

the *talakawa* (masses), advocated for a free North and aspired to see a competitive and sound Muslim Northerners. He was extremely outspoken and unremitting in his attack against corruption of the traditional rulers (Gumi with Tsiga, 1992). Sa'adu operated under western educational values for the liberation of the masses; nonetheless he was a gallant defender of Islamic values who left a mark not only on politics but also on literature and theology (Yakubu, 1991). He was a strong social critic who expressed in intellectual terms his opposition to the socio-political conditions of his time and demonstrated an enviable anti-imperial prolificacy in verse and prose (Yakubu, 1999).

One of his significant contributions in the educational development was his concern about the apathy of the people towards western education and poor educational facilities in northern Nigeria. He accused the Hausa people of being unresponsive towards education and for not sending their children to schools due to nonchalant attitudes. Remarkably, Sa'adu in his poem "*Arewa: Jamhuriya Ko Mulukiya*" (The North; Republic or Monarchy) while describing the current situation of his time, gave a depiction of a typical Hausa man as one who liked to get things at ease without struggling, typified with lackadaisicality, ignorance and living in dirtiness. In some lines of the poem, Sa'adu said:

"Ignorance has made us spineless. It chained us even to our necks. Has put handcuffs on our wrists. And tied our feet with cord that bites...." (Dangambo, 1974).

One of the most interesting things about the poem was that, it has the role of reawakening the people in the fields of education and politics in their efforts to catch up with the rest of Nigerian regions (Dangambo, 1974). It is equally an interesting example of reformism which centered on education. Sa'adu has recognized the necessity of western education which he believed had to take its place besides Islamic knowledge. He criticized the British colonial education policies in educational backwardness of the people. At one point, he passed challenging remarks on the educational policies of the British

where he says; *God willing very soon our conflict with the British will get to the extreme, and they will surely regret for not giving us modern education* (Tahir, 1983).

Besides, his intellectual ideas were on both Islamic and western education. He had emphasized on the necessity for the Muslims to know the meaning of the Qur'an in order to understand Islam correctly and to avoid superstition and ignorance about the religion. This led him to commence translation of the Qur'an into Hausa (Umar, 1988). His major contribution towards reviving Islamic education was in his criticisms on lack of productivity in the traditional Qur'anic schools. He was so emphatic that the Qur'anic schools should not be seen as a northern but a national problem. In 1948 at one occasion, Sa'adu stated that, *there were over ten thousand Islamic schools in existence but in disorganized and haphazard manner all over the region*. He urgently called for a systematization of these schools in such a way that they will provide both Islamic and western education and by doing so make them potent agencies for mass literacy (Yakubu, 1999). A.M. Yakubu quotes him saying, by solving the problems of these schools:

We shall solve more than half the problem of mass illiteracy in the country. No doubt the Muslim population of the North will benefit the more from the solution to the problems of these schools but I firmly believe that instead of becoming a liability, the solution will prove an asset to the people of this country (Yakubu, 1999).

In another poem "*Wakar Bidi'a*" (The Heresy), apart from presenting anti-colonial agitation, Zungur had attempted to contribute to the revival of Islam in Nigeria, to call on the people to go back to the original Islam which was practiced during time of the Prophet and his companions. And this type of Islam is based on sound knowledge, clear and free from superstitions and other accretions (Umar, 1988). Sa'adu in the poem had equally mobilized the

people against some scholars whom he considered their knowledge about Islam as shallow and superficial, as such, they formed the heretic class. At the same time he extolled group of learned men whom he described as “lamps of the age which brighten the darkness which comes of discord that the heretic bring” (Dangambo, 1974). This shows that, there were in the society two groups of scholars; those who explain the real teachings of Islam to people and those who explain the teachings of Islam erroneously. In that case, Sa’adu was able to discover some discrepancies between the way religion was taught and the way people practiced it. The poet points clearly the evil destructions brought upon society through acts of the heretic and ignorant (Dangambo, 1974).

Mallam Aminu Kano (d. 1986)

Mallam Aminu Kano like Sa’adu Zungur, was a true nationalist and a radical politician who operated under the platform of NEPU. He was known as a man of restless spirit who engaged in numerous conflicts with the British colonial authorities and struggled for the liberation of the masses (Gumi with Tsigia, 1992). He was very intelligent, courageous, tireless speaker, populist and a strong NEPU activist. He was a patriot and a teacher who lived a just life and had demonstrated powers of leadership and service (Paden, 1986). He graduated from Kaduna College in 1942 with a high school certificate, then attended School of Oriental and African Studies, London where he is said to have got in touch with personalities in the left-wing of the labor party in England and was exposed to the writings of Marx, Laski and Ghandi. However, his radicalism and critical attitudes seem to have pre-dated his stay in London (Adamu, 1979). His training in Islamic and western education contributed in molding him to articulate the virtues of social transformations as well as criticizing the old structures of the society (Umar, 1988).

He became strongly disenchanted with the whole educational affairs and was among the leading agitators for improvement of the entire educational systems in northern Nigeria. He perceived that the problems of education generally stemmed from the northern aristocracy; the emirs who were to a large extent responsible

for the sorry state of things. He believed that, the manner in which the colonial masters promoted ignorance of all facets was through the emirs. They were equally incapable of doing anything in the campaign against illiteracy (Tahir, 1983). He then spearheaded a struggle to improve western education and to modernize the Islamic education system in the North. He was of the view that, the Islamic educational system cannot carry on with its traditional task as before (Kane, 2003). He had in 1946 criticized the curriculum of the Qur’anic schools as:

Arbitrary in form, bookish in style and hopeless for promoting social ideals and usefulness. It has done nothing but make the work in the school lifeless and killing (and indoctrinating to conservatism). The Qur’anic schools failed to appeal to the child, but succeeded in promoting drudgery, loading the child’s mind with facts he/she never understands. Consequently, the child becomes mentally disabled, and the products of such schools are a mass of static society. The present day Qur’anic teacher besides being disqualified educator, appears to be a menace in the educational field for not only is he hopeless ignorant of these modern conception but is not ready to accept them (Feinstein, 1973).

His believed was that using modern teaching methods would not only speed the process of memorization of the Qur’an, but also enable the teaching of Arabic and other Islamic subjects to younger pupils. He therefore, opened a formal Islamiyya school in his house which proved very effective in the transformation of knowledge the way he envisaged (Kane, 2003). Indeed, Mallam Aminu Kano was among the real activists for modernization of Islamic education in northern Nigeria. The Significant role of NEPU apart from advocacy included social provisioning.

The *Jama’atu Ansaaril Islam* (The Northern Muslim Congress)

Beside the role of creating awareness about education, the NEPU activists embarked on social provisioning. They initiated an organization, an offshoot of NEPU called *Jama'atu Ansaaril Islam* (The Northern Muslim Congress) devoted to promoting Islamic education along modern style in 1951 with Headquarters in Maiduguri (Scott, 1953). This sub-organization was to act as a counter to the existing practices in both Islamic and western education (Bako, 2014). Therefore, it was initiated through ideas of reform for expanding the frontiers of Islam through teaching and learning. Their major reform idea was to modernize Islamic educational system and promote establishment of modern Islamiyya school system which combine elements of western education (Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, 1951).

The *Jam'iyyar Islamiyya School (JIS)*

To achieve the above objective, another project launched called *Jam'iyyar Islamiyya School (JIS)*. The purpose of the project was to develop a system of education in which both western and Islamic educations will be combined together so that imperial system of education will not have any impact on the Muslims. It was hoped to establish many Islamic schools, improve the existing Qur'anic schools, and provide Islamic books through the JIS (Chamberlin, 1975). The first experiment of the Islamiyya School system was launched in Maiduguri in September, 1951. Its success encouraged the founding of similar in Kano by Mallam Abba Maikwaru. Also, similar Islamiyya was established in Zaria in 1952. The NEPU Activists founded Haqqul Yaqeen Islamiyya School at Sudawa Quarters in Kano City, beside the house of Mallam Aminu Kano. In 1953, they established another Islamiyya school in Tudun Wada, Kaduna and Bauchi in 1954. From then the scheme was extended to all strongholds of NEPU supporters in northern Nigeria (Bako, 2014).

Through the activities of this organization, the system of Islamiyya School was extended to various places in the North. Thus, it can be said that, the proliferation of Islamiyya school system was supported by the NEPU activists. Indeed, the NEPU activities were

embodiment of intellectual reforms based on both western and Islamic grounds (Paden, 1973). The NEPU activists who were progressive Muslim politicians contributed in eradicating ignorance among youth which became part of the political programs of NEPU as a political and as well opposition party (Bako, 2014). They considered education as the major tool for ensuring social change. Thus, the NEPU Islamiyya schools were designed to promote among students and their parents awareness of socio-political reform through full orthodox interpretation of Islamic ideals.

In addition to the above, NEPU and its activists had acted as pressure group influencing government educational policies and were equally very instrumental in the efforts of promotion and integration of Islamic and western education in northern Nigeria. Thus, we can say that, NEPU and its activists have made great contributions in addressing educational crises in northern Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have gone through the attempt of an opposition political party in acting as agent of transformation and change. If current oppositions in Africa change their perspectives and tactics and act like NEPU and its activities, Many African problems will be solved in terms of poverty, education, unemployment, etc.

References

- Adamu, A.T. (1979)** "Western Education, Political Power and Cleavage in Northern Nigeria 1900-1960: A Study in the Political History of Colonialism" *M.A. History*, Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham.
- Bako, A. (2014)** *Traditional and Nationalist Values in Political Practice: A Biography of Mallam Lawan Danbazau (Ki Kasala) 1922-2000*, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto Press.
- Chamberlin, J.W. (1975)** "The Development of Islamic Education in Kano City, Nigeria, with Emphasis on Legal Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries" *PhD History Thesis*, Columbia University.
- Danbatta, A.M. (2004)** "The Emergence of NEPU and Its Struggle for Democracy: Reminiscence of a Founding Member", Lecture No. 1, on *Reminiscences and Recollections of Four NEPU-PRP Activists*, Compiled and edited by A.M. Jega, et. al. Kano, Centre for Democratic research and Training, Mambayya House.
- Dangambo, A. (1974)** *The Poetry, Life and Opinions of Sa'adu Zungur*, Zaria, NNPC.

- Deborah, G.B. (2014)** "Education for All and the Liberation of Nigeria" *Text of University of Ibadan Alumni Lecture*, Ibadan, August 29.
- Feinstein, A. (1973)** *African Revolutionary: The Life and Times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano*, Division Publishing Limited Wiltshire.
- Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, No 471, 19/9/1951.
- Gumi, S.A. with Tsiga, I.A. (1992)** *Where I Stand*, Ibadan, Spectrum Book Ltd.
- Kane, O. (2003)** *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, Leiden, Brill.
- NAK/MAI/Prof 5732: *Jam'iyyar Islamiyya School* Maiduguri.
- Paden, J.N. (1973)** *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, California, London and Berkeley.
- Paden, J.N. (1986)** *Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*, Zaria, Hudahuda Publishing Company.
- Scott, P.H.G. (1953)** *A Survey of Islam in Northern Nigeria in 1952*, Government Printers Kaduna.
- Tahir, G. (1983)** "Some Thoughts of Selected Hausa Leaders on Western Education: An Exploratory Study" a Paper presented at the International Seminar on Hausa Studies, University of Sokoto, 24-28 October.
- Umar, M.S. (1988)** "Sufism and Anti Sufism in Nigeria" *M.A. Islamic Studies Dissertation*, Bayero University, Kano.
- Yakubu, A.M. (1991)** "An Aristocracy in Political Crisis: *Zamanin Siyasa* in Northern Nigerian Emirates, 1939-1967" *PhD History Thesis*, Saint Anthony's College, University of London.
- Yakubu, A.M. (1999)** *Sa'adu Zungur: an Anthology of the Social and Political Writings of a Nigerian Nationalist*, Kaduna, Nigerian Defense Academy Press.

قنصوه، صبحى على محمد (1991) مشكلة الإدماج الوطنى فى نيجيريا، رسالة الماجستير قسم السياسة، معهد البحوث والدراسات الأفريقية، جامعة القاهرة.