

**AN ASSESSMENT OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN AD-  
DA<sup>W</sup>ATU'S-SALAFIYYAH IN ILORIN**

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**Abstract**

*Da<sup>W</sup>ah* is a unique and indispensable tool for Islamic propagation. The work of *Da<sup>W</sup>ah* enlists both genders, though the reality reveals that both of them are not at par in most cases, especially when it comes to open-*Da<sup>W</sup>ah* engagements. Males are more prominent than their female counterparts. This paper therefore examines *Ad-Da<sup>W</sup>atu's-Salafiyyah* in Ilorin *vis-a-vis* the involvement of women in making *Salafiyyah* a household name in the city. The paper adopted historical method in achieving its set objectives. It is revealed, in the paper, that Salafism is increasingly growing in the city by the day, though with some deficiencies, especially in relation to availability of female *Du<sup>W</sup>āt*. Despite the activeness and sizeable numbers of women inclination to the call, much has not been done to religiously cater for their interest as regards gender issues and sensitivity in Islam. There are few female *Du<sup>W</sup>āt* which is not proportionate to their numbers, hence males are made to anchor

programmes that are meant for females. Misinterpretation of feminine provisions in the *Shari'ah*, matrimonial issues and inadequate knowledge of Islam are some of the identified factors for the paucity of female *Salafiyyah* preachers. The paper, therefore, concluded that for the *Da'wah* to be worthwhile, there is the need to train more women for *Da'wah* activities and for gender consciousness.

**Keywords:** *Da'wah*, Propagation, Salafism, Misinterpretation, Female

### **Introduction**

*Da'wah*, in its simplest technical interpretation, is to invite people to the way of Allah.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the most essential tools for proselytization in Islam. *Da'wah* was the major responsibility of the Messengers and Prophets of Allah because of its significance and importance in turning people to the path of Allah. It is so crucial that Allah ordered a party from among the believers to carry it out for Islamic propagation (Qur'an3:103). The effectiveness of *Da'wah* in Islamic evangelism is so obvious that right from the time of the Prophet, the Companions and the early generations of Muslims, it has been an important tool for spreading of Islamic message. It is a proven medium for effective Islamic admonition and promulgation with impacts on both the Muslims and non-Muslims. Undoubtedly, as *Da'wah* is useful in effecting necessary changes among the Muslims, it is also instrumental to getting the non-Muslims acquainted with the message of Islam, probably to get inclined to the religion or to enhance their understanding of it (Islam).

*Da'wah* is a major responsibility of both Muslim men and women, though men appear to be more involved and active in it than their women counterparts. This is evident from the great number of male scholars that Islam has produced right from the time of the Prophet till the present time. Different factors are responsible for the paucity of female *Du'āt* (S. *Dā'iyah*). Notwithstanding, some women have been partaking in *Da'wah* activities across ages and places with excellent performance and significant impacts. This paper, therefore, aims at examining *Ad-Da'watu's-Salafiyyah* in Ilorin vis-à-vis the involvement of women with a view to determining the level and nature of their participation and impacts in making Salafism a household name in the city. The historical method will be adopted to drive home the objectives of this paper. This is imperative because the city is rich in Islamic heritage and scholarship.

### Concept of *Da'wah* in Islam and the Role of Women

*Da'wah* is from the Arabic word which means to call or to invite.<sup>2</sup>In its ordinary sense, *Da'wah* presupposes calling people to a course or purpose, which may either be good or bad. Technically, the word *Da'wah* means to invite people to the way of Allah or to do what is righteous which can earn one rewards.<sup>3</sup>*Da'wah* in its essence, therefore, means the conveyance of the message of Islam to people. The glorious *Qur'an* in many places directs Muslims to engage in rigorous acts of *Da'wah* and sets the rules of engagement for the *Du'at*. Prophet Nūḥ among other Prophets of Allah is placed as a template for whoever wants to embark on calling people to the way of Allah. A critical examination of *Sūratu'l-Nūḥ* will reveal how he deployed various *Da'wah* techniques and strategies, ranging from public to private *Da'wah* and how he appealed to the reasoning faculty of his people in the bid to accomplish his mission. These are nothing but a divine template for *Du'at*.

The Nuh's *Da'wah* model which qualified him as a pioneer in the field and the first to be addressed as *rasulu'l-Lāhi* (Messenger of Allah), because he was the first to be sent to his people by Allah, could be said to have been complemented by Prophet Muhammad's demonstration of a high sense of patience, rare perseverance, and uncommon intellectual prowess, all of which are essential when it comes to inviting people to righteousness. Most importantly, the Glorious *Qur'an* places knowledge-based proof (*ilm*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) as the drivers for *Da'wah* activities (*Qur'an* 12:108; 16:125). These are essential because as knowledge guarantees the mastery of *Da'wah* projects, wisdom guarantees appropriateness in the delivery of the message of Allah. Wisdom will guide one in providing answers to the questions of what, where, when, why and how in a *Da'wah* context.

Jamal has identified eleven (11) main qualities that a *Dā'iyah* must possess. These include among other things, *Ikhlāṣ* (sincerity), *Ilmu* (Knowledge), *Ḥikmah* (wisdom), *Ḥilm* (forbearance), *Rifq* (gentility), *Ṣabru* (patience), *Tawāḍu'* (humility), *Quḍwah* (exemplariness), *Husnul-Istimā'* (good listening hear), *Shajā'ah* (courage), and *Karam* (generosity).<sup>4</sup>A closer look at each of these items reveals their inevitability in *Da'wah* accomplishment.

A critical assessment of *Da'wah* activities in Islam shows that it is an all-inclusive task that concerns every Muslim regardless of gender, though in different capacities. As indicated above, the focus of this paper is on women whose role in *Da'wah* projects has not been properly defined, especially in Ilorin. Women generally have endowments that are

quite unique and useful for *Da'wah* activities, hence their importance in the Islamic scheme of things. Islam redeems their status from retrogression to grace. Azizu-Rahman rightly observes:

It is not an overstatement to say that Islam is the first religion in the world to offer a system for the protection and wellbeing of women and their rights. This system is absolutely perfect. It offers her dignity, respect, and equal status as men. In the Holy Qur'ān, Allah Almighty instructs both men and women separately and collectively regarding their roles, duties, and responsibilities both as men/women and as a practicing Muslim. These instructions throw light on the purpose of the creation of both genders. They also provide guidelines using methods which will ensure the safeguard of the chastity and modesty of both the creations as this is important for the sustenance of the society.<sup>5</sup>

Women therefore attained different status as they grow in life and Islam is in tune with each status, because each is significant to Islam as a whole and *Da'wah* in particular. They live first as daughters before progressing to the status of wives and subsequently mothers. In each of these statuses, they have *Da'wah* responsibilities to discharge as placed on them by Islam. As daughters, women had critical roles to play in *Da'wah* activities. The first is to live an exemplary life that is worthy of emulation among their peers in the society. Records testify to the roles of A'isha as a daughter to AbuBakar before becoming a wife to the Prophet. She was obedient, intelligent and morally upright among other qualities. She had a memory of everything that transpired throughout her life as a minor. Her sense of obedience to her parents was demonstrated when she was to be married to the Prophet by her father and she never objected to the decision.<sup>6</sup>The same goes for Hafṣah, the daughter of 'Umar, whose obedience was equally demonstrated when she was also to be married to the Prophet by her father.<sup>7</sup> They played dual roles which are geared towards entrenching the missions of the best friends to their respective parents and husband. Hafsa, as a daughter to *Khalīfatu* 'Umar, kept the original copy of the Qur'ān from which it was preserved and protected against loss, interpolation and corruption of different sorts.<sup>8</sup>Also, Asmau Bint Abi-Bakr was another female companion with a proven record of outstanding contributions and dedications to Islam. Her role in the battle of Yarmouk stands her out.<sup>9</sup>

As mothers, women are the first schools to their children, as opined by Hafiz Ibrahim.<sup>10</sup> They are described as the first and the best school where a child starts learning about life. This therefore confers on them the religious duty to nurture their children in a religious way. The case of Sumayyahbint Khabbāt (d.615 CE) who by virtue of her training to her children had all of them as martyrs because her four (4) sons died in different battles in defence of Islam. She was just a golden example to women folk.<sup>11</sup>

Also, as wives, different women from history have immensely contributed to *Da'wah* activities in Islam. For instance, wives of the Prophet played major roles by lessening domestic responsibilities on him, and by being strong pillars to his *Da'wah* activities. Wives of the Prophet, starting from Khadījah, A'isha, Ummu Salamah, among others, are noted to have in one way or another provided the necessary support for their husband in his divine assignment. Khadijah in particular, apart from being the first person to accept Islam<sup>12</sup> and gave hope and assurances to the Prophet, supported him with her material wealth and built his confidence. Both A'isha and Umm Salama were intellectual repositories of his renditions.<sup>13</sup> They were highly revered and referred to by the Companions on many matters. In fact, A'isha reported *ahādith* of the Prophet more than many male Companions.<sup>14</sup>

Also, many women are teachers of repute in Islamic history. There are many role models among females whose knowledge of Islam is uncommon. A roll call of teachers of many great scholars includes many women among those who baked them. From the 7<sup>th</sup> century after the period of the companions till the present 21<sup>st</sup> century, many female Muslim scholars have emerged. Prominent among them are Rabiyyahbint Muawidh, Amar Bint Abdur-Rahman (d. 710CE), Umm Ad-Darda As-Sughrāh (d.700CE), Aisha Bint Ahmad Ibn Muhammad IbnQadim (d.1009CE), Sayyida Nafisah (d.830CE), to mention but just a few. Also, in the contemporary time, especially in Nigeria A'isha B. Lemu of Islamic Education Trust, Minna, Niger State Nigeria Dr Sherifat Hussain Abubakar of Department of Religions, History and Heritage, Kwara State University, Malete, Dr Hasanat Abubakar-Hamid Funmilayo of Arabic Department, University of Ilorin, Alhaja Khadijah Olayiwola Al-Imam, Al-Hidayah Media, and a host of others are some of exemplary women who had printed their foot on the sand of time when it comes to *Da'wah* or Islamic activities.

### **Salafism in Ilorin**

Ilorin is the capital city of Kwara State, Nigeria, and a border state between the south and the north of Nigeria. The city is known with a very rich Islamic cultural heritage, due to its subjugation by the Islamic Jihad of 19<sup>th</sup> century, under the headship of Sheikh Uthman bin Fudi.<sup>15</sup> It was Shaykh Abdus-Salam bin Jinta popularly known as Sheikh Alimi that led the *Mujahidun* (Muslim warriors) to the city. Although there are evidences which established the presence of Muslims in Ilorin, especially at Oke Suna before the arrival of the *Mujahidun*,<sup>16</sup> their coming into the city marked a significant turnaround in the history of Islam in the city. So, the type of Islam that was being practiced in Ilorin was the one that was later identified to be *Sūfi* oriented which the *Salafiyyah*, in the modern times stands against.<sup>16</sup> Truly, if not when the wind of *Salafiyyah* blew, many people hardly differentiate between what is Islam and what is the customary practice of Ilorin, hence the people of Ilorin are fond of saying and boasting that the custom of my city is in line with *Sunnah* of the Prophet.<sup>17</sup> It was the *Salafiyyah* that revealed the parallels that exist between traditional Islam in Ilorin and the level of its compliance with the authentic *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

The appearance of *Salafiyyah*, as it is known today, started in the late 80s with the return of some Ilorin indigenes who had won scholarships to study Islamic related courses in Saudi Arabian Universities. The first to be noted with the *Da<sup>c</sup>watus-Salafiyyah* was Shaykh Aminullahi Ibrahim popularly known as *Baba Medina*.<sup>18</sup> It was after him that the city witnessed the arrival of many other returnees who are graduates of Saudi Arabian Universities in the late nineties (90s) and the calls for *Salafiyyah* got boosted. People started to notice different attitudes that are somehow strange from the norms of the society. Such include the campaign against bending or bowing while greeting, preaching against the use of *Subhah* (rosary), wearing of above the ankle trousers among other practices. The *Da<sup>c</sup>wah* methods of the armies of youth that are returning from overseas Universities were quite strange to the people.

The likes of Professor Abdur-Razzaq Abdul-Majid Alaro, Professor Abdur-Rahman Ahmad Al-Imam Kakuri, Professor Abdul-Ganiy Akorede Agbarigidoma, DrElesin, Sheikh Abdul-Wahhab Ajia, Muhammad Ali Jabata, and a host of others, are prominent in the spread of *Ad-Da<sup>c</sup>watu-Salafiyyah* in Ilorin. Except Muhammad Ali Jabata, who went to Azhari University, Cairo, Egypt where he never graduated,<sup>19</sup> others are Saudi graduates. They are responsible for the grooming of younger ones and home grown *Salafiyyah* advocates that are common

around today. In Ilorin, the home grown *Salafiyyah* advocates who are students of these scholars include Dr. Ahmad Nafiu Arikewuyo Al-Jawhari, Ustadh Abdur-Razzaq Ejigbo, Ustadh Ali Bawa, Ustadh Sanusi Lafiaji, Dr. Kamaldeen Ajijolakewu, Ustadh Abdul Fatahi Sarunmi and a host of others.

It was not long before one discovered the springing up of different learning centres, including *Madāris*(Islamic schools), *Halaqat* (study circles) where people were taught the tenets of *Salafiyyah* and public *Da'wah* outreach among others at different locations within the city.<sup>20</sup> Today, there are *Halaqat* at Fatimah mosque, Opo Malu Road, *As-Sunnah* Mosque and Sanrab Mosque, both located at the University Road, Tanke, Umar Al-Khattab Mosque, Kuntu, Mu'awiyyah Mosque, Oloje, *Darul-Hijrah*, Apalara Area, *Al-Istiqaamah*, Ogidi,<sup>21</sup> among others where different lectures are anchored by different lecturers using different texts which are written by *Salafiyyah* admired scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb, Sheikh Ibn Bāz, Al-Uthaymīn, Al-Bānī among others. They also used some works of the living *Salafiyyah* scholars from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

What needs to be noted is that *Ad-Da'watu 's-Salafiyyah* in Ilorin is majorly anchored by male scholars, even as could be inferred from the names above. Females are mostly the audience who listened to the preaching alone without necessarily bothering themselves to tow the path of the likes of A'isha and Umm Salamah, among other female prominent *Da'wah* activists mentioned above who sometimes engaged even men. The phenomenon is not limited to Ilorin, rather it cuts across the Islamic world, if one takes the statistics of the preachers across board. Detail will be discussed at the appropriate place in this paper.

### **Selected Female *Salafiyyah* Preachers in Ilorin and their Activities**

Despite the paucity of female *Salafiyyah* preachers in the city, there are pockets of them whose *Da'wah* activities are worthwhile. This sub-head is therefore assigned to focus on their roll call. They include Alhaja Habeebat Abimbola Otuyo, Alhaja Khadijah Abdul- Ghaniyy Al-Abtawiyah and Afodun Rafiat Ummu Abdir-Rahman.

#### **Alhaja Habeebat Abimbola Otuyo**

A *Dā'iyyah* by training, Alhaja Habeebat Abimbola Otuyo graduated from *Daru Da'wah*, Ibadan, where she obtained *Thanawiyah* certificate before proceeding to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with her husband, Professor Ibrahim Jamiu Otuyo of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin

in the Department of Islamic Studies. He is one of the graduates of Saudi Arabian Universities. While in Saudi Arabia, she attended Girls' College of Education, Riyadh. She also attended University of Ilorin for a degree programme in Arabic language which she graduated in 2011.

As a teacher and a preacher, Alhaja Otuyo started public *Da'wah* for almost three decades ago in Ilorin.<sup>22</sup> According to her, when she returned from Saudi Arabia and settled in Ilorin, she noticed the rampant shameless acts being perpetrated by some Muslim women in her area, Sango. Little did she know that it was a general practice across the city. These include the modes of dressing by Muslim women which stand between indecency or decency but unacceptable modes of dressing in Islam. There was general use of *Iborun* and *Ibori* as against the *Hijāb* and *Jilbāb* that Islam prescribes for female folk. Alhaja was also particular about the common type of dance in the city which was popularly known as *Kodis'Oni'lu*. This is where a married woman will shamelessly throw her buttocks to a drummer, while the drummer will move his drum as close as possible to her buttocks to create sensation and arouse public interest.<sup>23</sup>

These among other indecent practices have eaten deep into the fabric of the society. They therefore triggered her decision to start engaging in public *Da'wah*. According to her, she started enlightening people at Sango area, of course, her immediate environment when she saw the above aberrations in a society of learned people. She was on this for almost twenty-five (25) years until recently when she stopped because she noticed some degree of changes and understanding among the women in the society.<sup>24</sup> Considering the period spent, it is clear that her preaching activities started as an ordinary Islamic preaching without any reference or emphasis to *Ad-Da'watus-Salafiyyah*, basically because it was not the trend that time, though her preaching themes are geared towards Salafism.

As part of her contributions to *Da'wah* in Ilorin, she established Al-Bab Center for Islamic Books and Materials, Maraba, Ilorin. The center, which according to her, was established in 1995 as a small shop in Sango area has grown to be home for most Islamic Books in Yoruba, English and Arabic languages. The centre is still very functional as one of the rallying points for Islamic materials in Ilorin. She also mentioned her involvement in various activities of Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Ilorin, as a speaker and contributor and in many radio and television programmes such as Al-Mu'minat. She is a teacher and researcher, mother and grandmother.<sup>25</sup>



**Alhaja Khadijah Abdul- Ghaniyy Al-Abtawiyah**

Al-Abtawiy, as she is fondly called, is a scholar and wife of a scholar with a high sense of reverence and reference from people. She has benefited a lot of people with her knowledge. She actually hailed from Zulu Compound, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, but was married to Sheikh Abdul-Ghaniy Aboto, a popular Muslim preacher in Ilorin and its environs.<sup>26</sup> She finished from *Zumuratu'l-Adabiyyah Kamaliyyah*, Ilorin, where she obtained her *I'dāddiyyah* and *Thanawiyyah* certificates. She joined *Zumurah* after she had learnt the rudiments of Arabic language and Qur'ānic recitation from her biological father who was Al-Imam Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Kaylani of Zulu Compound, Ogbomosho. She has made a lot of efforts in Islamic propagation through preaching and teaching. She started propagating Islam when she was still in *Madrasah*, especially among her mates. During the holiday time which used to coincide with the month of Ramadan, she used to be one of Qur'anic exegetes who deputized her dad in his absence.

Alhaja Khadijah narrated how she became a *Mufasssarah* (female exegete) that on that day, her dad travelled during Ramadan with the plan to return before the evening time when the *Tafsīr* session would hold. As usual, people gathered to listen to *Tafsīr* but unfortunately her father was unavoidably absent. The gathering was so crowded that the Chief Imam of Ogbomosho was in attendance. Her dad was a kind of person with different schedules. He was a good propagator of Islam even by making references to the Bible. In fact, he memorized many biblical verses and versions. He was also a sportsman and a Nigerian force officer (Nigerian Police). That day, he went to represent Oyo State in a sporting competition and he could not return as expected. Her grandfather ordered her to lead the session that day and she did the *Tafsīr* for the members of public in Ogbomosho. This was so pretty amazing that the news went viral in the whole of Ogbomosho that a young lady led *Tafsīr* session. This incident motivated a lot of families to enroll their children in Arabic schools.<sup>27</sup>

Before this, Alhajah Khadijah had a congregation (*Jama'ah*) in her household which is named *Jam'iatu As-Ṣalātiyyah*, Zulu, Ogbomosho, Oyo State. It was a large congregation that used to hold different Islamic activities, including teaching, preaching and training as might be necessitated by the topic of discourse. All these were basically for females. The group served as avenue for educating Muslim women at that time. After a while, she went to Ilorin. On getting there, in strengthening the cause of propagating Islam through *Da'wah*, she was fortunate to be one of the first set of females to deliver lectures on Radio Kwara. She was

a prominent member of Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN).<sup>28</sup> Her membership in MSSN exposed her to *Salafiyyah* ideology which she found pristine and pleasing. She also belonged to Mallam (Now Prof) Abubakar Imam Ali-Agan students, whom he trained on Islamic *Da'wah*. She was one of the female members that Ali-Agan used to put forward to give sermons or to counsel other female members. Her impacts did not stop, even after her marriage. In fact, she has been able to establish a branch of *Jam'iyyatu Ṣalāṭiyyah Al-Abtawiyyah*, Ilorin and it is flourishing even better than that of Ogbomosho.<sup>29</sup>

Among others, Alhajah Khadijah belongs to an Islamic Organization called "The Criterion: Women in Business and Profession". She is their National *Mu'allimah*. The organization has different branches throughout the country and even abroad such as in Accra, Ghana. The reason for establishing this, according to her, was the discovery of pathetic and unfortunate conditions of Muslim sisters in their various homes. She used to organize a time with the brides-to-be and counsel them before going into their matrimonial homes. This usually occurs a day or two before their wedding and they call it Mother's day. She has been invited as a guest lecturer to different organizations in different States throughout Nigeria, especially South-western states. She also holds television and radio programmes such as *As-Salihaat*, *Al-Qanitaat*, *Al-Muslimaat* on stations like NTA, Kwara TV, Harmony FM, Unilorin Radio, Radio Kwara where she lectures Muslim Sisters and the entire Muslims at large.<sup>30</sup>

### **Afodun Raffiat Ummu Abdir-Rahman**

She is a scholar and wife to another scholar, Ustadh Dr Kamaldeen Ajijolakewu of Microbiology Department, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, who is a prominent *Salafiyyah* scholar in Ilorin. She is also a graduate of the University's *Madrakah* and a Qur'ān memorizer. Having interested in living an Islamic life, her husband tailored her religious thoughts towards Salafism, which defined everything about her today. She graduated from the Department of English, University of Ilorin. She is very popular among University of Ilorin female students as she used to be invited to different *ta'līm* sessions involving the female students on campus. When she delivered her first lecture at the session, she proved her mastery of Islamic principles to the satisfaction of all and sundry. She has delivered several other lectures covering different topics. Some of these include: "Status of Muslim Women", "Challenges of Muslim Women" and "Fasting" among others. She delivers most of her lectures in English

as her listeners are mostly female students from University of Ilorin. She is a wife and mother with children and these did not hinder her *Daw'ah* activities.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Paucity of Female *Da'iyah* among the *Salafiyyūn* in Ilorin**

In reality, *Ad-Da'watu's-Salafiyyah* is witnessing an impressive growth in the city of Ilorin, but one of the greatest challenges to the call is the scarcity of female *Du'āt*. As much as the city is blessed with many male scholars of *Salafiyyah* inclination who are of international repute, females are relatively few. This has accounted in no small measures for some noticeable anomalies that characterized the *Salafiyyah* circles in the city. Such includes males anchoring different programmes for females both at public lectures and at *halaqāt*, which is repugnant in Islam.

The *Shari'ah* standard is gender sensitive. This is because the *Shari'ah* took into cognizance the peculiarities of both sexes and the question of morality. It forbids free mixing between males and females. That is the rationale behind separation even at the places of worship, prescription of *hijāb*, discouragement of loud recitations, and avoidance of privacy with strange men<sup>32</sup> among others. In line with these rules, males are better taught by a male and females by a female. The contrary is only allowed under the condition of necessity (*Aḍ-Ḍarūrah*), which must not be taken as the rule, as it is adopted today.

A visit to the *Salafiyyah* centres in Ilorin reveals how male scholars are the anchors in most cases. Fatimah mosque, As-Sunnah, Sanrab, Shaykh Ajia and other *halaqat* in Ilorin, are some of the examples of places or centres where male lectures, while the audience includes females. Research also reveals that lectures in some of these places are not specifically designed for females, but they (females) used to attend in order to improve their knowledge of Islam. Although there are windows of women programmes in some of these *halaqāt*, like Fatimah mosque, Sanrab and Qur'ān Academy among others, there are few women who handled some of them. In fact, most of the women that anchor these programmes are not well grounded in Islamic knowledge, as one would have expected. The sizeable number of female attendees in *Salafiyyah* programmes in the city should have necessitated the need to find alternatives, in order not to jettison the Islamic rules, in an Islamic gathering through violating the rules of grouping males and females separately.

Lack of enough female *Du'āt* has exposed many Mallams to danger of immorality and has accounted for various setbacks in enlisting

female members of the society into Salafism. Intermingling of the people of opposite sexes for whatever reasons including religious matters is most times between two things. It is either there would be lack of interest, misplaced interest or shyness. But if there are trained female scholars for that purpose, they can always employ different methods as may be convenient or conform to their nature thereby enabling the accomplishment of the mission. It was on the case of necessity that the Prophet would attend to females or his wives attending to male companions, as could be inferred from *Sīrah*. The *Ḥadīth* literature holds how female companions demanded attention from the Prophet, just to attend specifically to them.<sup>33</sup> This narration shows that prior to this incident, the Prophet did not use to attend separately to them. As absence of female *Dā'iyah* poses serious challenges to the course of Salafism in Ilorin, the under listed are some of the factors thereof.

#### **Hindrances to Availability of Female *Du'āt* among the *Salafiyyah* in Ilorin**

It is clear from all indication that *Ad-Da'watu's-Salafiyyah* in Ilorin is suffering a setback due to absence of enough female *Du'āt* who can handle the *Da'wah* activities among the females. This has accounted in no small measures for the challenges in the consolidation of the *Da'wah* in the city. Females constitute a reasonable percentage of every society and issues relating to them must not be handled with levity. They have roles that are crucial to enhancing the moral standards of every society, hence various prescriptions and restrictions that are put in place by the *Shari'ah*, such as modes of dressing, talking, interacting, among others which are meant to preserve them for moral standards that will enhance the betterment of the society. The under-listed are the factors that inhibit the availability of female *Du'āt* among the *Salafiyyah* in Ilorin.

#### **Misconception of Islamic Provisions on Voice of Women and *Hijāb* (Veil)**

Undoubtedly, an assessment of the activities of some *Salafiyyah* advocates in Ilorin reveals that there are existing misconceptions on the *Shari'ah* provisions on female's voice in relation to nudity (*ʿawrah*) and *hijāb* as mixing or intermingling with people of opposite sexes calls for caution. These are occasioned by different references from both the Qur'an and authentic reports from the Prophet. The Qur'an in chapter 33:32-33 directs the females not to raise their voices, especially in the public in order not to cause problems relating to lustfulness in society. It is

for the purpose of living above these problems in the society that the *Sharī'ah* provides that they should recite silently in *Ṣalāt* and forbids them from any public activities that will make them mix freely, or intermingle with strange men. There is also the view that it is for the same purpose that the Prophet encouraged the women folk to observe their *Ṣalawāt* inside their homes, instead of *Masjid*.<sup>34</sup>

Although most of the prominent *Salafīyyah* scholars in Ilorin are silent about engagement of female *Dā'iyah*, Jabata, a prominent *Salafīyyah* figure in the city, however makes a clear position that the *ḥijāb* provision in the *Sharī'ah* goes beyond clothing but also includes the conduct of females in the society. Therefore, the primary meaning of *ḥijāb*, in his view, is to create a barrier between Muslim women and strange men. Where the women are now allowed to give lectures, even to the fellow women without proper precautionary measures, it is a violation of the *Sharī'ah* provisions.<sup>35</sup> There could be implied agreement with Jabata<sup>36</sup> from most of the *Salafīyyah* advocates in the city. This is because one would have expected that as the husbands are prominent with *Da'wah* activities, they ought to have trained their wives in the art of preaching in order to engage females in the society, but this is not the case.

The open and implied position of the *Salafīyyah* scholars in Ilorin are grossly against the position of many classical and modern scholars including Ibn Kathīr,<sup>37</sup> Imam Al-Allūsī,<sup>38</sup> Al-Bānī,<sup>39</sup> and the scholars of *Al-Lajnatu 'd-Dā'imah* (The permanent committee of scholars) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In their opinions, the verses only forbid melodious voices or tones, unrestricted movement and unacceptable dresses. Al-Bānī who appears too strict on forbiddance of women from even going to mosque for *Ṣalāt*, based on the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet that says: Do not prevent your women from visiting the mosque, but their houses are better for them,<sup>40</sup> takes it as a general rule with an exception that where they will have access to learning and beneficial lectures, they should not be prevented. He however cautioned that females best give *Da'wah* right inside their homes. She can set aside a day or time when other females can come to her for that purpose. As useful as this may be to the contemporary *Salafīyyūn* in extending their tentacles in the city, it is not observed by the majority of the advocates.

The misconceptions are not unconnected to the belief, especially by the *Salafīyyah* advocates, that women need to be distanced from the public life as a way of encouraging chastity and public morality. This has ignited a serious confusion among Muslims in the country because it is not limited to *Da'wah* activities but also cover public life. Muslims are

confused and divided over what should be the rules and limits of women's engagements in both religious and public activities. The restriction of women may however not be appropriate in a country like Nigeria where both Muslim and Christians compete in almost everything. Sight must not be lost at the fact that constitution does restrict Nigerian women from attaining any lofty posts or offices, as Christian women struggle towards this, Muslim's house is divided.

### **Marriage and Domestic responsibility**

Marriage constitutes another major factor to the few number of female *Du'āt* among the *Salafīyyah* scholars in Ilorin. Many women who have been inundated to Salafism and with requisites to give *Da'wah* find it difficult to embark on preaching. They are mostly preoccupied with matrimonial and domestic responsibilities. As a wife, a woman has domestic responsibilities, ranging from maintenance home to taking good care of the husband and the child/ren among others. Many at times, these preoccupy her, hence she does not have time for other responsibilities outside the home. Women, as indicated above while discussing them as daughters, wives and mothers, have critical roles to play in enhancing *Da'wah* but majorly behind the stage when Islam was at an early stage of formation. The time now demands more roles from women which require their coming on stage as active *Du'āt*. They can use *Da'wah* to educate their fellow women on different challenges as well as creating avenue for reduction of poverty and improve the literacy levels among women in the society. Marital challenges and increase cases of domestic violence among others can be addressed with the instrumentality of *Da'wah* that is anchored by female.

The above scenario is just the case of women that are happily married. Those with marital challenges such as widows, divorcees, spinsters, and those with physical challenges should also be considered. Many of them have the burden of fending for themselves or the family as the case may be. They thereby live in poverty and get preoccupied with what will better their lots, ditto to their families. Marriage of some is a miserable one without any sense of direction. Some are divorcees while many were going through hell in the name of marriage. Many women are also victims of domestic violence from the hands of men. The concomitant effects of all these challenges on the psychological and emotional wellbeing of a woman who is a victim of the circumstances is amnesia, turmoil and others that destabilize, fluster and undermine the mind and take away her delights. It should be noted that no matter the level of

Islamic knowledge a woman is endowed with, emotional instability will have devastating effects on her and thereby making her unfit for *Da'wah* activities.

### **Inadequate Islamic Knowledge**

Another major hindrance to availability of female preachers among the *Salafiyyah* in Ilorin is absence of knowledge and scholarship. Interactions with many women of *Salafiyyah* group who dress in *Hijab* or *Niqab* revealed that majority of them lack adequate knowledge of Islam. Their Salafism is because of their marriage to a *Salafiyyah* husband. Personal interactions with a *Salafiyyah* lady who adorned herself in *Niqab* but seriously needed a man to marry her suffice. She was made to realize that *Niqab* is better used, in a society like ours, by a married woman and not unmarried who has not passed the stage of being approached for marriage by men. Ignorance is a major issue among the *Salafiyyah* women of today. Many of them tend to be religious out of good-will without necessary religious knowledge to match it.

### **Conclusion**

This paper discussed *Ad-Da'watu's-Salafiyyah* and consolidation of Salafism in Ilorin focusing on the roles of the females. It is revealed in this paper that, though *Salafiyyah* came into the city not quite long, its impact has outweighed the little time of its presence in the city and there is tendency of eliminating, within a short time, every old Islamic practice it met on ground. However, one of the major areas which need critical attention of the *Salafiyyah* advocates in the city is low number of female *da'iyah*. Most *Salafiyyah* women in Ilorin are unskilled in the art of open-*Da'wah*. This has largely reduced their participation in Salafism to mere audience with little impacts, as may be credited to the identified women in this paper. Different factors were noted which include misinterpretations of feminine provisions relating to voice and *hijab*. Others are marital challenges, domestic violence and the degree of Islamic knowledge of most of these women which is low. For an improved and effective *Salafiyyah Da'wah* outreach, therefore, more female *Du'at* need to be trained. This will bring about gender sensitivity as enshrined in *Shari'ah*, because women will be handling female *Da'wah* and female related matters. This will go a long way in making *Ad-Da'watu's-Salafiyyah* to be effective, appropriate and properly integrated in the city within a short period.

The paper therefore recommends that all hand should be on deck to furnish *Salafiyyah* women with adequate knowledge of Islam and train them in the art of preaching, to enhance effectiveness and progress in the spread of the calls in the city. Salafism should be interpreted in a manner that will bring a balance between religious and public lives, so that the neglected aspects can be catered for in the interest of Nigerian *Salafiyyah* in particular and Muslims in general.

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