Kannywood and the Perception of Possessiveness (*Kishi*) in Islamic Marital Discourse: Reflections from the Hausa Film *NamijinKishi*

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Abstract

Kannywood is seen as one of the leading movie industries that attempt to conjugate their films with Islamic values and observe some form of moral consciousness in their visible cinematic undertakings. This is largely due to the fact that Hausa, the societyin which the movies are produced, has a strong and uncompromising hegemonic religious culture. This, to some extent, makes it difficult to the Hausa movie practitioners to fully operate outside the cultural milieu of the setting to which they belong, and which is also the primary consumer and immediate patron of their theatrical commodities. However, despite the claims of the Kannywood stars to be operating according to the dictates of Islam, being that the majority, if not all of them, are Muslims, they are still faced with criticisms of not abiding by Islamic injunctions and Shari'ah provisions. This piece attempts to critique the Kannywood's perception of spousal possessiveness (kishi) based on Islamic marital discourse with particular reflections from NamijinKishi, one of the recently produced Hausa films. The central theme of the film is illustrating the extreme position which some husbands take in terms of kishi, which pushes them to make consequentially drastic and naïve decisions that at the end leave them in perpetual agony and continual regret. Drawing on the sources of Islamic injunctions, the essay argues that the film, while trying to offer a moderate view of an important marital subject, has ended up downplaying unequivocal and categorical textual stipulations, thus furthering Muslim misgivings of Kannywood actors and their claim of maximum religious' compliance. It is recommended that government bodies which are shouldered with the task of censoring Hausa films and ensuring their compliance with religious, moral and cultural tenets should increase pressure in implementing the objectives for which they were established. Similarly, the film actors are called upon to be taking their films both at the level of scripts and camera-ready scenes to more religiously learned fellows for censoring and necessary guidance before they are finally released for consumption.

Keywords: - *Kannywood, Hausa, Film, NamijinKishi, Islam*

Introduction

As an influential medium of putting across a message, film is a double-edged weapon that can be used in either positive or negative ways, and send right or wrong communication. The conflict that film in general sense often finds itself in, especially in a society that upholds morality and is religiously conscious, is the question of misrepresentation, corrupting of cultural values and spreading immorality. Hausa film industry is faced with similar criticism, though its makers constantly deny and argue that they promotereligious and cultural values of the society they represent. The film industry objects to being projected as an agency that perpetrates social immorality and religious corruption. That is why by the standard of some analysts such as McCain (2011) and Haynes (2007), Hausa films are judged as being "highly moralistic" (Haynes, 2007, p. 5). Kannywood, the umbrella of Hausa film companies is, on the average scale, seen as one of the leading movie industries that attempt to conjugate their films with Islamic values and observe some form of moral consciousness in their visible cinematic undertakings.

Despite this, there are still misgivings and suspicions hovering around the film stars and people do not have full confidence in their claim to represent Islam and Hausa Muslim society. This has of course, as shown in relevant section in this article, led to some form of reaction from government, religious clerics, intellectuals, analysts and the general public. Apart from street and armchair criticism of Hausa films, there are also attempts to subject the issue to academic studies.

Adamu (2017) traces the origin of Hausa appreciation of popular culture, with a particular reference to consumption of Hausa video films. He investigates the extent to which the films are patronized and how successful their markets are, especially with the trends of increasing transformation of film media. While Adamu's essay is informative and insightful on principally the economic development

and financing of the industry, it does not, given its scope, look at the issue from a religious angle.

In another piece, Adamu (2009) studies the process of subjecting Hausa films to intellectual activity. He surveys the early efforts made in documenting the progress of and issues surrounding the industry in magazines from 1997 through 2003, the period within which film industry in the North secured the umbrella name of *Kannywood*. In August 2001, the proceedings of Hausa films started making internet presence and soon a small community grew that engaged in critical debates and discussions on the general development of Hausa film industry. In an effort to "enforce a more academic focus on the industry" (p. 9) as Adamu accounts, intellectual platforms were used whereas capacity building workshops, roundtable discussions and even conferences were organized. Eventhough Adamu's scope does not includemoral questioning of Hausa films, he cannot help noting that their movies are merely "love stories in a Hindi film template" (p. 10).

Another important work on Kannywood comes from Ibrahim (2019). The author coalesces theoretical issues related to the trajectories of development of Hausa film industry and other gossips with practical examples from Kannywood films. The work briefly reviews 25 films and makes a case for the top 12 and 10 Kannywood films in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Perhaps the most relevant writing with the present article is that of Murtala (2019) which examines the debate that surrounds the discourse on legal status of Hausa films in Islam, with a view to making a case for the permissibility or otherwise of the art. The research arrived at a conclusion based on a direct watching and critical examination of more than 350 modern Hausa films. The main thesis of the author is that filming or the act of Hausa filmmaking in particular is not completely prohibited but full of pros and cons. He is, therefore, more concerned with bringing reform to the activity, especially given that, from the look of things, it has now become part and parcel ofNorthern Nigerian contemporary culture.

That is why he calls on working towards promoting synergy among the filmmakers, Islamic scholars, authorities and the community at large to bring sanity to the art, thus quelling its too much disregard of ethical standards.

It is against this backdrop that this article critiques the Kannywood's perception of spousal possessiveness (*kishi*) in relation to a recently produced Hausa film titled *NamijinKishi*. The central theme of the film is illustrating the "extreme" position which some husbands take in terms of *kishi* which pushes them to make consequentially drastic and naïve decisions that at the end leave them in perpetual agony and continual regret. The present article argues that the film does not adequately justify that the *kishi* displayed by the central character is not as extreme as audience are expected to believe. Likewise, there are other issues in the film that do not reflect any reality in the Hausa socio-religious setting. Importantly however, a brief survey indicates that the central message the film sets out to put across has worked well in the psyche of many unsuspecting audiences who unknowingly have succumbed to its worldview.

In the midst of an audience of about 50 people watching the film, the researcher observed that the comments made by more than 40 of them were indicating discomfort with the central character because he has been painted black, not by his*kishi* alone but what it has engulfed him into. The conclusion of many of the commentators was that the man was not a good person, even though there is no other peculiar trait or attitude of him that renders him a sort of a nonentity other than being enviously protective of his wife.

The first part of the film coded 1&2 which was uploaded on YouTube, was as at September 20, 2019, viewed by 245, 202 audiences. Out of them, 166 persons made comments and more than half of them opined that Habibu's*kishi* is too much. One commentator wrote and requested that someone should endeavor to address the issue from the Islamic perspective. Perhaps the most scathing comment came from a lady called Princess Farida who said she would never marry a person like the central actor of the film,

Habib, even if it means she has to remain single throughout her life if she has to marry him. The second part of the film coded 3&4 was also uploaded on YouTube and as at the same date above, there were 164, 507 people who have viewed it. A total of 200 viewers have commented. More than 75/% of them expressed their indignation and disappointment with Habib, even though some of them felt sorry for him. Some of the viewers representing about 15% took neutral position without cursing or praising Habib. Some of them merely praised the movie while only negligible few sided with him.

This article is divided into five segments including introduction which mentions the general background of the study. The next segment casts a brief glance at the Kannywood with a special reference to its interplay with Hausa Muslim society and the struggles and hurdles it has been passing through. The third segment presents an overview of the film *NamijinKishi*including a mention of its stars, a take on its title and plot summary. This is followed by an appraisal of the film from an Islamic perspective. The conclusion sums up the paper and offers few recommendations.

Kannywood and Hausa Muslim Society

Hausa dramas with screen motions can be considered as initial moves that paved ways for the coming of modern art of filmmaking. The dramas produced prior to *DurminDanya*were largely accomplished under the auspices of government-owned television and radio stations. They were purely didactic and not aimed at amassing material gain. These radio/television station-based dramas provided the largest percentage of the starring workforce in Hausa film industry, at least at the start (Murtala,2019).

The idea of Hausa filmmaking in Northern Nigeria in the modern sense dates back to the 1986 when the*TurminDanya/The Drum*was initiated, finished in 1989 and subsequently released in 1990 in Kano (Adamu, 2017). The film is seen as the "the first successful commercial Hausa-language video film"(McCain, 2011, p. 37),which predated even the famous Igbo film *Living in Bondage*in

1992.Similarly, the North-based congregation of filmmakers Kannywood, which is centrally Hausa, predates the South-based umbrella of filmmaking industries Nollywood despite that the latter is more popular on the global scene giventhat their films are made in English(Adamu, 2014), thus having more prospects to attract larger audience worldwide. In any case, this illustrates how well-established and influential the Hausa filmmaking industries have sought to become since their inception in the early 1990s.

Meanwhile, Kannywood started attracting greater attention after the reintroduction of Islamic Shari'ah, which came after the return of Nigeria to a democratic rule after about 15 years of military regime. In October 1999, the Government of Zamfara State in Northern Nigeria inaugurated Shari'ah and set in place workable measures and effective policies to support its implementation. Soon, other Muslim-majority states, at the forefront of which stood Kano (which became the hub of Hausa filmmaking industries) followed suit and by the end of 2001, 11 states (Jigawa, Gombe, Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Yobe, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger and Sokoto) had emulated Zamfara State and enacted Shari'ah laws.

After the restoration of Shari'ah, Kano State Government established an independent Censorship Board which was shouldered with the task of managing, controlling and bringing sanity in the commodities of popular culture at the top of which stands Hausa films. Intense criticism against the Hausa films kept on surfacing from many quarters including government officials (Adamu, 2009), leading the Kwankwaso administration to, in December 2000, ban the sales, production and display of films in the state.

This partly informed the subsequent travails which the Kannywood has had amidst the larger society that is conscious of and aspires to live according to the dictates of Islamic value system. Though there is some admiration and wide consumption of the films made by the Kannywood industries, the Muslim society in the North, which is the primary consumer and most immediate audience of the cinematic projects, still frowns at most of the actions of the film

actors both within and outside the screen. The filmmakers are seen as agents and promoters of religious aberrations, immorality and social vices.

A big challenge that kept on recurring in the overall discourse of Muslim North is the question of compatibility of Hausa films with Islam. This question is often discussed not outside the purview of the actions of Kannywoodmembers in their films. The crucial issue that stands at the centre is the relaxed relationship and unrestricted mingling between members of the opposite sex. It represents the main cause of criticism which the film industry sparks from not only the influential religious constituency but the greaterMuslim society. According to Murtala (2019), most of the content of Hausa films remains subject to moral concern.

The general impression given by the Kannywoodactors is that they play the same or relatively a closer role with religious scholars as they both aim at the same goal of preaching and sanitizing the society morally and socially. They boldly inscribe the phrase "*MasuFadakarwa*" (i.e. the admonishers, the preachers) in the prologues and epilogues of their films to signify the overall role the actors play. That was why perhaps as widely reported by many radio stations in Kano such as the popular *IndaRanka* on Freedom Radio, the words of one of the government officials, which clearly indicated that the film stars were "doing" aptlya similar job with the Ulama and that it was only a dull who would fail to notice this, had seemingly resonated well with the overall feeling of the Hausa film actors.

Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau (2003-2011) who was elected on the mantra of ensuring a more practical and realistic Shari'ah also had a lot of issues with the filmmakers. There weremuch expectations on the part of the masses concerning the moral and social ills the film industry was seen as promoting. The people's confidence was restored and soon there were fresh expectations on how the government would effectively handle the issue of filmmakers. It is instructive to note that Kano serves as the

hub of Hausa film industrieswhere prospective actors from other states kept on trooping to meet their comrades and strive hard to join the film industries, including at times at the behest of their dignity and perhaps their most precious and valuable assets. The responsibility of regulating Hausa films was left solely on the shoulders of Kano State Government and there were not much notable replications of such efforts in other states, especially when the wind of Shari'ah subsided in the later years.

What however became a great turning point but of unwelcome nature was in 2007 when a piece of shocking news broke of an intimate affair between one of the Hausa actresses Maryam Hiyana and her lover. The 8-minute video clip which showed the film star and her partner in a naked appearance and having bed affair had seriously shaken the roof of Hausa film industry in Nigeria. It became apparent that unless government had risen to this emerging challenge, there was not any length that Hausa film actors couldnot go to. With the tacit support of the generality of the Muslim masses, Kano State Government embarked upon a holistic attempt to sanitize the whole activity and do whatever possible to put to a halt the promiscuous missions the filmmakers were seen as advocating.

In September 2007, AbubakarRaboAbdulkarim was appointed as the head of the Kano State Censorship Board (first as Executive Secretary and little later as Director General) and the Board introduced strict policies which demanded that films must be officially screened before they were released to the audience. Simple as the policies appeared, they were seen by especially the filmmakers as "draconian" and "straitjacketed". They considered government action as a plan to completely annihilate their occupations and some of them saw no wrong in defying government policies. Soon the actors began relocating to neighbouring states where such policies did not exist.Those who remained in Kano and felt they could go ahead with their activities without succumbing to the government's "pressure" were seriously dealt with and made to face the wrath of the law. A number of them were incarcerated and jailed while hundreds of uncensored films were confiscated.

As the Kannywood stars found it difficult to do as they liked, they resorted to producing satiric films and disparaging musical tracks as a way of venting their spleen on their perceived "oppressor" – the government, strongly encouraged and supported by the influential clerical elements in the state. Perhaps the highest display of such criticism was demonstrated by the exuberance with which the Kannywood members publicized the allegation meted out against the DG of KSCB, Rabo, that he was in August 2010, "caught" with a young girl in suspicious circumstances. The filmmakers found this allegation as an interesting point of evidence to counter the "claims" of preserving Islamic values and preventing indecency which Rabowas amplifying.

Meanwhile, as the allegation of the "scandal" involving Rabo was being widely publicized especially within the milieu of the Kannywood family, the way and manner the issue was handled entailed a lot of questions and skepticism which in turn affected the integrity and validity of the allegation. The questions people used to ask included whether there was any tangible audio-visual evidence to supplement these claims as in the case of allegations pointed out on some outlandish actions of the filmmakers? An anonymous member of the industry confirmed to me that members of the Hausa film industry never cared to produce any evidence to support their claims against the government official. In any case, unlike the speculations advanced by some analysts, Rabo did not lose much of the respect he had from the society as besides members of theKannywood and their handful sympathizers, most people did not find any reason to believe the allegation as it lacked substantial proofs.

Something that often escaped the memory of the Kannywoodfamily was that if in the aftermath of the Hiyana saga the government had kept mute, the situation would be more volatile than it was and there was every likelihood that people could take laws into their own hands against the film actors. Therefore, in essence, government's intervention was more in favour of the Kannywood, since those who

complied with its regulations were accordingly allowed to continue with their activities.

The return of Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso to power in 2011 and his entire tenure proved to be an era which guaranteed freedom to Kannywod though the censorship board was not abolished. Popular Hausa filmactors especially those "victimized"by the previous administration like Rabilu Musa (Ibro) were given seats on the board. Kwankwaso'ssuccessor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje made more gratuitous concessions to the filmmakers as he appointed Ismail Na'AbbaAfakallah, one of the popular Hausa film stakeholders as the DG of the KSCB. What has however remained a mystery in Kannywood is that while most of the filmmakers initially celebrated the appointment of one of them as the apex head of the film regulatory body, something that should have secured more freedom for them to do as they deem fit, the development has appeared to be a "misery in disguise". While the era of Rabo which they considered as "draconian" capitalized solely on the inactions of the film industry and often did not bother to weigh political gains or losses when dealing with them, the present leadership of Afakallah is, as the film actors allege, searching for every window of opportunity to silence those who have loyalty or support to political opposition of the ruling party in the state.

Another turning point which would have been a great favour to the film industry was a proposal by the Federal Government of Nigeria to in 2016 construct a multibillion naira world-class film village in Kano. The issue provoked too much furor and criticism trailed the Nigerian atmosphere which forced the government to rescind the plan. Many viewed the move as a grand plan to give official cover and safe haven to the filmmakers to continue corrupting the moral fabric of the Muslim society in the North.

An Overview of *Namijin Kishi*

NamijinKishi was shot in 2019 under the auspices of Kumo Production with Saleh Yaro as producer and Ali Gumzak as director.

It features Kannywoodactors such as Sadiq Sani Sadiq (as Habib), HafsatIdris*Barauniya* (as Faiza), Ali Nuhu (as Ahmad), Shehu Hassan Kano (as Faiza's father), AlhassanKwalle (as DPO), GarzaliMiko (as Mu'azzam), Fati Umar, etc. The major preoccupation of the film is illustrating the extreme position which Habib, the major actor, takes in terms of *kishi* which pushes him to make consequentially drastic and naïve decisions that at the end leave him in perpetual agony and continual regret.

Audience can smell some sense of feministic tendency in titling the film as "*NamijinKishi".* From the semantic point of view, the word "*namiji*" which means male, and as an adjective with the suffix "n", linguistically refers to the amount of effort or energy one invests in doing something. The general sense of the word is positive and always conveys a praiseworthy message to the noun it is assigned to qualify. Therefore, the English phrase "robust attempt" or "strong effort" may be perfectly rendered in Hausa as "*namijinkokari*". In contrast, it is strange to hear the word rendered in collocations that give negative messages such as "*namijinmunafurci*" or "*namijinazarbabi*". Hence, to append the adjective "*namijin*" to the noun "*kishi*", which in the film is portrayed negatively, is not only a big blooper but also an attempt to cheat in the language game. Conversely, it is almost a socio-religious and linguistic consensus that the type of *kishi* shown by married men towards their wives is positive, and lacking it or being unconscious about it is blameworthy just as when*kishi*is used in the context of woman, it generally refers to her being antagonistic towards any move by her husband to add another wife. The same meaning also applies to the deleterious competition and rivalry that exist between or among women who are married to a single husband in a polygamous family. That is why, since this *kishi* is often negative and in conflict with categorical religious tradition and social and moral conscience in Muslim

community, it is described as "*mugunkishi*", "*bala'inkishi*", "*azababbenkishi*" or "*dankarenkishi*".

Plot Summary

The movie unveils a story of a Hausa couple who are trapped by an effort to reconcile between a prime religious principle and the common expectation of the surrounding environment, informed largely not by religious ideals but supposed cultural assumptions. Habib, the husband of Fa'iza, always wearing Ustaz-style cap, is a man who, according to the film, has an extreme and exceedingly intense possessiveness and envious protection towards his wife, thus the title *NamijinKishi*.



The film opens up with a scene showing Fa'izaaccompanying a young man of about 20 years, both coming out from her parlour. It unfolds that the young man is her cousin when her husband enters the house as the man exits. Habib thunders at his wife for allowing a man he is not aware of to enter his house and remain alone with him for some time. Though she explains to her husband that the man is her cousin and reasons that he was brought up in her parent's house even before their marriage, besides that she is ten years older than him, Habib argues that since a cousin is not her mahram (i.e. any of

her male relative who is not legally permitted to marry her), this kind of relaxed relationship will not be tolerated in his house.

The film goes on to portray the extent of Habib's *kishi* in different instances. These include his tirade against Fa'iza's brother who, while on a visit to his sister's house, reclines on her clothes; Habib's objection for a male doctor to run a pre-natal scan on his wife; his indignation towards the husband of his wife's friend who sees Fa'iza' off when she visits her sick friend at the latter's home, while Habib is outside waiting for her in his car and other instances.Perhaps the highest display of wild *kishi* in the film is Habib's effort to, as he enters his house, smash the man he overhears conversing with his wife, to the point where she is telling the man that she misses him. It becomes a serious blunder when Habib discovers that the man is none but her father and not her love partner as he suspects.

Another exhibition of extreme *kishi*in the film is Habib's miscalculation to issue the third count of divorce to Fa'iza while she is on sickbed receiving treatment. Habib divorces Fa'iza for the first and second counts because she enters neighbourhood without his permission in the first instance and in the second instance she makes a loose phone conversation with a former male classmate.

This time around, it happens that Fa'iza seeks her husband's permission to pay a sympathetic visit to her sick mother using a commercial vehicle. Habib refuses to permit her and he instead pledges to finish office work quickly and rush home to pick her to her parent's house. While Habib is away at his office, Fa'iza insists that she must go and even after in a phone conversation, the husband disagrees, she flouts his order and goes on and takes a commercial vehicle. On the way, she has an accident and is rescued by the people present. When Habib arrives at the scene immediately after receiving the tragic news, he is told that a middle-aged man present is the 'good Samaritan' who saves Fa'iza's lifeby evacuating her from the road to avoid being quashed by speedy cars, not minding physical contact between them.

The incidence sends a shockwave to Habib so much so that like the victim Fa'iza, he has to be hospitalized, not because his wife has an accident but because someone – a male folk – has touched her in the process! Even on sickbed, Habib finds it difficult to reconcile the incidence with his prime principle of *kishi* and keeps on recapitulating this in his mind and he eventually divorces her, and unfortunately for him, since this is the third instance, they should be separated and there will be no reconciliation unless after she marries another man and they get separated.

This situation opens up another phase of severe wildness for Habib. He shows queer and outlandish behaviour to the extent of saying he is still Fa'iza's husband and the divorce never means she will get separated from him. Even when someone – Ahmad – proposes to marry Fa'iza and plans have reached advanced stage for the wedding, Habib never stops claiming that he is entitled to her, despite that he is incarcerated by the police after an encounter with Fa'iza's fiancé. On the day of the wedding, Habib makes an abrupt appearance at the scene of the gathering while an Imam is about to finalize the wedding rituals. Shouting on top of his voice, Habib threatens that the wedding should never take place and Fa'iza is still his wife, till a group of people rise and prevent him from intruding to the Imam's square to disrupt the process.

It is only through the pressure of his mother and few colleagues that Habib realizes that nothing will ever change the status quo and he eventually gives up and marries another woman. He also regrets and understands the fault line of his actions with his 'bizarre' and 'alien' display of *kishi* and discovers that it never pays. In fact, when he enters his house one day and finds that his new wife's brother is around, gloriously seated and comfortably dining in a breadwinner-fashion, Habib has nothing to say but jokes and smiles at the young man.

Appraisal of the Film from an Islamic Perspective

It is imperative now to examine the degreeof compatibility of the film's conception of*kishi* vis-à-vis Islam.Is the type of *kishi*

displayed by Habib too extreme? Does Islam justify the way the people who surround Habib want him to apply his *kishi* on his wife?

*NamijinKishi*is a stereotypic film project directed at those who uphold the principle of being meticulously protective of their wives. Islam takes steps to prevent the escalation of rampant and unchecked mingling of members of the opposite sex, especially between those who can legitimately marry from among themselves. Islam enshrines that there must be some distance and decorum should be maintained between males and females. It does not allow relaxed and loose relationship which may lead to lewdness, promiscuity and illicit affairs. That is why the Qur'an enjoins that Muslims – males and females should lower their gaze and guard their chastity (Q24: 30-31).

While the principle of lowering gaze is general in respect to males and females, there is an additional emphasis on especially married women. The Qur'anic verse enjoins that married women should not exhibit their adornment and elegance to anyone except their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their nephews, their fellow women, their slaves and male attendants who have no physical desire (Q24:31).

In another place, taking a leap from the legislation on Prophet's wives, the Quran charges that there should be a distance and barrier between men and women except if there is a close blood relationship between them, such as parents, children, siblings, nieces, nephews, their fellow women and their own slaves (Q 33:53-55). In the same vein, the Quran enacts that women should properly cover their bodies from top to down so that they should not be easily identified, lest they are harassed or harmed (Q33:59).

In a Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) warns that people "should beware of entering the domain of ladies". Someone from among the Ansar (people of Madinah) asked the Prophet (SAW) "what about *al-Hamw*? The Prophet (SAW) replied that *al-Hamw*is death itself"

(Bukhari: 5232). The Hadith clearly shows that it is unethical to be entering houses where there are women and men should be cautious of doing that. Different interpretations have been given to the key word *al-Hamw*in the Hadith.*Al-Hamw*, according to some scholars such as Imam Laith, Tirmizi and Nawawi, refers to the male relatives of a husband. But according to Imam Dawudi, *al-Hamw* refers to the father of the wife (IbnHajar, 2007, p. 381-382, vol. 9).

The implication inferred from the Hadith is that once free and relaxed relation is allowed to become the order of the day, where people especially those on the part of the husband, can at their will, unrestrictedly enter marital homes, unhealthy consequences can prevail. Furthermore, the Prophet (SAW) points out in another Hadith that a man and a woman should not be alone in a secluded place except that the Satan becomes a third party among them. Therefore, once this principle is violated and flouted, it is very likely that the Satan will take over and cause temptations which can result in illicit relationship between members of the opposite sex. It should be noted that this Hadith does not specify or make an exception as to who among the relatives of a woman should be alone with her as far as he is not her husband.

As important and paramount as Jihad is, as an apex symbol of Islamic authority, there was a time someone complained to the Prophet (SAW) that he had been enlisted in a command of combatants for an expedition on one hand, while on the other hand, his wife would embark on a journey to Makkah for pilgrimage. The Prophet (SAW) instructed him to abandon the Jihad and accompany his wife to the pilgrimage (Bukhari: 3006). This signifies how crucial it is to be protective of one's wife.

It is perhaps an attempt to live by these dictates that Habib is seen as someone possessing an extreme *kishi* where he rejects every move to allow his wife to be alone in her elegant appearance with male persons, including her close relatives. His objection that Fa'iza should not be alone with her cousin is understandable as he is not her mahram. He is not among the relatives that the Qur'an exempts

as those who can see her adornment (Q 33: 55). Similarly, seclusion of Fai'za with her close relatives including those who are her mahram cannot be explained as something encouraged by the Shari'ah. The Hadith cited above showing that Satan will be there to cause temptations does not exempt the mahram. That is why it is morally safer for the male relative including her father and brothers to be accompanied by someone so that this prime principle is adhered to, and to block all avenues of suspicion.

If for example, when Shehu Hasan Kano visits the house of Fa'iza, he is accompaniedby any of his children, there will not be any suspicion on the part of Habib since the latter will see a symbol that he has visitors, and not just a (male) visitor. Even in this case, Habib does not decide to take action until he overhears his wife telling the man in the room some sweet words which she should utter to him as her husband. It is not common in Hausa society for a married daughter to tell her father that she misses him because there are other senses that the expression conveys which can only fit the husband, and not anyone else. Therefore, it is legitimate for a man to be envious and react furiously when his wife appears in elegant dress and remains secluded with another man, even if the man is her mahram. Media is awash with examples of cases where a brother, cousin, relative or even a father is caught having an illicit affair with his sister, cousin, female or even daughter.

Other instances such as the scene showing Fa'iza being seen off by her sick friend's husband after her visit to their house cannot be used to illustrate that Habib possesses an undue *kishi*. The appearance of the man, wearing T-shirt and Jeans, with his barely-combed hair must definitely send a wrong message to Habib pertaining the moral integrity of the man. After certainly having exchanged greetings with Fa'izainside the house, possibly in the presence of his sick wife, what business has the man got seeing off another person's wife? Some people change to other rooms when their wives have visitors so that she will have some freedomto chat with them, but it is clear that this man does not go anywhere but remains stuck to his sick wife's bed, even after her married friend visits the house.

Habib's objection that his wife must not be treated by a male doctor can be seen as a dangerous decision towards the life of his wife. But it can be quickly pardoned since he is not insisting that she must not be treated at all, but that he prefers a female doctor, and it is clear that if there is no female doctor, he may accept her being scanned by a male doctor. The alternative which Habib suggests is that he should look for a commercial clinic which has female health workers and take his wife there. And this explains why Habib at times succumbs to Fa'iza's pressure, especially when she corroborates with religious injunctions. In any case, the Prophet (SAW) cautions that *al-Dayyuth* – someone who is loose and not enviously protective of his wife– will not enter paradise (Nisa'i: 2562).

Fa'iza's mother's conjecture of not being aware of any form of *kishi* in history similar to that of her son-in-law vindicates the public suspicion about religious ignorance that is said to be the symbol of Kannywood actors. A simple reflection will tell her that the second successor of the Prophet (SAW), Umar bin al-Khattab and the rest of the Sahabah were protective of their wives more than the way Habib shows. Likewise, in the modern day, people show greater forms of *kishi* than Habib. After all, throughout the film, Fa'iza does not wear a *niqab*, and the husband who does not make it mandatory for his wife to be wearing a *niqab* cannot be regarded as someone who has an intense *kishi*.

The hardest decision taken by Habib which leads to their final separation is caused largely by Fa'iza's recalcitrance. She defies his order and goes ahead to hire a commercial tricycle to visit her sick mother. If at all she is virtuous and loyal as the film tries to project, what is difficult in waiting for few hours so that her husband will come back home and take her to her parent's house in all comfort and dignity? Is her accident not a punishment for her defiance of her husband's order? Has she achieved her aim of visiting her mother? Is divorce a good record for a woman? Extraordinarily, no attempt in the film is made to brandish even thetiniest finger of blame on

Fai'za. She is portrayed as a poor victim of masculine oppression and injustice.

The post-separation phase of the film in which Habib behaves wildly and incongruously represents the unnecessary nuisance of the whole movie project. Like in other parts of the Muslim world, in Hausa society, it is very common for a separated couple to find themselves in a conundrum, often regretting and missing each other, especially if the divorce is irrevocable. But then the illegal solution, which they sometimes resort to, is to make a plan for someone to marry the woman and divorce her, sometimes without them having intimate relationship. This plan comes in different dimensions; sometimes it is both the man and woman that plan and hire someone to marry the woman on condition that he will divorce her afterwards; at times it is the man alone that engages someone to do it as a contract; and at other times it is the woman that decides to do it alone, often without the knowledge of the divorced and the second husband. With the exception of the last dimension on which there is a scholarly disagreement, Islam has categorically prohibited these deceptive plans (Abu Dawud: 2076).

It is however, unheard for a man who divorces his wife irrevocably to continue parading himself as her husband when the news of their separation becomes public and behave the way Habib does in the film. If the news has not become public, it is possible to find a man and woman who will decide to conceal the issue and go on with their life as couple, but noting that they are committing a grievous sin.

Some utterances made by Habib, though indicating the depth of his insanity as the result of his total separation from Fa'iza, are sheer nonsense. His too much swearing is needless and Islamically implicating. Allah cautions Muslims against uttering undue and unguarded swearing (Q2: 224).

Towards the end, the film makes a clear conclusion of the message it sets out to put across, by pointing out, in the words of an Ustaz

invited by Habib's mother to admonish her son, that Habib should reduce his *kishi*. The semi-cleric explicitly utters that the type of *kishi* shown by Habib is 'not' permissible in Islam, despite that the few instances mentioned by the scholar such as going out of a housewife due to an excuse are of course legitimate excuses recognized in the Shari'ah, which do not fall within the ambit of the *kishi*sanctioned in Islam.

Conclusion

More or less Hausa Films have become part of the medium through which the Hausa Muslim society is viewed. The main issues increasing the tension and suspicion of the public on the films are their claim to represent the Hausa Muslim society. There are a lot of criticisms as regards the extent to which the authenticity of their claims vis-à-vis the content of the films and the moral integrity of the actors. *NamijinKishi* sets out to provide a moderate view of *kishi* by critiquing what it considers an undue and exclusively severe form of *kishi.* The film's success lies in its suggestion that an attempt to live by the dictates of Islam will not succeed when it is not complimented by sound religious knowledge, despite that this is not properly demonstrated in the film. The version of *kishi* the film queries is itself not extreme and the real form of *kishi*found both in history andthe pages of Islamic texts transcends the one put forth in the film.

Using an Islamic framework, this article reviewed a recently produced film titled *NamijinKishi*. It first presented a background study on the trajectories of Kannywoodand their relations with Hausa society which has moral and religious consciousness and is always sensitive of misrepresentation of its values in films. The article gave a brief overview of the film including the film's plot summary and the actors it features, after which the film's central idea was discussed in the context of Islamic viewpoint. The main argument of the researcher is that the message the film is sending largely adds to one of the areas in which Kannywood can be found wanting in trying to (mis)represent Islamic ideals and principles.

Hence, the article recommends that filmmakers should be mindful of distorting Islamic teachings by resorting to Muslim scholars for consultation before they release their film. Similarly, government bodies which are shouldered with the task of censoring Hausa films and ensuring their compliance with religious, moral and cultural tenets should intensify pressure in implementing the objectives for which they were established.

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