

Human Empowerment: A Case Study of Tijāniyyah Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN) Osun State, Nigeria

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Sulaiman, Kamal-deen Olawale

Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Bello, Wasiu Oyetunji

Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

Abstract

Tijāniyyah is one of the groups in *Sūfi* Islamic order. Sufism or *Tasawwuf*, has its root in the early days of Islam, i.e., it is as old as Islam, but its transformation as a distinct movement occurred over time. *Tijāniyyah Sūfi* order was founded by Ahmad al-Tijani (1735-1815). The name *Tijaniyyah* is derived from his name “Al-Tijani”, which refers to his birthplace, *Tijani*, a small village in Algeria. The order came to Nigeria at a very early stage, perhaps during the lifetime of its founder. The order has faced criticism and controversy from some scholars and groups, who accuse it of introducing innovations (*bid’ah*) in Islam. This paper aims to unveil its contributions and how its empowerment programme benefited the people of Osun State. It also unearths the roles and activities of the *Tijāniyyah* Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN), Osun State. The research used analytical method as well as survey method to achieve its set objectives. Findings from the study show that the group (TIGMEIN) under the umbrella of the Osun State *Tijāniyyah Sūfi* order has organised different trainings across all local government areas of Osun State to secure jobs for teeming unemployed youth and alleviate poverty in the State. The work therefore recommends that members of the group put in more effort to sustain the programme and that government, as well as other organisations in the State and Nigeria at large, should also assist the programme.

Keywords

Tijāniyyah, Tigmein, empowerment, initiative, philanthropist

Introduction

Tijāniyyah is a subgroup in the Islamic mystical order (Sufism). The word is named after the founder, Ahmad at-Tijāni, the leader of the mystical order whose progenitor was *Khalīfah* Ali (the fourth successor in Islam) and Fatimah

Corresponding author:

Professor Kamal-deen Olawale Sulaiman, Department of Religious Studies, Ekiti State University, P.M.B. 5363, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
Email: kamaldeen.sulaiman@eksu.edu.ng

(the daughter of the Prophet) .¹ He was a God-fearing and obedient man, and he met one of the Sufis from Egypt, Sayyidi Muhammad Quridi, who told him that God loved him. He then asked Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni what he wanted, he answered that he wanted the high post. Sayyidi Muhammad Quridi replied, ‘You do not know yourself, your position before Allah is more than what you demanded’.² Ahmad at-Tijāni took the title of Sharīf and then produced a pedigree that traced his ancestry to Al-Hassan, son of Ali bn Abi Talib, a cousin of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).³ Between 1783 CE and 1786 CE, Shaykh Ahmad at-Tijāni claimed to have seen a series of visions of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) in which he was instructed to found a new order⁴. This order was to claim the exclusive allegiance of its followers, so that they could not belong to any other order.

Empowerment is a process enabling individuals to understand the relationship between their actions and outcomes, allowing people the power to achieve the results they desire. It is also an intrinsic motivation made up of four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The four cognitions are defined as follows:

- i. Meaning: it is the fit between the requirements of a work role and a person’s belief, values, and behaviours;
- ii. Competence: it is the self-efficacy related to work, the belief in one’s capability to perform work activities with skill;
- iii. Self-determination is a sense of choice in initiating and regulating actions; and
- iv. Impact is the degree to which a person can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work. However, it is a means of acquiring skills to empower. It is also the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities.⁵

According to Aliyu (2010) as reiterated by Sa’i, to empower means to make more able, to enhance the ability to perform, and increase capacity.⁶

Initiative means power, energy, and desire that is needed to do something.⁷ There are different types of initiative such as: individual, social, economic, educational, cultural, physical, psychological, and others. The *Tijāniyyah* movement is identified as a spiritual organisation that encourages its adherents to maintain spiritual uprightness. This reputation allows other Muslims to regard *Tijāniyyah* followers as spiritual consultants.⁸ Additionally, they recognise *jalabi* (spiritual attraction) as a means of economic sustenance. However, the findings reveal that it is a misconception to claim that *Jalabi* (spiritual attraction) is the primary means of economic survival for *Tijāniyyah* leaders. Instead, the movement emphasises spiritual knowledge and the pursuit

of divine proximity (*qurbah*), striving to become righteous saints (*awliyāu llahi*) rather than relying on *Jalabi* as an economic tool.⁹ Shaykh Ibrahim Niyās, a great reformer within the *Tijāniyyah* movement (1900-1975) was a multifaceted leader- teacher, author, farmer, and business man-who embodied self-reliance throughout his life. He actively encouraged his followers to engage in lawful professions as a means of economic survival.¹⁰ His teachings and emphasis on mutual support among adherents laid the foundation for initiatives like the *Tijāniyyah* Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN), which reflects his vision of communal upliftment and self-sufficiency.¹¹

The *Tijāniyyah* in Osun State

It was noted that the creation of Osun State out of the old Oyo State on the 27th of August, 1991 by the then Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, led to the emergence of *Tijāniyyah* in the State.¹² Though, the *Tijāniyyah* in Osun State did not emerge immediately after the creation of the State until 1996, when Shaykh Mudathir Sulayman Cisee Igbaye (now Chief Imām l- faydah Yorubaland Edo and Delta State) together with Shaykh Abdullahi Olodo (d.2008) from Ibadan, Oyo State visited Shaykh Abdur-Rahim Alesinloye Arikose Anabi (d.2015) because *Majma'u l- 'Ahbāb Faydat -Tijāniyyah & Muhasasatu an-Nasrul- 'Ilm* Society of Nigeria (AAIS) Northern Nigeria branch organise *Mawlid* Shaykh Ibrahim Niyās every year.¹³

The visitation of dua Shaykh, Shaykh Mudathir Sulayman Cisee Igbaye (now Chief Imām l- Faydah Yorubaland Edo and Delta States) together with Shaykh Abdullahi Olodo (d.2008) from Ibadan, Oyo State to Shaykh Abdur-Rahim Alesinloye Arikose Anabi (d.2015) on the purpose, led to the first meeting on the 9th of June, 1996, and they decided that the last Sunday of every month would be the meeting day. In 1996, the Osun State *Tijāniyyah* held the *Mawlid* of Shaykh l-Islam organised by *Majma'u 'Ahbāb* Shaykh Ibrahim Niyās at Ansārud-Deen Central Mosque, Sabo, Osogbo on the 14th of December, 1996/3rd Sha'ban. 1417 A.H.

The State meeting of *Tijāniyyah* continued regularly for three months between October and December, 2005, until when the association became moribund because of leadership tussle (*Khilāfah*). However, they were able to hold a state meeting on the last Sunday of January, 2006. At the meeting, a suggestion was raised on the picking of a ballot paper by each of the six (6) zones of the association. At first, it was Shaykh Arogundade from Osogbo Zone who picked up the paper, which resulted in his getting the post of Secretary for Osogbo Zone.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Shaykh Nurudeen Imran Bello Samata emerged as the State Secretary from Osogbo Zone, and he assumed office in February, 2006. Other posts were:

1. Ikirun Zone: Alhaji Abdul Hafiz Adedayo (Ila) - Financial Secretary
2. Ede Zone: Alhaji Salihu Jayeola (Ejigbo) - Auditor
3. Iwo Zone: Shaykh Abdul Fatai Toromade (Ikire) - Treasurer

4. Ife Zone: Public Relation Officer (P.R.O.) not submitted
 5. Ijesa Zone: Sayyid Muhammad Ishāq - Assistant Secretary
 6. Osogbo Zone: As early mentioned but to complete the six zones- Shaykh Nurudeen Imran Bello Samata - General Secretary
- Chairman: Shaykh Ibrahim Idowu Alakoniya Ila
 - Vice Chairman: Shaykh Nasir Nafiu Dogo Ikire¹⁵

The State meeting continued regularly as the executives took care of the association as at 2006. The commencement of Niyās day South-West organised by Supreme Council for *faydah Tijāniyyah*, the first rotation programme read thus:

- 1st *Mawlīd*: Oyo State – 2006
- 2nd *Mawlīd*: Ondo State – 2007
- 3rd *Mawlīd*: Ogun State – 2008
- 4th *Mawlīd*: Osun State – 2009
- 5th *Mawlīd*: Lagos State – 2010¹⁶

Second (2nd) Round:

- 1st *Mawlīd*: Oyo State – 2011
- 2nd *Mawlīd*: Ondo State – 2012
- 3rd *Mawlīd*: Ogun State – 2013
- 4th *Mawlīd*: Osun State – 2014
- 5th *Mawlīd*: Lagos State – 2015¹⁷

Tijāniyyah Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN)

The *Tijāniyyah* Grass-root Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN) is a multi-disciplinary non-governmental organisation, established in 2004 to promote social justice in Nigeria, and elsewhere. It is an initiative aimed at triggering national development through sensitising, mobilising, informing, educating and empowering *Tijāniyyah* followers from the grass-root. The *Tijāniyyah* community in Nigeria is plagued with several problems which have led to the truncation of its members from accessing certain rights and privileges, therefore stalling the general progress of the movement.¹⁸ The organisation is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission with RN:158595. The mission, vision, and areas of focus are:

- (i) Mission Statement: To empower disadvantaged people with knowledge and skill, through enlightenment and capacity building, to make them

stronger, and more confident in controlling their lives, claiming their rights, and contributing to national development.

- (ii) Vision: A society where everybody has the required skills, and opportunity to achieve their fullest potential and to participate in all aspects of life.
- (iii) Thematic Programme/Areas of focus:
 1. Legal literacy campaign
 2. Budget and tax advocacy
 3. Access to healthcare
 4. Equality of access to opportunities
 5. Monitoring electoral process
 6. Care for our forest/clean environment
 7. Peace building & conflict Resolutions
 8. Empowering people for sustainable livelihood
 9. Humanitarian assistance to people who need help¹⁹

The *Tijāniyyah* Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN) Osun State Chapter was inaugurated on Saturday, 22nd January 2022 at Freedom Park, Osogbo, Osun State under the Authority of Fadilatun Shaykh Mahi Ibrahim Niyās Al-Kawlakhi (RTA).²⁰

Beginning of TIGMEIN Osun State

TIGMEIN Osun State emerged through the first meeting that was held on Tuesday, 2nd November 2021 at Osun State *Tijāniyyah* Central Mosque, Arogunmosa Area, Osun State, Nigeria. At the meeting, the executives were selected across the nine (9) geo-political zones of the State.²¹ The second meeting was held on 16 November, 2021 at the same venue, *Tijāniyyah* Central Mosque, Osogbo. It featured the introduction of the National executive, State and Local Government coordinators. Also, the National Board of Trustees Secretary, Professor Sharafadeen Omotayo Amuda explained that the originator of TIGMEIN, Shaykh Tijāni Sanni Awwal, has assigned them to pick the date for the inauguration of the society in Osun State. They then agreed to visit the Grand Khalīfah of the State, Shaykh Abdul Kareem Raji, and Imām al-faydah for Yorubaland, Edo and Delta, Shaykh Mudathir Kolawole Sulaiman Cisse.

Other meetings which were held between 21 and 28 December, 2024 were on the inauguration date and familiarisation of the event with the incumbent Governor, Alhaji Isiaka Oyetola. Towards the inauguration, another meeting was held on 11 January, 2022, where Professor Amuda elucidated on the aims and objectives of the originator of the society, which are for the eradication of poverty among the adherents of *Tijāniyyah* and also to involve the adherents in political office so as to allow the adherents to become leaders of their association. At the meeting, they also agreed that it would be too early to declare the party to be supported at that time. However, the last meeting before

the inauguration day was held on 18 January, 2022, where all the preparations were sealed. On Saturday, 22 January 2022, the inauguration was held at the Freedom Park, Osogbo where Professor Amuda averred that the society did not collect anything from any political appointees.²² At the event, the executives were inaugurated as follows:

- i. Coordinator: Shaykh Abdul Azeez Ajibade – Iwo
- ii. Deputy Coordinator: Alhaji Abdul Ganiyy Ayelabola -Oriade
- iii. General Secretary: Sayyid Sulaiman Lukuman Babatunde
- iv. Deputy General Secretary: Sayyid Miftaudeen Tajudeen -Ejigbo
- v. Treasurer: Sayyidah Islamiyyah Adeola – Ede North
- vi. Financial Secretary: Sayyidah Sulaiman Silifat – Odo-Otin
- vii. Deputy Financial Secretary: Olagboyega Adebayo -Apomu
- viii. Youth leader: Sayyid Kun fayakunTijōni – Osogbo
- ix. Amirah: Sayyidah Raji Ibitoye Khadijah – Ila
- x. Deputy Amirah: Sayyidah Owolaranfe Haolat – Ife
- xi. Auditor: Abdul Azeez Jamiu – Ife²³
- xii. Deputy Auditor: Sayyid Oladepo Ismaheel – Olorunda
- xiii. Welfare officer: Sayyid Abubakr Musa – Ede
- xiv. Deputy welfare: Sayyid Sarumi Quadri – Oriade
- xv. P.R.O.1: Sayyid Busari Musa Babalola -Ilesa West
- xvi. P.R.O.2: Sayyid Bello Mudathir – Ifelodun
- xvii. Protocol officer: Sayyid Abidoye Ismaheel – Oke-Ila
- xviii. Deputy protocol officer: Sayyid Adetunji Ismaheel – Iwo
- xix. Legal Adviser: Barrister Abdul Kareem Adekilekun – Ede
- xx. Deputy Legal Adviser: Lawyer Sarafadeen Hammed – Ife
- xxi. West Senatorial Leader: Shaykh Raji Munirudeen O. – Ede
- xxii. Central Senatorial Leader: Shaykh Olayiwola Tajudeen A. – Boripe
- xxiii. East Senatorial Leader: Shaykh Zakariyyau Isiaq – Obokun²⁴

Other executives from Osun State are:

- i. Alhaji Shaykh Abdullahi Abiodun Ibrahim Alakoniyyi-Natioal General Secretary (Ila-Orangun).
- ii. Prof. Sharafadeen Omotayo Amuda-National Leader & Secretary Board of Trustees (Iwo).
- iii. Shaykh Habib Tunde Musa-South/West Coordinator (Ede).²⁵

Activities of Tijāniyyah TIGMEIN in Osun State

After the State inauguration on 22 January, 2022, disbursement of acquired capital followed thus:

Table I: Disbursement of Acquired Capital

S/N	ZONES	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	DIVIDENTS
1	Osogbo Zone	Irepodun, Osogbo, Olorunda, Orolu	#800,000
2	Ikirun Zone	Ifelodun, Boripe, Boluwaduro, Ila, Ifedayo	#800,000
3	Ede Zone	Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo	#800,000
4	Iwo Zone	Iwo, Olaoluwa, Ayedire, Irewole, Isokan, Ayedaade	#800,000
5	Ife Zone	Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South,	#600,000
6	Ijesha Zone	Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Atakunmosa East, Atakunmosa West, Obokun, Oriade	#700,000 26

- i. Osogbo Zone comprises of these Local Governments: Osogbo, Olorunda, Irepodun and Orolu - the sum of eight hundred Thousand Naira (#800,000) was given to them for the empowerment;
- ii. Ikirun Zone comprises of Ifelodun, Boripe, Boluwaduro, Ila, and Ifedayo Local Governments - received eight hundred Thousand Naira (#800,000);²⁷
- iii. Ede Zone comprises of Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, and Ejigbo Local Governments - received eight hundred Thousand Naira (#800,000);
- iv. Iwo Zone comprises of Iwo, Olaoluwa, Ayedire, Irewole, Isokan and Ayedaade Local Governments - received eight hundred Naira (#800,000);
- v. Ife Zone comprises of Ife Central, Ife North, and Ife South Local Governments - received the amount of six hundred Thousand Naira (#600,000); and finally
- vi. Ijesa Zone comprises of Ilesa West, Ilesa East, Obokun, Oriade, Atakunmosa West, and Atakunmosa East - received seven hundred Thousand Naira (#700,000).²⁸

* This research observed that Ife Zone organised training on making of black soap, gaari industry, baking and other artisan work for their members.

* The *Tijāniyyah Ibrahimiyah*, Ikirun, Ifelodun participated in the State Programme, such as TIGMEIN *Tijāniyyah* Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria. The body organised a training of soap making and released certain amount of money as loan for business, which was supposed to be paid back as agreed, so that others may benefit.²⁹

* Ila Zone also introduced training on making *iru* (locust beans), gaari processing, moulding of blocks with bricks and other artisan work.³⁰

* Osogbo Zone organised a three-day training on baking, where thirty-two (32) females attended the programme. It was clarified that the programme was presented as part of the different activities and programmes laid down by new Grand *Khalīfah* for the welfare of *Tijāniyyah* in Osogbo Zone.³¹

It was observed that over three hundred members (300+) benefited from the society in different Zones as it was earlier mentioned.³²

Observation

The findings observed that some Local Government Areas have not been functioning as they should, and that this situation is detrimental to the aims and objectives of the organisation, therefore requiring immediate correction.

Table II: Local Governments not Functioning

S/N	ZONES	NAMES OF BENEFICIARIES	DIVIDENDS
1	Osogbo Zone	1. Shaykh Morufu Salami Babatunde 2. Shaykh Issah Gambo 3. Alhaja Mulkat Giwa 4. Sayyid Shittu Ma'ruf 5. Sayyidah Mujidah Baruwa ³³	For business For business For business For business For business
2	Ikirun Zone	Not available	Not available
3	Ede Zone	1. Isiaka Olaniyan Alamu 2. Zubayrah Muhammad 3. Sodiq Olabiyi 4. Olawale Fatimah Atoke 5. Shaykh Nurudeen Ogoro ³⁴	For business For business For business For business For business
4	Iwo Zone	1. Kareem Aliru 2. Nafiu Abdullahi 3. Raji Sefiu 4. Sodiq Basiru 5. Musbau Abdul Kareem ³⁵	For business For business For business For business For business
5	Ife Zone	1. Saudah Ayoola Shukurah 2. Saudah Adesanmi Solat 3. Sayyid Nurudeen 4. Saidi Ojikutu Tawakaltu 5. Sayyidah Nafisat Murtala ³⁶	For business For business For business For business For business
6	Ijesha Zone	1. Usamat Badmos 2. Ma'ruf Adebayo 3. Abbas Omonsola 4. Ajiboye Halimat 5. Ajibola Simiat ³⁷	For business For business For business For business For business

Recommendation

These recommendations and suggestions aim to enhance the benefits of TIGMEIN in various communities, as follows:

- i. Regular monitoring and visits to different Local Governments across the six geo-political zones of the State.
- ii. TIGMEIN should put more efforts into its operation.

- iii. Those that have benefitted from the organisation should further impact and promote the organisation.
- iv. Philanthropists are advised to assist the organisation.
- v. Governments at all levels are encouraged to support the organisation to realise its goals.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the contributions of the *Tijāniyyah Sufi* order in Osun State and how its empowerment programme benefited the people of Osun State. It also explained the roles and activities of the *Tijāniyyah* Grassroots Mobilization and Empowerment Initiative of Nigeria (TIGMEIN) in Osun State. This paper revealed that *Tijāniyyah* is one of the groups in *Sūfi* Islamic order. Sufism or *Tasawwuf* has its root in the early days of Islam, i.e. it is as old as Islam, but its transformation as a distinct movement occurred over time. The *Tijāniyyah Sufi* order was founded by Ahmad al-Tijani (1735-1815). The name *Tijaniyyah* was derived from his name “Al-Tijani,” which refers to his birthplace, *Tijani*, a small village in Algeria. The order came to Nigeria at a very early age, perhaps during the lifetime of its founder. The order has faced criticism and controversy from some scholars and groups, who accused it of introducing innovations (*bid’ah*) in Islam. *It was also shown* that the group (TIGMEIN) under the umbrella of the Osun State *Tijāniyyah Sūfi* order has organised different trainings across all local government areas of Osun State to secure jobs for teeming unemployed youth and alleviate poverty in the State.

The work therefore recommends that members of the group put in more effort to sustain the programme and that government, as well as other organisations in the State and Nigeria at large, should also assist the programme. On the basis of the aforementioned discussion, it is clear that the efforts of TIGMEIN require assistance from the government and other non-governmental organisations so that more progress and achievements will be recorded. It is important to note that human life in society or community is in its ability and inability.

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