

THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MUSLIM STUDENTS' SOCIETY ON CAMPUS

By:

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In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful. May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon our noble Prophet Muhammad Sallahu Alaihi Wasallam.

Protocol

I wish to start this presentation by showing my appreciation to the organisers of this occasion for giving me this opportunity to participate, as a guest speaker, in this noble duty of assisting the course of Islam. Organising a fund raising activity for procurement of a bus and stocking of a library by the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, Federal Polytechnic Kaura-Namoda Chapter, is a worthwhile project which should be supported by all Muslims, individuals and groups. For the MSS to enhance its numerous activities on campus in religious, social and educational spheres, its members must be well equipped with necessary tools and materials. Unfortunately, members are not in a position to provide these needs from the little they get from parents and sometimes governments as up-keep allowances. Yet the mission has to be carried out and the goals must be pursued and targets must be reached. The intension of this little talk is to conduct a survey of numerous activities Muslim Students' Society Nigeria carries out on campus and to show the urgency of the need to come to its assistance for it to succeed in its mission. Three areas are earmarked for the survey namely religious, social and educational. We begin with

religious activities as the foundation for a successful educational pursuit.

Religious Activities

Religion, as we all know, entails relationship between man and a super natural power he holds in awe. Islam, as a religion and a way of life, defines relationship between a Muslim and Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala*. Such relationship becomes fully effective from the time the Muslim attains the age of puberty and continues up to the time he departs this world. No matter the position attained by him or the circumstance in which he finds himself, the Muslim must remain committed to Islam in all respects including enhancing its practice among the Muslims and introducing it to the non-Muslims. Members and leaders of MSSN, like other Muslims, are bound by this bond to Islam. It is, therefore, not surprising that the organisation has taken upon itself the onerous responsibility for ensuring that Muslim students on campus are given opportunity to practice Islam as a way of life while they pursue their courses of study. Some of the areas employed by the Society to ensure a successful sojourn on campus for the Muslim students include the following:

- Facilitation and maintenance of mosques for daily prayers by making all necessary arrangements to see that enabling environment is created for the Muslim students, and sometimes members of staff, to observe congregational prayers and forge brotherhood and unity among themselves. Sometimes, the organisation carries out these responsibilities by itself without assistance from institutions.

- Carrying out of enlightenment activities like *Nasiha* that is usually made at the end of every congregational prayer on the campus and *Wa'az* (preaching) conducted both within the campus and among communities living adjacent to the campus.
- Conducting Islamic quiz competition and Qur'an recitation competition among members on campus or students of secondary schools within the immediate catchment area of the institution.

Social Activities

Muslim students are, like all of us, social animals and they have to interact. Having come from various tribal, ethnic and linguistic groups, the Muslim students are bound together by the identity of Islam. It is also a fact that a higher institution of learning is a community in itself comprising of people belonging to various social interest groups and each individual identifies with his or her own group. It therefore, becomes imperative on the MSSN as a group to identify its members and bring them to its fold as well as secure their identity for them. In an attempt to do that, the MSSN organises social functions for the good of its members part of which are:

- Organises annual orientation programme for new students. The programme is necessary because it is through it that the new students are brought into the fold of the society and prevented from being enlisted by anti-social groups and organisations on campus.
- Organises send-forth *walima* for its outgoing members. The *walima* is meant to remind outgoing members to remain

committed to the ideals of the society which they had imbibed while on the campus and to also be good ambassadors of the Society wherever they find themselves.

- Fights social ills on the campus which are inimical to the wellbeing of a decent community. MSSN is seen as a good partner in progress in some institutions because it assists the Management to check anti-social behaviours among students such as cultism, nudeness, drug peddling and addiction, alcoholism and to some extent examination misconduct.

Educational Activities

Education in the context of this presentation comprises both Islamic and modern systems of education operating in Nigeria. A Muslim is, by the provisions of Islam, under obligation to pursue Islamic education in order to worship Allah as taught by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Modern education on the other hand is *fard kifaya* as long as other Muslims satisfy the need of the Muslim community in basic professions such as engineering, medicine and teaching. But where the Muslims are left behind and they have to rely on non-Muslims for these basic needs, as we witness today, pursuit of modern education becomes compulsory. Therefore, Muslim students in our institutions of higher learning who pursue various programmes of study in modern sciences have also spared time to continue with their Islamic education. Muslim Students' Society has provided that opportunity to Muslim students through some of the following avenues:

- Encouraging students to excel in their programmes of study and coordinating study groups. The society impresses on its members

the need to attend their lectures, tutorials, workshops and practical all the times and punctually, and to submit their assignments and practical reports on time. Students are also encouraged to form study groups among their course mates with a view to assisting weaker ones among them.

- Conducting *Ta'lim* programme for students wishing to advance their knowledge in Islamic education. Two forms of *Ta'lim* exist; the one conducted between *Maghrib* and *Isha'* prayers where some Islamic books are read and explained by a learned member for the benefit of the congregation, and a normal *Ilmi* school that is conducted for individuals who wish to learn one Islamic book or the other under the guidance of a learned member.
- Conducting extra-mural classes and career guidance for secondary school students. The programme is carried out by MSSN as a contribution to the immediate community of a higher institution. Students who failed their O' level examinations and those wishing to sit for Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME) are brought together by the MSSN and a volunteer group of MSSN is recruited to teach them. Similarly, a tour of some secondary schools is undertaken by MSSN where talks on career choice based on subject combination are given.
- Organising public lectures on campus on a topic of national importance or religious significance to enlighten the campus community and general public. In most cases speakers are drawn from sister institutions or from related organisations.
- Establishing and Running of a Library. This is a common feature of MSSN activities across institutions of higher learning. Each

mosque of the MSSN has a library attached to it. The library is meant to serve the reading and research needs of the members. That is why in most libraries books on subject areas offered in the institution and basic books on Islamic education are found on the shelves of these libraries. Attempts are being made by chapters to digitize their libraries.

Appeal

Looking at what has been said above, it will be clear to everybody that MSSN is significantly contributing in the areas of religious and socio-educational life of our children, wards, brothers and daughters on campus. Without this Society the history of our children in the institutions of higher learning will certainly be different. Many of them will be carried away by the tide of social ills pervading our institutions of higher learning. It can also be said that to carry out these activities, the Society requires a lot of resources. Unfortunately, members of this Society in the Federal Polytechnic Kaura-Namoda do not have the capacity to raise, within themselves, the required resources to execute these activities.

A bus is certainly needed by the branch for its activities such as preaching tours, conduct of extra-mural classes for secondary school students, career guidance and attending meetings outside Kaura-Namoda. A branch of MSSN without a library will be a handicapped one in its religious and educational activities. This is the reason why this fund raising is organised. Whatever one can donate will go a long way to address these problems. We should remember that whatever

we contribute Allah will repay us a thousand-fold even after our demise for this is a *Sadaqatun Jariyah*.