

CHAPTER 13 EARLY EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Objectives

At the end of this chapter, the students should be able to:

- discuss the nature of trade;
- discuss the trade routes and items of trade;
- explain North African and Saharan influences on Kanem Borno;
- discuss the impact of Islam on culture and life of Borno and Kanem people;
- discuss the introduction and spread of Islam in Hausaland;
- describe the conflicts which developed between Islam and Local religious practices;
- discuss the impact of Islam on Society and state in Hausaland.

Introduction

In this chapter we shall look into Nigeria interaction with North Africa and other countries of the world; Trans Saharan trade with the movement of the centre of trade from the Western part to the Eastern part; the organization and operations of the trade; the major trade routes that brought the peoples of the Sudan and North Africa in contact with each other and the articles of trade and their gradual natural change, Islam in Kanem – Borno and Hausaland with their political, economic, social, cultural and religious influences.

13.1 Contacts with North Africa

Contact through migration

In ancient times, Sahara was not as dry as it is today, the reason was because enough water can be obtained from rainfall and rivers to grease the land in order to ensure rich vegetation. This also attracted a large number of people to settle in the area. Later, the Sahara started to dry out due to low rainfall and the dryness of the rivers around Sahara and this led to the migration of people from the North and Southern part to Nigerian area in search of greener pastures.

Contact through trade

Nigeria in the earlier times, interacted with one another and the major contact of Nigeria with North Africa was through trade. This trade was made possible through the Trans Saharan trade routes. Articles of trade such as clothes, metal wares, dried dates, beads, salt, horses, perfumes from North Africa were given in exchange with Nigerian products such as gold, ivory, kolanuts ostrich feathers, hides, etc.

Contact through religion

The Berber merchants of North Africa mainly came to Nigeria to trade. They did not come empty-handed. They came with their religion, culture and social way of life. This religion is known as Islam. As a result of Nigerian interaction with North Africa, many rulers and the peoples of Nigeria were converted to Islam. Notably among them were rulers of Kanem-Borno and Hausa land such as Mai Umme Jilmo, Dunama I and II, Idris Aloomia or Kanem Borno and Mohammed Runfa of Kano that embraced Islam and made it a state religion. Some of these rulers also performed religious rites like going on pilgrimage to Mecca. This religion also had influence on their modes of dressing, greetings and culture as a result of intermarriage between the North African people and Nigeria.

Contact through war

Nigeria peoples also made contact with other countries of the world through war. Rulers in Kanem Borno, such Dunama I and II, Ali Ghaji and Idris Ahooma, engaged in dynasty wars, expansion wars and Jihad or Holy wars. Their victories in all these wars brought fame to Kanem – Borno. For instance, Dunama I and II engaged in war with So and Bulala people which contributed to the downfall. However, during the reign of Idris Alooma, the land of So and Bulala were recovered by Idris Alooma. Idris Alooma also waged war and conquered Tuaregs. The Hausa people also waged wars against each other which brought disunity among them. The major wars were the external one. The holy war or Jihad of 1804 by Usman Dan Fodio in which most of the Hausa states were conquered by the Fulanis Jihadists. They did this to establish their system of government in the Northern part of the country on one hand and to convert the peoples of Nigeria, especially the Northern part, into Islam on the other hand.

13.2 Trans-Saharan Trade

Organisation and Operations of the Trans Saharan Trade

The Trans Saharan trade was the trade between Nigeria and North Africa through the Saharan region. The wealthy North African merchants or businessmen became major financiers of the trade. They were the owners of major firms that had their branches in North Africa, the Sudan and Sahara. The wealthy merchants from North Africa travelled across the Sahara once in a year. At times, the journey across the Sahara could take about 70days and people that were financially handicapped were not allowed to participate in the trade. It was very risky to travel in small numbers for fear of being attacked by the highway men (armed robbers) and because of the wirlwind. This made them to travel during the dry season when there could be no rain and the problem of wirlwind would have been put to a halt. Most wealthy class from North Africa got their riches from Europe and Jew's agents were appointed by these firms to safeguard their business and to protect the business interests of the companies that appointed them. These agents were sent to different locations in which they had their business, especially in Nigeria area, and other parts of West Africa. These agents were quite vast with the traditions, customs and the needs of the people in the areas they had to control. They were

expected to understand and receive the current market situation as their mother companies kept informed concerning the instability of price of the commodities in the market. The articles of trade were bought and kept till when they were ready to travel across the Sahara. For proper organization, the agents appointed were divided into two groups, depending on the different types of goods, they were dealing with. The first group of agents appointed were placed or located in the Northern part of the Sahara and North Africa, These agents must ensure that the European and North African goods were sent Southward. The other group of agents were to take charge of the Savanna and forest goods and they were to stay in the Sudan.

The Trans Saharan trade was highly monopolized by the wealthy merchants of North Africa. This made some of them to settle down in some part of Savanna township, such as Gazargamu, Kano and Kastina. The two types of agents earlier mentioned served as middle men in the areas they had been chosen to control and they made attempts to control the trade to their own favour. There were some towns and cities that got involved in the trade such as Ghadames, Sijimasa, Tlemcen and Wargla. The merchants in the coastal towns that traded with Europe were not allowed to participate directly in the Trans Saharan trade by the agents in the hinterland who served as middlemen in that area. The Tuaregs, Hausa, Kanuri, Wangarawa and Dyula became chief distributors of goods brought from the forest region of West Africa and the Sudan at the Southern point of the Trans Saharan trade route. The goods from the forest and Savannah regions were transported to the Sahara, North Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Some commodities like gold, silver cloth, copper and salt were used as mediums of exchange otherwise known as trade by barter.

The Tuareg people were employed as guides and guards as a result of their understanding and knowledge of the Sahara desert. The Sudan people were also involved directly in the transportation of their goods across the Sahara during the annual pilgrimage when many people will be travelling with their goods.

The traders crossed the desert once in a year. They normally travelled at the expiration of the rainy season when the risk of experiencing whirlwinds would have reduced. Camels were also used as a means of transport across the Sahara. There were other hazards that the traders can be exposed to, such as hot days, sandstorms, thirst, cold nights, etc.

Trans Saharan trade routes

The Trans Saharan trade routes acted as links through which the Sudan and North Africa were brought into contact. There were a lot of factors to be considered in making a choice of the routes. Some of the factors were; the routes where oasis can be seen the presence of high way men along the routes, and the routes where gold and other goods can be seen. Chad area the territory along Tripoli and between Ghana Empire and the Maghrib were among the earlier routes.

As the gold that brought Ghana into prominence had been finally used and slaves from the Western Sudan were transported across the Atlantic Ocean and Americas and the Caribbean which

was the most important trade routes between North Africa and Sudan experienced a gradual shift to the east.

The deterioration of most of the states of Western Sudan led to the Eastward shift from West to East. Ghana had already reached its zenith with better political organization and was around 8th to 11th centuries, also in possession of gold mines in which led to the concentration of trade routes from North Africa on West Africa. It was at the same time that Kanem now became a formidable organized state which stretched to the North East of Lake Chad and it was linked by one major route to North Africa. The territory between these regions were almost difficult to travel across the Trans Sahara trade routes. After the decline of Ghana Empire and the gold which was its source of wealth had been plundered, the trade routes now moved quickly to Mali which was located the East of Ghana. Mali had better political organization with territorial expansion and wealthy. This was as a result of discovery of goldsmith in the area. The period between the 13th and 15th centuries, Mali had already became the most prominent and strongest state in the Sudan. The eventual decline of the Mali Empire that led to the rise of Songhai Empire were factors which contributed to the further shift Eastward of major trade routes.

It is important to note that, by this time, the states of Agades, Borno and the Hausa states had already become well-known and extremely large within a short period. The needs of the Berber Merchants were accomplished in these three states mentioned above. The centralised nature of these states made all sections or part of commercial activities to be secured. The centres further moved eastward and these centres were rich in gold.

In addition, Gao, the capital of Songhai had a surplus of gold towards the beginning of 15th century. Timbuktu had already become prosperous in the east with other important cities around it. These centres also had become well-known as centres for Islamic culture and civilization which contributed to the development and growth of the trans-Saharan trade. The traders and scholars were seen scattered around West Africa from Mali, Borno and Hausa states now become homes of settlement for these traders and scholars from Mali. Then, the Central Sudan now replaced the Western as the new source of slaves for the Trans Saharan trade in 15th and 18th centuries. Borno also now became known as the main source of slaves for the trans-Saharan trade by 16th century. Just as was the situation in most of these Western Sudanese states like Ghana, Mali and Songhai, most of the states of central Sudan experienced the coming of the scholars and traders of North Africa into their territories in great numbers. These traders and scholars had tremendously contributed to the development of trade between the North Africa and the Sudan.

The following were the three major routes:

- (a) Morroco – Taodeni - Timbusetu
- (b) Tripoli – Ghadames – Air – Kastina – Kano
- (c) Tripoli – Fessan – Borno

The compact of these trade routes on the people of Sudan were first it made trade possible between the people of Nigeria, North Africa, Middle East and Europe. Secondly, Islamic scholars came to West Africa through the routes which led to the establishment of higher institution, higher learning. The Islamic scholars also helped to propagate Islam in Borno and Hausa Land.

Articles of trade

These were the important items of trade used in the trans-Saharan trade such as gold, salt, kolanut, leather horses, hide and skin.

The goods used in the trade were classified into two: essential goods and expensive/lucrative goods. Essentially, these goods were highly needed for the political, economic and social development of the states of the Sudan, North Africa, Middle East and Europe. The goods such as; salt, slaves, gold, horses, weapons and cowries, were used as medium of exchange, slaves were recruited as workers and soldiers.

The other type of goods used in the trade were known as lucrative or expensive goods. The bourgeois class, such as the rulers and wealthy people, were involved in this sort of trade. The lucrative goods were cloth, kolanut leather goods, pepper, sugar ivory etc.

Most of these goods emerged at different times in the industry. There were uncertainty concerning the time gold was introduced or came into existence in the commercial activities between the Sudan and North Africa. Gold actually became prominent after the advent of Islam. It was used as a medium of exchange by traders from North Africa, Sudan, Middle East, and even, Europe between the 11th and 13th centuries uptill the 17th century.

Unlike gold, the slave trade had began long time before the arrival of Islam. Multitude of slaves were annually transported across the Sahara desert. Trade in slaves became so popular and increased extensively as a result of the spread and presence of Arabs in North Africa.

Salt was another important product. Salt was mined in Tangaza as the people of West Africa were in need of salt. It was also used as medium of exchange just like silver.

Lastly, leather trade emerged and became prominent right from 16th century. Hausaland and Borno were major producers of leather goods.

13.3 Islam in Kanem – Borno

Islam in North Africa and the Sahara was a prelude to the coming of Islam. The Berbers of North Africa actually were converted to Islam dating as far back as 7th century. Nigeria was highly influenced as soon as business activities started between Nigeria and North Africa. Islamic scholars who came to Kanem – Borno made use of the Trans Saharan trade routes to spread the religion, which was new to the people of Nigeria. These Islamic scholars were used as scribes and also became advisers to most of the rulers of Kanem Borno. These scholars who highly influenced Karem Borno politically, economically and socially, settled at Njimi and sometimes moved to Ngazagamu.

Introduction of Islam to Kanem-Borno

Islam emerged in Kanem Borno during the reign of Ume Jilmi in 1085 – 1097. Although, he was converted to Islam there was no significant influence of Islam on Kanem Borno. Kanem – Borno started to experience Islamic impact by the middle of 12th century. Kanem – Borno became Islamized during the reign of Idris Alooma. During his reign; many Islamic scholars came to Kanem – Borno, he went to mecca on pilgrimage; and he made it a state religion.

Mai Umme and the acceptance of Islami by the Kanem Court

Mai Umme Jilmi reigned between the period of 1085 – 1097. He was during his reign that Islam was first introduced to Kanem-Borno. Also, he made an attempt at performing pilgrimage to Mecca, during which he died.

The consolidation of Islam among the ruling elite with particular attention of the zeal and efforts of Mais like, Danama, Dibalemi, Ali Ghaji, and Idris Alooma.

Mai Dunama Dibbalemi I made certain developments towards consolidating Islam. For instance, he embarked on pilgrimage to Mecca during his reign (1097 – 1150). Infact, he performed three pilgrimages to Mecca with a lot people accompanying him.

Mai Dunama II contributed a lot to the spread of Islam in his territory. Fulani religious leaders were invited from Mali to help in the propagation of Islam. Maliki School Law was established to boost the development of education in Kanem. Also, a hostel was built at Cairo in Egypt for the Kanem pilgrims.

Ali Ghaji was not left behind in the consolidation of Islam in Kanem – Borno although he did not really achieve much in the propagation of Islam in Kanem Borno. Ali Ghaji became a Muslim, he took advice from Islam leaders, such as Imam, and also married four wives according to the Islamic culture and tradition, but it is pertinent to note that the court was Islam while most of the people in the society were pagans.

Idris Alooma reigned between 1571 and 1603. He made a remarkable reform of Islam during his reign. He made Islam a state religion. He also fought the Holy War (Jihad) to purify Islam in Kanem – Borno. Like other rulers that had reigned before him, he made pilgrimage to Mecca in 1589 in which the wealth of Kanem-Borno was displayed. Kanem Borno became famous during his regime building at Cairo hostel for Borno pilgrims. He replaced customary laws with Sharia laws. He built mosques with bricks, which was a new architecture design in Kanem – Borno.

Laws on adultery, murder and other social vices were enacted with punishment for the offenders or law breakers according to Islamic teachings.

The role of Ulama in the spread of Islam among the ruling elite and the society. The Ulama were vested in Islamic knowledge. Infact, they were known as Islamic scholars. They were scribes and teachers of Islamic tenets, culture and tradition. They were advisers, scribes and secretaries to

most rulers in Kanem – Borno. They contributed a lot to the social and religious development in Kanem Borno. Their contributions were also felt economically and politically.

The impact of Islam on Kanem and Borno's political, cultural, social and economic life

The political impact could be traced to when Islam was introduced to Kanem – Borno. This was during the reign of Umme Jilmi (1085 – 97) in the 11th century. In the central Sudanese states, Islam brought all the converts together under one umbrella and ensured unity among the converts the converts in the central Sudanese states as against the diversity and disunity that existed before as a result of traditional religious practices of the people. Islam also contributed to the good government that existed in Kanem-Borno. Through Islam, diplomatic contacts were made possible between Kanem – Borno, North Africa, Middle East and other parts of the world. Through this diplomatic contact, Kanem – Borno was able to get firearms from Tripoli to fortify the military. Islam was also declared as state religion in Kanem – Borno.

Islam came to Kanem Borno through the Trans Saharan trade route. Islam became widespread in all the trading centres in Kanem – Borno. It had also contributed to the growth of the trade in Kanem – Borno in the sense that it has brought wealth and fame to Kanem-Borno and also made popular and great the rulers in Kanem-Borno especially Idris Alooma.

Most of the Kanem-Borno, rulers that went on pilgrimage had associated with foreign people that opened their eyes to foreign trade. This actually contributed to the impact of Islam on Kanem – Borno economically in the central Sudan.

The impact of Islam on Kanem-Borno's cultural life could be traced towards interactions that existed between the peoples of Kanem-Borno and peoples of North Africa, and with other Arab nations in the middle East. This affected the traditional religious practices of Kanem-Borno that were replaced by the new religion. Notably, it changed their mode of dressing, white robes and turbans were now worn by the people of Kanem – Borno. New languages, such as Arabic language, were introduced and people were taught how to speak the language. Arabic language was spoken side by side with their local languages. Another impact of Islam on Kanem – Borno's socio-cultural life can be seen in the development of education in the central Sudan. Writing was introduced with the establishment of institutions of higher learning. With writing, it was possible to keep the records of events and accounts of trade.

13.4 Islam in Hausaland

Contacts between Hausaland, Borno and the Western Sudan, and the introduction of Islam in Hausaland

Islam was introduced into Hausaland for the first time through Wangara traders from Mali in the 13th Century. The religion became widespread in Hausaland in the 14th century as it was in the 13th

century. The Mali traders had already been spreading the religion by championing the crusade before Al-maghili came to propagate Islam in Hausaland through the East of Kanem.

Islam was introduced to Kano through the Wangara teachers, who were forty in number, from Mali on the invitation of Yaji (1349 – 85). The invitation was given by the King of Kano in accordance with Kano chronicles. Islam continued to spread to Zaria, an important Southern part of Hausaland around 15th century. The important states of Gobir, Kebbi and Katsina were annexed by Mohammed Toure and Askia the great in 1493-1529. By this time, almost the whole of Hausaland had already embraced Islam.

The early spread of Islam in Kano, Kastina and Zazzau; the role of the Wangarawa Fulani; and other scholars contributed to the spread of Islam to other parts of Hausaland.

In the 14th century, Islam was introduced into Hausaland by Wangarawa merchants. It spread to Kano during the reign of Ali Raji between 1389 and 1385 and by the middle of the 15th century, it has spread to Katsina.

Islam actually grew stronger in Katsina towards the end of 15th century on the arrival of Timbuktu scholars into the city. Katsina was an important centre for Islamic culture and learning during the 17th century in which Don Marina and Don Massanih were Islamic scholars.

Influence of Islam on the state could be seen through ideas of government, (such as Kano during the reign of Mohammed Rumfa), and rise of scholars around the courts e.g. Al – Magbili and Abdulrahman Zagarta in Kano, etc.

In the 14th century, Kano had its first contact with Islam but the religion was actually propagated and well established in Kano during the reign of Mohammed Rumfa of Kano. He also made Islam a state religion.

Mohammed Rumfa contributed to the growth of Islam in Kano by giving enough encouragement to Muslim scholars to settle in Kano. He built mosques and erected beautiful architectural design or edifices to make the scholars more comfortable in Kano. The most important of the scholars was Al-Maghili who served as Mohammed Rumfa's personal adviser on state affairs. Al-magbili, wrote a book titled "the obligation of princes" the principles that a ruler was to adhere with in order to be strong and successful were outlined. The Id-el Fitri festival was also introduced by Mohammed Rumfa to mark the end of Ramadan.

Mohammed Rumfa also embarked on the reorganization of the administration in accordance with Islam by appointing eunuchs into the office. He added to the glorious status of the king by increasing the power of the monarchy through the introduction of costumes and ornaments such as; figni, Fans, Long trumpets, Kakaki were introduced.

Influence of Islam on the society and how it was facilitated

- (a) **Commerce:** The coming of Islam into Hausaland had facilitated commercial activities. In this sense, that Hausaland was strategically placed along the trans-Saharan trade routes which enabled it to participate in commercial activities with other nations such as North Africa, Middle East and Europe. The Hausa states, Agades and Borno, made contact with North Africa through Saharan trade in the 16th century with the presence of Islamic scholars and merchants. In addition, towards the beginning of 18th the century Hausaland became one of the main producers of kolanut and leather works with a high quality grade.
- (b) **Literacy/Education:** Islam also facilitated literacy and education in Hausaland as writing was introduced, which made it possible for the people to keep records of events and accounts of trade. Through Islamic scholars who followed trade to central Sudan, Islamic education was introduced and institutions of higher learning were established in the 16th century.
- (c) **Religious practices:** Islam had influence on religious practices of the people. Before the coming of Islam, most Hausa states were pagans practicing their traditional religions. With the coming of Islam, religious practices, such as going on pilgrimage to Mecca, having faith in Allah through his prophet Mohammed were introduced and verified the Hausa people with the Arab world. This common bond made them to fight their enemies whenever there any need it.
- (d) **Festivals:** Islamic festivals, such as Id El Fitri, Id El-Moulud, Id El Kabir, were common festivals celebrated by the Hausas. Id El Fitri the festival marking the end of the Ramadan. Id El Moulud is the birthday of Prophet Mohammed while Id al Kabir was the festival marking the sacrificed instead of Ishmael, the son of Prophet Ibrahim.
- (e) **Dress habit:** Finally, Islam had a great influence on the dress code of the Hausa society. The men now put on white robe with turban, Babariga, etc. The women put on a Hijab. The Purdah system became a religious practice and became an important dress code for the Hausa Women.

Summary

- Nigeria made contact with North Africa and other parts of the World through trade, religion, war and migration.
- The interactions and relations between Nigeria and North Africa became deeper as a result of their involvement in the Trans Saharan trade.
- The Berber merchants and scholars became the main crusaders of Islam in Nigeria area.
- The North African traders crossed the Sahara desert to either side once in a year.
- As a result, the benefits derived from the relationship, the rulers of Borno and Hausaland provided places of settlement for Islamic scholars in their area.
- The rulers embraced Islam in their respective areas due to economic and political reasons.
- Camels became a means of transportation in the trans-Saharan trade.
- Important commodities, such as gold slaves, salt, kolanut, etc, facilitated the growth of the Trans Saharan trade

- There was easy flow of goods and traders along the trans-Saharan trade routes.
- The merchants became the major financiers and investors of the trade.
- Each of the goods involved in the trade had its time of prosperity and recession.
- Through the spread of Islam into their respective areas, the socio-political lives of the people of Kanem – Borno and Hausaland were transformed.

Revision Questions

Objectives

1. Nigeria made contact with the outside world through one of the following _____.
 - A. travelling
 - B. telephone
 - C. letter
 - D. trade
2. The important trade between Nigerian peoples and North Africa before the colonial era was known as _____.
 - A. Trans-Atlantic trade
 - B. International trade
 - C. Trans-Atlantic slave trade
 - D. Trans Saharan trade
3. The only means of transport used in the Trans Saharan trade _____.
 - A. Camels
 - B. Lions
 - C. Horses
 - D. Cattles
4. The people that were hired as security or guards along the Trans Saharan trade routes were known as the _____.
 - A. Berber merchants
 - B. Tuareg people
 - C. Saharan people
 - D. Sudanese people
5. Who were the major investors or businessmen in control of the Trans Saharan trade?
 - A. wealthy merchants of North Africa
 - B. The Tuaregs
 - C. The Berber Merchants
 - D. The Songhai people
6. The following were the dangers along the Trans Saharan trade routes except _____.

- A. sandstorm
 - B. hot days
 - C. missing of one's way
 - D. easy flow of goods and traders
7. Islam was introduced into Kanem – Borno during the reign of Umme Jilmi in what year?
- A. 1885 – 1886
 - B. 1095 – 1098
 - C. 1085 – 1097
 - D. 1805 – 1810
8. The time of departure to the either side of the North by African merchants was always at _____.
- A. end of the dry season
 - B. during the rainy season
 - C. end of the rainy season
 - D. beginning of the rainy season
9. The Ulama in the city of Kanem – Borno were known to be _____.
- A. Islamic traders
 - B. Islamic worshippers
 - C. Islamic soldiers
 - D. Islamic scholars
10. Who was the Kano ruler that added glory status of a king?
- A. Bayajidda
 - B. Idris Alooma
 - C. Al-Maghili
 - D. Muhammed Runfa

Essay Questions

1. Critically examine the nature of relations between Nigerian Peoples and North Africa in the earliest time.
2. Enumerate the factors that contributed to the growth of trans-Saharan trade.
3. Highlight the dangers that were along the trans-Saharan trade routes in the pre-colonial era.
4. Discuss the contribution of the Islamic scholars towards the literacy and education of peoples in Hausaland.
5. Discuss the effects of Islam on socio-cultural lives of the people of Kanem – Borno.