

TRADITIONAL WAYS OF CURBING CRIMES IN ILORIN AND THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM, PRE-COLONIAL ERA UP TO 1900

Osaretin Akinola Osho

Command Finance Office, The Nigeria Police Force,
Dept., of Finance & Admin, State Headquarters,
Calabar, Cross River State.

Phone No: +234 803 729 0116

Email: oshoosaretin@gmail.com; osaretinosho@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examines traditional mechanisms for curbing crime in Ilorin. This historic Yoruba city later became an Islamic emirate, with a focus on how these indigenous practices were transformed under the influence of Islam. Using qualitative methods and data from oral interviews and documentary sources, the paper highlights various pre-colonial strategies, including ritual appeasements, occultic interventions, oath-taking, banishments, communal surveillance, and the promotion of moral upbringing through home training and societal values. These approaches were deeply embedded in communal Trust, social cohesion, and collective responsibility. With the advent of Islam and the Dogari institution, policing in Ilorin took on a new structure anchored in Sharia law and Islamic moral order, shifting from voluntary communal practices to centralized authority under the Emirate system. The findings reveal both continuity and change: while some indigenous practices persisted, Islam redefined the framework of policing, justice, and crime prevention. The study concludes that although Islamic and later colonial influences modernized certain aspects of policing, they also weakened the communal ethos that had underpinned traditional crime control, thereby contributing to challenges in maintaining social order.

Keywords: Ilorin, crime prevention, traditional policing, Islam, Dogari institution, Sharia law, Yoruba culture, communal justice.

Introduction

Crime and criminality are not new phenomena in human society. Across cultures and civilizations, diverse strategies have emerged to maintain law and order, often reflecting indigenous knowledge systems and cultural values. In Ilorin, a historic city in north-central Nigeria with deep Islamic and Yoruba cultural roots, traditional mechanisms for crime control have long been central to

community governance.¹ These include the roles of local chiefs, religious leaders, vigilante groups, community oaths, and spiritual sanctions, all embedded in a moral framework that prioritizes communal peace and social cohesion.

However, as globalization deepens and modern criminal justice systems gain prominence through both colonial legacies and contemporary reforms, foreign influences — ranging from Western legal structures to international human rights frameworks — have begun to shape, and sometimes undermine, these traditional institutions. While foreign models offer standardized procedures and professional policing, they often fail to account for the cultural specificity and social dynamics of local contexts, such as Ilorin.

While a lot of studies have focused on Ilorin and policing in Ilorin,² Adequate attention has not been given to the traditional ways of curbing crimes in Ilorin and the influence of Islam. This paper examines the intersection of indigenous crime-prevention practices in Ilorin with the growing influence of foreign legal and institutional frameworks. It critically assesses the efficacy

¹R. T. Idris and O. I. Yemisi. Crime, Prison Services and Administration in Colonial Ilorin Emirate, North Central, Nigeria. *West Bohemian Historical Review*, XIII (1), 2023; R. T. Idris, O. I. Yemisi, and A.S. Abdulbaki. Crime, Policing and Judicial Prosecution in Colonial Ilorin, North Central Nigeria. *Transcultural Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Badr University, Cairo, Egypt, 3(4), 2022, 81-82.

² Osho, O. A. 2024. “Armed but Unaccounted: Missing Police Firearms in the Nigeria Police Force: Implications for National Security and Sustainable Development.” *Africa: Journal of Contemporary Issues* 23 (1): 75; Osho, O. A. 2025a. “Policing Pre-colonial Ilorin and the Emirate up to 1900.” *Humanus Discourse* 5 (5): 4; Osho, O. A. 2025b. “Has Anything Changed? Impact of the Nigeria Police Force Act 2020 on Police Practices and Reforms.” *IKR Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Science (IKRJAHSS)* 1 (1): 16–17. <https://ikrpublishers.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/IKRJAHSS0225-2025.pdf>; Osho, O. A. 2025c. “From Resource Control to Oil Theft: Evolving Crime in the Niger-Delta and the Nigeria Police Force’s Role in Mitigation and Enforcement.” *Ochendo* 6 (3): 9-10. <https://acjcol.org/index.php/ochendo/article/view/6681/6468>.

of traditional methods in crime prevention, their evolution under external pressures, and the challenges of integrating or preserving local systems in an era of global governance and legal pluralism. The research questions are: What were the traditional ways of curbing crime in Ilorin? What was the influence of Islam on the conventional ways of curbing crimes? The paper adopts the qualitative method. Primary and secondary sources of data were relied on. The primary data were collected through oral interviews in Ilorin, while the secondary sources of data relied on books, existing literature, and theses.

Traditional Ways of Curbing Crimes

Most of the traditional methods of curbing crime in pre-colonial Ilorin society were regarded as crimes in themselves during the Emirate of Ilorin era. These conventional ways are, among others, ritual appeasement, occult intervention, etc.

Ritual Appeasements

One way to curb a specific genre of crime in society was through ritual. Rituals were performed to placate the gods or deities of the land, protecting it from calamities, drought, famine, and even crimes. Atonements were performed through ritual objects, such as animals, leaves, and sacrifices (Ebo), and ultimately, human sacrifices, as prescribed by the Oracle. A respondent averred that rituals were sometimes used to counter rising cases of ritual because the people believed in *Omo ina la n ran sina*--We can only send the child of Fire to fire/Fire begets Fire.³

Occultic Intervention

³E. Soneye, 78, oral Interview, Tanke Ilorin, Trader, 12 January 2020

Some of the powerful occultic groups included Sango, Egbe Aje (also known as Witches/Egbe Agba), Osanyin, Osugbo Awo, and Ifa Priests, among other occultic groups that were summoned when cases of crime were not only rising but also taking mystical directions. A respondent provided instances where some thieves used *afterlife* (invisibility) and bulletproof (*Ayeta*) armor in robberies.⁴ If the arrest of the culprit was beyond the *Akoda* and the State, then the King usually called on the *Ifa* Priests or *Egbe awon Agba* (Witches) since it was believed that the Oba was the head of all occultic groups on the land. These individuals were summoned to arrest the culprit within the stipulated time frame.

Curses/Oath Taking

One of the ways of curbing crime in the pre-colonial Ilorin Emirate was through curses, which were usually placed on criminals during annual festivals. Some of the consequences were madness, nakedness, sickness, afflictions, deformity, and poverty, among others. As established, raining curses on a thief or prospective thief was something no villager or person wanted to break, especially if it came from occultic groups, aged women, or aged men.

During the oath-taking ceremony, boys who were initiated into adulthood were administered oaths to protect the realm and never embark on missions that would jeopardize the peace and tranquility enjoyed in the town. Aside from that, before joining the *Akoda*, the applicants were mandated to swear oaths never to indulge in shameful acts that would endanger the lives of the town or their comrades. Such oaths ensured that cases of *Akoda* brutality or excesses were checked. That is not to say that a few rotten eggs existed; such cases were minimal. On the oath,

⁴O. Osibodu, 89, oral interview, Hunter Tanke Ilorin, 13 January 2020

an elderly man claimed that "*Oyinbo to se pencil lo se eraser*---The Whites who created pencil also created eraser. Transliterally, it meant that some corrupt cops also devised ways to circumvent the consequences of breaking the oath.

Banishments and Banters

Often, banishments from Ilorin town were one of the preventive measures to checkmate crime and curb erring *Akoda* from becoming a bad cop. It must be noted that banishments were often feared because it was not only the culprit who would be banished, but the entire family as well. Here, a curse was placed on the banished family, never to step into the town ever again, and attempting to enter the city in whatever guise would be met with thunder strike or affliction. By this, knowing that one's family would be banished was a way to deter crimes, discourage criminals, and also hold the *Akoda* personnel accountable.

Also, there were banters thrown at someone caught in criminal acts. There were many songs that the villagers or neighbours would sing continually at the sight of the person or their family. In many cases, such banter had led many culprits to commit suicide or embark on self-exile when they could not withstand the consequences. Some of the banters were:

<i>Oju ole re, Ole</i>	Here is a Thief....Thief
<i>Oju le re Ole</i>	Here is a Thief....Thief
<i>Oji awo loja...Ole</i> (Depending on item stolen)	He stole plates from the market...Thief
<i>Oji aso alaso...Ole</i>	He stole clothes from the market...Thief

Banters and songs, as mentioned above, were thrown at the culprit or any member of their family sighted anywhere in town, on farms, or at a palm wine joint. Usually, such banters caused

many culprits or members of their families to vacate the city. This was often due to the belief that, "Oruko rere, O san ju Wura ati fadaka lo. ----A good name is better than gold or silver." Another philosophy of the Yoruba and Ilorin People in particular was the philosophy of "Omo luabi-- which exudes godliness, diligence, and honesty.⁵

Societal Inquisitiveness on Sources of Wealth

The pre-Emirate society was based on questioning and testing all forms of wealth and persons. By this, a man who had suddenly become wealthy was not only suspected but was summoned by the palace or neighbours. Even before engaging in a relationship, the first question that was usually asked was, "Tani baba ti e ni ile yi?---Who is your father in this land?" Such a question not only inquired about the personality of the acquaintances but also their families. In more critical times, the person was called upon to swear an oath that they had not committed any criminal acts. An oral interview granted by an older woman revealed that the palace may even assign a private *Akoda* to investigate the source of the person's wealth. If it were established that the source was clean and through hard work, the town crier would go about announcing it, and since the community was small, the grapevine would spread that his wealth was genuinely earned.⁶ She succinctly puts it thus "Ti oro eniyan ba ni ba ninu, awon ara ilu won a pe eni naa lati mo idi oro re, boya ni se ni oseso tabi adigun jale olosa ni. Awon ara ilu ma ya fun a fi ti awon eniyan ba

⁵ B.A. Adebawale and F. Onayemi, "Aristotle's Human Virtue and Yoruba Worldview of Omoluabi: An Ethical-Cultural Interpretation" *African Philosophical Inquiry*, 6 (2016) 32.

⁶ S. Ajibola. 79, oral interview, Tiper garage, Ilorin, 12 February 2020.

ri daju wipe idi oro re mo. If a man's wealth were suspicious, the people would distance themselves from him for some time to know if he did money ritual or engaged in robbery until concrete evidence had been established that the person's wealth was clean."⁷

Know-Your-Neighbour

There was a know-your-neighbour policy which arose not by edifice or any codified law, but from the communal way of life. The society was not large, so people knew who were indigenes, strangers, and *Alajapa* (itinerant traders). This policy was also effective in arresting criminals even at the point of hatching. That is, since the windows and doors were usually open, and the inside was typically dark, a person committing a crime or bringing in a stranger was quickly identified.

Moreover, if a man brought in a stranger or had a visitor, the family would take them around the compound (*Agbole*) for people to identify with the newcomer. By identifying with this person, the community would always defend them if questioned by an outsider who is not from *Agbole*. As a woman puts it, "*Ti won ba daduro ni ita, awon to mo ma sowipe omo lagbaja ni, ose de lana ni*--If a visitor that had been introduced to the clan were stopped outside the clan, the clan would defend him/her and inform the questioner where the visitor resides." ⁸

The Barter/Communal Economy

The barter system, where commodities were exchanged for commodities, also helped reduce crime. This economy also meant that one did not need to pay cash (cowry) when the use of an exchange commodity was introduced to purchase needed goods and services. Instead, the

⁷ S. Ajibola. 79, oral interview, Tiper garage, Ilorin, 12 February 2020.

⁸ R. Ajagbe, 86, oral interview, Trader Oja, 12 April 2019.

person gives out what they did not want or what they had in excess for what they needed. Additionally, if he needed to clear his farms or build a hut, he did not need to employ paid labour; instead, the Owe (Communal) system took care of that. By Owe, a rotational working scheme was established, where members of Owe assisted one another when needed. Hence, the lack of a money economy ensured that many people were not materialistic, and the resort to stealing or making quick money through criminal activities was minimal or absent.

Society based on Trust.

The pre-Emirate society was based on Trust. By this, a seller just needed to display their wares without being present. To state the cost, they just needed to place stones against the goods to signify the cost (amount of cowries) that would be required to purchase the goods. This Trust also helped to curb crime and reduce criminal activities.

Constant Patrol

The *Akoda* at the palace also engaged in town patrol once in a while. Additionally, it must be noted that the night watch (*Olode*) was also available to move around the town at night, and the *Akodas* also moved about the market to prevent and check for crimes. The *Olode* and *Akoda*, in all their dealings, operated a shift system that ensured that if one became tired, another would take over. This system helped to curb crime to a large extent during the pre-colonial and pre-Ilorin Emirate period.

Home Training (*Eko Ile*)

The Pre-colonial society in Ilorin, before foreign influence, was built on the home. Those are the reasons for proverbs such as "*Ile La n wo ka to somo loruko*--It is the home that determines how we name the child", "*Ile la tin ke eso rode*--Charity begins at home", *agba ki n wa loja, ki ori*

omo wo--A child cannot go wrong when we have the elders to teach them" among others.⁹ The inculcation of moral upbringing was paramount than the pursuit of power, possession, and wealth. That is, virtues as *irele* (humility), *ipele* (gentility), *suru* (patience), *iwa tutu* (morality), *omoluabi* (good behaviour), *omo abire* (a child from a good home), among others, prevailed over all other things. These virtues were also instilled through the community and even superstitions. Some superstitions helped instill morals in the children, and these shaped their behavior until they grew older. With these virtues, involvement in crimes was less or almost non-existent in some communes (*agbegbe*).

Foreign Influence on Pre-colonial Policing

Two foreign cultures had an overwhelming influence on the pre-colonial form of policing in Ilorin. These were Islam and the British Western form of policing. While the former came through the Trans-Saharan slave trade in the 7th century, the latter went through the colonial enterprise that began after the 15th-century contact with the Benin Empire.

Introduction of Islam and Dogari Institution

The advent of Islam through the trans-Saharan slave trade was significant in the advent of the new religion and culture into Ilorin, a former Yoruba town. The foremost Yoruba historian, Samuel Johnson, described it as the third-largest town of the Yoruba nation.¹⁰ As he puts it:

Ilorin is, in one respect, different from the other Yoruba towns, in that the ruling powers are not native to the place. How it came about that Ilorin, a pure Yoruba town and once the third city in the kingdom, fell into the hands of aliens, and to this day owes allegiance to other than its rightful sovereign, will be told in its place.

⁹ R. Ajagbe, 86, oral interview, Trader Oja, 12 April 2019.

¹⁰ S. Johnson, *Samuel Johnson: The history of the Yoruba*, Reprinted copy, (Lagos: C.S.S. Press 2001), 94

However, to this day, the principal market and the chief mosque of the town remain in front of the house of the founder and rightful owner of Ilorin¹¹

Just as it changed its religion, so too did it change the town's political and policing institutions. By becoming an emirate after the 1804 Jihad war, the initial form of policing was discarded. In the new arrangement, recruitment into the Dogarai system, as it was in the Hausa-Fulani Emirates, was primarily based on knowledge of the new religion, Islam, and a suitable home. Aside from recruitment, organisations, among others, established a new set of laws known as Sharia, in which societal norms were anchored, the way pre-colonial Police were recruited and organised. With Islam, the organisation of policing in Ilorin Emirate shared much resemblance with what was in place in other parts of Northern Nigeria. Locally appointed guards, headed by a supervisory security officer, reported to the Emir on any incidents that occurred. Guards were appointed to guard each district under the Emirate, and they made use of light weapons such as sticks and other tools similar to those used by hunters. They were not paid for the task at that time, although they received rewards in the form of emoluments such as agricultural produce and other implements that could aid their policing tasks.¹²

In Ilorin, the Dogari came from Borno but met Sheik Alimi at Kotangora, which was where Sheik Alimi performed his first miracle.¹³ They both left Kotangora and became close, searching for greener pastures, as they had never intended to establish themselves in Ilorin town, which was an outskirt of the Oyo Empire. They arrived in Oyo, Ogbomosho, before finally settling in Ilorin.

¹¹ S. Johnson, *Samuel Johnson: The history of the Yoruba*, 94

¹² O. Osibodu, 89, oral interview, Hunter, Tanke Ilorin, 13 January 2020

¹³ S. Dogari, 48, oral interview, Dogari Compound, Gelegele, Ilorin, Kwara State, November 2021[Interview was Courtesy of Idris Tosho].

¹⁴ The Dogari, before the advent of the Emirs, originated in the Quranic school of Sheikh Alimi. According to the Seriki Dogari, “*Ti awon Omo ile kewu ba se asemase tabi ti ko se nkan to je ko se, won a pe Dogari ki o wada seria fun*”¹⁵-----If the Islamic pupils misbehaved, they were dealt with by the Dogari. It is worth noting that at this period, it was not a formal institution and operated on a personal level, granted by Sheik Alimi.¹⁶ Their work began in 1830, and during this period, Alimi and the first Dogari, Ahmadu [Ahmad], had both died.¹⁷ The government was formed under Sheik Abdusalam, who was the first Emir of Ilorin, at which point the Dogari became institutionalized. With the institutionalized Emirate system, the Alafin of Oyo could not stop the development and establishment of a new force and frontier state. As Saad puts it:

The inability of the Alafin to remove the Muslim leaders at Ilorin probably forced Alafin Majotu to recognize the established Emirate and its sovereignty. Ilorin's policy of expansion and demonstration of might and supremacy was such that by c.1833 it had subjected almost all important Oyo towns, and Oyo-Ile itself became a tributary to Ilorin, and paid regular tribute till the early 1890s when British colonial administrators in charge of Lagos and Yoruba states prevented and stopped the payment.¹⁸

Thus, the Dogari institution predates the Emirate system in Ilorin.¹⁹ The Dogari also served as bailiff and palace security in the Emir's Court. They help convey messages to the Emir and sometimes offer advice on the security of the palace, the palace household, and the Emirate in general. In fact, they were regarded as the Chief of General Staff of today's political strata.²⁰

S. Dogari, 48, oral interview, Dogari Compound...

¹⁵S. Dogari, 48, oral interview, Dogari Compound...

¹⁶ S. Dogari, 48, oral interview, Dogari Compound...

¹⁷S. Dogari, 48, oral interview, Dogari Compound...

¹⁸ H. Sa'ad, “The Dynamics of Political Development in a Multicultural Society: The Case of Ilorin during the 19th and 20th Centuries.” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, 2015), 157

¹⁹ H. Sa'ad, “The Dynamics of Political Development In a Multicultural Society: The, 157

²⁰ H. Sa'ad, “The Dynamics of Political Development In a Multicultural Society: The, 157

In the centralized Hausa-Fulani states, a formal Policing mechanism existed under the *Dogari* system. The Dogari institution derives its authority from the Emir, who is regarded as the head of the Emirate and the supreme head of the political institution in Ilorin Emirate. The Dogari in Ilorin emirate is an offshoot of the Islamisation of Ilorin and the investiture of the Dogari compound within the Emirate. They are in the class of the elite enslaved people. The Dogari was described as a slave cum jailer, a chief executioner, and a prime minister.²¹ This shows how powerful he was. The Dogarai is the earliest known Police organization in the Hausa states of Nigeria. Membership of the organization was from the servile eunuch class. They were led by the Sarkin Dogarai, who was under the authority of the Galadima. Sir Ahmadu Bello described the pre-colonial Policing system in the Hausa states thus:

There was a form of Police known as Dogarai, who were at once executioners, escorts, watchmen, and personal guards of the ruler. They all wore scarlet rigs (sometimes with another colour inserted) with fabulous scarlet turbans, ill-balanced on their heads, and a giant sword. In some cases, they also had guns. Until the end of the twenties, they were, for practical purposes, the only Police in the North, as there were very few Government Police, and they mainly served on escort duty with Administrative Officers and as guards for Government cash.²²

The origin of the Dogaris is traced to Kano during the reign of Mohammed Rumfa.²³ At inception, he recruited his most competent and loyal slaves to protect the palace and the King. From Kano, the system spread to other parts of Hausaland during the pre-jihad era.²⁴ The origin

²¹ Bowen Papers, Ogbomosho Baptist Seminary Roberson Collection, vol. 1, p. 38, Bowen Journal 22/4/55; Robert Campbell, *A Pilgrimage to Motherland. An Account of a Journey among the Egbas and Yorubas of Central Africa in 1859-60* (London: Johnson 1860), 61 in Ann O'Hear, "The Economic History Of Ilorin In The Nineteenth And Twentieth Centuries: The Rise And Decline Of A Middleman Society" Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1983, 6.

²² S.B. Amusa, "Policing and the Decolonisation Process in Nigeria, 1945-1966." (Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, Department of History, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 2015), 56.

²³ S.B. Amusa, "Policing and the Decolonisation Process in Nigeria, 1945-1966." 56

²⁴ S.B. Amusa, "Policing and the Decolonisation Process in Nigeria, 1945-1966." 57

of the Dogari in Ilorin Emirate is traced to Ahmadu Baba, who was born in Borno and was a friend of Sheik Alimi, with whom he came down from the North.²⁵ Thus, though the Dogari institution emerged from elite enslaved people, that of Ilorin is different, as Ahmadu Baba was already a freeborn by the time he arrived in Ilorin with Sheik Alimi.

The Dogarai system also changed the method of recruitment. The recruitment of the Dogarai in Ilorin Emirate was determined by family history, aristocratic class, mannerisms, and, most importantly, Islamic religion. Before someone could be chosen as a Dogarai, background checks would have been conducted regarding their overall moral, intellectual, and spiritual upbringing and knowledge. This implies that the kind of family a person comes from will be taken into consideration. Additionally, his character in the community will be evaluated to determine if the level of integrity aligns with the role to be undertaken. Furthermore, it will be ascertained whether the Police are fit to handle that role without posing hazards to themselves or the community. However, the Seriki Dogari is not just a titled chief but a family title that is not transferred to another family.

During this period, the Dogarai lacked vehicles to patrol and prevent crimes, as well as to apprehend criminals. They trekked, mounted horses, donkeys, and camels, using them as a means to patrol the Emirate, as well as its borders and outskirts. The weapon had also gradually evolved from sticks to bows, arrows, and knives, as well as machetes and swords. As Abdulbaki Shola notes, with empowerment, there was a considerable likelihood of crimes and criminals being

²⁵ S. A. Abdulbaki, "Dogari Institution and the Security of Ilorin Emirate in the 19th Century," 109. In I. A. Jawondo, A. B. Ambali, and A. I. Abdulkadir, *Human Security and The Survival of Ilorin Emirate Culture*. (Ilorin: CILS, 2019)

immediately detected, and such a response led to crime deterrence.²⁶ The Dogarai also carried out intelligence and data gathering services, particularly in areas considered prone to crime in the Emirate, including public places, markets, and along caravan routes to other neighbouring northern states. These were considered areas where crimes were most committed.²⁷ With the early detection of crimes, funds that would have been used for prosecution, arrest, and the cost of feeding such criminals in custody were saved for other developmental strides in the town and Emirate in particular.

Islamic policing, which was anchored in Sharia law, had most of its laws outlined in the Quran. For instance, lashes of the cane were used for petty theft. Another aspect was that it did not regard all elements of petty theft as stealing. For example, a man who is hungry and branches in another man's land to pluck what he could eat and catch could not be charged for stealing. This form of foreign law and policing also gained popularity among the people of Ilorin, who were embracing the Islamic religion in large numbers.

Under the Emirate system, the Dogarai made decisions based on what was established and recognized as a crime in the community, adhering to the principles of the rule of law and natural justice in policing. They also drew their rationale for punishment from Islamic law, which had been part of Ilorin's governance since the establishment of the Emirate.²⁸ While other parts of

²⁶ S. A. Abdulbaki, "Dogari Institution and the Security of Ilorin Emirate in the 19th Century," 114.

²⁷ S. A. Abdulbaki, "Dogari Institution and the Security of Ilorin Emirate in the 19th Century," 114

²⁸ O. Rotimi. *The Police in a Federal State: The Nigerian Experience*. (Ibadan: College Press Ltd, 2001), 54

Nigeria operated under collectively acclaimed social ethics, the situation in Ilorin during the pre-colonial period was quite phenomenal. The Islamic justice system had a tremendous impact on civil and criminal matters in the Emirate. However, most of the people continued with many aspects of pre-colonial policing and activities. A good example was the use of rituals, charms, and other similar practices. One of the most potent of these charms was the broom or game bait, which was hung at the entrance of a house. Once a thief entered the compound, they were bound to take up the broom or game and play or sweep until daybreak or until the landlord caught up with them (if they came in droves).

On funding the Police under the Dogarai, evidence suggests that the Dogarai's funding came from the Emirate's treasury.²⁹ These primarily consist of taxes and tributes paid from each affiliation to the Emirate and each compound. Local forces that assisted in policing duties are rewarded based on concessions from the traditional ruler. However, the Police during this time were structured to be modest in their outlook, so as not to accumulate wealth that would divert them from their sensitive role of safeguarding the community.

The general assessment of the Police in the Emirate system during the pre-colonial and Emirate periods was that it was subordinate to the traditional rulers, rather than the people, as was the case in the pre-emirate days. This cannot be disputed, given that the situation in Ilorin in the

²⁹ O. E. Rotimi "A History of Native Administration Police Forces in Nigeria, 1900-1970." (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 1990), Chapter 2-4; Akinola O. Osho "The Nigerian Police Force and Crime Control in Ilorin Metropolis 1967-2014" An unpublished M.A Dissertation submitted to the Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin 2014, 56-67

pre-colonial period was that of absolute submission to the Emir, who was believed to be a representative of God on earth. The powerful position of the Emir influenced policing activity.

Conclusion

The paper laid bare the pre-colonial form of policing in the Ilorin Emirate. The orientation of pre-colonial policing was communal, with volunteers willing to protect their territories. That is, men protected the populace based on the zeal and need to guard and protect their fatherland. The coming of foreign culture, which included Islam and British Western forms of policing, changed these forms of policing. One of the ways it changed the form of policing was by attaching stipends or monetary gestures to policing. With the financial rewards and the emergence of a capitalist economy, the Police, as well as the entire population, became materialistic and overtly corrupt. The pre-colonial policing, which had the personnel under oath, was hardly desecrated; so also for the indigenes that were not too materialistic and understood the significance of *oruko rere, san ju fadaka lo* (A good name was better than gold or silver). These oaths were swift, as oath-breakers were subjected to a fierce god who was believed to be swift in attacking or killing the culprits. Although the Western and Islamic policing brought some modifications to policing in terms of modernisation, they were too centralized, subjective, and centred on the State and not the community or the people. Hence, these forms of policing, rather than reducing and preventing crimes, exacerbated the phenomenon.

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