

The Role of a Mosque in Politics: Muslim Perspectives on Jamia Mosque in Nairobi

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Abstract

A Mosque in the Muslim life is a very important place of worship where Muslims gather five times every day for congregation prayers. Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, build a Mosques immediately after the Hijra to Medina, then eventual adopted it for religious gathering, educational functions, home for the homeless, office for public affairs both legislative and executive, hall for military meetings and court for adjudicating on cases and assembly for the political gatherings and guidance. Enemies, Qureshi realized the role of a Mosque in Politics and therefore build a rival mosque called “Dhirar Mosque” whose purpose was to divide Muslims and become the base for the enemies; Allah ordained that the Mosque to be demolished and forbid the Prophet, May peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, from observing the inauguration Salah in it. The guided caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them, in their wisdom created places for Governmental functions outside the Mosque, the Mosque remained a place for Muslim Public gathering offering guidance in religious, social, economic and political matters. However when Muslim were divided along different political lines during the era of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, each Political group mobilized its followers in their respective Mosques for the war and its propaganda. It seems Ali was not in support of this development since he suggested that he shall not bar his political rivals from his Mosques alluding to the independence and neutral role of the Mosque in dispute among Muslims. We may infer from this political history that the role of the Mosque in Politics is not specifically provided for in the Holy Quran and what the Prophet did was in response to the immediate needs that why the guided caliphs did not see any wrong in assigning new roles and departing from the early ones. The ideal situation was that the Mosque should be a symbol of Muslim unit for common purpose in issues affecting Muslims, however in matters where Muslims are divided the Mosques should have a neutral position and ability to act as an arbitrator as drawn from lessons in Ali’s guidance.

Jamia Mosque have been constructed by the Muslim Asian Community represented by Syed Maulana Abdullah Shah between 1902 and 1906 remained aloof in Politics even in late 1980s when Sheikh Abdullahi Naseer a Muslim Scholar and a Politician was appointed to be the Imam and expressed his political views in public his services were terminated ostensibly because of his support for the Iranian Revolution but in reality he had attempted to ascribed a political role to the Mosque. At this time Muslims believed did not believe in the linkage between Muslim Religion and Politics. In 1988, Sheikh Ali Shee, a Muslim Scholar specialized in Shariah and a former Kadhi well conversant with current affairs was appointed as the Imam for Jamia Mosque. He openly expressed his political views and even influenced Muslim mass to adopt his views, he openly criticized the Government and become the icon of Muslim Political guidance in Kenya. Muslims changed their attitudes towards politics and felt that Muslim Religion had a place to play in Politics. The Church at that time had also established its foot in Politics with Bishop Alexander Muge, who was assassinated for his political views, Bishop Henry Okullu and other Christian leader vocally criticizing the Kanu Government. The role played by Jamia Mosque in introduction of Multi-Party System in Kenya in early 1990 is not clear, however students of Prof Malik Hussein who had frequent lectures in the Mosque before Friday summons like Mr. Abdu Rahman Wandati registered a significant role in the struggle. However, the Political influence of Sheikh Ali Shee had prepared the minds of Muslims in Kenya to accept assignment of a political role to the Mosque. Sheikh Ali Shee was also terminated from Jamia Mosque due to his attempt to define the role of the Mosque in Politics. In the struggle against President Moi’s Government during the Multi Party era Jamia Mosque was reluctant to support the Opposition and tried to be aloof in Politics. On the other hand Supreme Council of Muslim of Kenya had now engaged in Politics and demanding for respect and protection of rights of Muslims in Kenya under the leadership of the late Ahmed Khalif as the Secretary General. Supkem went ahead to participate in the Mfungano Initiative in the quest for a new Constitution in Kenya. Jamia Mosque committee admitted new members such as Billow Kerrow who were politician and professionals in other fields specifically accountancy, only to move the center of influence of the Mosque from the Imam to the Committee. In rivalry with Supkem, Jamia Mosque engaged in Politics by issuing political statements on different political events frequently. In 2002 General Elections, Jamia Mosque played an active role in supporting the Rainbow Coalition to oust Kanu for Power successfully. In the 2005 Referendum, Jamia Mosque openly supported the No, Orange Campaign successfully apparently due to its attempt to abolish the Kadhi’s Courts gradually. In the 2007 General Elections, Jamia Mosque once again supported the Orange Movement with its leaders being part of the Muslim Leaders Forum as part of the campaign strategy for ODM. Since the election campaign had taken tribal dimensions the Muslim community was not immune from the division. Muslims whose tribes supported the PNU Party were not happy

with the role played by Jamia Mosque in those elections. In the aftermath of the Elections with disputed election results and violence erupting in different parts of the Country, Jamia Mosque could not play the role of an arbitrator since it was already partisan. In the 2010 Referendum Jamia Mosque sought to rally Muslims behind the proposed Constitution successfully, some dissenting Muslim voices did not affect the position adversely.

In the 2013 Elections Jamia Mosque was reluctant to declare its support for the Opposition in public although in reality it did support the CORD candidate against the TNA, worse still Muslims were divided along tribal line between CORD and TNA and Jamia Mosque was not able to rally them behind CORD. It is apparent that if dispute could have arose between CORD and TNA requiring intervention of the civil society, TNA followers could not have submitted to the arbitration role of Jamia Mosque.

Consequently, Jamia Mosque has the role of providing political guidance to Kenya Muslims specifically and the entire Country generally as part of the Kenya Civil Society. However utmost care should be exercised in selecting the issues to be supported to be limited to Public Interest of the entire Muslim Community or the Country at large. Issues emanating from difference of opinions and personalities, Jamia Mosque should only offer objective advice on them while maintaining its neutral position and independence. It is therefore evident that Jamia Mosque will require proper capacity building support to enable it play this role.

CHAPTER ONE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

A Mosque plays a critical role in the life of a Muslim, being the place where he observes his five daily prayers alongside with his brothers. Due to the social responsibilities associated with ladies and their physiological needs, frequent visits to the Mosque are not mandatory, however they are in one way or the other influenced by what happens in the Mosque through their fathers, husband, brothers and sons. To demonstrate the significant of a Mosque in Islam, the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be up on him, made it to be the first construction in Medina on his arrival. It became the center in knowledge where the companions came to meet the Prophet, May peace and blessing of Allah be upon him for learning sessions. Guidance in both religious and social affairs was sought from the Mosque. During the guided caliphate period, the scholars preserved the guidance role of the Mosque, in fact, they became equivalent to Universities whose role was not only teaching and educating students, but also guiding the society. During the Umayyad and Abbasid Empires, Mosques played a big role in countering social, economic and political wrongs and even scholars like Abdullahi bin Zubeiry fought the rulers who had usurped power and were killed in the grand Mosque on Mecca. Throughout the Muslim history when reference was made to the Mosque it signified the scholars who were using that Mosque for the selected activities. The Constitutional Muslim Scholar, Imam al-Mwawardi, devoted a chapter for Mosques in his valuable book of al-Ahkaam as-Sultaniyya, and went ahead to classify them into public and private Mosque. He further stated that Public Mosques are to be administered by the State in terms of appointing the Imam and providing his remuneration; whereas Private Mosques are administered by the people residing in its vicinity collectively. In his opinion followers of different schools of thought may pray in the same Mosque under the leadership of one Imam since the validity of salah depends on the individual convictions. Imam al-Mawardi managed to resolve the controversy of plurality of schools of thought; however he made no mention of the role of a Mosque in Politics. Whereas Imamul Haramain Juweini declares that decisions taken by political leaders who are not knowledgeable in Islamic law without consultation and approval of scholars are null and void; here he directly discussed the Scholars and Jurists, whereas we are mentioning the Mosques as a symbol for the Jurists and Scholars.

It is therefore interesting to explore the role of a Mosque in our contemporary world and modern systems of governance to avoid clashes and conflicts.

In this study has been divided into three chapters, starting with the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, research objectives and its justification. Then chapter two dwells on the Methodology applied in the study and concluding with chapter three with data analysis, research finding and recommendation.

Background of the Problem

The Concept of a Mosque

The word Mosque is used to denote a place of worship for Muslims referred to in Arabic as “Masjid” meaning a place for prostration or performing the ritual of “sujoud” meaning prostration. To designate a place for worship can be traced back to the pre-Islamic period where the Grand Mosque of Mecca was considered a place for worship and accordingly considered a holy and scared land. Therefore fighting was not permissible within its vicinity. Allah mentioned the term “masjid” in several on occasions it could be worthy to explore its use and connotation.

"And who is more unjust than those who forbid that Allah's Name be glorified and mentioned much (i.e. prayers and invocations, etc.) in Allah's Mosques and strive for their ruin? It was not fitting that such should

themselves enter them (Allah's Mosques) except in fear. For them there is disgrace in this world, and they will have a great torment in the Hereafter.

And to Allah belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn yourselves or your faces there is the Face of Allah (and He is High above, over His Throne). Surely! Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing 114 - 115." ¹

"In houses (mosques), which Allah has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honoured), in them His Name is glorified in the mornings and in the afternoons or the evenings.

Men whom neither trade nor sale diverts them from the Remembrance of Allah (with heart and tongue), nor from performing As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), nor from giving the Zakat. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned (from the horror of the torment of the Day of Resurrection).

That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds, and add even more for them out of His Grace. And Allah provides without measure to whom He wills 36-38." ²

It is evident from these verses that a Mosque is a place for worship and rituals such as salah and dhikr. The Grand Mosque of Mecca has been given special treated in the Holy Quran and several verses revealed to provide for its special position in Islam, it is the ground for the ritual of Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam. Accordingly many verses were revealed to narrate its historical background and justification to make it the holy land for Hajj. It is hereby submitted that the right to declare a place holy is reserved for Allah only. We are privileged to have the Holy Quran containing verses documenting the historical events and happenings that culminated in its construction by Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismael as a symbol of sacrifice and dedication to Allah. The obedience demonstrated by Ibrahim and his wife to establish a home for his family in the desert of Mecca and the subsequent settling of people with life facilities like water and fruits, all those are signs for reflection by the believers. It so follows that the Grand Mosque in Mecca in a symbol for Islam in the whole World consequently they turn their faces towards it whenever they perform Salah. In few verses the Mosque in Jerusalem, Baitul Maqdis is mentioned as a holy place too. In fact it was the first Qibla for Muslims before being commanded to face Mecca. It was the venue for Miraj, ascending to the heavens in the night of Israa, where all Prophet gathered and performed Salah with the Prophet Muhammad being their Imam. This Mosque for that reason and others becomes the second holy Mosque. Many Prophets of Bani Israel were either born or lived within its vicinity.

The Mosque of the Prophet in Medina comes third in position being his Mosque in his town. In it believers shall always remember the efforts devoted by the Prophet and his companions in establishing Islam and its systems. The sacrifice they made to fight the enemies of the religion. Consequently the reward for salah in the three Mosques is much more than any other Mosque in the World. This is to encourage Muslims in the World to visit these Mosques.

It worthy noting that the Holy Quran does not mention any other function of the Mosque other than being a place for Worship, where Muslims observe Salah and other forms of worship such as dhikr, remembrance of Allah.

The Sunnah of the Prophet, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, contains many rules and etiquette of the Mosque ranging from preserving them to be places for worship to encouraging Muslims to build and revive Mosques by observing their daily salahs and the Friday salah in the Mosque and maintaining their hygiene, purity and tidiness and maintaining order so that the Mosques do not loose their value and become places for purposes strange to worship such as markets and private announcements without order.

However the Sirah of the Prophet, his practice reveals that the Mosque can have many other roles other than being strictly a place for worship and rituals. The Prophet always seized the opportunity of Muslims gathering in the Mosque to teach them Islam and remind them of the Islamic tenets. The Prophet, may peace be upon him, taught his companions in the Mosque before and after prayers. The Prophet, may peace be upon him, also used the Mosque as the venue for consultation on various matters such as the military and security affairs then organizing the army and forces to participate in various military and security functions. It is evident that all these functions although not being strictly acts of worship or rituals, they are for public interest and not individual and personal. However in special circumstance even private and personal activities may be permissible subject to maintaining of order, since the Prophet auctioned a piece of clothe for one of his companions and advised him to buy an axe and starting e business of selling firewood, eventually he become rich and divorced poverty.

It is for this reason that the Jurists have construed the traditions which prohibit and preclude the Mosque from private activities as mere disliked acts and not prohibited; this is for want of order and organization. Therefore if private acts can be organized and channeled through the proper order, they may be allowed so long as the integrity of the Mosque shall be maintained.

¹ Al Baqarah chapter 2 verse 114-115

² An Nur chapter 24 verse 36-38

The Role of the Mosque

The role of a Mosque as place for guidance can be seen clearly in the practice of the Prophet, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. At the beginning of Islam in Mecca, the Mosque played a critical role as a place for assembly and gathering of Muslims not only for worship, but also to receive new teachings and guidance in their lives.

When Muslims were oppressed in Mecca, they used to meet for reading and studying Islam besides praying secretly in house of Alqam although spontaneously it is narrated that the Prophet, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him used to pray in the Masjid Haram. Because Islam was a new faith introducing new system of life, the new Muslims were in need of learning sessions and the Mosque was the proper place but in absence of any, the house of Alqam was converted into a Mosque. Immediately after the Hijra, the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, he build a Mosque.

The Personality of the Prophet, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, being the Messenger of Allah and therefore the center for guidance enhanced the guidance role of the Mosque. It is worthy noting that this guidance was applicable to all spheres of life; social, economic and political. Domestic quarrels between spouses were referred to the Prophet in the Mosque not as a judicial officer but as a guide knowledgeable in the applicable laws and rules. Commercial disputes were also referred to him, may peace of Allah and blessings be upon him, for guidance and advice. The Prophet being the political leader also offered guidance and direction for Muslims in relation with the political issues in the Mosque. It may argued that the Governmental Institutions were yet to be established that is why the Prophet improvised the mosque for that role, however it should be noted that the dual personalities manifested in the person of the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The personality of a Prophet as a recipient of divine guidance and his personality of a political leader, the head of state, were the dual personalities. The personality of being the head state and all what it entails such as the governmental institutions could be move from the Mosques to other buildings else where, and that is what the guided caliphs did whereas the role of a mosque for guidance remains intact. Some governors build Castles for government functions such as Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas during the caliphate of Omar bin Khatab, yet the Mosque remained in the hands of scholars guiding the general public and advising the political leader through criticism and applauding of policies.¹

Abu Bakar, may Allah be pleased with him made his inaugural speak in the Mosque and continued to lead Muslims in Salah during his caliphate, same to Omar, Othman and Ali bin Abi Talib.

However during the caliphate of Ali bi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, Muslims were divided into two camps; the camp of Ali and that of Muawiya. The Mosque at during this period played a critical role in mobilizing the followers for the two camps, The another camp emerging for the radicals, Khawajis, considering both Ali and Muawiya as disbelievers. This role can be demonstrated by the plot to assassinate Ali bin Talib, Muawiya and Amr bin Aas during the Fajr Salah. It means that the followers of the camps used to receive guidance and directions from the Mosque. It is evident that the insertion of verses justifying the acts done by Othman in favour of his clan and relatives in the Friday Khutba, summon, and recitation of dua to Allah to purify Ali's face in answer the Khawarij who were cursing him during their summons are indicators of the negative role that the Mosque assumed during that period. Hypothetically if the Mosque at that time could remain neutral it could have played a very significant role in uniting the different factions and groups of Muslims. It could be a lesson to the subsequently generation to seek for independence of the Mosque from active Politics in order to act as an Arbitrator in case of dispute besides protecting the fundamental and essential norms, systems and principles of the society. Muslims from all these camps were in agreement that Islam is the source of Law and that Islamic teachings should prevail. So, if this could be the unifying factor to be protected by Mosques from the different camps, an agreement could have been arrived through arbitration by the Mosque as it was attempt at the battle of Siffin.

Jamia Mosque

Jamia Mosque is a significant Mosque in Kenya located on Banda Street in the Central Business District. It was built by the Asian Muslims who were working in the Railway construction by their own individual efforts carrying stones and cement and applying their construction skills to build it. However Syed Maulana Abdullah Shah subsequently financed the building to its erection in its current block 1 where the pulpit is situated now.² This is the reason why the construction of the Mosque took a long time between 1902 and 1906. The expansion of the Mosque was officially opened in 2003 with the capacity to accommodating over 15,000 persons for Salah. This happened after the Mosque Committee bought the adjacent famous Kigali Plot which was being used by small traders without legal title from the City Council by then. The acquisition of the plot was not easy because the squatters refused to vacate the land therefore the Mosque Committee was force to mobilize Muslims within

¹ Ibin Jarir Al- Tabary, Taarikh Tabary, Daarul Maarifa, Egypt V1 3 pg 150

² Sheikh Ibrahim Lithome, Interviewed in Nairobi 27/12/2015

the City for forceful eviction of these squatters, small traders, since they had defied Police threats and vowed to fight back. This could be the turning point for Jamia Mosque since more Muslims started identifying themselves with it since they actually fought for it. The expansion was financed by well-wishers within the Country and without through a fund raising drive spearheaded by the Mosque Committee. There is also a Multi-Purpose Hall which can accommodate over 1,000 persons in a function, with a Library equipped with some books in different fields with a sitting capacity of 100 persons. All these features make this Mosque unique in Kenya. The Committee has many investment projects adjacent to Mosque and others located in other places within the Central Business District. The researcher could not verify the volume of the income yield from those investments since the Mosque Committee declined to honor our request for an interview. The Mosque Committee makes weekly publications called "Friday Bulletin" in which highlights are made on both local and foreign news besides admonishment, advertisements and announcements from the business community. The Mosque also holds weekend public lectures on various topics delivered by prominent scholars in Kenya. The Jamia Mosque Committee is managing a college in the name of Jamia Mosques Training Institute running vocational training programs such as tailoring, language learning, computer training programs and lessons for newly reverted Muslims. The Mosque has constituted a consultative body called Majlis Ulamaa- Jamia Mosque, in which we managed to interview some members such as Sheikh Ibrahim Lithome to share with us his experience.

The Mosque with Politics

Jamia Mosque since its construction remained aloof in Politics maintaining good and warm relations with the Government of the day. In our interviews nobody could recall the role played by the Mosque in the struggle for independence in Kenya. This is not unique to Kenya since Muslim Institutions at that time were confined to rituals only partly by the colonial masters and partly by the Muslims themselves since Jurisprudence was at its decline. It seems that the renaissance of Islam in East Africa generally and in Kenya particularly did not receive support of Jamia Mosque at that time, since we failed to trace any link between the Mosque and any of the prominent Sheikh of Islamic renaissance such as Sheikh Ali Mazrui, Sheikh Abdallah Farisy, Sheikh Bakher, Sheikh Sumeit, Sheikh Al-Amoudy. The Mosque remained unpopular in politics until late 80s when Sheikh Abdullah Naseer, was appointed the Imam of the Mosque¹. Being a scholar who is knowledgeable in current affairs, he managed to attract followers from different parts of the Country and his view was that Religion cannot be separated from Politics moreover Politics must be guided by Religion. His programs in the Voice of Kenya Radio managed to popularize Jamia Mosque since he was being introduced as the Imam of Jamia Mosque. There is no report of his confrontation with the security organization because of his political views although he used to commend boldly on some political activities in Kenya. It appears that his priority was to win support of Muslims first before engaging in a specific political endeavor. When the Islamic Revolution acceded to power in Iran, Sheikh Abdullah Naseer moved quickly to declare his support for Imam Khomeini through the influence of his friend Dr. Ahmed Khatib, this led to termination of his contract of work with Jamia Mosque and eventually he embarrassed Shia Sect up to date. Thereafter, the Mosque Committee appointed Sheikh Ali Shee as the Imam in 1988 to replace Sheikh Abdullah Naseer after the Mosque had remained for some time without any official Imam². Sheikh Ali Shee was very knowledgeable in current affairs and all his Friday Summons were an opportunity for him to comment on the political events in Kenya. The Church also at that time had stood up to advocate for human rights and good governance in Kenya. Bishop Henry Okullo in Kisumu and Alexander Muge in Eldoret are the evidence of that new trend in the Kenyan Church. Bishop Muge was later assassinated on his way to Eldoret from attending a rally in Busia. Besides challenging the Government for its violence of Human Right and his advocate for good governance, Sheikh Ali Shee sought to educate Muslim Mass in Kenya on their rights, Islamic teachings and tenets and mobilize them to stand for their rights whenever violated. Sheikh Ali Shee had a desire to become the Supreme Leader of Muslims in Kenya and was almost achieving this goal through his elegant summons and lectures in the Mosque and in other gatherings elsewhere, however the Special Branch, which has transformed into the National Intelligence Services moved swiftly to prevent his raising by asserting pressure on Jamia Mosque Committee to delink itself with the prominent scholar. Some of the individuals who fought for the removal of the Sheikh from the Mosque have very scanty knowledge of Islam such as Sheikh Muhammad Yunis. The enemies of the Sheikh fabricated the theory for him joining Shia Sect having travelled to Iran and Iraq severally in addition to some bold jurisprudence views such as inheritance of an illegitimate child, validity of a marriage without a guardian. It is worth noting that these views do not warrant his dismissal from being the Imam of the Mosque, but due to the pressure from the security organs on the Mosque

¹ Sheikh Abdullah Naseer is a scholar educated in Lamu and elegant in Kiswahili with good command of Arabic and English languages, he was elected in the 1st National Assembly in Kenya from Coast Constituency.

² Sheikh Ali Shee is a scholar educated in Kizingitini Lamu, the Al-Azhar Shareef before proceeding to Om Durman Islamic University where he obtained 1st Degree in Shariah, he worked as Kadhi before being dismissed for having criticized President Moi who demanded Muslim Women to remove their Hijab to be seen by men. He has authored many books in Kiswahili with many public lectures recorded on Cassettes.

Committee the mission was accomplished by his removal. At this time, the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims had arose to its people's expectations and its Secretary General Mr. Ahmed Khalif often criticized the Government for violation of Human Rights and bad governance in the Country. In the Mfungano Initiative by the Civil Society Organizations in the quest of a new Constitution, Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims actively participated and Sheikh Ali Shee although he had left Jamia Mosque participated as a representative of the Council of Imams and Preachers based in Mombasa by then. The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims had new youth leadership of a Prominent Muslim Lawyer, Sheikh Ibrahim Lithome besides Mr. Ahmed Khalif.

After the exit of Sheikh Ali Shee and active participation of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims in political affairs, Jamia Mosque awake to its responsibility as a member of the Kenyan Civil Society, the role it had remained adamant to assume and terminated two Prominent Muslim Scholars from the post of Imam of the Mosque for indulging in Politics. This time, Jamia Mosque opted to emerge as a Corporate Entity, Jamia Mosque, not as an individual as the case of Sheikh Abdullah Naseer and Sheikh Ali Shee. The first role that the Jamia Mosque Committee assumed was to enlighten Muslims on various political events in the Country and declare its position therein. The participation culminated in the shy support for the opposition, NARC, which saw KANU losing power to the opposition leader, President Mwai Kibaki, then it escalated by active participation in the rejection of the proposed Kilifi Constitution at the Referendum 2005 which had proposed Religious Courts in the place of Kadhis' Court. Jamia Mosque Committee rallied Muslims behind it to reject the proposed Kilifi Constitution. The assumption of the new role by the Jamia Mosque Committee may be associated with the new entrants namely Honorable Bellow Kerrow, Sheikh Ibrahim Lithome and Mr. Ibrahim "Jonny". The Jamia Mosque Committee then participated in the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections whose results were disputed triggering the Post-Election Violence of 2007-2008. At this stage the Mosque was deeply inclined towards the Opposing ODM lead by Mr. Raila Odinga, in fact Jamia Mosque formed its Political wing called "National Muslim Leaders Forum" chaired by Mr. Abdullah Abdi with membership of Mr. Said Othman, Sheikh Dor of Council of Imams and Preacher, the late Sheikh Idris to seek Muslim support for the Presidential Candidate Raila Odinga. It is worth noting that NAMLEF benefited from the MoU with Raila in the Grand Coalition Government between President Kibaki and the Prime Minister Raila Odinga since Sheikh Dor was nominate as a Member of Parliament and Said Othman as a Permanent Secretary. There is a general feeling that Muslims did not benefit from this partnership between Jamia Mosque and Raila Odinga save individual appointments to Government offices.¹ The Mosque just like other Religious institutions which were partisan in the disputed elections, it was not called upon to arbitrate on the dispute; however it participated in the healing process and reconciliation of the communities in the affected areas.²

Moreover the Mosque again participated in the 2013 Elections which saw the election of President Uhuru Kenyatta into office with little controversy, but this time the Mosque failed to give a specific direction for Muslim support owing to differences among its members over JUBILLE and CORD. There is a feeling that Jamia endeavors are not properly planned and they lack adequate consultation.

The Mosque has also issued Public Statements severally on other occasions such as the Terrorist Attack on West Gate Shopping Mall, Garissa University College Terrorist attack, the Mpeketoni Massacre by the Shabaab Militants, the Manderu Massacre inter alia.

We shall in this research analysis this participation to establish its role in politics through interviews with the key persons in this process and survey through questionnaires targeting the general public, the recipients of the Mosques' address.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

Secularism recognizes the fact that religious clashes are detrimental to the National Unity and Development and an attempt by the State to favor one religion may trigger such clashes. As a precaution, Secularism holds that Religious Institutions should remain neutral and does not prescribe any active role to them, however these Institutions over time have played very important roles in Political transformation in America, Europe besides African Countries, It is interesting to examine how this active role has been played and how they have managed to circumvent the hurdles laid down by the Secularism Theory.

Justification

The early Muslim Jurists addressed the challenges that faced Muslims and Muslim Institutions in the Muslim World where Muslims were the majority, therefore failed to provide for rules or jurisprudence governing the conduct of Muslims and their Institutions in Countries where Muslims are minorities. This vacuum is being filled

¹ Focus Group, held on 27/12/2015 in Nairobi at Family Resources Centre from 10.00 am up to 1.00 pm

² Ibid

by radical and extremist views endangering the National Cohesion and jeopardizing the interest of Muslims in such Countries. This research will strive to fill that vacuum.

Hypothesis

The Political Culture and Customs have ascribed a certain role to the Religious Institutions which role manifests in practices without necessarily being enshrined in the official instruments of power.

Aims and Specific Objectives of the Research

General Objective

This Research aims at studying the development of Muslim Population in Kenya and identifying their challenges.

Specific Objectives

- 1) To analyze the participation of Jamia Mosque in Politics
- 2) To assess the impact of the participation of the Mosque in Politics
- 3) To identify the risks associated with the Jamia Mosque participation in Politics

Research Methodology

The researcher applied the Qualitative Research Methodology in this study within the Social Research,

Research Tools

The research employed various techniques for data collection which include:

- a) Questionnaires targeting the general Muslim Population recipients of the Jamia Mosques political activities. Initially, the researcher had planned to distribute the Questionnaires in the Mosque during one of the Dhuhur prayers, but when the permission from the Mosque Committee was withheld, a Google group was created to reach out to the faithful Muslims who frequently pray in the Mosque, unfortunately no response was forthcoming. Eventually the Researcher relied on his own personal relations to approach respondents to fill the Questionnaires.
- b) Interviews targeting facilitators of various Jamia Mosque activities, however permission to interview the officials of Jamia Mosque Committee members was declined and again the research relied on his personal relations to meet some of the officials who sought to remain anonymous save for Sheikh Lithome; moreover other key partners of Jamia Mosque in its Political endeavors were interviewed specifically Mr. Abdullah Abdi the chairman of NAMLEF (National Muslim Leaders Forum)
- c) Focus groups' targeting the Muslim Scholars and activists in different fields, however only one session was held owing to the financial constraints and in attendance were persons who have seen Jamia Mosque transform its role in Politics. The material acquired from this session was used to develop the background of this study in reference to Jamia Mosque, herein annexed the names of the participants.

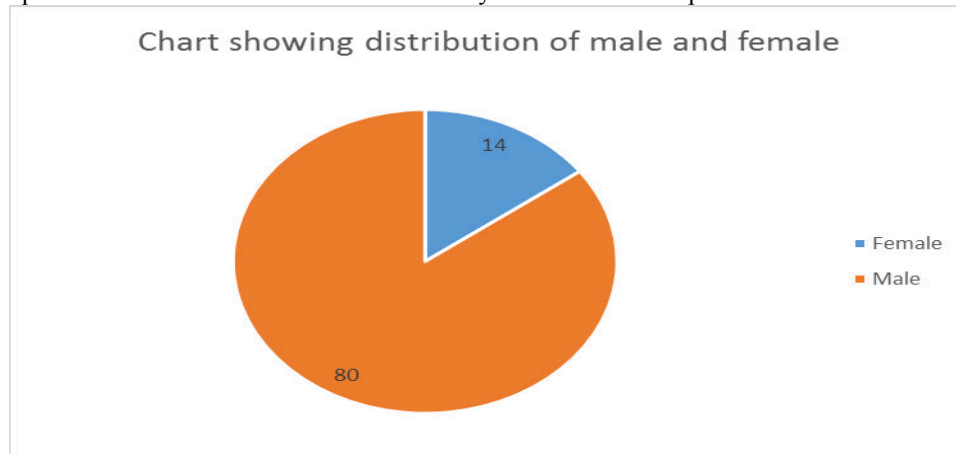
CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. 94 questionnaires were distributed and all analyzed. Out of the respondents 80 were male and 14 female.



2. Out of the 94 respondents; 91 were Kenyans, 1 Tanzanian, 1 Burundian and 1 Somalian.

3. Distribution on terms of counties.

County	No
Nairobi	54
Is iolo	6
Lamu	3
Tana river	2
mandera	2
Kajiado	2
Kwale	2
Mombasa	2
Wajir	1
Nakuru	1
Kiambu	1
Garissa	1
Kitui	1
Unfilled	16
Total	94

4. Distribution in terms of age group

Age group	Number
16-20	3
21-25	7
26-30	14
31-35	17
36-40	11
41-45	8
46-50	7
51-55	8
56-60	4
61-64	3
65+	3
Unfilled	9
Total	94

5. Distribution in term of academic qualification

Qualification	Number
Certificate	25
Diploma	13
Degree	26
Master	19
PhD	4
High school	1
Unfilled	6
Total	94

6. Distribution in terms of profession

Profession	Number
employed in Private sector	21
Business men	16
Student	10
Academician	9
civil servant	7
Engineer	6
Teacher	3
Accountant	2
retired civil servants	2
Advocate	1
Banker	1
Customer attendant	1
Director	1
Electrician	1
Farmer	1
Imam	1
Lecturer	1
Librarian	1
Police	1
prop agent	1
Registrar	1
social worker	1
Unemployed	1
Unfilled	4
Total	94

SECTION B. Jamia and politics

1. Respondents were asked whether Jamia is their regular Mosque. They responded as below:

Prayer type	Number
Friday Prayer	42
Dhuhr and Asr during working days	23
All five daily prayers	6
Otherwise	14
Unfilled	11
Total	94

2. Respondents were asked for how long have you been praying in Jamia Mosque.

14% of the respondents answerers that they have been praying in Jamia Mosque for 50-20 years, 16% for 19- 10 years, 37% for 9 – 5 years, 21% for 4 – 1 years and 11% for less than 1 year . 3% of the respondents did not answer the question.

No of years	Numbers	%
50-20 years	13	14
19- 10 years	15	16
9 – 5 years	34	37
4 – 1 years	19	21
less than 1 year	10	11
Unfilled	3	3
Total	94	100

3. Respondents were asked to describe Jamia Mosque's role in the political landscape in Kenya :-

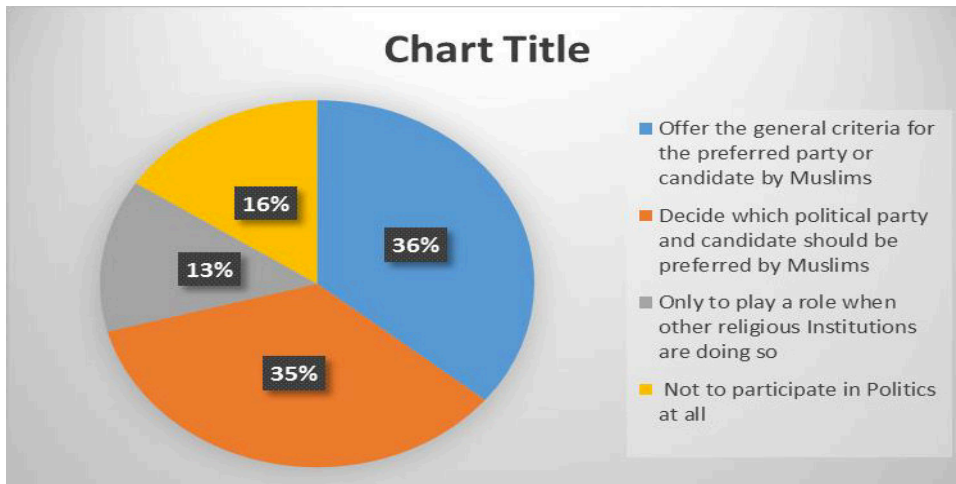
	Before independence and during colonial era		During the one party rule		During the multi-party era and the struggle for a new constitution	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Participated in protecting people's rights	11	12%	15	16%	23	24%
Participated in protecting the rights of Muslim	20	21%	34	36%	42	45%
It didn't participate	18	19%	14	15%	11	12%
I don't know	41	44%	27	29%	17	18%
Unfilled	4	4%	4	4%	1	1%
Total	94		94		94	

- Before independence and during colonial era; 12% of the respondents replied that Jamia mosque participated in protecting people's rights, 21 % Participated in protecting the rights of Muslim, 19 % replied that they didn't participate and 44 % didn't know.
 - During the one party rule (Kenyatta and Moi era); 16% of the respondents replied that Jamia mosque participated in protecting people's rights, 36 % Participated in protecting the rights of Muslim, 15 % replied that they didn't participate and 29 % didn't know.
 - During the multi-party era and the struggle for a new constitution 24% of the respondents replied that Jamia mosque participated in protecting people's rights, 45 % Participated in protecting the rights of Muslim, 12 % replied that they didn't participate and 18 % didn't know
4. Respondents were asked on their opinion in the role played by Jamia Mosque in the 2007 General Elections;

	role played by Jamia Mosque in the 2007 General Elections		the role played by Jamia Mosque in the 2013 March General Elections		role played by Jamia Mosque in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks such as Westgate, Mpeketoni, Garissa University College, Mandera Massacre, Gikomba, and Eastleigh	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Very Good	23	24%	16	17%	21	22%
Satisfactory	51	54%	52	55%	43	46%
Bad	10	11%	10	11%	15	16%
I don't know	9	10%	15	16%	10	11%
Unfilled	1		1		5	
	94		94		94	

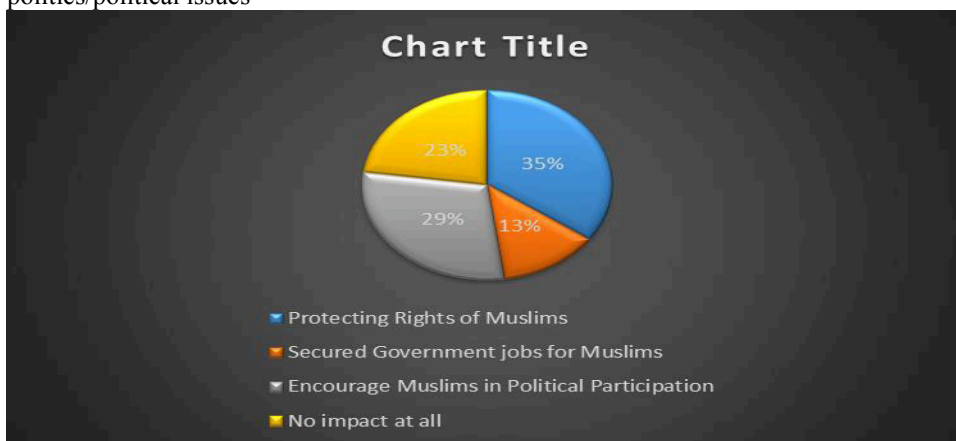
The response was 24% Very Good, 54 % Satisfactory, 11% bad and 10% don't know.

- Respondents were asked on their opinion in the role played by Jamia Mosque in the 2013 March General Elections? The response was 17% Very Good, 55 % Satisfactory, 11% bad and 16% don't know.
- Respondents were asked on their look at the role played by Jamia Mosque in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks such as Westgate, Mpeketoni, Garissa University College, Mandera Massacre, Gikomba, and Eastleigh? The response was 22% Very Good, 46 % Satisfactory, 16% bad and 11% don't know.
- Respondents were asked on what they think should be the role of Jamia Mosque in the Politics of Kenya



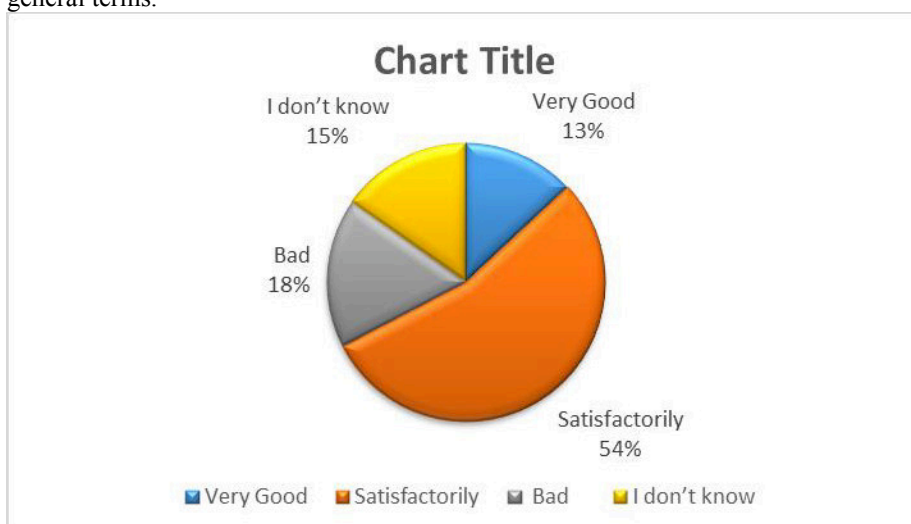
36% responded that they should Offer the general criteria for the preferred party or candidate by Muslims, 35 % thought they should decide which political party and candidate should be preferred by Muslims, 13% thought they should only to play a role when other religious Institutions are doing so and 16% thought they not participate in Politics at all

8. Respondents were asked on their view on what has been the impact of Jamia’s participation in politics/political issues



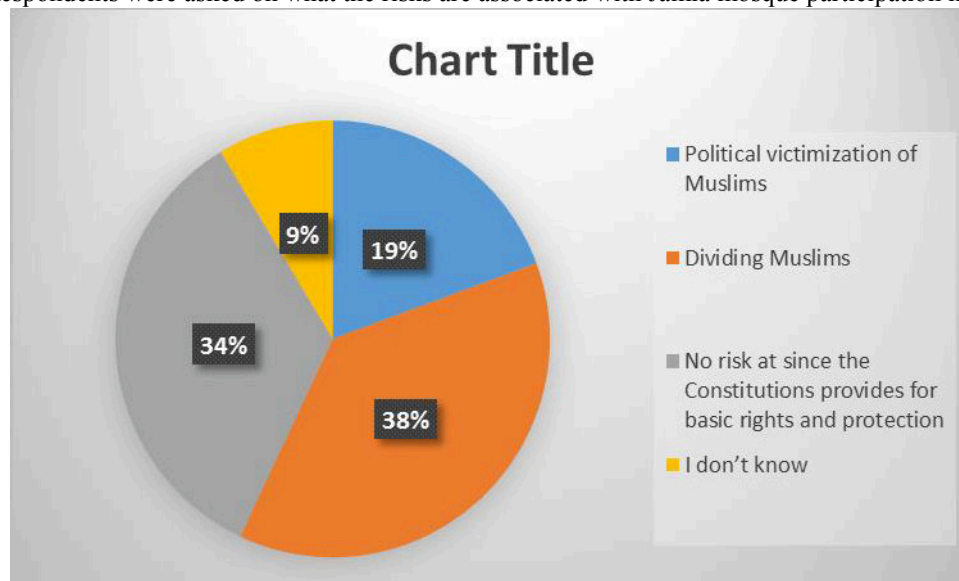
35% responded that Has been Protecting Rights of Muslims, 13% that Jamia mosque has Secured Government jobs for Muslims, 29% that they encourage Muslims in Political Participation and 23% no impact at all.

9. The respondents were asked on how well Jamia mosque has handled political challenges in Kenya in general terms.



The response was 13% Very Good, 54 % Satisfactory, 18% bad and 15% don't know.

10. Respondents were asked on what the risks are associated with Jamia mosque participation in politics.



19% said political victimization of Muslims, 38% on dividing Muslims 34% that there is no risk at since the Constitutions provides for basic rights and protection and 9% don't know

Conclusion

Research Findings

The Researcher has established the following facts:

1. The role of a Mosque falls within the Public Welfare in Islamic Law and may change from time to time and place to the other.
2. For the Jamia Mosque to preserve its relevance in the Kenyan context within the Muslim Community it had to indulge in politics since that was the people's expectation.
3. The Mosque had insignificant participation in the struggle for independence and the second liberation of Kenya from the negative implications of One Party System.
4. The Jamia Mosque Committee has fairly participated in articulating Muslims concerns and protecting their rights such as the Political Statements and Declarations issued in the aftermath of Terrorist attacks
5. The active participation of Jamia Mosque by supporting the Opposition Candidate in the Presidential Elections, risked dividing Muslims along ethnic and tribal lines since the Politics in Kenya are based on Ethnicity and Tribalism.
6. The new Constitution provide for adequate protection against mass victimization for political support for a loser Presidential Candidate.
7. The participation of Jamia Mosque in the two Referenda was above average since it was based on support for principles such as "Good Governance, Kadhis' Courts and Protection of Human Rights.
8. Jamia Mosque participation in Politics is ad hoc in nature without proper planning and lack of sufficient consultation hence benefits are limited to individuals not the community.

Recommendations

On basis of the Research Findings, the Researcher Recommends:

1. Further study of the Jamia Mosque administration organs and structures to identify challenges and suggest possible solutions.
2. To further study the capacity of the Jamia Mosque and ascertain availability of the required human resources and suggest possible capacity building programs.
3. To further study the relations between the Jamia Mosque and other Muslim Organization and Mosques countrywide to identify opportunities of creating linkages and forum for Consultations.
4. To establish the proper mechanism to enable Muslims in Kenya to identify themselves with the Mosque and to facilitate consultations.
5. Jamia Mosque requires a master plan and a strategic plan for Political Participation.

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Focus Group, held on 27/12/2015 in Nairobi at Family Resources Centre from 10.00 am up to 1.00 pm

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