

ROLE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES TEACHERS IN COMBATING RADICALIZATION AMONG MUSLIM YOUTH IN APAPA-IGANMU, LAGOS-NIGERIA

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Abstract

One of the forbidden acts in Islam that all Muslims, most especially Islamic Studies teachers, are expected to discourage in the society is immorality. This can be done through many channels, such as discouraging the act through curricular and extra-curricular activities. This paper, therefore, contends that Islamic Studies teachers, like other stakeholders in Nigeria, have major roles to play in the government's fight against violent radicalism. In the process, the study examined key areas wherein Islamic Studies teachers are capable of playing vital roles in proffering workable solutions to the problem of violent radicalization, hooliganism and civil disorder in the society. The data for this study were collected in Apapa-Iganmu Local Council Development Area (LCDA) of Lagos State, with a view to appraising how Islamic Studies teachers could collaborate the efforts of governments and parents, by eradicating violent radicalism in the society. The study adopts the qualitative research method. Primary and secondary sources formed the fulcrum of materials used. Selected stakeholders were personally interviewed. Also, participatory observations were conducted in some areas of the LCDA. The study found out that the Islamic guiding principles are sufficient to discourage Muslims from all forms of socio – moral and politico – economic vices bedeviling the society. The study recommends, among others, that the government should give necessary supports to the Islamic teachers towards their efforts in curbing radicalization, in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA and by extension to the State in general.

Keywords: *Apapa-Iganmu, Islamic Studies, Islamic Teachers, Islamic Tenets, Radicalization.*

Introduction

Radicalization among the youth is an aspect of social vices that Islam does not only condemn, but also proffer workable solutions to, through some far-reaching measures that are relevant in all circumstances. In fact, the extent to which these measures are implemented by individuals or a community determines the level of peace enjoyed as they endeavor to live a fulfilled life. Similarly, these measures are not mere assumptions but have been very effective in the recent times as will be seen later in this paper. However, despite this, it is disheartening that some Muslim youths still get involved in violent radicalization in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

Radicalization is a common phenomenon in global history that has emanated in various forms and dimensions. The menace has series of negative consequences ranging from mass killings,

destruction of property, social disorder, disruption of youthful ingenuity, and a host of others. Although, Nigeria has had a quantum share of the radicalization phenomenon, some modicums of it are found in the southern part. Lagos State, being the epicenter of social and economic activities in Nigeria, has also witnessed the disturbing issue of radicalization that needed to be addressed before it escalates in a similar magnitude of the northern part of Nigeria.

In a bid to curtail radicalization, the government has constantly perfected series of strategies towards nipping the scourge in the bud in Nigeria and Lagos State in particular. For instance, the Lagos State government has often ensured inter-faith harmony through consistent dialogue with the leaders of the religious sect within the State. This has proven to be tangible instrument at stemming the trend of religious radicalization in Lagos State because through this avenue, the religious groups are abreast of the intelligence reports relating to emerging radical sects. Apart from the government's efforts, there is need for individual and collective efforts that must be geared towards stemming radicalization in Lagos. In essence, the roles of the teachers of Islamic Studies cannot be overemphasized. The foregoing propositions inform the focus of this paper, which attempts to examine key areas wherein Islamic Studies teachers are capable of playing vital roles in proffering workable solutions to the problem of radicalization in the society. To achieve this, the paper is divided into the following sections, namely: introduction; definition of some terms in the paper/conceptual clarifications; types of radicalization; causes of radicalization; the people of Apapa-Iganmu LCDA, an overview of radicalization among youths in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA; causes of radicalization among youths in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA; ways through which Islamic Studies teachers could assist in combating radicalization among the youths in the society; recommendations and conclusion.

Definition of Some Terms /Conceptual Clarifications

Radicalization: The term radicalization emerged in the 1970s to stress the interactive and gradual escalation dynamics in the formation of violent, often clandestine groups (Momodu, J.A & Temilola, O. 2017). Like most other concepts in the social sciences and humanities, there is no consensus on the definition of the term radicalization (Ashindorbe, K. & Owonikoko, S. B. 2017). The following are some of the definitions of radicalization: According to Clutterbuck:

Radicalization" can be used to describe a process whereby individuals (and even groups) develop, over time, a mindset that can—under the right circumstances and opportunities—increase the risk that he or she will engage in violent extremism or terrorism. ... (it) is understood to be a complex, dynamic, and non-linear process of change in the mindset of an individual that leads over time to a significant alteration in world-view, perception of external events, and his/her internal understanding of them. As these changes occur, they can be reflected in the individual's behavior, which can ultimately—in certain individuals—escalate to the point of engaging in violence, violent extremism, or terrorism. (2015).

Commenting on this definition, Oloyede maintained that:

It is clear from the above that radicalization is a process where groups or individuals hold contrasting opinions on issues in whose case they believe their contrasting opinions ought to be established in place of the already existing norm. In addition, few of such individuals believe their opinions could only be established through violent means and methods in which case their radicalization reflects violence. (2018).

To Adisa, radicalization entails the deliberate use of tactics, and deceits to make non-members of a radical or terrorist group believe in the ideologies and objectives of the revolutionary group for the purpose of integrating them into the mainstream of the terrorist or violent operations. (2017)

Momodu and Temilola cited Horgan thus:

The term radicalization is a process and a gamut of activities occurring in systematic stages eventually ending up in violent extremism. Similarly, an effective working definition of radicalization is that it is a “social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political or religious ideology. (2017)

They explained further that:

It is important not to restrict any such definition to one form of ideology, to acknowledge that radicalization is a process (not an outcome), and, as is the case explicitly in Lentini’s definition of radicalization, to recognize that radicals wish to transform the existing social order, often but not necessarily using methods that are extreme, anti-social and illegal. (2017)

Furthermore, Momodu and Temilola once again contributed to the discourse when they asserted that:

It is important to stress that radicalization does not necessarily lead to violence and not all violent radicals resort to terrorism. In other words, it is not all the people that are exposed or have undergone a process of radicalization that become violent. As a matter of fact a strict adherence to any ideology or Christian or Islamic doctrines is a form of radicalization. Nonetheless, radicalization is not an end in itself but a means to end and the end is violent extremism. (2017)

From the foregoing, it is obvious that radicalization is synonymous to extremism and terrorism. This explains why Adisa maintains that terrorist organizations often use radicalization as a strategy for recruiting young people into their terror groups (2017). Also, the concept of radicalization can be conceived at least through two different ways; namely: negative and positive or violent as well as non-violent radicalization. (Ashindorbe and Owonikoko, 2017; Veldhuis T. and Staun J, 2009)

Radicalization can be conceived as violent when a person prepares to take (violent) actions to realize his or her radical worldview (Beennett, N. 2019); or when radicalization is seen as a gradual process of

socialization which involves embracing views, opinions, ideas, doctrines and activities which could lead to the use of violence and acts of terrorism in the pursuit of predetermined objectives. (Ashindorbe and Owonikoko)

On the other hand, non-violent radicalization involves a process by which individuals are introduced to an openly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views but such change in thought and character does not necessarily lead to violence or terrorism. Radicalism here refers to a diverse range of people who are working hard for legitimate causes and the advancement of positive and beneficial goals (Ashindorbe and Owonikoko). Therefore, this paper focuses on the first sense of the concept of radicalization (that is, violent radicalization).

Islamic Concept of Radicalization (*At-tatorruf*)

The modern Arabic word for radicalization is *at-tatorruf*. As result, the Hans-Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic has it that *at-tatorruf* means: “excess, excessiveness, immoderation, extravagance, extremism, extreme standpoint or position, radical attitude, radicalism” (Cowan. J. M. 1961). In other words, the classical Arabic lexicon has two linguistic meanings for *at-tatorruf*: (i) the limit of something, and (ii) (a reference to) the movement of some body parts. Of the two meanings stated above, the one that is relevant to this paper is the first one; that is, “the limit of something”. While explaining this first meaning, Luwaihik elucidates further that the lexical reference works make it clear that “the limit of something” refers to the end and utmost limit of something. This is, if the two ends are not equal, wherein it would be proper for either of them to be the beginning or the end, such as the two ends of a string (Al-Luwaihik, A.M. 2001). Shimr explains that, “Its ends are known by its expulsion” (AL-Azhar, nd). Dagimun and Musa agreed with Al-Luwaihik that: Something is referred to as *mutatarraf* when it is coming close to the edge or limit of something. For example, one uses this term with respect to the sun when it is close to setting. However, despite the fact that the Arabic word, *at-tarf*, means the utmost edge of something or something's limit, it is lexically proper to use the word *tatorruf* for whoever goes beyond the limit of justice and goes to extremes (Dagimuun, M. U and Musa, S.A. 2019). This view is in line with *al-Mujam al-Waseet*'s, which states that: “He went beyond the limits of justice and was not moderate”.

Furthermore, other related terms to *at-tatorruf*, according to Usman, include: *al-unf* (harshness, violence), *at-tashaddud* (rigidity, inflexibility), *at-tanatta'* (to spread or extravagancy in speech and action). In addition, *al-unf*, *at-tashaddud*, and *at-tanatta'* are attributes of *al-ghuluww* (extremism). The literal meanings of these terms are not far from the technical usage. They all denote going beyond the limit of *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law) (Usman, A. 2018)

Islamic Concept of Extremism

Since it is obvious from the above submissions that radicalization is synonymous to extremism (or sometimes used to imply extremism), it is not out of place to examine its definitions according to

the view of Islamic scholars. For example, Ibn Taymiyyah defined extremism “as going beyond the proper limits concerning a matter, (beyond what it deserves either in praising it or disparaging it) (Ibn Taymiyah, nd). Ibn Hajar also explained extremism as exaggeration in something and being stringent in that matter by going beyond the proper limits (Fathu Baar, nd).

Again, Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahaab made the concept even clearer by stating some parameters of extremism. He stated thus: “The parameter is to go beyond what Allah has ordered...” (Al-Luwaihiq). Also, extremism is a movement in the direction of the general *Sharī‘ah* principles and divine commands. However, it is a movement that has gone beyond the limits established by the *Sharī‘ah* itself (Al-Luwaihiq).

To, Al-Haqeel, “the texts of Islam refer to “extremism” by the expression “religious extravagance”. Extremism in Arabic is a word used to describe a person which transgresses the bound of moderation and does not take an immediate position. A scrutiny of the two terms “religious extravagance” and “extremism” would indicate some sort of an overlap between their meanings (Al-Haqeel, S.A.R 2002).

Similarly, according to Islam, Q. A.:

The scholars have many explanations for what is meant by extremism and those who go to extremes, all of which are in harmony with one another and do not contradict one another. All of them may be summed up as meaning one thing; it boils down to overburdening oneself and being too strict in matters where strictness is inappropriate. These meanings include the following: (i) going to extremes in worship, which leads to excessive hardship. Islam does not enjoin anything but that in which there is ease and tolerance. It forbids excessive strictness in religion; (ii) introducing innovations into religion, by forbidding that which Allah did not forbid, and introducing forms of worship and commitments that did not exist at the time of the Prophet; (iii) exaggerated and affected speech, by trying to select words which attract people’s attention, with no meaning or benefit; (iv) indulging in that which does not concern one, asking about that which is inappropriate, and delving too deeply into that which is of no benefit. (Islam, Q.A. 2020)

According to Al-Luwaihiq, it is not extremism if someone tries as much as possible to complete or perfect one's act of worship (2001). Similarly, Islam, Q. A. shared this fact when it maintained that with regard to adhering to outward signs of religious commitment and observing the sacred limits of Allah, and obeying His commands, these are obligations of Islam, and the way to enter the paradise, and no one regards them as going to extremes except one who wants to free himself from the rules of *Sharī‘ah* and attack the established rulings. How can adhering to *Sharī‘ah* and following it and clinging tightly to it be going to extremes? A good example of such instances is when there is sound evidence for a command from Al-Qur’an and *Sunnah* which clearly shows that something is obligatory (such as the five pillars of Islam and so on) or that something is forbidden (such as the prohibition on alcoholic drink and so on). It is not permissible to describe

anyone that holds firmly to them as an extremist because that implies accusing the Prophet who enjoined us to do so as extremist. (Allah forbids that his Prophet should be like that) (Islam, Q.A.)

Islamic Radicalization: A Misconception

One of the biggest misconceptions about Islam, especially given the constant stereotyping by the media, public analysts, writers and over-night ‘consultants’ on Islam and Muslim affairs is that Islam permits violent radicalization, extremism and terrorism (Misconception about Islam, 2020). This has led to the emergence of the term “Islamic radicalization, extremism and terrorism” and become popular after the 9/11 (terrorist attack in the United State) and 7/7 (2005 London bombings and murdering of Theo Van Gogh) when extremism and Islam became increasingly interchangeable terms, especially among the West (Tahir, H. and Grossman, 2013).

The West, in particular, and their stooges from other parts of the world incorrectly believes that Islam permits violent radicalization, extremism and terrorism due to the involvement of some Muslims in the menace. As if that is not enough, they also come out with parameters to identify their so-called “Islamic radicals, extremists and terrorists” based on their will and caprices that such Muslims will uphold among other qualities, the teachings of Islam such as growing of beard, wearing of *jalbāb* and turban, frequenting mosque and other forms of religious devotions (Usman, A.)

It must be noted that there is no divine command in Islam that obliges Muslims to perpetrate act of violent radicalization, extremism and terrorism and the fact that some Muslims indulge in the menace should not be taken as evidence that Islam admits or encourages it (Al-Haqeel, S.A.R.). Furthermore, it is important to question the rationale behind continuous and consistent blaming of Islam for evils committed by some errant Muslims (or those who hide under the symbols of Islam), despite the fact that: (i) Islam has already condemned the act;(ii) sources have it that the Muslims who get involved in violent radicalization lack adequate knowledge of Islam (or proper application of Islamic rulings); (Oloyede.I.O.); (iii) there are evidence that pointed to the fact that some of the case of violent radicalization, extremism and terrorism that were perpetuated in the name of Islam sometimes involved non-Muslims (Al-Haqeel, S.A.R.). However, they (antagonists of Islam) refused to attribute the evils of non-Muslims to their religions even though: (i) they perpetrated greater evils; (Oloyede, I.O.); (ii) terrorism emerged from them;ⁱ(iii) some groups among them openly declared that they are radical groups (Coalition of Christian Crusade, 2019).

Again, concern Muslims have questioned the underlying premise of broadly accepted meanings of radicalization and extremism by the non-Muslims that such meanings were based on Western liberal frameworks than Islamic concepts of moderation and extremism (as discussed in the previous section). This is a highly politicized consensus in the West around radicalization and extremism in relation to Islamic beliefs and culture (Tahiri, H. and Grosman,M. 2013). Prior to 2001, the term radicalization was a reasonably obscure academic term that was rarely used in the

media. It came into popular usage after the 2005 London bombings and the murder of Theo van Gogh (Bennett, 2019).

It must be re-emphasized that the idea of attributing violent radicalization to Islam cannot be true considering the following:

- i. Many verses of Al-Qur'an did not only equivocally condemn all acts that make up radicalization but as well encourage Muslims to spread peace in the society. Among the verses of Al-Qur'an that condemn acts of radicalization are: Al-Qur'an 28: 77, 5: 32, 17: 33, 16: 90 and 49: 9 etc. (See section 8.2.1 in this paper for detail of the verses). And the verses of Al-Qur'an that encourage the spread of peace in the society include: Al-Qur'an 25: 63, 10: 9-10, 6: 54,24: 61and49: 9etc.(See section8.2.1 in this paper for detail of the verses)
- ii. Many *Ahādīth* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also condemned all acts that make up radicalization. For example, Prophet Muhammad said: "By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! Who is that, O Allah's Apostle?" He said "that person whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil (Al-Bukhārī)
- iii. The Place of Peace in Islam is evident in the following: one of the meanings of Islam is peace; the concluding word of *Aṣ-ṣalāt* (canonical prayers) is peace; one of the names of Allah is peace (*Salām*); the daily salutations among the Muslims are expressions of peace and heaven in Islam is the abode of peace etc, (Abdalati, H. 1993).
- iv. The individual who sincerely approaches Allah through Islam cannot fail to be at peace with Allah, him/herself, fellow men and to build a lasting peace (Abdalati)

Based on these and many others, it is obvious that Islam totally forbids and condemns violent radicalization just as it forbids and condemns the misguided acts of vigilantes that target innocent civilians under the disguise of violent radicalization, extremism and terrorism (Oloyede).

Youth: is defined as people between the ages of 10 and 29 years (Wikipedia). In other words, it is used for people below the ages of 40 years or thereabouts, but most importantly, those that are young and strong at heart (Tinau, A.T. 2007). However, it is used in this paper to refer to people between the ages of 10 and 40 years.

Types of Radicalization

According to Mc Csuley and Mosalenko, radicalization is categorized into three:

- i. **Individual level:** This grows out of personal grievance, it emphasizes revenge for real or perceived harm inflicted upon oneself by an outside party...This was called "True

- Believer” syndrome as a product of which one becomes increasingly serious about one’s political, social and religious beliefs (2008)
- ii. **Group level:** Group value can affect individuals’ mindsets that these individuals become radicals. Groups out of their interactions can become polarized, especially the choice between violent and non-violent activism (2008).
 - iii. **Mass radicalization:** This is a form of asymmetrical political warfare in which radical groups act to provoke government to crack down on the population at large and produce domestic blowback that legitimize further violent actions. The primary purpose of radical groups using this tactics is not to destroy the enemy outright, but to make the enemy strike at political and ideological moderates such that the existing political order loses its claim on legitimacy, while the radical group gains legitimacy (Mc Csuley and Musalenko)

Causes of Radicalization: Scholars have posited that factors or conditions that account for radicalization include relative deprivation. Western occupations and support for oppressive regimes, particularly in Muslim communities, are also inclusive. Identity politics, poor political and socio-economic integration, feelings of humiliation on the part of the radicalized have also been identified as causes of the phenomenon (Veldhuis, T. and Staun, J.).

The People of Apapa-Iganmu LCDA

Geographically, Apapa-Iganmu LCDA shares boundary in the North with Lagos Mainland Local Government and Surulere Local Government at Iganmu along Orile Mile Two, and shares boundary with Ajeromi/Ifelodun Local Government. It is bordered on the South by the other side of Mobil plc plant, to Ijora causeway down to Lagos harbor, including NEPA to Nigeria Police Force (NPF), canal. It shares boundaries in the East with Apapa Local Government at Ijora along Wharf Road and in the West with Ajeromi/Ifelodun at Alafia canal (Lagos Directory)

Historically, according to Apapa-Iganmu LCDA publication, the paramount ruler of the area is the Ojora of Lagos, who is the Landlord of the whole area (Apapa Iganmu, LCDA, 2007). The Ojora family first settled at the site now occupied by the NEPA Power Station before moving to the present site known as Ijora Oloye (Fasinro, H.A.B 2004). Furthermore, the history of Apapa-Iganmu is best remembered due to the Federal Land acquisition of 1958 wherein the earlier settlers at Ijora Causeway were moved to give room for development. The earlier settlers at Ijora Causeway migrated to an area called Badia, which was totally swampy and covered by water. They were predominantly fishermen (Oral interview with Balogun, J.A. 2020)

Similarly, the fire disaster that occurred in January 6th 1967 at Adeniji Adele in Lagos Island also contributed to the rapid migration of people to Apapa-Iganmu because of its nearness to Lagos Island, which is the nerve centre for commercial activities in Lagos State (Apapa Iganmu, LCDA, 2007). Yoruba tribe who migrated from Kwara State dominates Apapa-Iganmu Local Council

Development Area. Most of the people are predominantly Muslims with a small percentage of Christians and pagans (Apapa Iganmu, LCDA).

Administratively, the people of the area clamored for a Local Government, which eventually led to the creation of the Apapa-Iganmu Local Council Development Area in October 2003, along with other thirty-six (36) Local Council Development Areas in Lagos State. The Council comprises Apapa Elemu, Sari Iganmu, Ijora Eledu, Ijora Olopa (Ijora Causeway), Iddo (opposite the Railway Terminus), Olojowon, Badia and Marine Beach. The Secretariat of the Apapa-Iganmu Local Council Development Area is located at 41, Gaskiya College Road, Badia. For administrative convenience, the council has an Area Office at Adekunle Deen Close, Sari Iganmu. Currently, the Council is divided into three major zones: Sari Iganmu, Badia and Marine Beach. The Council has a population of over two million people, who live mostly in slums (2007).

Over the years, the population of the area exploded and it grew to an urban slum with its attendant problems. Consequently, the area which is supposed to be centre of many good opportunities because of its nearness to Lagos Island, which is the nerve center for commercial activities in Lagos State, has over the years been, described by both oral and written sources as a predominant abode of all sorts of social vices, more importantly, violence among the youth, due to neglect by successive Federal, State and Local Governments' administrators (Fact and Potential Magazine, 2013).

An Overview of Radicalization among Youth in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA

The category of youths involved in radical acts in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA is not restricted to a meticulous tribe or religion (for example, it involves Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa, etc. and, both Muslims and Christians) but Yoruba Muslim youths supersede others in this menace due to the fact that they are the tribe that dominates the area. Also, the most common perpetrators of radicalization among the youth in Apapa-Iganmu are heterosexual males. This does not imply that females are exempted from this menace. For instance in recent times, a growing number of female youth too get involve in radicalization in the area (Oral Interview with Odumuyiwa, A. 2020).

In addition, radicalization among youth in the area under study is perpetrated collectively by individuals or gangs. Interestingly, radicalization sometimes occurs among youth in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA with the support of some politicians or their associates such as family members, the rich, and leaders of hoodlums. This is done through the use of money and different types of inducements such as employment, position, *hajj* sponsorship, etc. to lure the youth to engage in acts of radicalization. Unfortunately, radicalization sometimes leads to the loss of lives, property and causes general unrest in the society (Oral Interview with Olomoda, S.A.F. 2018).

Causes of Radicalization among Youth of Apapa-Iganmu LCDA

The factors responsible for radicalization among the youths in Apapa-Iganmu are many. They include: poverty, over-population, illiteracy or ignorance, uncivilized nature of the area, influence

of peer group, the social media, financial and other inducements, money making through political offices, monetization of elective offices, hooliganism, cultism and drug abuse, law enforcement agencies mishaps, attraction of riches, breach of trust by the election management bodies and others always attract Lagos youth to radical attitudes (Oral Interviews with Sadiq A. and Erikitola, M.T.O, 2020).

Islamic Studies Teachers and the War against Radicalization among the Youth

There are many ways through which Islamic Studies teachers can combat radicalization among the youth. These include: The teachers' personality, the curriculum contents, teaching methodology, and stakeholders' attitude towards the teachers of Islamic Studies (Oral Interview with Abdul Hamid, .A.W.A. and Kilani, F.A. 2020).

The Teacher's Personality

The first way through which Islamic Studies teachers could combat radicalization among the youth is through their own personality. To succeed in doing this, a teacher of Islamic Studies operating in a polarized society like Nigeria must realize the fact that s/he is faced with an arduous task and, therefore, it is compulsory that he/she possesses certain exceptional qualities in addition to qualities expected of a good teacher. Such qualities include: being a good Muslim, a good model to his/her pupils; s/he should be honest, kind, selfless, firm, fair and s/he should possess determination in his/her action. S/he should have a great influence on the lives of the pupils because s/he is laying the foundation for the pupils' beliefs, attitudes and conduct which may remain with them for the rest of their lives (Pivotal Teacher Training Program 2000).

The love of the students he wants to teach, a good rapport with them, a very high communicative skill, clear voice and good appearance are also required. In addition, he should exhibit the following qualities: patience, creativity, grasp of content, understanding of the Qur'an, knowledge of Arabic, religious observance, moral probity, versatility and knowledge of Information Technology (Bidmos, M. A. 2010). It must be reiterated here that moral probity is very important for teachers of Islamic Studies. According to Downey and Kelly:

If the teacher himself or herself is not a morally educated person, not only will he or she never become a moral educator, he or she is likely to have a positively inhibiting effect on the moral education of the pupils. No one should expect to be able to contribute to the moral education of children who is not morally educated himself or herself, just as no one promotes education in any field in which he or she is not a full educated person (Bidmos).

Therefore, in the fight against radicalization among the youth, teachers of Islamic Studies must, first of all, live by example or, better put, adopt the call of Nigeria president, Muhammad Buhari's: "change begins with me" (Vanguard News Paper, 2018). This is by doing a serious soul-searching. He/she would have to purge himself/herself of acts of immorality, repent of the evils of the past and make an irrevocable commitment to a life of sound faith, fear of Allah, sincere worship, ethics and moral teachings of Islam, in his/her individual and corporate life. Then the Islamic teachers shall

have the moral authority to teach their students the much-needed lessons in a life of integrity; for as the saying goes; *nemo dat quod non havet* (no one can give to others what he himself does not have) (Ehusani, G, 2004).

The Curriculum Content

Another way through which Islamic Studies teachers could combat radicalization among the youth is by choosing relevant and appropriate topics to teach the students during curricular and extra-curricular activities. Such topics include: (i) Al-Qur'ān and *Ahādīth* texts that condemned radicalization as well as those that encourage spread of peace in the society (ii) Islamic immunity against radicalization. Let us examine these:

Some Qur'ānic and *Ahādīth* Texts that Condemned Radicalization but Encouraged Spread of Peace

Many verses of Al-Qur'ān and *ahādīth* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) do not only equivocally condemn all acts that make up radicalization but as well encourage Muslims to spread peace and tranquility in the society. The verses include:

(i) ... and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the *mufsidūn* (those who commit great crimes and sins) (Q.28: 77)

(ii) ...We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person... or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind... even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits in the land!. (Q.5: 32)

(iii) And do not kill anyone which Allah has forbidden... (Q.17: 33)

(iv) Verily, Allah enjoins justice and *al-Ihsān* (goodness), and giving (help) to kith and kin; and forbids *al-Fahshā'* (i.e. evil deeds), and *Al-Munkar* (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law), and *Al-Baghy* (i.e. all kinds of oppression); He admonishes you; that you may take heed (Q.16: 90).

(v) And the slaves of the Most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness (Q.25: 63)

(vi) Verily, those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, their Lord will guide them through their Faith; under them will flow rivers in the Gardens of delight (Paradise). Their way of request therein will be *Subḥānaka Allahumma* (Glory to You, O Allah!) and *Salām* (peace, safe from each and every evil) will be their greetings therein (Paradise)! And the close of their request will be: *Al-Ḥamdu Lillāhi Rabbil-'Ālamīn* [All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (Q.10: 9)

(vii) When those who believe in Our *Āyāt* (proofs, evidences, verses, etc.) come to you, say: "*Salāmun 'Alaykum*" (peace be on you); your Lord has written Mercy for Himself, so that, if any of you does evil in ignorance, and thereafter repents and does righteous good deeds (by obeying Allah), then surely, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (Q 6: 54); ...But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allah (i.e. say: *As-Salāmu 'Alaikum* - peace be on you) blessed and good. Thus Allah makes clear the *Āyāt* (these Verses or your religious symbols and signs, etc.) to you that you may understand (Q.24: 61)

(viii) And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah; then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily! Allah loves those who are equitable (Q.49: 9).

Similarly, Prophet Muhammad said: "By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! Who is that, O Allah's Apostle?" He said "that person whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil (Al-Bukhārī 8:12). Again, Prophet Muhammad said: The real Muslim is the person with whom other Muslims are free from harm or evil of his tongue and his hand, and the true believer is he whom the people have trust in for protection of their blood and their properties (At-Tirmithiy 5:17) Also, Prophet Muhammad also said: "Let whosoever believes in Allah... honors his neighbor", (*Hadīth* 15 of *An-Nawāwī*).

Islamic Immunity against Radicalization

Proper understanding and implementation of the commandments of Islam help a Muslim to shun all forms of vices including radicalization. These commandments include:

(i) *Īmān* (belief, faith, and creed) in Allah: Real *Īmān* (that is, based on Al-Qur'ān and authentic *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad) makes it easy for a Muslim to shun immoral acts. Through belief in Allah and other pillars of faith such as the Day of Judgment and upholding the principles of accountability, man is motivated to behave morally and sincerely and will never engage in radicalization (Aliyyu .U., 2016). This is because there is a strong bond between *Īmān* and righteous deed as evident in Al-Qur'an and *ḥadīth*. For example, Allah says: "...except those who believe and do righteous good deeds" (Q.103: 1-3), others include: (Q.3: 110, Q 16: 97, Q.25: 68). And from *ḥadīth* Prophet Muhammad said: "By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! That person, whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil" (Al-Bukhārī, 8:12) Prophet Muhammad also said: Let whosoever believes in Allah... honor his neighbor" (*Hadīth* 15 of *An-Nawāwī*).

(ii) Canonical Prayer: Performance of *Ṣalāt* according to the rules attached to it prevents Muslims from indulging in all forms of vices, including radicalization. This is in line with the verse of the Qur'an that says: "...and perform *Ṣalāt*, verily, the *Ṣalāt* prevents from *al-fahshā'* (great sins of every kind...) and *al-Munkar* (...every kind of evil wicked deed)" (Q 29: 45). And the sayings of

Ibn ‘Abbas and Ibn Mas‘ud that: “if the *salat* of anyone does not prevent him from *al-fahshā*’ and *al-munkar*, then his *Ṣalāt* increases him in nothing but loss, and to be far away from his Lord (Allah)” (*Tafsīr Al-Qurtubi*, nd).

(iii) Compulsory Alms Giving: Proper payment of *Zakāt* by those who must pay it and its appropriate disbursement promote peaceful co-existence, love and harmony in the society (Bello, I.A., 2003).

(iv) Ṣawm: Fasting in line with rules guiding it in Islam leads to *taqwā* (fear or consciousness of Allah) (Q 2:183). It therefore, follows that a Muslim who sincerely fasts will be conscious of Allah on whose order he/she is abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual pleasure. Consequently, he/she shuns radicalization. The Prophet says: “when any of you keeps a fast, he should not utter *rafath* (a filthy or indecent word)...” (Al-Bukhārī). According to *al-Munajjid rafath* in the *ḥadīth* means to engage in evil acts, profane words or sinful deeds generally.

(v) Pilgrimage to Makkah: Performance of *hajj* by a Muslim who meets the conditions that are attached to its performance makes it easy for such a Muslim to shun vices. One of these conditions is to make enough provision before embarking on the spiritual journey and the best provision according to the Qur’ānic verse on this subject is *at-taqwā* (Q.2: 197). It is clear from this verse that an intending pilgrim must fear Allah, and that will make it easy for him/her to shun all forms of immoralities.

Besides, Allah has made it clear earlier in the verse quoted above that whosoever intends to perform *hajj* should not commit sin. And to elaborate on this verse, Bidmos categorically highlights thugs among people who are not expected to go on *hajj* (2012).

(vi) Taqwā: This means the observance of the Divine Commandments conscientiously and scrupulously, and keeping away from all forbidden, wicked and shameful activities, with the belief in the great requital of the last day (Paramole, K.O. 2020). In other words, *taqwā* which refers to an attitude of the mind, the awareness of and consciousness of one’s responsibility to Allah, is the foundation of the Muslim’s character (Liman, S.H.)

Almighty Allah demands of man to carry out thoroughly and well, the duties prescribed by Him and fulfill zealously the rights of human beings who have a claim on them according to the Divine law, and, on the other hand, to refrain strictly from doing anything that has been prohibited to man by Allah. Therefore, the *taqwā* of Allah is an instrument which compels man to obey the law of Allah and one of which is to shun radicalization.

Teaching Methodology

Another way through which Islamic Studies teachers could combat radicalization among the youth is by using adequate and appropriate methodologies to teach the students during curricular and extra-curricular activities. Since teaching Islamic Studies is a serious academic exercise which

requires careful planning and skill, using appropriate methodology to teach each topic will go a long way in aiding the learning process of the students. These methods include: group method, individual method, play-way method, story method, demonstration method, excursion method, drama method, etc, (PTTP).

Co-operating with Stakeholders to have Good Attitude towards Islamic Studies

Islamic Studies teachers must try to win the heart of the various stakeholders to have positive attitude towards the teaching of Islamic Studies. Such stakeholders include: the governments at all levels, school managers, parents and non-governmental organizations, etc. One of the ways through which teachers could do this (winning the heart of the stakeholders) is by stressing the importance of investing in the youth. He may support his views by making reference to the words of Oliver Tambo as quoted by Oke, that: “A people, a country, a movement that does not value its youth does not deserve its future”.

This will go a long way in making it easy and successful for Islamic Studies teachers to combat Radicalization among the youth. Some of the problems facing Islamic Studies teachers and the subject in our society today that could be solved by the stakeholders include: lack of necessary support, non-lucrative nature of the subject, low recognition of its teachers (compared to their counterparts in other fields of study), sense of inferiority by many of its teachers and students, and their parents, insufficient textbooks, journals and shortage of teachers, insufficient teaching aids (audio and visual), inadequate time allocation on time table (because it is being categorized as an elective subject in the curriculum) (Akindoyin, M.A.).

It is only with these qualities, methods of teaching and assistance from stakeholders among others that an Islamic Studies teacher who finds himself in a polarized society like Nigeria would be able to, not only teach, but also successfully use Islamic Studies to combat radicalization among the youth in the society. It must be emphasized here that the aforementioned Islamic immunity against radicalization is sufficient to free a Muslim from all forms of vices including radicalization, because, they are very effective and relevant in all circumstances. In fact, the extent to which these measures are implemented by individuals or communities determines the level of their result.

This view is supported by Al-Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, other relevant historical documents and contemporary evidences. For example, both Al-Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* have it that *Shayṭān* (Satan) whom religionists (especially, those with revealed books) believe is the factor behind evils among mankind, will not have power on any Muslim who is in the habit of observing the Islamic measures stated above (e.g. belief in Allah and worshiping Him sincerely) (Bali, W.A. 2005). In the same vein, sources have it that from time immemorial till date, Muslims who observe the Islamic measures sincerely are not only free from vices but are known with virtuous acts (Oral interviews with Olaoye M., Saadiq, A. and Erikitola). Besides, the fact that it is a common practice among the people understudied and Yorubaland in general (including non-Muslims), that whenever a person who upholds some Islamic measures is found guilty of immoral acts, he/she is seriously

reproached because of the belief that he/she is not supposed to engage in evil acts, is contemporary evidence of the effectiveness of the measures. Similarly, information received shows that the devoted Muslim youths in the area under study that apply the Islamic measures have not been guilty of the menace (Oral interview with Olaoye M., Saadiq .A and Erikitola). This is against the view of many writers and researchers especially in the West and their allies in other parts of the world on the factors responsible for the involvement of some Muslims in violent radicalization to strict adherence to the dictate of Islam.

It can be seen from the discussion thus far that Islam has a viable option for the arrest of all forms of vices including radicalization. Therefore, it is now left for Muslim youths in Apapa-Iganmu in particular and other parts of Nigeria in general, teachers of Islamic Studies and other stakeholders to immediately adhere strictly to these valuable methods and measures that conform to Islam.

Recommendations

In view of the above narratives, the paper recommends that:

1. Muslim youths must imbibe the idea of jettisoning radicalization, and uphold the pursuance of knowledge which will enable them regain their hijacked legacy of knowledge advancement by the West and make that knowledge their power to become great again.
2. Muslim youths can avoid radicalization and other forms of vices if they understand the implication of such acts. This can be achieved if only they have access to standard education that incorporates morals in its curriculum.
3. Government, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders should value and invest in the youth because any nation that wants peace, progress and survival must invest in its youth.
4. The government and other stakeholders should give necessary support to Islamic Studies teachers in general and those in Apapa in particular in their efforts to curb radicalization in the country.
5. Since teachers are the interpreters and transmitters of the cultural values of the society, it is expedient that the Muslims or Muslim Community designs agenda for teacher-education or teachers' education for the purpose of producing professionally competent and morally upright teaching force.
6. The state government and private school owners should employ more Islamic Studies teachers for schools in Apapa-Iganmu and other parts of Lagos State in order to boost the moral and spiritual awareness of our youth who the future leaders of our community.
7. Mode of producing Islamic Studies teachers through Arabic schools should be revisited through curriculum re-engineering.

8. Islamic Studies teachers should organize awards of moral probity for the youth in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA to be supported by stakeholders; ditto for other areas where similar situations occur.

Conclusion

This paper had examined key areas wherein Islamic Studies teachers are capable of playing vital role in proffering workable solution to the problem of radicalization among the youths in the society. In the process, the article examined the definitions of some terms in the paper, attempted a conceptual clarification of radicalization, *at-tatorruf*, *ghuluww*, and discussed misconceptions inherent in the term Islamic radicalization; as well as shed light on the term youth. Furthermore, other areas examined in the paper include: types of radicalization, causes of radicalization, the people of Apapa-Iganmu LCDA, an overview of radicalization among youths in Apapa-Iganmu LCDA, causes of radicalization among youths in the LCDA, and ways through which Islamic Studies teachers could combat radicalization among the youths in the society. Similarly, it evaluated the effectiveness of some of the Islamic guiding principles and found out that they are sufficient to discourage devoted Muslims from vices including radicalization, in all circumstances.

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