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## **Incursion of Shi'ism in Sunni Dominated Societies: A Study of Gombe Metropolis**

**Ali Samaila,<sup>1</sup> Yahya Oyewole Imam<sup>2</sup> and Fatima Abubakar<sup>3</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Sunni sect is considered to be the most dominant sect in Nigeria since the introduction of Islam in the 11<sup>th</sup> century up to 20<sup>th</sup> century when Shi'ism was embraced by a group of Nigerian youths in tertiary institutions who distinguished themselves by calling people to the true teachings of Islam amidst clash of ideologies of Marxism and Capitalism. Their primary motive was to capture state power and to establish an Islamic state devoid of anti-Islamic ideologies. The introduction of Shi'ism in Nigeria by these young Islamic activists generated a great tension and created a wide ground for theological debates to date. This paper therefore, attempts to study the introduction of Shi'ism in Gombe town, its prospects and challenges as well as the relationship between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis in the city. The work suitably adopted historical method of finding data; using primary sources such as interviews, observations and audio recordings, the research found that Shi'ism was accepted in Gombe since the late 1980s and to present time there are three Shi'ite organizations in Gombe which have some similarities and dissimilarities as well. The research finally recommends among other things, that in order to achieve unity among Muslims of different sects, adherents of the sects should guard their tongues against provoking utterances to their brethren of other sect.

### **Introduction**

The advent of Islam in what is Nigeria today is dated back to 11<sup>th</sup> century. The place where it first reached was Kanem-Borno. It was subsequently spread to Hausa land and other parts of the country especially after the revivalist movement of Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fodiyo in the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Ali Samaila**, is with the Department of Religious Studies Gombe State University, Gombe. He can be reached at 08142635077, [ismailaliyyu@gmail.com](mailto:ismailaliyyu@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> **Yahya Oyewole Imam (PhD)**, is a Professor with the Department of Religions University of Ilorin, Ilorin. He can be reached at 08023587359, [imam.yo@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:imam.yo@unilorin.edu.ng)

<sup>3</sup> **Fatima Abubakar (PhD)**, is with the Department of Religious Studies Gombe State University, Gombe. She can be reached at 08036171744, [fatimaabubakar927@gmail.com](mailto:fatimaabubakar927@gmail.com)

century (Barau). Some authors assert that from the 11th century up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nigerian Muslims practiced Sunni-Islam. Although, there has been a Shia Community mostly traders from Lebanon living in northern Nigeria since the early colonial period, the acceptance of Shi'ism by the indigenous inhabitants was triggered by the 1979 Islamic revolution of Iran when a group of young Muslim activists imported the ideology to the country (Isa). While some informants opine that the infiltration of Shi'ism into Nigerian soil was a result of the effort made by Iranian Embassy in Lagos which used to distribute Shi'a books free of charge in the late 1970s (Agan).

The Islamic revolution of Iran came at a time when those youths were yearning for Islamic revolution or revivalism in Nigeria. The youths were under the tutelage of Mal. Ibrahim Ya'akub Al-Zakzaky, a Zaria based Muslim scholar who was known for pronouncements like "Islamic revolution", "establishment of Islamic state", "total change", and the like. His group labeled themselves as "*Ikhwanul Muslimin*" (Muslim Brothers), or in Hausa *Yan Buraza* (brothers) or "*Yan uwa Musulmi* (Muslim brothers). They organize lectures and several demonstrations during the first phase (Zenn).

At the early stage (In the 1980s), al-Zakzaky claimed that he did not belong to the Shi'a, that his group was not out to promote Shi'ism, and that what they wanted was Islamic revival and nothing else and that one could be a member regardless of his sect (Ali, Activities that preceded the advent of Shi'a in Nigeria). In due course, however, Shi'ism found its way among the al-Zakzaky's followers (Ali, Activities that preceded the advent of Shi'a in Nigeria), this led those who opposed Shi'ism to abandon the movement claiming that it was gravitating towards Shi'ite ideology (Thurston). For although al-Zakzaky at the initial time avoids calling his movement Shi'ite, his numerous remarks leave no space for skepticism as to his Shi'ism (fitina Tawayiyah). This indeed marks the initial stage of Shi'ism in Nigeria especially its northern part which has concentration of Muslims. In Gombe for instance Shi'ism was accepted in the late 1980s when a group of *Yan Buraza* (Brothers) from Gombe had contact with some of the movement leaders from outside the state who embraced Shi'ism. The new movement (Shi'ism) continued to gain followers in a discreet manner; and subsequently attracted more followers when the entire brotherhood movement metamorphosed to become a Shiite one.

### **Overview of the brotherhood (*Yan Buraza*) Movement in Nigeria**

The Brotherhood (*Yan Buraza*) movement which started in northern Nigeria in the late seventies can be considered a passage or a vehicle in which Shi'ism was imported into the country. It started as a movement for Islamic revival from among the students in tertiary institutions who were religious conscious and wanted to bring change to the entire nation by adopting the Islamic system of governance; Mal. Ibrahim Ya'akub al-Zakzaky was considered a leader of this movement. This youth movement started under the umbrella of Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) which later transformed to *Da'ira* or *Da'irori* (study centers) to accommodate non-students and the students who graduated from the universities. In short, the movement's activities in the late 70s and early 80s were strictly under MSSN while the late 80s and early 90s was a time in which *Da'irori* were formed outside the institutions in different towns and cities where activities of learning and preaching took place (Deba, activities of brotherhood movement in Nigeria). In any *Daira* there must be a teacher who is normally called *Ameer* (leader) who would tutor the members who were known as "Brothers" (*Yan uwa*) and *Hurras* (guards) who served as guard or security of the *Da'ira*. Some of the duties of the *Hurras* are organization of the place of reading or preaching and leading the *Muzaharah* (demonstration). Initially, the movement was not based on Shi'ism or promoting its ideology; In fact, the movement spent not less than ten years before its members started conversion to Shi'ism (Doma, the time when Shi'ism started among Yan Buraza).

The struggle began when Muslim students at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria and other northern Nigerian institutions were at the peak of a clash of ideologies with the pro-socialist students. Thereupon these youth began to campaign for the return to pure Islam, they once organized a demonstration titled "Islam Only" to voice out what they were campaigning for (Hussaini).

These youths consider the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*) as their role models and as such wherever the *Dairori* exist, they normally study the writings of the most notable scholars of the Muslim Brotherhood such as the books "*Maalim Fittariiq* (the Milestone) by Sayyid Qutb, *Jundullah Thaqaafatan wa Akhlaqan*, *Al-Islam*, and *Ar-Rasul Sallallahu Alaihiwa Sallam*, all authored by Saeed Hawwa, *Muzakkirat*, *Ma'athurat* and *Ar-Risalah* by Hasan al-

Bannah, to mention but a few (Doma, the time when Shi'ism started among Yan Buraza). In fact some informants believed that this is the sole reason why members of this movement were called "Brothers" (or *Yan Buraza* adulterated in Hausa dialect) (Doma, where did the title Brothers originated for Yan Buraza). They were sometimes addressed as "*Yan Harka*"(those who belong to the movement of reviving Islam), "*Yan bara'a*" (Those who renounce obedience to any system beside Allah's) and "*Yan Gwagwarmaya*"(Those who struggle to establish Islamic government) to signify their mission. They usually conduct a meeting (*Ijtima'*) on monthly basis in either Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)'s mosque or Bayero University (BUK)'s mosque (Ali, Activities that preceded the advent of Shi'a in Nigeria).

It was amidst this struggle that the Iranian revolution happened while al-Zakzaky was the Vice President of the MSSN. This revolution exposed these youth to know much about Iran and its Shi'ite ideology. It indeed attracted their attention as they were yearning for revivalism, causing division among the members and leaders of the movement into pro and anti-Iran and eventually led to the acceptance of Shi'ism by most of them (Doma, the activities that preceded the advent of Shi'ism in Nigeria). The Iranian government adopted different strategies in order to win the hearts of not only these Nigerian revival youths but the entire Muslim world to embrace its ideology. During their first anniversary of revolution in 1980 the Iranian government extended hands of friendship to most Muslim countries to support and celebrate with them. They invited Muslim organizations including the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria; Mal. Ibrahim Yakubu Al-Zakzaky who was a Vice President, in charge of International Affairs had the opportunity of attending the event together with some prominent Nigerian Scholars (Ali, Activities that preceded the advent of Shi'a in Nigeria). In addition, another important strategy adopted by Iranian government was sponsorship of passage to *Hajj* (pilgrimage). They sponsored some of the executives of this movement to *Hajj* for some years (Doma, the activities that preceded the advent of Shi'ism in Nigeria). This gesture also endeared Iranian government to these youths, and eventually facilitated their acceptance of Shi'ism (Doma, the activities that preceded the advent of Shi'ism in Nigeria).

Mal. Ibrahim al-Zakzaky together with some brothers initially intended to form a society in Zaria which they called "*Mujtama*" (community) to ease their mission and suggested Falladan in Zaria to be their station (Wanzam, the activities that preceded the advent of Shi'ism in

Nigeria). Some Brothers from other states started to relocate to the place but their intention did not actualize due to the imprisonment of al-Zakzaky from 1981-1984 (Wanzam, the activities that preceded the advent of Shi'ism in Nigeria). Due to his repeated clashes with Nigerian authorities, al-Zakzaky was imprisoned in the years: 1981-1985, 1987-1989, and 1996-1998. Across northern Nigeria, al-Zakzaky's followers were seen by authorities and mainstream society as troublemakers (Thurston). From 2015 to 2021 al-Zakzaky has been in detention by the Buhari-led government following the clash between the movement and Nigerian army in 2015 which took place in Zaria, Kaduna State (Isenyo).

In 1994, some of al-Zakzaky's followers broke away, rejecting him for secretly promoting Shi'ism as the group's ideology; the group called itself *Jama'at Tajdid al-Islam* (J.T.I) meaning Society for Reviving Islam (Thurston). After the estrangement of this group, the vast majority of Zakzaky's followers accepted Shi'ism as their ideology as they perceived the direction of their leader al-Zakzaky, while a very few of them clung to the Sunni sect, as such they were derogatorily called "*Yan Jumudi*." (those who are static) They were given this epithet due to their non-acceptance of Shi'ism. Thereafter, almost all the *Yan Jumudi* changed their initial stance to embrace Shi'ism (Wanzam, The beginning of Shi'ism in Nigeria).

### **Brotherhood Movement (*Yan Buraza*) in Gombe**

Malam Bello Doma was a pioneer *Ameer* (leader) of the Brotherhood movement in Gombe. Having been in the activities of MSSN since his secondary school days and up to the tertiary level, gathered more experience and connected to most prominent executives of brotherhood movement in most of the northern states. Doma started teaching Qur'an and other subjects in his father's mosque (popularly known as Bello Doma's mosque) in Jekadafari Gombe around 1985-1986. (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe) This mosque is considered as a seed bed for brotherhood activities, because apart from Qur'anic class, there were also *Ta'alim* (teaching) sessions where the teacher taught the above-mentioned books written by Egyptian brotherhood leaders. The *Ta'alim* is mostly followed by *Ta'aliq* (additional information). Other activities in the mosque included preaching by the teacher and visiting scholars from among the executives of the brotherhood who come from time to time to deliver lectures (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

After a year or thereabout, a man named Haruna came and sought the consent of the teacher to invite some youths in Government Science Secondary School Gombe (G.S.S Gombe) to participate in the study session if the teacher would permit (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe). The students subsequently joined the study session.

Mal. Doma who was considered to be among the anti-Iran among the leaders of brotherhood tried his best to block his students from associating with the neighbouring towns members of the movement for fear of their being convinced by Pro-Iranian members, as he considered them prone to fall into the trap of Shi'ites. He rarely allowed the students to participate in the meetings held by Brothers (Ali, brotherhood activities in Gombe). In 1988 Mal. Doma intended to go for *Umrah* (lesser *hajj*), he therefore, with the suggestion of the majority of his disciples appointed Baba Musa as their *Ameer* in his stead (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

Before Doma's departure, he sent a delegation to Bauchi to meet Mal. Hussaini Abubakar, who was *Ameer* of a *Da'ira* in Bauchi, to send someone that would add to the students' knowledge and experience. One Lukman, was sent to continue guiding them in the absence of their teacher. This man introduced to them some of the Iranian magazines and posters although the man was not a Shiite then but he did not have any role model other than Iran. The students seized this opportunity to establish correspondence with other members of the brotherhood movement in other towns, which in turn eased the spread of Shi'ism among them, just like Doma feared (Ali, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

Mal. Bello upon returning from *Umrah* discovered the situation on ground and expressed his dissatisfaction with many of the things brought by Lukman (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe). Some of the students became attracted to these Iranian magazines, posters and the likes and soon began to have series of conflicts with their leader (Doma) as a result. They accused him of aversion to anything concerning Iran and dislike for even the picture of Al-Zakzaky to be pasted on the walls. At one point in time, Bauchi Television Authority came to take a video coverage of the *Tarawih* (night supererogatory prayers during *Ramadan*) in the mosque during *Ramadan* (the ninth month of the lunar calendar), this presented a point for the students to attack the teacher's supposed dislike for pictures (Ali, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

The conflict between Doma and his followers became intense to the extent that whenever there was *Ta'alim*, the *Ta'aliq* would always be a contradiction of what has been taught in the *Ta'alim*, they gave the teacher negative sobriquet in his absence such as “*malam ya narke*” meaning “the teacher had melted in people that did not want the progress of Islam” “*Bayahude*” “a Jew” “*Dan Kwangilan Amurkane*” “he was sponsored by America to bring a set back to the movement”. One day, they convened a meeting for reconciliation which lasted from the early hours of the night till day break, but ended fruitlessly. Thus, a delegation was sent from the national body in order to make their disputes settled; the delegation include Mal. Hussaini Abubakar Bauchi and Mal. Aminu Gusau but to no avail. In fact, Gusau even declared that “the measure they use to assess one’s *iman* (faith) was his support for Iran” (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe), thereby making clear their excommunication of Mal. Doma.

As time went on, a group of *Yan Buraza* (Brothers) from the *Da'ira* embraced Shi'ism due to their contact with some of the leaders of the movement from outside the state. The people who accepted Shi'ism among the students faced challenges and intimidations from their fellows which led some of them to silently stop attending the activities of Brothers. Others still continued with their activities with the brothers while engaging in their Shi'ite activities secretly (Fosi).

Then, some of the students brought the idea of starting a *Ta'alim* session in emir's mosque. Some informants believed that the introduction of the *Ta'alim* in emir's mosque was intentional, for some of the disciples wanted to boycott the Doma's mosque, where they originally held the *Ta'alim* session (Ali, brotherhood activities in Gombe). Mal. Bello Doma and Mal. Baba Musa were the principal teachers in the *Ta'alim* session in the emir's mosque. Mal. Mustapha Baba Ilela a brother from Bauchi also advised them to start preaching in the mosque before and after Friday prayer, a suggestion accepted unanimously (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

However, in 1993 Mal. Bello Doma got admission to study in the Islamic University of Madina which gave way for Baba Musa to assume the position of *Ameer*. Mal. Muhammad Wanzam was considered as deputy to Mal. Baba Musa Gombe who used to teach in the *Ta'alim* session also (Doma, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

One day during the *Ta'alim* in the emir's mosque, some members were chased out of the mosque because they openly showed their inclination to Shi'ism. They narrowly escaped, to gather themselves in one Badamasi's room to communicate and seek for way out (Ali, brotherhood activities in Gombe).

However, Mal. al-Zakzaky was calling for unity of Muslims that was why he allowed some of his followers to practice Shi'ism when the majority practiced Sunnism, which opposed the position held by some of his officials. That was why in Gombe, Mal. Baba Musa Gombe started to warn people in places of *Ta'alim* against involvement in Shi'ites activities or accepting their ideologies. Some members from Gombe including his deputy Mal. Muhammad Wanzam went to Zaria to inform al-Zakzaky about what Baba was doing, thereupon Zakzaky instructed them to go back and inform him to stop this campaign. They came back to explain this after *Ta'alim* session delivered by Mal. Baba. After a day or two Mal. Baba went to meet Mal. Wanzam to deliver the book read during *Ta'alim*, declaring that he would no longer be delivering the *Ta'alim*, he would rather be a mere listener. (Wanzam, The beginning of Shi'ism in Nigeria) Not long thereafter, nine prominent lieutenants of Sheikh al-Zakzaky including Mal. Baba Musa Gombe declared their disavowal of him (i.e.al-Zakzaky) and founded another group called *Jama'atu Tajdidil Islam J.T.I* (Society for Revival of Islam); that was in 1994 when they noticed his acceptance of Shi'ism. This event was termed by al-Zakzaky as *fitnah tawayiyyah* (the trial of rebellion). The *fitnah Tawayiyyah* wiped away about two-thirds of Zakzaky's followers leaving behind only one third. (Deba, activities of brotherhood movement in Nigeria)

After the incident of *Tawayiyyah*, people from various states went to Zaria to re-affirm their allegiance to al-Zakzaky and to declare their rejection of leaders involved in rebellion to him. This is formally known as *Tajdidul Wilayah* (Reaffirming allegiance) (Wanzam, The beginning of Shi'ism in Nigeria).

In addition, the movement also in 1996 split again when Malam Hamza Lawan returned from study in Iran while al-Zakzaky was in detention; he (Mal. Hamza Lawan) started to preach Shi'ism as opposed to Sheikh al-Zakzaky's model. He attracted followers through his various audio cassettes, mostly from *Hurras* (Wanzam, The beginning of Shi'ism in Nigeria). Those who became receptive to his teachings were pejoratively called *Yan Taqlidi* (those who imitate). In

1999 his (i.e Mallam Hamza's) followers in Gombe were expelled from the activities of the movement while they were preparing the place for a programme which was one of their duties. After their expulsion, they started to gather at Nasarawo quarters in Gombe for their activities which include reading and prayer sessions under their leader Muhammad A. Muhammad who was the leader of the *Hurras* in the main stream movement. Malam Hamza Lawan registered his association in the name *Mu'assasatu Thaqafatuth Thaqalayn* with the corporate affairs in Kaduna State and ordered his followers in their various states to register as well; thereupon his followers in Gombe registered their movement with the name Bilal Islamic Foundation (Muhammad).

### ***Ahlul Bayti Muslim Community, Gombe***

The history of this Shi'ite organization is traced back to the incident of the emir's mosque when some members were chased out of the mosque. After that event the members travelled to Bauchi to meet one Abdulqadir Mubarak who was their ideological soul-mate and sought his advice on how to handle the situation. Mubarak was an indigene of Kano state studying in Iran, having come to Bauchi for one of the requirements of his study, *Tabligh* (extending the message) as it was one of their duties whenever they were in vacation. Mubarak advised them to dissociate themselves from the places of *Ta'alim* (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

Between 1992 and 1993 the Shiite community in Gombe hosted two visiting scholars from Iran, Muhammad Salihi and Hujjatul Islam Mansur Liqa'i respectively. Upon returning to Iran, Salihi sent some books to the members in order to help them learn more on Shi'ism as he realized their deficiency in knowing the teachings of the sect. Liqa'i spent some days in Gombe and left for Kano to establish the first Shi'ite school in Nigeria. During the opening, Liqa'i invited five members each from the states of Northern Nigeria where there were followers of Shi'ism and organized a workshop for them (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

After the establishing the school, two members from Gombe secured admission into the school, these were Mal. Mu'azu Adamu and Ali Mafara. Mu'azu succeeded in staying at the school for about six years and during his holidays, Mu'azu used to teach his fellow members on

faith based on what he learned from the school. After the graduation of Mal. Mu'azu from that school, he together with some members decided to organize a society that would be propagating and disseminating the ideology. They therefore, registered an association with the name *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community, Gombe in 1999. Later, in 2005, the organization was affiliated to *Rasulul A'azam* Foundation (RAF) as its national body with its leader *Hujjatul Islam* Muhammad Nura Dass. The main objective of this group of Shi'ites is to propagate Shi'ism to non-Shi'ites and to ensure that Shi'ism is being understood by its adherents. The association has its own office in Tudun Wada near National Examination Council office Gombe (Ali, the activities of *Ahlul bayti* Muslim Community in Gombe).

### **Organizational Structure**

The society's leadership is divided into two units; Spiritual and Administrative. Mal. Muazu was the spiritual leader and Mal. Muhammad Musa was the administrative leader. The spiritual leadership is permanent whereas the administrative run based on tenure system. The administrative leader or chairman is now aided by some executives who include the Deputy Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Welfare, Public Relation Officers and Legal Adviser. The spiritual leadership is up to the period of this study (2019) vacant since the demise of Mal. Mu'azu (Musa).

### **Activities and Prospects**

Some of the activities of this organization include:

- i. Reading session.
- ii. Annual Tafsir
- iii. Monthly/Annual program

### **Reading Session**

*Ta'alim* used to be conducted weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the night. The books read in the *Ta'alim* Session are *Ahkamul Islam* compiled by *Ayatullah Sayyid* Ali al-Khamna'i and the books *Aqaeedul Imamiyyah*. Alhaji Salisu and Mal. Muhammad Ibrahim Wanzam teach the *Ahkamul Islam* and the *aqeedah* respectively. The *Ta'alim* session is usually accompanied by

supplications. The supplications are *Du'a'u Khumail* and *Du'a'u Tawassul* on Tuesday and Thursday's night respectively (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

Beside the above mentioned *Ta'alim* which is basically for men, there is also a specific section established since 2004 for women and children classes. The children section is an *Islamiyyah* school where they will be trained based on Shi'ite principles and doctrines, the school did not incorporate any secular subjects. The classes mostly take place during weekends (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

### **Annual Tafsir**

The society organizes Tafsir annually in the month of Ramadan attracting scholars from outside the state. Sheik Saleh Muhammad Sani Zaria came to deliver Tafsir in 2002 and 2003. From 2004 to date Sheikh Bashir Lawan (*Sautu'sshi'a*) continue coming for the purpose. The Tafsir mostly preceded by a supplication known as *Du'a'ul Iftitah* (the supplication of opening) (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

### **Monthly/Annual Programme**

These are programs which the organization normally observes on the occasion of birthdays and death days of the Shiite Imams where they share happy and or grief respectively. The prophet's *Maulud* as well as that of his daughter Fatima are more venerated. Similarly the death of Husayn is the most remembered because of his brutal assassination (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

It is pertinent to note that, in either of the two programmes of happy or grief, they normally engage in narrating the life history of the Imam in question except on the day of *Arbaeen* (Arbaeen is a program organize on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after the assassination of Imam Husayn ) which after narrating the incident of Husayn's martyrdom they engage in cursing the killers of the Imam and even those who are happy with his assassination (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

### **The Program of *Layalil-Qadr* (The Nights of Power)**

This is another annual programme observed by this organization. They believe that *Laylatul Qadr* occurs on 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of Ramadan as such they engage in specific devotions in these days. The devotions include prayers, supplications and Qur'anic. The prayers (*Salat*) and recitation are observed on individual basis while the supplications are to be observed congregationally (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

### **Challenges of the Organization**

Like any other religious organization, *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community in Gombe has its own constraints, some of which are:

#### 1. Financial challenges

There was a program they sponsored to be aired in radio station weekly but due to the financial constraint they cannot afford now (at the time of this research).

2. Misrepresentation of Shi'ism by some Shiites organization in Nigeria such as Islamic Movement in Nigeria. *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community believes that some of the activities of IMN are not in conformity with traditional teachings of the Shi'ite which cause majority of the people to hate and down grade Shi'ites (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe).

### **Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), Gombe Branch**

This is another Shi'ite community in Gombe having al-Zakzaky as its national leader. Its emergence in Gombe as a Shi'a group is traced back to the incident of *Tajdidul Wilayah* after the split of JTI as previously indicated. They started to run their activities under the leadership of Mal. Muhammad Ibrahim Wanzam, who managed the affairs of the movement aided by other members until 2010, at which time he decided to step down over an alleged conspiracy by some of his followers who sent someone to ask and record his views on Sheikh Zakzaky's personality. He expressed his respect for Al-Zakzaky, but opined that the Sheikh Zakzaky is fallible like other humans. This opinion apparently enraged the members who felt that Al-Zakzaky was infallible; they thus interpreted his opinion as an insult to the Sheikh. Sensing an imminent rebellion, Mal. Wanzam stepped down and offered the mantle of the leadership to Mal. Ibrahim

Ahmad Kwalla who, however, turned down the offer saying that he would not accept a leadership offer from someone who downgraded the status of al-Zakzaky (Wanzam, the activities of IMN Gombe). Several attempts were made by the members to harm Wanzam but failed. The members thereafter went to meet al-Zakzaky and narrated the situation to him with inference of disloyalty. Consequently, Sheikh Zakzaky excommunicated Mal.Wanzam and appointed Mal. Muhammad Abbare as their new *Ameer* who remains in that capacity to date (Wanzam, the activities of IMN Gombe).

### **Organizational Structure**

The Islamic Movement in Nigeria has a unique leadership hierarchy which is similar to none among all the Nigerian Islamic organizations. The organization follows the hierarchy of leadership of *Yan Buraza* movement. Therefore, any *Da'ira* in a state or town is headed by the *Ameer* who neither has a deputy nor a secretary. There are also Brothers (*Yan Buraza*) who were the members of the association and the *Hurras* (guard of the *Da'ira*) as mentioned previously. The *Ameer* is assisted by some committees which work with him. Each committee or wing has its own leader (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe). Some of the committees are:

- i. Academic forum
- ii. Resource forum
- iii. *Shuhada* Foundation
- iv. Youth forum
- v. Media forum

### **Academic Forum**

This forum involves teachers and students in both tertiary institutions and secondary schools. It is meant to create awareness concerning the IMN. The forum was introduced when MSSN denied the involvement of IMN members in their programmes. The main objective of the forum is to regain the intellectual, cultural, and civilizational identity of the *Ummah* through the intellectual revolution in the academic environment (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe). Some of the activities of this forum are:

1. Conducting annual Islamic Vacation Course. (I.V.C) for secondary and tertiary students.

2. Annual Imam's week which mostly take place in June to commemorate Imam Khomeini's birthday and his contributions.
3. Visitation of sick. Whenever they are out for this visitation they normally share gifts and pray for the sick, without discriminating whether the sick is a Muslim or not.
4. Organizing tutorials on campuses.
5. Organizing lessons for secondary students.

### **Resource Forum**

This forum is targeted to civil servants. Its Programmes includes:

- a) Yearly programme of *Maulud* in Kaduna
- b) Organizing public lectures
- c) Get together; in which they will invite some influential elites in a state to have a meal and tell them more about their movement and stance (Deba, activities of brotherhood movement in Nigeria).

### **Shuhada Foundation**

This foundation was established because of numerous attacks waged on members of the movement. Therefore, its establishment was to sustain the families of martyrs who died in defense of the movement. As such, each member would donate a sum of one hundred naira monthly to the foundation, and every year in the month of Rajab, they gather together to account for the money generated and spent (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Youth Forum**

This forum caters for establishing relationship between IMN and other sects or religions. (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Media Forum**

This is designated for disseminating information to the general public (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

## **Activities and Prospects**

Among the core activities of Islamic Movement in Nigeria Gombe branch are:

- i. *Ta'alim* session.
- ii. Demonstration (*Muzahara*)
- iii. Preaching
- iv. *Quds* Day
- v. Workshop

### ***Ta'alim* Session**

This activity is of the earliest among their activities since the inception of *Yan Buraza* movement. The addition here is the introduction of teaching or school for married women and children. The women class started to hold in one Adamu's house in Jekadafari ward Gombe. Later, school was built in 1994 in the name *fudiyya*. The school's name *Fudiyya* is said to be coined from the name of Shaykh Uthman bin Fodiyo. The school which started as women's now transformed to primary and secondary school where children receive Islamic and western education concurrently. As time went on the school now have about five different branches in Gombe to decongest the first one and to ease the situation for its attendants. Other branches of the school are in the wards of Jekadafari, Pantami, Nasarawo, Al-Qahira, and Tabra. The school's schedule is divided into morning, afternoon and night in which children will study in the morning, women study in the afternoon, while the adult men study in the night (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Demonstration (*Muzaharah*)**

This is another IMN activity which is aim at articulating a mission. They normally dress out in particular attire which correspond the situation or the mission they want to express and holding placards containing the mission. They make rows of people roaming about the street to show the people the condition. The dress can be white if the *muzaharah* is for happiness or black if it is for grief. Some of the stipulated *Muzaharah* are for *Ashurah* (tenth day of Al-Muharram first month of the lunar calendar. The Shiites world -wide show their grief over the death of Husayn Ibn Ali

(one of their twelve imams) on that day), *Maulud* (birthday of the Prophet, and *Quds* day (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Preaching**

The IMN continued the preaching session which was mentioned earlier that Mustapha Baba Ilela suggested the introduction of Pre-*Khutbah* (sermon) and post-*Khutbah* in emir's mosque until when there was a crisis between the IMN members and the authorities of the mosque in 2011. Apart from this, they organize preaching especially during the days of *Maulud* (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Quds Day**

This is another special *Muzaharah* which is organized purposely to sympathize with Palestinians and seek for their liberation. It occurs on the last Friday of Ramadan annually (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Workshop (Daurah)**

All the state leaders (*Ameers*) gathered in Zaria to receive lesson or workshop from Sheikh Zakzaky every month. The state *Ameers* upon returning will gather other *Ameers* of different *Da'irori* in the town to organize a workshop for them, the leaders of different forums would also take part in the workshop (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Challenges**

Some of the challenges bedeviling IMN in Gombe consist of:

- a) Inability of the society to understand the movement. The Nigerian society view Zakzaky's followers as a trouble makers or terror group. There were instances of crisis occurred between the IMN members and the Nigerian government or other members of the society. In Gombe for instance, Conflicts occurred between the IMN members and the emir's mosque committee in 2011. The genesis of this crisis is that after the renovation of the Emir's Mosque by Goje's (second executive Governor in Gombe) administration, the mosque committee intended to ban the activities of IMN in the

mosque. The IMN members refused to stop their activities in the mosque with the notion that mosques belong to Allah. It was said that some of the mosque committee members ganged some thugs to come and chase them away from the mosque. Thence crisis erupted between the thugs and the IMN members where both parties take arms which caused some casualties as some of them were injured, imprisoned, and even one of the IMN members was killed. The crisis culminated when the governor ordered the security forces to intervene. The mosque committee and IMN reached a conclusion that IMN will continue their preaching after the Juma'at prayer not inside the mosque but within its premises (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

- b) Hatred of Shiites by the vast majority of Muslims. They claim that they were denied privileges at times because of their inclination to Shi'ism (Wanzam, the activities of IMN Gombe).
- c) Most of the members who had the opportunity to go to Iran on study seem to adopt an antagonistic stance towards the movement upon their return home (Deba, the activities of IMN in Gombe).

### **Bilal Islamic Foundation**

This is another Shi'ite organization in Gombe; they are the followers *Mallam Hamza Lawan* the founder of *Muassasatu thaqafatuth thaqlayn*. The prime motive of this organization is to present, through teachings and enlightenment, the teachings of *Ahlul Bayt* (the family of the prophet Muhammad PBUH) and to propagate and disseminate the pure Shi'a teachings (Muhammad).

### **Organizational Structure**

The group has a leadership hierarchy like any other organization having its chairman and other supporting positions. They operate based on tenure system. The organization had a center in Pantami quarters near Alhaji Da'u grave yard in Gombe, which is the administrative office as well as school (Muhammad).

### **Activities and Prospects**

In terms activities this organization shares similar activities with *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community Gombe. They specifically have in their center, a specific timing for teaching adult men and women as well as children (Muhammad).

### **Challenges**

The organization has some challenges which include financial constraint; they for long time want to have larger building for their center but manage to carry their activities in a smaller building because of the financial difficulties (Muhammad).

### **Relationship between the Three Shi'a Organizations in Gombe**

All the three Shi'a organizations in Gombe have indeed some similarities as can be seen from the fact that they are all Shi'ites, following the largest Shi'i denomination (i.e *al-Imamiyyah* branch of Shi'ism). They observe, even though differently, similar programs such as *Maulud* of the Prophet and that of the Imams, *Ashurah* commemoration of grief and the like. Most of the informants from all the organizations expressed that their acceptance of Shi'ism is based on knowledge and conviction. (Wanzam, Relation between Shi'ite themselves and between them and Ahl as sunnah)

Based on Shi'i principles any Shiite must have a *Marji'i*, (a jurist who reach the level of deducting laws) this is what they call it *Taqlid*. The members of all the three organizations consider Imam Khomeini's successor Ayatullah Sayyid Ali al-Khamna'i as their *Marji'i*. But since the *Taqlid* is a personal affair some of them have different *Maraji'u* (plural of *Marji'i*) such as Ayatullahi Sistani of Iraq and Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah of Lebanon (Wanzam, Relation between Shi'ite themselves and between them and Ahl as sunnah).

However, in spite of the above-mentioned similarities, there exist some distinctions between the three organizations which can be summarized as follows:

The *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community Gombe and the Bilal Islamic Foundation recognize the leadership of Muslim in Nigeria and the Nigerian democratic government; as such they do

fast in the month of Ramadan with the mainstream Muslims, while the IMN is in most of time engage in conflict with the government.

While the IMN Gombe consider Zakzaky as its spiritual leader at the national level, the two other organizations consider him not fitted for the position as he acts most at times contrary to the Shiites doctrines and principles. *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community Gombe follows Muhammad Nur Das (the leader of Rasulul A'zam Foundation R.A.F) as their spiritual leader at the national level. While Bilal Islamic Foundation considers Mallam Hamza Lawan Zaria as their national leader. (Musa)

The IMN calls for establishing Islamic government as its core and fundamental teaching and considers it as one of the issue of faith which one requires no *Marji'i* to undertake it because a person can only follow *Marji'i* on the issue of jurisprudence, whereas the two other organizations believe that struggle for revolution can only be led by a *Marji'i* and the government, if established, must be governed by his decision, as such they consider it impossible in Nigeria now, because of the absence of any in Nigeria. They claim that one can attain the position of *Marji'i* by investing his time in seeking knowledge for not less than thirty years. (Ali, the activities of Ahlul bayti Muslim Community in Gombe)

The *Ahlul Bayti* Muslim Community Gombe as well as Bilal Islamic Foundation only recognize person as a scholar if he happened to attend *Hawzah* (a study in center in Shi'ite dominated areas) while the IMN members believe that one can get guidance to study and be a scholar in his home town even without attending *Hawzah* (Wanzam, Relation between Shi'ite themselves and between them and Ahl as sunnah).

### **Relationship between Ahlus Sunnah and Shi'ites in Gombe**

*Ahlus Sunnah* in virtually every place in northern Nigeria shared the same attitude of despising Shiites on the basis of Shiites' hatred to prophet's companion and prophet's wives, as well as the allegation that they believed in the existence of interpolation in the Qur'an. They accused Shiites and their leaders as liars because of their principle of *Taqiyya* as such their relationship became sour. *Ahlus Sunnah* consider the Shi'ite not on the right path because of the above mentioned

evidences and developed a kind of hatred towards them based on the principle of loving for the sake of Allah (AbdulGaniy).

Shiites on the other hand, consider *Ahlus Sunnah* also not on the right direction because of their belief in the caliphate of Ali's predecessors and their please with all the *Sahaba* (companions of the prophet) who they considered as oppressors of *Ahlul Bayti*. They accused *Ahlus Sunnah* scholars of telling lies about Shi'ism (Wanzam, Relation between Shi'ite themselves and between them and Ahl as sunnah).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the foregone discussion, it is apparent that the history of the advent of Shi'ism was introduced to Gombe via the activities of Brotherhood movement who were well known as *Yan Buraza* in the late 1980s. It is also observed that not all the *Yan Buraza* accepted Shi'ites in the 1980s and the early 1990s. However, there are Shi'ites three different organizations which share some similarities and have differences on the other way.

In view of the aforementioned explanations and by considering the objectives of the research, the study suggests the following:

1. Government should come up with a policy or at least constitute a committee that would sensitize and check mate the activities of any religious organization to avoid unnecessary violence between an organization with either the security agencies or the community as seen in the crisis of IMN and the emir's mosque committee.
2. Muslim scholars should teach their people to display good teaching of the religion of in relating with Muslim of the other sect.
3. Muslim scholars should as well teach people the pure teachings of Islam concerning the disagreement of Sunnis and Shi'ite.

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