

## AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF *SUFI* ADHERENTS IN BIDA, NIGER STATE

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**Abdulrahman Yahaya**

[yahayaburhan@gmail.com](mailto:yahayaburhan@gmail.com)

*Department of Education Support Services and International Partnership  
National Commission for Colleges of Education, Abuja*

**Umar Saidu Alhaji**

[umaralhajisaidu@gmail.com](mailto:umaralhajisaidu@gmail.com)

*Islamic Studies Department*

*Fati Lami Abubakar Institute for legal and Administrative Studies, Minna.*

**ABSTRACT:** *Socio-religious concept is a term that was derived from a compound word of “social and religion” meaning different activities of people in communities which some historians suggested to be part and parcel of religions especially Islam. The paper seeks to encapsulate Bida in Nupe land, economic situation and locations where Nupe people are located in Nigeria, including their early religious worship such as Kuti (idol) which exist among people up to the time of introduction of Islam by some agents like Wangarawa Muslim scholars from Mali and Malam Muhammadu Bagana popularly known by Nupe people as “Manko” and others. The emergence of Sufism was assessed rightly from the time of Qadiriyyah Sufi practice and some scholars that were known with it like Sheikh Abdulrahman Muhammad bn Sharif and Sheikh Muhammad Wazir (1882-1945) called “Waziri Mamma” before the emergence of Tijjaniyyah Sufi order during the reign of 2<sup>nd</sup> Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Saba (1859-1873) known as “Ma’asaba” by Nupe people through a scholar Man-Haruna, alias “Man-yisa Naku” in Banwuya among people in Bida. The paper provides an overview of some socio-religious practices of Sufis in Bida, Niger State with the way and manner they are practice in accordance with the teachings of Islam. The paper examines*



*the effects of training on adherents among Sufis in Bida, Niger State. In this paper, exploratory design method would be used for obtaining data from relevant areas of primary and secondary sources.*

**Keywords:** *Bida, Examination, Nupe Land, Religious, Sufi and Socio-religious*

## **A. Introduction**

Islam from its advent has been playing significant role in directing the socio-religious practices of Muslims across the world. Several communities in the world including Nigeria are influenced with the sacred nature of it as being practice by the people. Islam for example, apart from being a complete way of life has its etiquettes on how its practice naturally conforms with the teachings of Qur'an and *Sunnah* which embedded it idea of socio-religious activities, for Muslims regardless of someone status in the community must adhered to it strictly.<sup>1</sup> Thus, people of Nupe communities in Nigeria could not be left out including, inhabitants of Bida town in Niger State. Therefore, it is believed that mankind originated from Allah with certain responsibilities to perform, while existing on earth for the benefit of his soul from this life to the next world.<sup>2</sup> These responsibilities are what is regarded as the pillars of Islam that include prayer, fasting, alms and pilgrimage etc.<sup>3</sup>

Islam requires absolute conviction and belief in the message of Qur'an which teaches the concept of Allah and His attributes as a creator, and Cherisher to mankind. Therefore, to be fair to some Sufis on the way and manner which they practice their socio-religious activities such as marriage, naming and funeral in Bida are attested to be conducted in line with the teachings of Islam. Even though aberrant Sufis could not be ruled out in any particular community due to their dubious characters being displayed among people that are totally against the teachings of Islam. This dubious displays sometimes endanger the genuine Sufism practice as well as their socio-religious practice because some could be easily tagged as bad people in the eyes of people.<sup>4</sup> In today's socio-religious practices of Sufis in Bida is so fascinating to them because of their firm beliefs which they attached to it. In this regard, carefulness has to be maintained for unraveling some of these practices of Sufis in Bida town, Nupe land of Niger State, Nigeria.

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<sup>1</sup> S. A. Aboki "Sufi Values and Contemporary Pseudo Sufism in Nigeria" *Al-ITAN journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies*, Vol.3, Issue No.2, 2019, Pp.165-167

<sup>2</sup> Alhaji Ibrahim Suleiman (55 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Bwari, Abuja (FCT) on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>3</sup> S. A. Aboki, "Sufi Values and Contemporary Pseudo Sufism in Nigeria" *Op Cit*, P. 166

<sup>4</sup> Malam Usman Baba (48 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2023

## **Bida in Nupe Land of Niger State**

Bida according to some tradition refer to Nupe word that means “a town where Nupe people are living over centuries located in the present Niger State Nigeria” although different historical sources indicate that there was no specific record of a date when the town was founded.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, some revelations suggested that Bida might have been founded prior before 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E. To justify this claim concerning the foundation of this historical town “Bida” by some writings was that 1531 CE was the year that Tsoede the founder of Nupe dynasty conquered his uncle's town of Nku, an ancient village near river Niger located under present Mokwa local government area in Niger State.<sup>6</sup> It is revealed that Tsoede made himself “Etsu Nupe” and appointed the twelve men who paddled his canoe on his flight from Idah in present Kogi State as chiefs of the twelve Bini towns of Nku, Tafyan, Tuwa, Pichi, Essan to mention but a few in Nupe land. Meanwhile, some historians affirmed that Bida town must had existed before the coming of Fulani rulers. It is further reveal that Umaru Bahausha was among of the scribes of Etsu Usman Zaki the 1<sup>st</sup> Fulani Etsu Nupe in the year 1846 CE that recommended Bida for him as preferable headquarters to “Raba” as the capital of Nupe. According to this claim, Etsu Usman Zaki by 1856 accepted this advice and moved to Bida as his capital.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, Bida remained administrative capital since then where Etsu Nupe resides up to date.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, Nupe word for Bida had no any clarity meaning in Nupe language however, some Nupe linguist, loosely referred to it as “less go” in terms of communication between Nupe people.<sup>9</sup> It is important to mention that there is assents variation in Nupe language which is not wide apart from other Nupe people speaking however, there is a common understanding of central Nupe among all. For example, Nupe people in Bida refer to a goat as “*Nangi*” while Nupe from Lapai call it as “*Bikungi*.” In addition, wearing of *Bente* (pant) and *Ede-Kakpe* (tying of wrapper on shoulder) for men and *Ede-Dzudzuci* (tying of wrapper for women) were the mode of dressing that indigenous Nupe people have been known with from the history before the advent of Islam.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Bida is the traditional stronghold of Nupe people and also headquarters of Bida Local

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<sup>5</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), Imam Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>6</sup> S. Ibrahim, *the Nupe and their Neighbors from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, Heinemann Educational Books PLC, Ibadan, 1992, Pp.1-2

<sup>7</sup> S. Ibrahim, *the Nupe and their Neighbors from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Ibid*, P. 2

<sup>8</sup> S. Ibrahim, *the Nupe and their Neighbors from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Ibid*, P. 2

<sup>9</sup> Malam Habibu Usman Baro (64 years), retired civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023

<sup>10</sup> Malam Habibu Usman Baro (64 years), retired civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023

Government Area in Niger State, Nigeria. It is bordered by Katcha Local Government Area to the East while Gbako Local Government Area in the North-west and Lavun Local Government Area to the South-West. The town has arable land of 50.0 square kilometers with density population of 3,764.<sup>11</sup> The population of Bida according to 2006 Census is 188,181 people. Bida is about 89 kilometers South-West of Minna, the State capital. The socio-economy of people in Bida revolve round agriculture, trading and civil service. Its inhabitants are Muslims with few non-indigenes as non-Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

Generally, Nupe people in Nigeria are traditionally located in Niger, Kwara, Kogi, Nasarawa and Abuja. They live around low river basins of Niger and Benue. Majority of them and their sub-groups are found in Western part of Niger State, which constitute eight (8) out of twenty-five (25) Local Government Areas namely Agaie, Bida, Edati, Lavun, Mokwa, Gbako, Katcha and Lapai.<sup>13</sup> In Kwara State there are several towns and villages of Nupe people around the axis of Kwara North that include Lafiagi, Tsaragi, Tsonga, Bacita, Kpada, Tankpafu, Koro, Rifun, Lade, Magi and Zambufu to mention but a few. Although their population in Kwara form two Local Government Areas of Edu and Patigi out of sixteen LGA's in Kwara State.<sup>14</sup> In Kogi State, there are presence of Nupe people in Lokoja, Bassa and Ajaokuta Local Government Areas including Koton-Karfe, Budan, Eggan and Doji communities under Lokoja Local Government Area. Similarly, Nupe people are located in Nasarawa State at places like Toto, Umaisha and Nasarawa town. While, in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Nupe people are found in Abaji, Bwari, Kogo, Kuje, Gwagwalada, Zuba, Dutsen-Alhaji, Karmo, Gwagwa, Kagini and Jiwa respectively.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the ecological atmosphere of Nupe land is fertile with abundance water and other mineral resources. The economy growth of Nupe people include agriculture, fishing, trading and career civil service while, Islam is the most dominant religion in Nupe land with few Christians and some traditionalists in exceptional cases.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> M. O. A. Abdul "the Islamic influence on the Brass-smiths of Bida" University of Ibadan, Nigeria, (nd), P.271

<sup>12</sup> Facts and figures about Niger State 2012 edition, Nigeria Statistical Development Project (NSDP). Pp. ix-1

<sup>13</sup> S. Ibrahim, *the Nupe and their Neighbors from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Op Cit*, P.1

<sup>14</sup> Silas Tsado (52 years), civil servant and historian, interviewed at Banyagi, Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023

<sup>15</sup> Malam Tanko Saidu Shehu (55 years), Nupe historian, interviewed at Minna, Niger State on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>16</sup> S. F. Nadel, *Black Byzantium the Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, University Press Oxford, London, 1942, Pp.1-12

## Early Religious Beliefs of Nupe People in Bida, Niger State

Different writers and some oral sources described the early religious beliefs of Nupe people in Bida Nupe land as polytheism. This in turn is referred to what is called *Kuti* in Nupe tradition. It is affirmed that *Kuti* (idol) among Nupe settlement differ from one place to another. According to some Nupe people that there are varied idols which had once existed in Bida that are peculiar to different households as at early time of history.<sup>17</sup> To this view, one might concede that there were number of these beliefs that existed in several Nupe land from the time immemorial. Therefore, idol worship is called by different names in Nupe land. For example, *Kuti* (idol) singular or *Kutiko* (big idol) plural, *Soko tetengi* (small god), *Sogba* (god that give child), *Ndaduma* (god of flood), *Ndakogboya* (masquerade) and *Eya* (friend), *Takun-Zhiko* (black stone), *Ndadoro* (priest) to mention but just a few.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of these traditional worship, Nupe people are said to believe in giving out sacrifices for the purpose of averting from some calamities, steady progress in life, remedying of misfortunes and their general wellbeing in all ramifications. Therefore, this practices of idol worships had existed for long time with Nupe people before the coming of Islam around 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> Some of the factors that introduced Islam to Nupe people include Wangarawa scholars from Mali, through river Niger routes from the upper to the middle section of the river and settled at Borgu as traders and scholars in the present day of Niger State, conversion of first indigenous Etsu Nupe who was called Etsu Jibrilu to Islam, he was said to be among of the kings of Tsoede dynasty before the coming of Fulani rulers to the kingdom. Etsu Jibrilu was reported to have reigned around (1746-1759) as Muslim ruler in Nupe land. As some records established that prior to the conversion of Etsu Jibrilu number of his predecessor's kings such as Etsu Ibrahim, Etsu Abdullahi Tsado, and Etsu Abubakar Kolo bore Muslim names, but what was not certain about them is whether they were Muslims or not like latter.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> S. Abdulrahman "Islamic learning in Nupe land 1750-1982" Ph. D thesis submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, 1983, P.4

<sup>18</sup> S. Abdulrahman "Islamic learning in Nupe Land 1750-1982", Ibid, P.5

<sup>19</sup> M. K. Yahaya "the Nupe people of Nigeria" in Journal of Studies of Tribes and Tribal, Vol.1, Issue.2, 2003, Pp.95-97

<sup>20</sup> S. T. Sidi "the Beginning of Islam in Nupe land in North Central Area of Nigeria" Proceedings of Adved 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences, 12-14<sup>th</sup> October, 2015, Istanbul, Turkey, P.176-178

Another factor was the account of preaching of Islam among people by indigenous Muslim scholars like Sheikh Abdurrahman bn Muhammad Sherif (d.1829) and Sheikh Musa to the towns and villages in Nupe land before the coming of Fulani's. Thus, despite the acceptance of Islam by Nupe people as at early period there were some of them who continued with traditional practices in Bida. In the light of this antecedents, one may be convinced that Islam had been introduced into Nupe land before the coming of Malam Muhammadu Bagana (d.1832) known as "Dendo or *Manko*" in Nupe history. One thing about *Manko* in Nupe land was his immense contribution to the reformation of Nupe people that practiced Islam side by side with traditional practices around 1830 CE.<sup>21</sup> This development led to the subdued of Bida Nupe kingdom to the Sokoto Caliphate and since then the descendants of the Fulani rulers in the emirate have assimilated into the Nupe culture and continue ruling as "Etsu Nupe" in the emirate. Although, it is true to say that in Bida today Nupe culture is largely synonymous with Islamic culture because Islam has assimilated all the important aspects of the traditional culture such as naming, marriage, funeral and others among people in the area.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Sufi* Practice in Bida, Niger State**

The derivational origin of the word "*Sufi*", which seems to have enjoyed a general acceptance is what links it with '*Suf*' or wool. As wool garments were believed to be commonly worn by men of ascetic life in the early times of Islam. This was therefore, to distinguish them from men who wore luxurious dress. However, it is noted that *Sufi* way of life is simple. Although it is believed that anything that has to do with lavishness does not attract the interest of a *Sufi* in anyway, his endeavor is the constant devotion to Allah. In other word, Sufism is defined as a path of spirituality which consists of worship, virtue and ego training described in the numerous portion of the Glorious Quran such as *Taqwah* (fearness) and *Taubah* (repentance).<sup>23</sup>

With the comprehension of Islam some outstanding scholars were identified to be founders of *Taruq* (paths) in the world like Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani and Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani for the purpose of linking up servants to Allah through *Ibadah* (worship). The two dominant *Sufi* orders in Bida Nupe land in Niger State are *Qadiriyyah* and Tijjaniyyah.<sup>24</sup> The *Qadiriyyah Sufi* order was

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<sup>21</sup> M. O. A. Abdul "the Islamic Influence on the Brass-Smiths of Bida", *Op Cit*, P.274

<sup>22</sup> M. O. A. Abdul, *Ibid*, P. 273

<sup>23</sup> K. Hussain "Spirituality of Islam" in Essentials of Islamic Sciences, Adam Publishers, New-Delhi, 2020, P.469

<sup>24</sup> Malam Sallah Mahmud (57 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed in Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

founded by Sheikh AbdulQadir Jilani in 12<sup>th</sup> century CE and spread to the West Africa around 15<sup>th</sup> century through Timbuktu where its centre was established for the adherents practice, prominent *Sufi* scholars that were identified with *Qadiriyyah Sufi* order in West Africa include Sheikh Ahmad Lobbo of Masina, Sheikh Usmanu Danfodiyo the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria and Sheikh Mukhtar al-Kunti of Timbuktu among others.<sup>25</sup> While Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order was founded by Sheikh Abul Abass bn Muhammad bn Al-Mukhtar- Al-Tijjani from North Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. He was born in 1738 C.E at Ain Madi, Algeria. Subsequently, Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order activity started spreading from the North Africa to West Africa in particular Mauritania through his followers and Nigeria as a result of the influence of Alhaji Umaru al-Futi.<sup>26</sup> Eventually, Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* Order emerged in Bida town in Niger State Nigeria through numerous *Sufi* scholars including *Man*-Haruna known as “*Man*-yisa Naku” Eban Wuya and visit of Sheikh Ahmadu al-Bamako during the reign of Etsu Nupe Umaru Majigi.<sup>27</sup> It is acknowledged by some Nupe people that Etsu Nupe Umaru Majigi promoted the peaceful coexistence and Islamization among Nupe kingdom up to his death in 1884 in Bida.<sup>28</sup>

There is no doubt that *Qadiriyyah Sufi* order was reported to be the first *Sufi* order that some Muslims in Bida were identified with for decades before the emergence of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order.<sup>29</sup> The evidence of this was example of some famous *Qadiriyyah Sufi* scholars who lived in Nupe land like Sheikh Abdurrahman Tsatsa born in 1756 CE. He was a revered saint according to Nupe history whose record shows that he wrote many poems on Islamic verses in Nupe *Ajami* for the teachings of Islam to Muslims. Apart from him, there is Sheikh Muhammadu Wazir (1882-1945) known as Waziri Mamma who was reported to be a *Qadiriyyah Sufi* and literary scholar, that have not less than four thousand lines of poems to his credit, though in classical Arabic language.<sup>30</sup> Apparently, Sufism practice has been established in Bida Nupe land over the past century among people. This is to say that the spiritual aspiration of some Muslims that gives focus to Sufism in Bida are vast with different experiences of knowledge of Allah. However, the diverse expression of Islam cannot be measured, as it has undergone tremendous historical variations over the history

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<sup>25</sup> “Islam in West Africa: Introduction, Spread and Effects” (nd), (np), Pp.3-4

<sup>26</sup> “Islam in West Africa: Introduction, Spread and effects” Ibid, P. 16

<sup>27</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>28</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu, interviewed, *Ibid*,

<sup>29</sup> Malam Sallah Mahmud (57 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed in Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>30</sup> M. U. Ndagi “Islamic Literary Traditions and the State of Manuscripts Collection in Nupe Land” paper presented at a 2-day International Conference held at Arewa House, Centre for Historical Documentation and Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. Pp.5-7

of time.<sup>31</sup> Islam encompasses the whole range of human activities which to some extent, certain approach has become manifest in a variety of forms over history. Therefore, in the social sphere Sufism has been given its clearest expression in the life of those that are called Sufis. Even though some who claimed to be Sufis are not living up to its ideal whereby many who live by it, in fact did not want their name to be known.<sup>32</sup> This may be form of *Ibadah* that is undertaken by them for the sake of oneness of Allah and not for worldly materials. *Sufi* practice across the world including Bida went through condemnations in its development and had withstood these condemnations.<sup>33</sup>

Part of the condemnations was directed "at the phenomenon itself" where it has been labeled as an innovation by anti-Sufis. Moreover, Sufis of both early periods like Dhun Nun al-Misri, Muhasab and Mansur al-Hallaj and late period like Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani have all been accused of one thing or the other. But because of the vitality of Sufism as a spiritual force and determination the belief of *Sufi* leaders of the genuine context of their mission Sufism survived and grew stronger all the times.<sup>34</sup> This is equally true of reformists and Jihadists in Bida Nupe land. As reported by Sufis that *Qadiriyyah Sufi* practice influence was very active on some Muslims until after the death of Sheikh Muhammad Wazir known as "Waziri Mamma" in 1945 when some adherents replaced their allegiance with "*Faydah* at-Tijjani" led by Senegalese Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack (d.1975).<sup>35</sup>

### **Foundation of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida, Niger State**

TheTijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida Niger State started by *Man*-Haruna who is also known as "*Man*-yisa Naku" at Banwuya area during the reign of 2<sup>nd</sup> Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Saba (1859-1873) called "Masaba". *Man*-yisa Naku was said to be an Islamic scholar who came to Bida and was connected to the Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Saba by his friend Sukude who resides behind his house for the spiritual assistance for victory over non-Muslims.<sup>36</sup> According to the revelation Etsu Saba sought for this assistance more especially during his raids to some settlements around Patigi, Tsaragi, Ilorin, Offa in Kwara State and Osun State up to some parts of Oyo empire for the

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<sup>31</sup> H. A. Hassan "*Sufi* Islamic Discourse in Africa: From the Greatest Jihad to the Establishment of the African Caliphate, MDPI Religions, 2020, 11, 639, Pp.1-3

<sup>32</sup> A. Brigaglia "Sufi Revival and Islamic Literacy: Tijjani Writings in Twentieth-Century Nigeria" the Annual Review of Islam in Africa, Issue No.12/1, 2013-2014, Pp.102-103

<sup>33</sup> Malam Ndaman Abubakar (49 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>34</sup> S. A. Aboki, "*Sufi* Values and Contemporary Pseudo in Nigeria" *Op Cit*, P.172

<sup>35</sup> Malam Ibrahim Saidu (61 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023

<sup>36</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023



introduction of Islam. *Man-yisa Naku* teaches many Islamic fields apart from Qur'an that include *Hadith, Ilm Lughah, Tauhid, Irab, Mantiq, Madh, Balaghah* to Muslims in Nupe language.<sup>37</sup> However, the chain of his initiation into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order was not known as at the time of this research but his notable disciples that were said to be initiated by him into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida include Alhaji Usman, Alhaji Alfa and Baba Alhaji Usman.

Later on, report had it that immediately after the initiation of Baba Alhaji Usman to Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order embarked on a journey by foot from Bida to *Makkah* for *Hajj* pilgrimage which took some years before he return with the continuation of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order development among Muslims in the area.<sup>38</sup> Another *Sufis* that were said to be initiated by *Man-yisa Naku* include Alhaji “Yan-Bazumagi” to as far as *Makanta Wawagi* area in Bida into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. Thereafter, after the acceptance of Alhaji Yan-Bazumagi into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* fold, he went and built his house at Bazumagi and become *Muqaddam* which he was authorized by his *Sufi* Sheikh *Man-yisa Naku* to initiate women into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. From this point onward, history indicate that some women were initiated by him and even led to their convergence at his house weekly for Friday *Kubrah Dhikr* (bigger praise of Allah).<sup>39</sup> Among these women include “Mama Rahmatu” the mother of famous Alhaji Abdulrahman Dokochi (d.19<sup>th</sup> May,2004), he was the *Imam* of Tifin Tswako area mosque Bida for two and half decades before his death.<sup>40</sup> The acceptability of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order by Muslims in Bida made it possible for *Man-Abdullahi Shinkafa* (d.1894) through Sheikh Ahmadu al-Bamako of Mali when he visited Nigeria and Bida in particular in Nupe land. *Man-Abdullahi Shinkafa* was said to be the one that hosted Sheikh Ahmadu al-Bamako at his residence in Tutijinba Bida during his visit around 1873 CE. Eventually, *Man-Abdullahi Shinkafa* started with the initiation of his students into Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. Some notable ones among them include *Man-Jibrilu Jiya Gbere, Man-Ibrahim* and *Man-Rufai*.<sup>41</sup>

According to the revelation, spread of the Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order among Nupe people in Bida was fastly facilitated by Alhaji Idris Qudus following his returned trip from middle-east to the places like *Makkah, Madinah* and Palestine around 1926-1935. In addition, while on his way

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<sup>37</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>38</sup> Hajiya Aishatu Yawa (88 years), House wife, interviewed at Sabongida area Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023

<sup>39</sup> Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>40</sup> Hajiya Aishatu Yawa (88 years), House wife, interviewed at Sabongida area Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023

<sup>41</sup> M. A. Abubakar, the Doctrines and Practices of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida, Masaga Press, Bida,2004, P.20

coming back home he visited Haina, Mali and Fez. It was in Fez in the present Morocco that he met with the then *Khalifah* of Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani.<sup>42</sup> His arrival home in Bida was attested to be a remarkable one where number of people were said to have trooped out to welcomed him paved way for more acceptance of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order among Nupe people. One of these initiates include late Sheikh Adamu Raji, the founder of *Ma'ahad Arabi Wal Islamy* Banwuya Bida and others.<sup>43</sup> It is further revealed that during the early emergence of the Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida, its *Wazifah* service was conducted on individual basis until after the followers of Alhaji Idris Qudus started performing *Wazifah* service in congregation that report got the then Etsu Nupe Malam Saidu Mahmud which he sought for the clarification of this new trend from Alhaji Idris Qudus. For this reason, Alhaji Idris Qudus was able to convinced him that this is how it is conducted even at its origin centre of Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani in Fez. This explanation to Etsu Nupe Malam Saidu Mahmud resulted to his approval for the continuation of this practice by the members of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order and remained up to date in Bida.<sup>44</sup>

The development of Ibrahimiyah branch of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order otherwise known as “*Faydah* Tijjaniyyah” by Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack cannot be left out of its significant role among people in Bida Niger State. This is due to the fact that many *Sufi* scholars from West and North Africa of this branch visited Bida at different occasions for the spread of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order. Prominent among them include Sheikh ibn Umar, Sheikh Muhammad Hadi a student of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani Niass Kaolack son and one time *Khalifah* of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, Sheikh Abubakar Suranbayi his younger brother, Sheikh Aliyu Sise, Sheikh Hassan Deem and Sheikh Hassan Sise.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, there are some Nigerian *Sufi* scholars from various parts of the country that also visited Bida for the spread of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order, among them include Sheikh Abdulkadir Zaria, Sheikh Yusuf Abdullahi Lokoja, Sheikh Abul Fathi Al-Yarwawi of Maiduguri and host of others.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> M. A. Abubakar, the Doctrines and Practices of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida, Masaga Press, Bida,2004, P.21

<sup>43</sup> M. A. Abubakar, the Doctrines and Practices of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida, Masaga Press, Bida,2004, P.20

<sup>44</sup> M. A. Abubakar, the Doctrines and Practices of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order in Bida, Masaga Press, Bida,2004, P.23

<sup>45</sup> Mayaki Isah Naibi (52 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023

<sup>46</sup> Mayaki Isah Naibi (52 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023

## Some Socio-Religious Practices of Tijjaniyyah *Sufis* in Bida, Niger State

Socio-religious practices of Tijjaniyyah *Sufi* order adherents in Bida according to some people is not different from Islam due to the fact that religious tenets and principles of Islam are expressed in various forms by the people. Essentially, religious tenets of Islam are divinely guided that nobody can modify it except the external rituals such as dress and locations which are often determine by the culture of people in a particular place.<sup>47</sup> The fundamental pillars of Islam such as *Salat*, (prayer) *Sawm* (fasting) and others envisaged every aspect of human endeavors, as its practices borne out the unification for Muslims worldwide irrespective of background, color and race under the umbrella of Islam. For instance, obligatory prayers are performed five times daily which Islam encourages all Muslims to pray along with other fellow Muslims in congregation at mosque. From the look of things, *Idi'l* celebration after fasting also facilitates collectivity of Muslims for socio-religious practice.<sup>48</sup> This in turn cement social relationship of people by way of mingling together on the state of happiness for religious celebration. More so, other socio-religious practices that attract people convergence in the town include *Maulid* for the Prophet (SAW), marriage, naming, and *Janazah*. From all these, socio-religious practices can come in different manner but has to be in tandem with the established norms of Islam are as follows:

### 1. *Maulid* Celebration of Prophet (SAW)

Some Nupe people in Bida town passionately shown their unwavering support for the *Maulid* celebration.<sup>49</sup> *Maulid* is derived from the Arabic root word '*Walada*' meaning to give birth or bear a child, descendent. While, in contemporary usage, *Maulid* refers to the observance of the birthday of Prophet (SAW) either on 12<sup>th</sup> night of *Rabi'al Auwal* of Islamic calendar or throughout the month annually.<sup>50</sup> It is a programme which is characterized especially by the recitation of panegyric poems such as *Qasidah Al-Burdah*, *Al-Hamziyyah* of *Imam* Busiri, *Al-Ishiriniyah* of Sheikh Abdulrahman Alfa Zazi and *Diwan* eulogy of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack and other things. *Maulid* is believed not to be all countries of the world that observe it but some Muslims across the globe observe. According to Raana *Maulid* of the Prophet (SAW) was first celebrated

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<sup>47</sup> Malam Hadi Basiru Ismaila (52 years), civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>48</sup> J. N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, Berkeley, University of California Press, USA, 1973, Pp. 65-84

<sup>49</sup> Malam Suleiman Aliyu Shafii (47 years), farmer and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2023

<sup>50</sup> R. Bukhari, *the Complete Illustrated Guide to Islam*, Annas Publishing, Singapore, 2016, P.168

in *Makkah* by the mother of famous Abbasid Caliph Harun Ar-Rashid who turn the house that her son Haruna Ar-Rashid was born into a mosque.<sup>51</sup>

Arguably, some sources alluded that it was around 11<sup>th</sup> century that *Maulid* started by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt. Its practice continues even when the Fatimid dynasty fell by the Sunnite ruler of Syria Nur al-Din (d.1174).<sup>52</sup> Therefore, some people are of the view that *Maulid* enthusiastic quickly grew among *Sufi* members across various Muslim communities as a way of remaining connected with the Prophet (SAW). This may be one of the reasons that popularize its observance among Muslim *Sufis* in Bida Niger State.<sup>53</sup> *Maulid* status has rapid and steadily attain an official recognition status of public holiday in countries like Egypt and Turkey under Ottoman empire since 1910. This holiday extends to Nigeria since early 1960s in the first Republic.

In Bida town, *Maulid* is reported to have started by the late Sheikh Muhammad Wazir Bida known as “Waziri Mamma” (1882-1945) at his resident in Banwuya during the reign of 9<sup>th</sup> Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Ndayako (1935-1962).<sup>54</sup> As at then, Etsu Nupe Muhammadu Ndayako was reported to be one of the high profile dignitaries who attended it at Sheikh Muhammad Wazir’s resident up to his death as Etsu Nupe. According to this revelation, this *Maulid* was attested to be the first of its kind that ever took place in Bida Nupe land and entire Niger State as a whole. In addition, the schedule of its programme as at that time was reported to be fixed at after *Ishai* prayer of the 12<sup>th</sup> night of *Rabial Auwal* month of Islamic calendar, annually and lasted till day break. Its proceedings were said to be centred on preaching of the life history of the Prophet (SAW), general religious matters and eulogy singing of *Burdah* and *Ishiriniyyah* of Sheikh Alfa-Zazi for Muslims. The revelation continued that the attendees to the occasion were fed with different eateries such as meat, food and drinks like *Kudo* which is called *Kunu* in Hausa language among others for showing appreciation to the people.<sup>55</sup>

The sustenance of this practice in Bida by some *Sufi* adherents kept flourishing to the extent of accommodating modernity trend in the way and manner of its observance. Some of these new trends *Maulid* in Bida Nupe land include *Maulid* for Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani the founder of *Sufi Tariqah*, Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack, *Maulid* throughout other months in the year aside *Rabial*

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<sup>51</sup> R. Bukhari, *the Complete Illustrated Guide to Islam, Ibid*, P.172

<sup>52</sup> S. I. Kasim, *Maulid Activity of some Muslims*, (nd), (np), P.39

<sup>53</sup> Malam Tijjani Yakubu (63 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

<sup>54</sup> Sheikh Muhammadu Abdullahi (64 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>55</sup> Sheikh Muhammadu Abdullahi (64 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

*Auwal*, weekly *Maulid*, daily *Maulid* and staging of procession on street by the adherents. But each of these *Maulid* has a peculiar pattern of its observance either in the monasteries, lobbies of the houses, mosques, open place and others.<sup>56</sup> For example, Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijjani *Maulid* used to be observed in the month of *Rajab* while Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack own take place in the month of *Safar* at open place annually for enumerating their contributions to Islam and *Tasawwuf*.<sup>57</sup> In objection to this practice, some anti-Sufis maintained that all these practices are unnecessary in Islam because there was nothing like this during the life time of the Prophet (SAW) and even life time of these two *Sufi* scholars; Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani and Sheikh Ibrahim Niass Kaolack. It is affirmed by some *Sufis* that *Maulid* of these kinds started after the death of these scholars.<sup>58</sup> As a result of this argument some *Sufi* adherents posited that *Maulid* of any form is centred on the passion of the Prophet (SAW) and promotion of Islam, adding that some of its positive impacts largely contribute to the flourishing of trading, medium scale businesses among participants.<sup>59</sup>

More so, it empowers even the transportation vehicular service movement of motorcycles and Keke-Napep drivers. This happen because of conveying participants to the venue of celebration by the transporters, therefore, whoever that think whether *Maulid* practice is needed for him, such person should do it with consciousness of Allah that is devoid of immoral practices and shameful acts that are not permitted in Islam.<sup>60</sup>

## 2. Marriage Ceremony of *Sufis* in Bida Town

The marriage is affirmed to be one of the purification ways for the procreation of legitimate human being right from the beginning of Islam. This is due to the fact that its sacred social contract nature made man and woman to enter into mutual agreement which both partners give their common consent before it.<sup>61</sup> In addition, mutual agreement for marriage is very unique to the extent, that even widows or divorced women are encouraged to get married provided that the requirements of Islamic marriage are fulfilled by them. It is important to mention that there is emphasis in Islam on the fulfilment of these essentials of marriage such as *Sadaq* (dowry), *Wali*

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<sup>56</sup> Malam Lawal Yusuf (57 years), trader and *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>57</sup> Habibu Muhammadu (46 years), civil servant, interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>58</sup> Abdul-Aziz Bukhari (50 years), driver, interviewed at Bida on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

<sup>59</sup> Habibu Muhammadu, interviewed at Minna, *Op Cit*,

<sup>60</sup> Hassan Ibrahim Ndalikali, (50 years), civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

<sup>61</sup> A. I. Doi, *Cardinal Principles of Islam*, Hudahuda publishing company, Zaria, 1981, P. 126

(guardianship), offer and acceptance, *Al-Wikalah* (representative) and declaration before any valid marriage. Therefore, any Islamic marriage that fails to meet up with these requirements is considered as invalid.<sup>62</sup> As a result of this, Islam has placed great benefit on companionship of marriage to the individual and society.

Apart from this, marriage good relationship also provides a stable environment for the upbringing of children as their role models. It is considered to be the happiest occasion in a man's life provided it is publicly proclaimed in accordance with Islamic norms. Most of the Sufis weddings in Bida town use to take place in the morning or afternoon in the week which its method is simple.<sup>63</sup> This is because *Imam* commence this process by reading varied prayers generally preceded by wedding *Khutbah* (sermon) that make the congregation realize the importance of the marriage in Islam.<sup>64</sup>

It is revealed by some Sufis that many scholars, including Sufis, have contributed to the strengthening of Muslim marriages by enjoining people to fear Allah in dealings with their spouses during their preaching to the celebrants on virtues of Islamic marriage.<sup>65</sup> Of course, many Muslim scholars inclusive of Sufis educate couples to protect the right of each other so that peaceful matrimonial home can be achieved by them. Example of these *Sufi* scholars that some people invite for wedding preaching in Bida include Sheikh Suleiman Jekada, Sheikh *Man-Baba* Essa and Alhaji Labaran Yahaya Dokodza among others are adjudged to be experts in the aspect of wedding preaching like *Walimah* gathering.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, these *Sufi* scholars are attested by some adherents for their roles in settling marriage disputes among couples in the community in exceptional cases. This their settlement intervention is done based on the confidence that adherents and some non-Sufis have in them because of their Islamic knowledge.<sup>67</sup>

### 3. Naming Ceremony of Sufis in Bida Town

Giving the plurality of human creation on earth which Allah has endowed nations with including, Bida town in Niger State, motivated some Sufis to give their utmost gratitude to Allah

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<sup>62</sup> A. I. Doi, Cardinal Principles of Islam, Ibid, P. P.127

<sup>63</sup> Malam Muhammadu Danladi (50 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Tadafu Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>64</sup> Suleiman Babadoko (48 years), civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>65</sup> Malam Muhammadu Danladi (50 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed, *Op Cit*,

<sup>66</sup> Baba Nasiru Abdulrahman (66 years), retired public servant, interviewed at Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

<sup>67</sup> Sheikh Muhammadu Gimba (53 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Darachita Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

through different forms of naming ceremony prayer.<sup>68</sup> Some revelations indicate that Sufis naming ceremony tradition is essential to them and for their new born baby because of its avenue which allowed them to seek for the blessing and virtue of Muslims for the child. The common names that Muslims name their child in Bida include Abdullahi, Abdulrahman, Abdul Rahim, Muhammad, Amina and Fatima to mention but a few adding that the tradition of naming prayer of *Sufis* in Bida used to attracts large turnout of people because of wide coverage invitation mainly from organizers.<sup>69</sup> This goes along with sharing of Kolanut and sweet for invitees. The common venue for holding this naming prayer in Bida include *Katamba* (lobby), mosques and open-places in the morning or afternoon, which its prayer time method used to take place between 7:00 am to 8:30 am and 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm sometimes. Certainly, the turnout of people used to be vary and, also depends on the popularity and relationship of the organizer with people in the community, but this practice of naming it is still maintained by Sufis and some non-Sufis in the town.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, at the process of this prayer many *Sufi* scholars enjoin Muslims to thank Allah for all His gifts to them and, also asked people to desist from sticking to a particular sex of a child. This is due to that fact that some parents prefer to give birth to a male child than female, however, whatever the case may be, all human beings are equal irrespective of gender, except through righteous strive and obedient that someone attain highest rank of Allah.<sup>71</sup>

Apparently, Muslim scholars, including Sufis educate people on some recommended *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) regarding child's birth including whispering *Adzan* calling into the newly born baby's right ear and *Iqamah* in his left ear immediately after birth. This *Salat* calling start with *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is great) and end up with (there is no god except Allah).<sup>72</sup> Certainly, fundamental pronouncements of faith serve as the pivotal around which the life of Muslim rotates, hence their symbolic are significance at birth. In furtherance to this, some scholars call on Muslims to maintain the practice of *Tahnik* on their new born babies in accordance with the *Sunnah* of Prophet (SAW). *Tahnik* means chew a date, then rub the new born baby 's mouth with it, by putting a little of the chewed date on a fingertip and insert it into baby's mouth. Then move it gently right and left until the whole mouth is rubbed with the chewed date.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Malam Yabagi Abdulkadir (51 years), contractor, interviewed at Bida on 24<sup>TH</sup> May, 2023

<sup>69</sup> Malama Habiba Abdullahi (58 years), Islamic woman preacher, interviewed Bangbara Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

<sup>70</sup> Ndagiman Takowasa (42 years), electrician, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>71</sup> Sani Muhammadu (39 years), student, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>72</sup> A. N. Ulwan, *Child Education in Islam*, Darel Salam, Egypt, 2001, P.26

<sup>73</sup> A. N. Ulwan, *Child Education in Islam*, Darel Salam, Egypt, 2001, P.27

However, if dates are not available substitute with any sweet such as honey. Some scholars opine that *Tahnik* is a process for strengthening the muscles of the mouth of new born baby by moving his tongue and mouth in order to get baby ready for sucking milk from the mother's breast.<sup>74</sup> In addition, the *Aqiqah* (slaughter) of animal such as goat or sheep which is attested by many people as recommended for new born baby on seventh day after birth but scholars differ on slaughtering of animal for a new born baby, as some consider the act, as *Sunnah* and recommended while others see it as obligatory.<sup>75</sup> The impact of naming ceremony prayer on Nupe people in Bida town is that its forum brought about Muslims from different areas in the town on prayers, where scholars enlighten crowd on the importance of gift of a child from Allah, instilling love of Allah and Prophet (SAW) in the mind of children and admonishment of training them properly on Islam so that they can become responsible persons in the society.<sup>76</sup>

#### **4. Janazah Prayer**

*Janazah* is an Arabic word that means funeral, that is traditionally observed in accordance with the teachings of Islam for the benefit of dead person. The moment a Muslim dies, his body will be washed and shrouded for funeral prayer. Therefore, any one participating in this prayer must perform ablution just as in any other prayer. It is reported that in Islam *Janazah* prayer service could be performed in a mosque, any open space and other places for seeking forgiveness for the dead before is buried at cemetery.<sup>77</sup> The method of *Janazah* prayer involves the placement of the dead body in front of *Imam* who faces the *Qiblah* standing and people form rows behind him and say a prayer that has neither *Sujud* (prostration) nor *Ruku* (genuflexion) or sitting but ends with *Taslim* in standing posture. During the performance of this prayer the *Imam* and followers read silently any prayers they wish but the followers repeat *Takbir Allahu Akbar* (Allah is great) four times openly after the *Imam*, while at the fifth time the *Imam* says the *Taslim*.<sup>78</sup>

Funeral prayer is one of the socio-religious activities that *Sufi* scholars took part along with other Muslims for the benefit of deceased person. It is noted that during the funeral or after it,

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<sup>74</sup> M. Sherif "upbringing of Muslim children" (np), 2003, P.32

<sup>75</sup> Zubairu Iliyasu Tela (54 years), Qur'anic teacher, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>76</sup> Suleimanu Ndabagi Tetengi (46 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>77</sup> A. K. A. Alam, *A Simple Guide to Funeral Rites in Islam from the Point of Death to the Burial*, Salafi publication, Birmingham, 2019, Pp.6-7

<sup>78</sup> S. Abdulrahman, "Islamic learning in Nupe land" *Op Cit*, P.198



many scholars preach to the bereave people to be patient and mindful of their utterances to Allah over the death of someone among them. They also reiterate to the people that Allah can take or give life to anyone He wishes.<sup>79</sup> This shows that death is inevitable to every soul; it is a reality that every soul must test one day in life. In addition, some deceased families are known with a tradition call *Fidau*. This *Fidau* prayer is of different types that ranges from three, seven and forty days in some Muslim communities.<sup>80</sup>

But one of the popular one that Sufis and some non-Sufis prefer to attend in Bida town is that of the three days *Fidau* prayer, where people gather at deceased residence for the purpose of praying for him as an act of redeeming all his shortcomings.<sup>81</sup> More so, seven and forty days *Fidau* prayer do not witness many people like that of three days in the town. Although this practice of *Fidau* in some places in Bida used to be a low-key remembrance that some bereaved family members converge for the last collective prayers for the dead person. However, in most of *Fidau* convergence of this nature some family members of the deceased do offers some *Sadaqah* (charity) of different variety of things ranging from row food stuffs, money and others to those that attend prayer session with them for the benefit of dead person.<sup>82</sup>

### **Effects of Sufis Training on Adherents in Bida town of Niger State**

The influence of Sufis training on people in Bida town have reflected on so many things that are conducted by them in the community that ranges from the acquisition of Islamic knowledge, spiritual enhancement and others.<sup>83</sup> It is therefore, understood that the commonest way for all Sufis to conceptualize training is to point to the purification of someone soul which according to some revelations do happen through the connection of novice to his Sheikh or *Muqaddam*. This is the process where Sheikh will set a disciple on guidance rules for true mystical experience knowledge of Allah.<sup>84</sup> In a much same manner, Seeseman posits that “training of soul” aimed at cleanse the evil-commanding of negative influences up to the point where one become perfect in spiritual connection with Allah.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, the acquisition of Islamic knowledge is one of the basic

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<sup>79</sup> S. Abdulrahman, *Ibid*, P.199

<sup>80</sup> Malam Alfa Bamisun (52 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>81</sup> Malam Kudu Tsonfada (67 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Edogifu, Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>82</sup> Malam Kudu Tsonfada (67 years), interviewed, *Ibid*,

<sup>83</sup> Alhaji Usman Alhassan (54 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Minna on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>84</sup> S. A. Aboki, “Reflections on *Tasawwuf* in the Sokoto Caliphate” *Al-ITQAN Journal of Islamic Sciences and comparative Studies*, Vol. No. 2, Issue No. 2, 2018, Pp. 21-25

<sup>85</sup> R. Seeseman “Spiritual training: the way to mystical knowledge” Ch.02. 67, 2011, Pp.68-70

prerequisite for all servant before knowing Allah., in essence, whoever that lack knowledge of Islam would be slowly thriving towards Allah. For example, in Bida Sufis influence show on adherents on learning of Islamic knowledge books authored by Islamic scholars. This influence manifested through their zeal for going to scholars for learning on day to day basis, this used to be in the morning, afternoon and evening of the week except Thursdays and Fridays that they rest.<sup>86</sup> Although mode of Sufis training on knowledge acquisition is traditional from the onset which used to take place at monastery, mosques, lobby of the house and under tree where students are taught different areas of knowledge such as *Tafsir*, *Hadith*, *Fiqh* and Arabic grammar and others. The common teaching methods noted by some Sufis as at the time of this research was rote, explanatory and oral methods in Bida town.<sup>87</sup>

It is a common knowledge that where there is a positive knowledge acquisition training, there must be negative. Therefore, positive knowledge result in promoting the character of student for worthy living. Meanwhile, training could be regarded as a way of deepening morality standards in human behaviours for the purpose of better life.<sup>88</sup> It is asserts by some Sufis that training of adherents entails many things that ranges from enlighten followers for the best worship of Allah. According to some Sufis in Bida this is why some of them entrusted their children in the custody of scholars for proper training on character and education. Even though in realizing this development some collate token fees for their services and running of the school. Example of this arrangement was sighted at *Islamiyyah* school established by *Malam* Suleimanu Jekada, Ekpan Etsu Umaru Bida, *Ilmi* school of Emitsu Zango Bida and *Makaranta* Emi-*Malam* Yakubu Muwo Tifin Tswako area, Bida and others.<sup>89</sup>

More so, influence of Sufis on spiritual enhancement is one of the strides that is seen with most of them in Muslim communities including Bida town in Niger State. It is affirmed that spiritual connection is the best avenue that propel the elevation of servant to the greater heights from this life to the next world.<sup>90</sup> These spiritual influence exercises on adherents possible sometimes through the availability of genres produced by some *Sufi* scholars for the elaboration of the essence of spirituality and training that deals with this aspect include annotation of verses

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<sup>86</sup> Baba Alhaji Ndaman (47 years), student, interviewed at Banyagi Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>87</sup> Baba Alhaji Ndaman (47 years), student, interviewed at Banyagi Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>88</sup> Malam Mustapha Sanusi (54 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>89</sup> Malam Ismaila Badamasi (49 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>90</sup> Malam Sani Yusuf (62 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Gwagwa Abuja on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

and chapters of the Glorious Qur'an on supplication of prayers. Moreover, this kind of genres of *Sufi* scholars on annotation usually begins by showing some names of Allah that Qur'an contains.<sup>91</sup> This, to some extent, indicates that man has the potential to know Allah through the deep knowledge of Islam. Obviously, the task of interpretation of the Glorious Qur'an is endless by all means.

However, *Sufi* scholars as well as some Muslim scholars use this method of annotation for explaining some chapters and verses of the Glorious Qur'an based on their understanding for the benefit of Muslims at various communities. *Sufi* scholars that produces this kind of genres feel that details of certain historical circumstances surrounding the revelation of chapters or verses need to be known by Muslims in order for them to understand fully the main intent and purpose of the revelation of Qur'an.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, it is believed that interpretations of the Qur'an are many and varied. They are varied according to the taste and understanding aim of the interpreter. Example of annotation genres include *Lataif al-Faidah al-Qur'aniyyah* ((subtle virtue of Al-Qur'an) focuses the signs and oneness of Allah with many verses of the Glorious Qur'an with their purposes and places of revelation. It is composed in order to teach Muslims the importance of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). This work was produced by Sheikh Yusuf Abdullahi Lokoja (d.2016) his sources of reference are *Tafsir Jalalayn Sawi*, *Hadith* and other Islamic books. Notably, many of his followers have adopted the usage of this work for supplication recounting and teaching at his monastery in Lokoja and Bida town in Niger State.<sup>93</sup>

#### **D. Conclusion**

The paper reflected examination of socio-religious practices of Sufis in Bida, Nupe land in Niger State. Therein, historical foundation of the Bida town was provided with the kind of Fulani descendants that are ruling as Etsu Nupe since after 1804 *Jihad* in the area. The people have assimilated to the culture of the indigenous Nupe people which portray them as Nupe. The paper unveils where Nupe people are located in North Central Nigeria at the places like Niger State, Kwara, Kogi Nasarawa and Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) It shows the religious beliefs that was practiced by Nupe people in Bida from the early time in the history which after a while

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<sup>91</sup> M. O. A Abdul, *introduction of Glorious Qur'an*, Islamic publication bureau, Lagos, 1986, P.84

<sup>92</sup> Malam Nasir Yusuf (60 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Abuja 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

<sup>93</sup> Malam Bukhari Aminu Yusuf (54 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023

the introduction of Islam set in through some agents of Islamization such as Wangarawa Muslim scholars, some indigenous Muslim scholars like Sheikh Abdulrahman bn Muhammad Sherif, first indigenous Nupe Muslim ruler in Nupe land known as Etsu Nupe Jibrilu and reform of Muhammadu Bagana popularly known as *Manko* in Nupe history. The kind of *Sufi* practice that was prevalent among people in Bida such as *Qadiriyyah* and *Tijjaniyyah* orders with clear scholars that were identified with each since their emergence in the area including some socio-religious practices like *Maulid*, its types, marriage, naming and funeral ceremonies to the congruent of their Islamic tenets and effects of *Sufi* training on adherents all featured respectively.

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### **List of Informants**

1. Abdul-Aziz Bukhari (50 years), driver, interviewed at Bida on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
2. Alhaji Ibrahim Suleiman (55 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Bwari, Abuja (FCT) on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
3. Alhaji Usman Alhassan (54 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Minna on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
4. Baba Alhaji Ndaman (47 years), student, interviewed at Banyagi Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
5. Baba Nasiru Abdulrahman (66 years), retired public servant, interviewed at Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.
6. Habibu Muhammadu (46 years), civil servant, interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

7. Hajiya Aishatu Yawa (88 years), House wife, interviewed at Sabongida area Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023.
8. Hajiya Aishatu Yawa (88 years), House wife, interviewed at Sabongida area Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023.
9. Hassan Ibrahim Ndalikali, (50 years), civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.
10. Malam Alfa Bamisun (52 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.
11. Malam Bukhari Aminu Yusuf (54 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
12. Malam Habibu Usman Baro (64 years), retired civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023.
13. Malam Habibu Usman Baro (64 years), retired civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023.
14. Malam Hadi Basiru Ismaila (52 years), civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
15. Malam Ibrahim Saidu (61 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023.
16. Malam Ismaila Badamasi (49 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
17. Malam Kudu Tsonfada (67 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Edogifu, Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
18. Malam Lawal Yusuf (57 years), trader and *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed at Minna on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
19. Malam Muhammadu Danladi (50 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Tadafu Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
20. Malam Mustapha Sanusi (54 years), *Sufi Muqaddam*, interviewed on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.
21. Malam Nasir Yusuf (60 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Abuja 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
22. Malam Ndaman Abubakar (49 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
23. Malam Sallah Mahmud (57 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed in Bida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
24. Malam Sani Yusuf (62 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Gwagwa Abuja on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.
25. Malam Suleiman Aliyu Shafii (47 years), farmer and *Sufi*, interviewed at Bida on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2023.
26. Malam Tanko Saidu Shehu (55 years), Nupe historian, interviewed at Minna, Niger State on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
27. Malam Tijjani Yakubu (63 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.
28. Malam Usman Baba (48 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.
29. Malam Yabagi Abdulkadir (51 years), contractor, interviewed at Bida on 24<sup>TH</sup> May, 2023.
30. Malam Zubairu Garba (48 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Abuja on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.

31. Malama Habiba Abdullahi (58 years), Islamic woman preacher, interviewed Bangbara Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
32. Mayaki Isah Naibi (52 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023.
33. Ndagiman Takowasa (42 years), electrician, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.
34. Sani Muhammadu (39 years), student, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.
35. Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), Imam Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
36. Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
37. Sheikh Idris Muhammadu (73 years), *Imam* Banwuya mosque, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
38. Sheikh Muhammadu Abdullahi (64 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Bida on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2023.
39. Sheikh Muhammadu Gimba (53 years), Islamic scholar, interviewed at Darachita Bida on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.
40. Silas Tsado (52 years), civil servant and historian, interviewed at Banyagi, Bida on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023.
41. Suleiman Babadoko (48 years), civil servant, interviewed at Bida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
42. Suleimanu Ndabagi Tetengi (46 years), civil servant and Sufi, interviewed at Bida on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.
43. Zubairu Iliyasu Tela (54 years), Qur'anic teacher, interviewed at Bida on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.