

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF SALAFIYYAH DA^cWAH ON LAFIAGI MUSLIMS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Over the years, various Muslim organizations and individuals have emerged at different times and places advocating for a return to the practices and ideologies of the Muslim forbears. This trend has been echoed and reechoed differently in various Muslim societies. Hence, this paper aims to explore the emergence of Salafiyyah dacwah in Lafiagi Emirate and its socio-cultural and religious implications. The paper also examines how the principles of Salafiyyah influenced local religious practices, social dynamics, and community interaction. The research employs descriptive method to achieve its aims. The study finds out that the Lafiagi Muslims had contact with Salafiyyah ideology through the preaching of the non- Nupe scholars. The study concludes that Salafiyyah dacwah was perceived by Nupe Muslims as a strange ideology to the to existing religious and sociocultural practices and effected some changes thereof. Thus, through rigorous propagative efforts, Salafi ideologies and practices successfully influenced local religious and socio-cultural practices. The research therefore recommends that the Salafi group should focus on proper organization of its dacwah activities and leadership, because having a central leader under whom the group will thrive properly would help the group in navigating a lot of challenges, among other things.

Keywords: *Salafi; Dacwah; Salafiyyah; Lafiagi; Kwara State.*

Introduction

The word *Salaf* could be translated to a number of meanings among which are past, ancient, predecessor, forefathers (Al-Athari, 31). A survey of the usage of the word in the Qur'an shows that it was used eight times in seven chapters with the literal meanings of the past and preceding actions (Arikewuyo, 192).

Technically, *Salafiyyah* is the emulation of the methodological and ideological tracks of the Companions of the Prophet and of the ancient traditional scholars of Islam who also emulated the companions in their creeds (Arikewuyo, 192). In the wordings of Sounaye Abdoulaye, it is the restriction of the authentic source of Islam to the *Qur'an* and the tradition of Prophet Muhammad. At the same time, it (Salafism) insists on the oneness of Allah and following the model of Muhammad and his companions (Sounaye, 1). The forgoing definitions underscore *Salafiyyah dacwah* as both puritanical and reformative. It seeks purity and authenticity by restricting the sources of Islam to only the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah* and the standard practices of the Prophet's companions and the first three generations that followed them. While it is reformative approach lingers around the rejection of what it views as innovation and destruction of syncretic traditions as understood and by the first three generations of Muslims. *Salafiyyah* and its *dacwah* is built on various *ahādīth* where the Prophet made references to the credence, nobility and subjective of his Companions and the imperativeness of imitating them even in the period of religious apocalypse (As-Suhaymi, 23). According to Albānī (13), *Salafiyyah dacwah* is premise upon the Qur'anic verse which reads:

The vanguard (of Islam)- the first of those who forsook (Their homes) and of those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds,- well-pleased is Allah with them, As are They with him: for them hath He prepared Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever: that is the Supreme felicity (At-taubah, 100).

Perusing the developmental stages through which *Salafiyyah* has passed; Arikewuyo submitted that it has passed through three developmental stages, each stage with its characteristic features. The first stage, which is characterized with ultra conservative and literalist trend attacking the new evolving renaissance of the Greek philosophy in the Muslim community. This was headed by Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855 C.E.) and supported by the *Muhadithun* (Traditionists). The second stage is the period of Ibn Taymiyyah when rationalism was injected to *Salafiyyah*. This stage is characterized with the combination of textual provision with sound reasoning, intellectual disposition and academic polemics. Finally, the third stage is the stage of the reformist movement of Muhammad Ibn Abdil-Wahhāb. This stage was quite influenced by the bedouinism and harshness of the Arabian gulf. Consequent upon this, there are various factions of *Salafiyyah* in Muslim world. Some are rationalists as represented by Muhammad Abduh and his student Muhammad Rasid Rida while some others are literalists as represented by the scholars of Saudi conservative *Salafiyyah* (Arikewuyo, 193-194).

Be that as it may, the emergence of the *Salafiyyah* proponents in Lafiagi area with their *dacwah* around year 2000 presents the existing religious and socio-cultural practices with the question of authenticity. In other words, it questions the authenticity of the religious practices and social norms, and attempt to replace it with what it views as *Sunnah* and the practices of the fore-generation of Muslims, *Salafus-Salih* (Interview with Danladi, 2024). The impacts it made and the reaction it triggers this study and make it a worthwhile adventure. Essentially, this paper endeavours to highlight the emergence and development of *Salafiyyah dacwah* in Lafiagi emirate, the socio-cultural impacts of the *Salafī dacwah* on Muslims in the emirate and its impacts on religious practices. The research is both a library-based and field research.

Advent of Islam in Lafiagi Town

Against the popular submission about the ascription of Islam in Lafiagi to the duo of Fulani Mallams, Maliki and Manzuma, oral tradition has it that the original founders of Lafiagi were Muslims (Interview with Mohammed Abdullahi). It is on record that upon the arrival of the Fulani jihadists on the imperial soil of Lafiagi, they heard a voice similar to that of *Adhān* (call to prayer). To clear their doubt, they started tracing the voice which eventually led them to a place known as Emi *Ladan Dzagi* (now in Bindofu) where they found a Ladan (*Mu'adzin*) calling to prayer. They also met them reading '*shafi*', in Nupe, pieces of paper containing Arabic and Islamic knowledge. It follows therefore that prior to the advent of the Fulani Mallams, the Nupe people who lived in Lafiagi were practicing Muslims, albeit alongside their cultural practices and traditional rites as was prevalent in kin Nupe (Nupe land). For instance *Kutijin* (occultism), *Efu* (occult prescriptions), *Ebasan* (soothsaying), *Hati* (signs and tarot) and consultation of *Kajigi* among others were still commonplace (Interview with Mohammed Abdullahi).

However, with the coming of the Fulani Mallams, Mallam Abdulmalik quickly began his preaching activities in Lafiagi and neighboring villages, and at the same time a wide correspondence with the available '*Ulama* within the community. His preaching was aimed at converting the people of the emirate to a reformed Islam, to ensure that other affairs of the community conform to the teaching of the *Shar'iiyyah*. He enlightened people of Lafiagi on Islamic doctrine and pointed out how wicked it was to make sacrifices to idols (Interview with Mohammed Abdullahi, 2024).

Going by available records, it is known that owing to the expansionistic expedition and proselytization activities of Uthman Dan Fodio's flag-bearers, Islam gained prominence and expansion in Lafiagi and its neighboring communities. Due to their reformation approach, many pagan practices were significantly reduced and neutralized. It could also be concluded that the advent of Islam in Lafiagi was propelled by military engagement. It was rather through exhortation, teaching and learning of the Islamic knowledge (Interview with Alh. Babagado).

Moreover, Lafiagi became richly endowed with numerous erudite scholars of Arabic and Islamic Studies as well as preachers whose contribution to the spread of Islam in Lafiagi cannot be overemphasized. Mallam Muhammad Shamiyu of Emi Liman Kolobigi, the first indigenous chief Imam of Lafiagi emirate, Mallam Idris Liman Ndeji, Muhammad Liman Soro, Mallam Idris of Emi Liman Keremi, Adam Abba-Zango, Sheikh Uthman Bindofu, Muhammad Bida Saba kobo of Tako-Gabi, (all of Lafiagi) to mention but a few (Interview with Alh. Babagado, 2024).

Some scholars from neighboring communities like *Bida*, Enagi and in fact some Hausa merchants who came to settle in Lafiagi also consolidated the course of Islamic expansion on Lafiagi area (Interview with Mall. Manko, 2024).

Another factor that aided the spread of Islam is the subsequent establishment of *Dahlīz* (evening traditional *Qur'anic* School) *Qur'anic* learning Centers, where children learn the recitation and memorization of the *Qur'an* in the evening. The canters help in the spiritual and moral grounding of the young ones (Interview with Alh. Alfa Lawal, 2024).

Sociocultural and Religious Activities of Lafiagi people

There are various socio cultural activities which are part of the general Nupe cultural and religious activities and which are sometimes being practiced regionally according to the local conditions. This study will highlights some of those cultural and religious practices as it is being practiced in Lafiagi Township.

Traditional Song Performance

It is worthwhile to note that Nupe people are generally rich in songs and music especially the praise songs. To every occasion, there is an appropriate song performance. As a matter of fact, songs are not only performed during occasions alone but also during some occupational activities. There is hardly any occupation that does not require the performance of a traditional song. Occupations ranging from fishing, hunting, blacksmithing and farming to a collective or individual labour require that a specific kind of song be performed. To this end, the Nupe have '*Eni Kyadyazhi*' (song for the fishermen), '*Eni Egbe*' (son for the hunters), '*Eni Enu*' (farmers' song) and '*Eni Tswachi*' (song for the blacksmiths) etc. they also have '*Eni Kutizhi* or *Ndako Gboya*' (ritual or masquerade songs). More so, various socio-cultural occasions also features the performance of traditional songs. Occasions like naming, marriage, house opening, cīd celebrations and a host of others (Muhammad S., 2).

The Triad of Navu, Ninfugi, and Eyazhe Festival

Navu or *woriorche* (burning torches), *Ninfugi* (New Year's feast) and *Eyazhe* (new year forecast) are part of the cultural cum religious celebration among the Nupe Muslims in Lafiagi as it is being celebrated elsewhere in Nupeland. According to Nadel in Muhammad Bukhari, the culture of *Ninfugi* is observed with *Navu* celebration. He submitted that in Nupe a torch (*Navu*) represent the climax of the public appearance of the Bida *Enazhi* (age group). It is essentially a festival of youths. Its ritual acts which expresses symbolically the death and renewal of the year are carried out by the youths. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands. The youths will then group and divide themselves and throw their torches high up in the air, catch them as they fall. The procession continues until they finally get to the river (nearby or any available one the area). On reaching there, they dived into the water, splash on their body and play as well. Commenting on the scenario, Nadel expressed that *Navu* is the only occasion on which he saw Nupe indulge in open, undisguised sexual play (Muhammad B., 80).

However, the above is the general description of *Navu* festival in Nupe land. Accordingly in Lafiagi, the celebration follows the same pattern as described above. The *Navu* starts on the 1st of *Muharram* and ends on the 10th of the same month with *Ninfugi* in the 10th night and procession to the river. There is a popular tale that in that night the river water will change to *Zamzam* water and as such,

people go to the river and fetch it on large quantity. This is the general belief of the people. Not only that, they also bath in it to receive blessing and cleanse themselves. These events account for why the Islamic month of Muharram is called *Estuwa Navu* in Nupe (Interview with Idris Ndako).

More still, in the succeeding morning, that is 11th of *Muharram*, the whole festival culminates with *Eyazhe* which is a full forecast of all that will happen in the new year. In this regard, things like rain, plague, pandemic and other natural disasters would be forecasted. In the *Eyazhe*, the 'Ulamā' (local Mallams) will gather and read out some written documents or information that such and such things will happen this year. They usually name every year after some selected Prophets e.g. Prophet Ibrahim, Musa, Isah and even Muhammad (S.A.W), and at the end of the day embark or apportion certain *Sadaqah* (charity) to be paid by the people including the Emir (Interview with Danladi).

Nko (the Emirate Dubar)

Nko, properly put is *nko estu*, is one of the significant and influential sociocultural activity in Nupe land generally and lafiagi particularly. The Nko is in form of a royal durbar usually organized on the third day of both -*īd*; *īdul-fitr* and *īdul adha*. The event is usually organized in the emir's place attended by all the local chiefs, village head (*Zhitsus* and *Estu-Yankpa*). The religious leaders like Chief Imam of Lafiagi at the apex and all the villages Imam comprises of *Bata* and *Kinti* (lowlands and uplands) communities must be on attendance. Usually the *Nko* is designed to be avenue for the Emir to address the subjects on wide ranges of issues that borders on socio-cultural, political and economic activities of the emirate. During this *Nko*, proclamation, new orders, rules and regulation, and also appointment and pronouncement of new traditional and religious titles are made during this occasion. More so, there are lots of traditional entertainment featured in this event; *Gboya* (Masquerade) display and dances, *eyanma* (magic trick), *eyaguru* (human with horns), *maba* (petty eulogizers) and a host of many others (Interview with Sha'aba).

Emergence and Development of Salafiyyah Da'wah in Lafiagi Town

The origin of the *Salafi da'wah* in Lafiagi emirate could be attributed to three main factors namely lackadaisical attitude in the observation of religious obligations, escalation of syncretism and influence of the *Salafi* preachers elsewhere (within and outside Nigeria) and of course that of global *Salafism*. Around 1996, Lafiagi started receiving influences of *Salafism* from Bida through the *da'wah* activities of some *Salafi* preachers. On different occasions, many of the Lafiagi indigenes who reside in Bida and who might have been exposed to *Salafism* invite some *Salafidū'āt* (preachers) to their hometown in order to propagate and publicize *Salafism* through public preaching. This however was an attempt to validate their supposedly new religious worldview and to gain acceptance from the society. This is so owing to the nature of persecution and rejection directed to individuals who were trying to preach and exhibit some features of *Salafism* then, in Lafiagi. For instance, in 1996, one Mallam Zakari of Emi Ladan, Bindofu, Lafiagi invited an *Izala* preacher from Bida, in person of Mallam Abdullahi Mujahidu. The later delivered sermon on the *Salafi* concept of *Tawhīd*. Eventually the *da'wah* ended with pelting of the preacher as a result of the issues that ensued during the question and answer session. This incident was a demonstration of the community rejection of the sermon (Interview Danladi).

Be that as it may, since *Salafism* is not a structured organization and does not operate under the leadership of a singular figure, it is therefore difficult to indicate an individual as the founder of *Salafiyyah da'wah* in Lafiagi Township. This is to say that *Salafism* in Lafiagi cannot be attributed to a specific individual the emergence of *Salafism* in Lafiagi owes itself to the contributory efforts of some youths who might have contacted *Salafism* abroad and who later struggled to push for the advancement of the *Salafism* in their hometown. Nevertheless, some people believe that Umar Abdurrahman Estu (popularly known as Man Estu) was the one who introduced *Salafism* to Lafiagi Township and that it started at Emi Madiwu Lafiagi while some others attributed its foundation to

one Abdullahi Abdullah (Eba Haja of Emi Abu, Lafiagi) who is a close ally of the former (Interview Danladi).

Another source has it that it was Abdurrahman Estu who pioneers the publicity of *Salafiyyah da'wah* using microphone at *Egban Madiwu's* mosque (an area in Lafiagi). This however does not mean that there were no other practicing *Salafis* in Lafiagi who might not be interested in doing *da'wah* work due to some challenges thereto.

Having said this, the *da'wah* so started is characterized with the following opinions:

Observation of the five daily prayers is not as primary as having sound *'Aqidah* about *Tawhīd* which is the basic foundation upon which all the rituals are based;

The practice of *Ebasan* is tantamount to *Kufr/Shirk* (disbelief/polytheism), and that any Mallam who engaged in practicing it cannot validly lead a congregational prayer;

That *Tawasulbijahir-Rasūl*, that is, using the prophet's glory to seek closeness to Allah especially while praying is as well tantamount to *Kufr* or *Shirk* (disbelief or polytheism). These are some of their earliest opinions on *'Aqidah*. On worship (*'Ibādāt*), the following opinions and practices characterized *Salafism*:

- i. The invalidity of the prayer of he who prays badly; that is, one who prays too fast as though he does not recite *Al-Fātihah*;
- ii. The imperativeness of observing *Jilsatul-Istirahatu* (short sitting before standing up) while praying. Note however, that the practice is not a point of necessity even among the classical schools of thought.
- iii. Prohibition and innovativeness of *Talafudhu-bin-niyyah* (oral pronouncement of ritual intention);
- iv. The obligation of *Qabd/Wad'* (Folding the hands in prayer) as opposed to *Sadl* (Unfolding the hands in prayer);
- v. That the call to prayer, and observation of the *Zuhr* prayer (the noon prayer) should be made immediately after the *zawal* (when the sun reaches its meridian) irrespective of the hour of the day as opposed to the prevalent practice in Lafiagi which fixes *Zuhr* prayer at 2 O'clock. And on the socio-religious practices, they held the following opinions:
- vi. Prostration in greeting as it is practiced among the Nupes is *Haram* or *Shirk* (prohibited or polytheism).
- vii. Compulsoriness of using *Hijāb* (loosed garment worn by women to conceal their adornment) by Female Muslims among other things (Interview Danladi).

Eventually, the *Salafi* youths later started to observe their prayers only after the elderly people might have finished their own in the same mosque. Noting this, the latter began to disown and chase out the former from the mosque. However, the eviction of the former from the mosque (*Egban madiwu's* mosque) prompted them (the *Salafi* youths) to demarcate an open space hitherto the mosque (*Egban madiwu's* mosque) as a prayer station. Consequently, this gave birth to the first *Salafiyyah* mosque in Lafiagi. By implications, the first *Salafiyyah* mosque came into being in the year 2005, after the separation of the *Salafi* youths from the main mosque of *Egban Madiwu*.

Having said this, *da'watus-Salafiyyah* which started in an area in Lafiagi, with its starting point at *Egban Madiwu's* mosque later metamorphosed and became known in the nooks and crannies of Lafiagi Township.

However, with the passage of time, the *Salafis* noticed and objected to some ideologies of the *Ahmadis*. First, the former in a dialogue told the latter to stop prostration in greeting. Second, they should abhor the methodology of using the Bible and other related sources as the basis in their preaching on the pulpit during *Jum'at*, the latter were not ready to shift ground for any reason. As such, after rigorous dialogues between the two on issues of their differences, and with the realization

that the latter were too attached to their ideologies, the former thenceforth withdrew from the latter's *Jum'at* and went to their starting point (*Egban Madiwu*) to start a *Jum'at* of their own. With the *Salafis* starting their *Jum'at* prayers at Egban Madiwu, they witnessed a sudden influx in their population (Interview with Haroon).

All these development generated heated reactions from the non *Salafi* Muslims of that community. On the 2nd of May, 2014, the *Salafiyyah Jum'at* mosque was destroyed by groups of irate youths. Meanwhile, this crisis culminated in the activities of the *Salafis* namely; the *Jum'at* prayer, the weekly *da'wah*, and observance of five daily prayers in that place (*Egban Madiwu*) *Ubandawaki* area, Lafiagi. Additionally, the local authority (the *Ubandawki*) banned the continuation of *Salafiyyah da'wah* in *Ubandawki* area (Interview with Haroon).

Following the above, the activities of the *Salafis* shifted to another area, namely; Ndamaraki area, Lafiagi, where a new mosque was erected and their activities such as: *da'wah*, *Ta'lime* flourished. Thus, with the passage of a considerable period, the disagreement between the *Salafis* and the non-Salafi Muslims over some religious issues become escalated and later escalated into conflict. Consequently, on 11th of November, 2022, another crisis ensued between the later and the former which resulted in the closure of a mosque that belongs to the *Salafis* on the order of his royal highness, Alhaji Muhammad Kudu Kawu, the emir of Lafiagi.

Socio-Religious Impacts of *Salafiyyah Da'wah* on Muslims in Lafiagi Emirate

One of the prevalent Islamic education systems is the *Dahliz* format, where children attend evening Qur'anic school in the neighborhood. Hardly does one pass a residential area without seeing more than one *Dahliz*. In some areas, every *Emi* (compound) has a *Dahliz* where, in addition to Qur'anic recitation, introductory Fiqh (Jurisprudence) and rudimentary Arabic are taught alongside *Qasai'd* (poems). By convention, during Rab'ul-Awwal, these *Dahliz* would celebrate *Mawlidun-Nabiyy* (the prophet's birthday) as part of extracurricular activities for the students. It usually features *Madhun-Nabiyy* (chanting panegyric poem for the Prophet), *Hadith* competitions, chanting of *Al-Burdah* written by Al-Busayri, and a host of other intellectual and educative activities (Interview with Eba-Haja).

Salafiyyahda'wah is foremost in contesting the veracity of the above practice. Basically, it was an intellectual campaign for the extermination of *Bi'd'ah* (heresy), and *Mawlidun-Nabiyy* (celebration of the Prophet's birthday) is a major one, according to the *Salafis*. Consequently, the *da'wah* was able to subdue and neutralize this massive celebration of *Mawlidun-Nabiyy* (celebration of the prophet's birthday) by the *dahliz*.

Moreover, the *da'wah* is also successful in influencing the dressing manners especially for the females. As mentioned earlier elsewhere in this research, the wearing of *Hijab* and *Niqab* was so uncommon that only few *Ahmadiyyah* women and perhaps, some other non-*Ahmadi*s who might have lived in Hausaland wore it. However, with the emergence of *Salafiyyah*, the *Hijab* and *Niqab* became a common garment worn by Muslim women. As a matter of fact, while *Hijab* replaced *Edetikpe* (headscarf), *Nisfus-Saq* (trousers length to the half of shank) became en vogue among men (Interview with Eba-Haja).

Further still, *da'watus-Salafiyyah* is also successful in limelighting some of the unpopular prayer practices. For instance, *Sadl* (unfolding the hands while praying) was very common whereas, *Qabd* and *Wad'* (folding the hands while praying) were uncommon. In the same vein, *Jilsatul-istirahah* was equally unknown, that when eventually the *Salafis* argued for its observance, it was seen by some Mallams as arrogant way of praying. Thus, the *Salafis* were referred to as those who take break while praying. Also credit to the *Salafiyyah da'wah*, *Jam' bainas-Salatain* (joining of two obligatory prayers) when there is necessity became known and practiced (Interview with Eba-Haja).

Another social cultural impact of the *Salafi da'wah* is in the aspect of celebration of naming and wedding ceremonies. Naming ceremony otherwise known as *‘Aqīqah* were unnecessarily delayed by most Nupe Muslims, even the Mallams, because of some cultural impediments or the desire to pull crowd and sustain a flamboyant celebration. In reality, praise singers, *Edzanzhi* (drum beaters) and large feasting are featured in the celebration of *‘Aqīqah*. Thus, many *‘Aqīqah* are unnecessarily delayed till the child attain adolescence, or never observed at all. With the propagation of *salafi da'wah* coupled with the practice of some of the *Salafi* individuals, this trend started to face out and the strict observations of the religious provision with regard to the celebration of *‘aqīqah* became vogue. That is, slaughtering of animals on the eighth day and removing the hair of the new born, with the convergence of Mallams for prayer on a low key. Hence, the proliferation of *Sunnasosogi* (non-elaborative *‘Aqīqah*) over the former.

Equally, the marriage system in Nupe land is expensive due to some cultural rite and celebration connected to the marriage. With the development of *Salafism*, preferences are nowadays given to the observation of the cardinal things ordained by Allah. That is, *Waliy*, *Sighah* and *Khitbah* are the main features of the marriage system. This does not suggest that the cultural event that are connected to marriage ceremony like *Edzanzhi* (drumbeaters), *Ningbazhi* (praise singers), party, *Efegin* (party) etc are not more in practice but it has been significantly reduced due to the influence of the *Salafiyyah da'wah* (Interview with Mahmud).

Closely related to this is the practice of *Yawo sadaqa* (marriage without dowry) that was largely popular among the Nupe people. This is a mode of marriage where a father or anyone in that capacity gives her daughter's hand in marriage to any man he wishes without any dowry in exchange. This practice was considered as a virtuous act to the extent that it is believed to have a Prophetic blessing. To this effect, a popular poetic lines is been repeatedly chant in the event of taking such bride to the groom's house. The lines go thus: *yawo sadaqa yawo annabio* (Marriage without dowry is a prophetic marriage). With the development of *Salafiyyah da'wah*, this practice was campaigned against and dubbed (Interview with Mahmud).

Religiosity gains more enthusiasm, vigorousness, competition, challenging and with more vitality. This is because of the challenges of authenticity, credence and purity often posed by the *Salafida'wah* (Interview with Mahmud).

Furthermore, the *Salafiyyah da'wah* met on ground creedal concept of pantheism- a belief that Allah is in everywhere and in everything as alluded in the *Sūfī* concept of oneness of essence (*Wahdatul-Wujud*) Sequel to that, the *Salafida'wah* emphasizes on the primacy of *At-Tawhīd* (monotheism). It preaches that all the good deeds, virtues and rituals have no beneficial effects without sound *Tawhīd*. In fact, since the inception of the *da'wah* in this region, *da'watut-Tawhīd* (call to monotheism) has been entrenched in its three (3) folds of *Ar-Rubūbiyyah* (Lordship), *Al-'Ulūhiyyah* (devotion) and *'Asmāu' Was-Siffāt* (Divine Names and Attributes). This campaign of *Tawhīd* was specifically directed against some traditional belief systems like *Ga'achi* (witchcraft) wearing with other than Allah, swearing with graves of their predecessors, occult prescription (in Nupe, *Efujin*), *Gboya* (Masquerade), *kutijin* (river goddess) and a host of others. In fact, then, a youth hardly dies without the people having it to believe that the death is natural. Youthful deaths are commonly attributed to *Gachizhi* (witches). Even the local Mallams espoused the belief because most of them, in their preaching, frightened people with the reality of the *Ega* (witchcraft) and the power of *Gachizhi* (witches).

However, the *Salafis* see this attitude of Mallams as a promotion of heterodoxy. Thus, in due time, this and other similar beliefs became significantly reduced Also, Nupe people fondly swear with their ancestors' grave, or any other things they venerate. However, this forms the starting point of the *Salafiyyahda'wah*. A thorough campaign was launched in this aspect and this belief system was significantly influenced (Interview with Mahmud).

Closely related to the above is re-modification that the *Salafi dawah* brought to the mode of practicing the *Eyazhe* (New Year forecast) festival. In the past events, it used to be a full forecast of what will happen in the New Year in terms of rainfall, drought and even deaths. For instance, a year would be placed against a prophet and it would be forecasted that there will premature deaths, drought, disease outbreak and other things. As such, prescribed *Sadaqah* (charity) would be recommended for the rulers and people to expiate for the impending calamity. This practice is being condemned as unfounded innovation and unislamic. As a matter of fact, the *Salafiyyah* youths through their *dawah* campaign that the practice is tantamount to Shirk (polytheism) because forecasting the future is from the knowledge of the unseen which absolutely belongs to Allah. The resultant effect of this (*Salafiyyahdawah*) is that it forced the traditional Mallams to stop the proper forecast of the New Year and resort to organization of special prayer during the new-year event (*Eyazhe*) (Interview with Mahmud).

More so, *Salafiyyahdawah* was directed towards effecting some changes in the aspects of some rituals which the group condemned as acts of religious innovation. In this regard, *At-Tallaqudhu bin-Niyyah* (saying of intention in words) preparation of *Walimah* (Banquet) while going to Hajj, observation of *Nafilatul-Kaffarah* (supererogatory prayer for atonement) in the last Friday of the Month of *Ramadān* and the miscalculation as regard the percentage to be given as *Zakāt* (Nisāb) with respect to farm outputs. On this last case, it should be noted that majority of Lafiagi people are farmers. Thus, if for instance a farmer owns four rice farms and realized a total of 28 bags of rice from all his farms, harvesting 7 bags from each farm. However, he believes he is not obligated to give out *Zakat* (charity) from his harvest because he did not reach the threshold of 10 bags from each individual farm. The *Salafiyyah* group therefore argued otherwise that *Zakāt* must be given out after the summation of all the farm produce across the farmlands accordingly since all the farms belongs to the same individual. The reform in this socio-religious aspect is also influential (Interview with Mahmud).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it could be concluded that *Salafidawah* emerged in Lafiagi emirate through the influence of some *salafi* players across Nigeria and the outside world. This was complemented with the concerted effort of some indigenous youths who were more inclined towards *Salafism*. The study also concludes that the *Salafidawah* was aimed at reforming some religious practices, revives the Sunnah and purge the religion out of profane accretions that has crept into it through innovation or socio-cultural inadequacy. Thus, to a significant extent, the *Salafidawah* has made social, cultural and religious impacts in the life of Muslims in the emirate.

Recommendations

The *Salafi* group should focus on proper organization and leadership, having a central leader under whom the group will thrive without undue distractions will help the group in navigating a lot of challenges such as sectionalism and defection among other things. The group should also design a nuance *dawah* strategies/policy that encourages intergroup dialogue. This will enable them to have a proper diagnosis of the socio religious problems and how to tackle it without any blemishes. More importantly, the *Salafi Du'at* should strive hard to imbibe patient and perseverance in the course of carrying out *dawah*. This will hasten the growth and development of the *dawah* peacefully and minimize avoidable unrests. The *Salafiyyah* group should also do well to establish learning centers for the proper grounding of her members and the younger generations.

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