele was installed (Y. O. Balogun, 2009).

Balogun (2007) asserts that the Imamship tussles began in recent time. For example, there was Imamship tussle in *Ansar-Dd-Deen* Society, Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria. Upon the death of Imam Abdus Salam in 1984, Alhaji Adam Kolawole Ibrahim became Acting Imam till July 16, 1986. By July 1986, Imamship Tussle started in the town. The two contestants to the position were the Acting Imam, Alhaji Adam Kolawole Ibrahim and Alhaji Abdul Ganiyy Olowoniga. Eventually, the Acting Imam was appointed as the substantive Imam of the town in July 17, 1986. The supporters of the appointed Imam claimed that their Imam was more qualified because he had both Islamic and Western Education. He was a Grade ii Certificate holder while Alhaji Abdul Ganiyy Olowoniga only had Islamic Education. He had equally under gone a leadership Training Course under the national body of *Ansar-Dd-Deen* Society in Lagos, Nigeria. Hence, he was the most fitted to the position.

He states further that the League of Imams and Alfas in the former Ondo State, Nigeria, under the Grand Imam of Sheu Yayi Akorede intervened and their resolution was that the Acting Imam, Alhaji Adam Kolawole Ibrahim should continue as the substantive Imam of the town. He opines that the supporters of Alhaji Abdul Ganiyy Olowoniga were dissatisfied with the appointment of Alhaji Adam Kolawole Ibrahim and they therefore broke away and named their Muslim denomination as Oyo Peju Muslim Community which later transformed to *Nawair-Dd-Deen* Society, Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria, on 17 March, 1987

In Igbemo-Ekiti, Nigeria, upon the death of *Imām* Abdullah Junaid Ikudanikansi in 2004, Alhaji Bakare Abiola Maliki became the Acting *Imām* of the town till 2007. An Imamship Committee was set up in 2006 to select the Imam of the town. The inaugural meeting of the committee took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2006 (Oral interview with Bakare Abiola Maliki as the Acting Imam of Igbemo-Ekiti and the Amiru-l-Muminu of Ekiti State, 2018). The three major contestants were late Alhaji Kareem Oluwasola Balogun, Alhaji Ibrahim Yusuf Ogunmilade and Alhaji Abdullahi Kolawole Jamiu. The Committee invited three learned men in terms of Islam to conduct the interview. The interviewers were Professor M.A. Abudu-Raheem from the Department of Religious Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti; Alhaji A.B. Abdussam from the Department of Arabic, College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti, now Ekiti State Missioner of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria; and Alhaji Abbas Abubakr Muhammad, the Chief Imam of Ikare-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The position of the contestants in the interview conducted were in the order of listing their names (Ansar-Ud-Deen Central Mosque,

2007a). Alhaji Abdullahi Kolawole Jamiu initially refused to take part in the interview, claiming he had already been chosen as the preferred candidate by the Odo-Igbemo community for selecting Imams since the 1840s (Y. O. Balogun & Balogun, 2021). The picking of the 2<sup>nd</sup> position, Alhaji Ibrahim Yusuf Ogunmilade as the appointed *Imām* by the *Mufassir* of the town, Alhaji Abdul-Rahman Balogun on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2007, led to resentment by the followers of the other two contestants (Oral interview with Amusa Ayodele as the Seriki Adini and Treasurer, Central Mosque, Igbemo-Ekiti, 2021).

In an attempt to resolve the problem, two different meetings were held between the Muslims of Igbemo-Ekiti and the representatives of the Mission Board of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council. The first was held at Igbemo-Ekiti on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2007 while the second one took place at the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society Central Mosque, Odo-Otu, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, on the 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2007. The resolutions reached in the Ado-Ekiti meeting were that:

- 1) It is important that no one considers themselves as the designated leader of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Igbemo-Ekiti Branch.
- 2) The temporary Imam should continue to guide the Muslim community in prayer until a peaceful resolution is achieved.
- 3) An additional interview should be arranged by the Imamship Committee for the Odo-Igbemo candidate in Igbemo-Ekiti.
- 4) The results of the supplementary interview must be presented to the Mission Board of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council.
- 5) The Mission Board of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council will review the report and select one of the three candidates to serve as the Imam of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Igbemo-Ekiti Branch.
- 6) It is expected that the chosen candidate will be well-received by the Muslim community in Igbemo-Ekiti.

On the basis of the above resolutions, the Imamship Committee organized an interview for Alhaji Abdullah Kolawole Jamiu on the 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 where he came third (*Ansar-Ud-Deen* Central Mosque, 2007). The same set of the interviewers were invited to conduct the interview. The Mission Board of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State, thereafter ratified Alhaji Ibrahim Yusuf as the *Imām* of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Igbemo-Ekiti Branch. Consequently, he delivered his first sermon on Friday, the 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2007. The day also marked the reversion of the followers of Alhaji Kareem Oluwasola Balogun and Alhaji Abdullah Kolawole Jamiu to Central Mosque, Igbemo-Ekiti, under the Acting *Imām* of Alhaji Bakare Abiola Maliki. They too observed their own Jumu'at service at the Oke-Oja Ratibi mosque, Igbemo Ekiti before moving to the former Central Mosque at Iro quarters, Igbemo-Ekiti. All attempts to reconcile them by the League of Imams and Alfas of Ekiti State proved abortive (Oral interview with Bello Ayodele as the Former Secretary and Treasurer of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, 2018). Alhaji Abdullah Kolawole Jamiu was later appointed as the substantive *Imām* of the Central Mosque, Igbemo-Ekiti, on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 (Programme of Installation and Turbaning of Alhaji Abdullahi Kolawole Jamiu as the Chief Imam of Igbemo-Ekiti in 2009).

The problem of the Chief *Imām* of Ikole-Ekiti, Alhaji Dawood Adewale Fajembola, was after his appointment as the *Imām* of the town. A petition, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014, was written against the *Imām*, to the Chairman, *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council. He was accused of having canal knowledge of one Miss Khadijat Onipede of twelve years of age. The lady's father, Alfa Kareem Onipede, who serves as the Public Relations Officer

of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ikole-Ekiti Branch, brought the issue to the attention of the Executive Committee of the same organization on October 15, 2015. The accusation was then brought to the *Imām* on October 16, 2015. The *Imām* refuted the accusation, while the girl stood by her claims (Ansar-Ud-Deen Society et al., 2014). The girl's medical examination results indicated that she was not a virgin at the time when the accusation was made (John's Medical Centre, Olopemiji, Ikole, 2016). The medical report played a key role in the removal of the *Imām* on October 19, 2015 by the Executive Committee of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, Ikole-Ekiti Branch. In addition to the alleged inappropriate relationship with the girl, the petition contained various other accusations against the *Imām*. Some of these accusations included:

- 1) Without informing anyone, he appointed Alfa Ibrahim Ojokaye, an Ebira man, as the Chief *Imām* of Otunja-Ekiti. As a result, the Muslims in the town started holding their Jumu'at services separately from the Ikole-Ekiti Central Mosque;
- 2) Without informing the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in the town, he moved from Ikole Ekiti to Ayedun Ekiti.
- 3) Contrary to the Executive Committee's knowledge, he authorized the issuance of the Society's marriage certificate.
- 4) At the League of Imams and Alfas meeting in the Ikole-Ekiti Local Government Area Council, he called upon Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Fafure, the Chairman of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ikole-Ekiti, and caused a scene.
- 5) He took over the seat reserved for the State President of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs at the meeting in Ikole-Ekiti and ignored all requests to give up the seat;
- 6) He took away all the money realized at the remembrance service of late Chief A.T. Lawal without remitting the share of the Society to the Executive Committee. He claimed that the Executive members were not there despite the presence of the Secretary, Public Relations of Officer, Iyasuna and some other members of the Society in the programme;
- 7) He asserts his authority over the League of Imams and Alfas within the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ikole-Ekiti, stating that the Central Mosque is a communal property.
- 8) He favors participating in meetings held by other organizations over those organized by the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society.
- 9) He lodged a complaint against the Chairman of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society to their representative, alleging that the Chairman was overstepping his responsibilities by denying him a seat on the National Executive Committee of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria.
- 10) Following his suspension, he began appearing at the mosque with hired thugs from the Ebira tribe to intimidate members of the Society's Executive Committee.
- 11) He affixed a license plate with the title of Chief Imam of Egbeoba kingdom to his vehicle.
- 12) He informed the King that he was being targeted by the Chairman of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ikole Ekiti, Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Fafure, despite the fact that it was Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Fafure who had encouraged their relationship;
- 13) He was being molested because he is a member of All Progressives Congress, a political party in the Country, whereas many prominent members of the Society belong to the party (Ansar-Ud-Deen Society et al., 2014).

On receiving the petition, the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, Ekiti State Council, Nigeria, issued a circular, dated 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, to the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, Ikole-Ekiti Branch, stating that:

- 1) The *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, Ekiti State Council, officially appointed the Chief *Imam* on behalf of the National Executive Council of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria. His removal though may be initiated by the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ikole-Ekiti Branch through a written report to the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, but the final approval must be that of the National Executive Council, acting on the advice of the State Council.
- 2) The principles of due process have been disregarded. The procedure for dismissing any Executive member, including Imams, is clearly outlined in Article 21 of the Society's Constitution. Mishandling your actions could result in the Society facing numerous legal battles and public humiliation.
- 3) You are instructed to cease all action and revert to the original situation regarding the matter until a comprehensive investigation is carried out by the relevant authority.

Article 44 of the Society's Constitution states that:

The National Executive Committee has the authority to expel or suspend any member of the Society who violates the current Rules and Regulations or Bye-Laws. The Councils and Branches may suggest actions to the National Executive Committee. (*Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society et al., 2014).

The Council then established a committee consisting of five members to look into the accusations. The committee was made up of the individuals listed below:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1) The late Chief <i>Imām</i> of Awo Ekiti-Alhaji Abdul-Salam Ayoola Agbaje-                            | Chairman;  |
| 2) The Chief <i>Imām</i> of Ikere Ekiti-Alhaji Ahmad Baba Abdus-Salaam-                                 | member;    |
| 3) Alhaja Sidikat Sulaiman from Awo Ekiti-  | member;    |
| 4) Alhaja Suwebat Sulaiman from Ido Ekiti-  | member;    |
| 5) Alhaji Makanjuola Hamid, the State Secretary of<br><i>Ansar-Ud-Deen</i> Society, Ekiti State Council | Secretary. |

After meeting with the involved parties, the Committee determined that there is no evidence to prove the Imam's alleged involvement in the rape. As a result, the Committee proposed the following recommendations:

- 1) The Mission Board and State General Purpose Committee of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ekiti State are advised to have a meeting with the Elekole of Ikole-Ekiti, Oba Ajibade Fasiku, as he is interested in the case.
- 2) It is recommended that the committee should request the presence of the branch Chairman of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ikole-Ekiti, Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Fafure, and all relevant stakeholders from the Ogunlayi families for a discussion about the consequences of their decisions regarding the Imam.
- 3) If the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ikole-Ekiti refuses to reinstate the Imam, the General-Purpose Council should explore all avenues to establish a new branch specifically for the Imam to prevent further expansion of the Society's adversaries in the State.
- 4) The State Executive Committee should regularly host seminars for all Imams and Alfas under the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in Ekiti State to educate them on the Society's expectations and provide a thorough understanding of the Society's Constitution.
- 5) It is suggested that both parties should attend a meeting at the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society's Central Mosque Headquarters in Odo-Otu, Ado-Ekiti, where the final decision of the National Executive Committee will be announced (*Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, n.d.).

On the basis of the recommendations, the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council, came out with this White Paper Report. The Report states that:

- 1) *Imām* Dawood Adewale Fajembola was suspended by the Council due to an alleged rape offense, which has not been proven. The decision to remove him from his position has been revoked as the Council determined the other alleged offenses were minor.
- 2) The Council has asked Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Fafure's Executive Committee to nominate a candidate for the *Imām* position in Ikole-Ekiti Branch.
- 3) A new division, called *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society Division 2, has been established in Ikole-Ekiti under *Imām* Dawood Adewale Fajembola.
- 4) The new division is encouraged to submit their Executive Committee members' names to the State Council Secretary promptly.
- 5) The Council urges the Ikole-Ekiti Branch and *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society Division 2 to collaborate in spreading Islam as part of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* family.
- 6) The Council has directed the Secretary to inform the National Headquarters of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria about their final decision for official documentation (Ansar-Ud-Deen Society et al., 2014).

The Chief *Imam*, Alhaji Dawood Adewale Fajembola, released a statement expressing gratitude to the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council for their support amidst false accusations of rape on March 15, 2015. He also thanked them for suggesting the Division 2 of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ikole-Ekiti Branch for his benefit. He notified the Society that his organization named “Ikole-Ekiti Muslim Community” has inaugurated a Central Mosque similar to other prominent cities in Nigeria such as Ado, Akure, Osogbo, Ibadan, Lagos, Abeokuta, Ilorin, Okenne, Abuja, and several others. He explained that those followers who have faith in his leadership will gather to begin Central Mosque Friday Jumu’at service on Iloka Street, Ikole-Ekiti, on the 30th of January, 2016. He mentioned that he has replaced the Chief *Imam* of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ikole-Ekiti Branch, with the Chief *Imam* of Ikole-Ekiti and Egbeoba Kingdom according to Dawood Adewale Fajembola.

On the role of the League of *Imāms* and *Alfas*, Ekiti State, on the amicable resolution of the matter, *Imām* Fajembola stated that the League of *Imāms* and *Alfas* stepped aside from the case because of the allegation that he wanted to lord the body on the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society in the town (Oral interview with Dawood Adewale Fajembola as the Chief *Imām* of Ikole-Ekiti and Egbeoba kingdom in 2022).

## 2. Methods

The study utilized a qualitative approach and employed various data collection methods to investigate Imamship disputes in Ekiti State. Interviews were conducted with key figures such as the Acting Imam of Igbemo-Ekiti, the Seriki Adini, and Treasurer of the Central Mosque in Igbemo-Ekiti, as well as former officials of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society and the Chief Imam of Ikole-Ekiti and Egbeoba kingdom. Analysis of documentary materials, including committee reports and correspondence between Islamic organizations, was also carried out. To ensure representation from different regions, one community from each senatorial district was selected for the study: Ikere-Ekiti (South), Igbemo-Ekiti (Central), and Ikole-Ekiti (North). By combining various sources and research methods, the study was able to verify information and gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding Imamship disputes in Ekiti State.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The Acting Imām in Ikere-Ekiti, Alhaji Adam Kolawole Ibrahim was given more than enough time to cement his Imāmship. Since he was a contestant to the position, other person should have been appointed to be Acting Imām like the case of Igbemo-Ekiti. Since he had interest, it will be disgraceful to remove him. Probably the Igbemo people learnt from this mistake. Many of the members of the Imāmship Committee set up, especially in Igbemo-Ekiti were biased. Some of the committee members were supporters of one candidate or the other. The result of the interview was known by the candidates and their followers before the announcement of the result.

The unilateral declaration of a person by the Mufassir of Igbemo-Ekiti, Alhaji Abdurrahman Balogun is a great mistake on his part. He would have allowed the result to be debated at the Mosque Committee and if possible, at the General Committee levels and finalized on the person to be selected before the announcement. The case of Ikole-Ekiti is after thought. The selected Committee by the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council, made recommendations to the state Council on the Imām. One of their recommendations was too weak. The fact that the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ikole Ekiti Branch should establish a second Mosque called Division two and transfer Imām *Imām* Dawood Adewale Fajembola as Imām there is a weak recommendation. The new appointed Imām should have been asked to take over the new mosque.

The rejection of the order not to remove *Imām* Dawood Adewale Fajembola pending the determination of his case by the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ikole Ekiti Branch is a violation of the order of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council. The Branch supposed to be punished for that yet nothing was done. The confirmation that Imām Dawood Adewale Fajembola was not guilty of the allegations leveled against him is enough evidence not to transfer the Imām to another Mosque. The series of division of mosques in Ekiti State over who becomes the Imām of a mosque is a danger to the development of Islam in the State. Since there is no punitive measure against the idea, more mosques would emulate them.

#### 3.1. Recommendations

In the light of our findings during the course of this study, the following recommendations are made:

In order to foster unity among the Muslims in every town in Ekiti State, the Muslims should regard themselves as partners in progress. They should shelve their divisible tendencies so as to pave the way for harmonious relations among them. It is through cordial relationship that they would be able to propagate and uplift Islam in Ekiti State. Allah says: *“Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: For them is a dreadful penalty”* (Qur’ān 3:105).

In another Qur’anic verse, Allah Says:

*“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah’s favour on you; for ye were enemies and He join your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided”* (Qur’ān 3:103).

As to the succession problem, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had already proffered solution to this. If the solution is followed to the letter in every town and Ekiti State, the problem would become a thing of the past soonest. His solution reads thus:

It has been narrated by Abu Musa who said: “*Two of my cousins and I entered the apartment of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). One of them said: Messenger of Allah, appoint us rulers of some lands that the Almighty and Glorious God has entrusted to thy care. The other also said something similar. He said: We do not appoint to this position one who asks for it nor anyone who is covetous for the same*” (Siddiqui, 2016).

It is the duty of the *Shūrah* Committee or any committee that is saddled with the responsibility of appointing the Imāms to abide by this prophetic tradition so as to avert further division of Muslims in Ekiti State. If a person knows that he would not be appointed to the position if he asks for it, he will caution himself and his followers and this would sustain peace and harmony within the communities.

Furthermore, the person who is interested in the position of Imām should not be allowed to remain as Acting Imām. A neutral person who is not interested in the position should be permitted to hold the position. In fact, the idea of delaying the selection of an Imām after the death of an Imām should be discouraged. If one Imām dies on Thursday or early in the morning on Friday, the person to be the Imām should be the one to perform the next Friday Service. This will reduce the contestants to the position.

The idea of setting up a special committee for the selection of an Imām should be discarded. The leaders of every mosque should constitute themselves to Imāmsip Committee upon the death of an Imām and select whoever to lead them. The unilateral declaration of an Imām by anybody should be discouraged. The appointment of an Imām is beyond the capacity of a person. It should be handled by the leaders of the Mosque.

There should be punitive measure for violation of the order of state or national body of any organization or society. If the measure is in existence, it should be put into operation. If a Branch knows that it would be penalized for violation of the State or National body, it will not act against the wish of the State or National Body.

There is the need to improve the financial base of the Mosques through investing in profit making ventures like construction of lock-up shops, events centre and engaging in agriculture. Every member of each Mosque should be asked to contribute a certain amount of money per year to the purse of the Mosque. This will go a long way in assisting each of the Mosques to record more achievements.

#### 4. Conclusion

The selection of Imāms and the leaders of the Muslim organizations is sometimes a problem in Ekiti State. It is true that the League of Imāms and Alfas was able to resolve some of these problems. However, there were others the organization could not resolve. The unresolved ones led to the division of the Muslims of the concerned towns into the Central Mosque and *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society or the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society and other society.

For example, in 1986, it divided the Muslims in Ikere-Ekiti into the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society and the *Nawair-Ud-Deen* Society. In 2007, it divided the Muslims in Igbemo-Ekiti to the Central Mosque and the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society. In 2015, it divided the Muslims in Ikole-Ekiti to Ikole-Ekiti Muslim Community and the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society.

Of course, the divisions have their positive effects. Many Muslims have mosques closer to their houses unlike in the past when the whole town had only one mosque and it is far away to them. It also encourages healthy competition in building mosques and carrying out many activities to attract members. However, the disadvantages and the consequences of the divisions are more than the advantages. It encourages unhealthy and Un-Islamic rivalry. It

promotes cold-war amongst the Muslims of a given society. It can lead to pretension and lack of freedom of worship. On this not we advised that our recommendations should be implemented for uplift of Islam in the concerned areas and elsewhere.

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