

# The Debate on Islām and Transgenderism: An Analytical Discourse on the Silence of Scholars in Nigeria

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## Abstract

*Transsexuality, hyperandrogenism, hermaphrodite and gender identity are emerging contemporary modern science discourse. These are issues which often dominate discussion among scholars in some sections of contemporary Muslim world. Authorities in some of Western world such as; United State of America and some European and Asian countries are grappling with challenges such as; status and gender identity of a transgender while filling form, discrimination and stigmatization against these people or using public toilet to mention but a few. While developed countries are grappling with all these challenges, one wonders what will happen with developing and under-developed countries where Muslims are highly populated? What are the precepts put in place in Islām to address these controversial issues, since one can categorically opine that, the Qur'ān and hadīth of the Prophet did not directly talk about these issues. Although the Qur'ān discusses issues such as sodomy, same sex cohabitation, just as the Prophet talked about cross-dressers. Arising from the foregoing, this qualitative research, which is both expository and analytical, examines critically the scientific exposition of transsexuality, hyperandrogenism, and gender identity. The paper explores various Islāmic juristic opinions on transgender; Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS) and gender identity. This paper recommends an urgent need for intensive awareness creation among Muslim scholars for onward spreading of the message to the Muslim communities. It is thus advocated that these should be done, among other means, through workshops, seminars, conferences and public lectures.*

*Keywords: transsexuality, hyperandrogenism, khunthā, mukhannathā, Islam*

## Introduction

**H**yperandrogenism, according to Peigné et-al, is a medical condition which is concentration of high androgens in the body of man or woman.<sup>1</sup>

High level of testosterone is the main cause of hyperandrogenism. It occurs in approximately 5% of women of reproductive age. Hyperandrogenism is a fundamental symptom of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). It is described also as, excessive circulating male sex hormone (testosterone) in females and its effects on the body.<sup>2</sup> Testosterone is said to be of male steroid hormone that stimulates development of male secondary sexual characteristics, produced mainly in the testes, but also in the ovaries and adrenal cortex

According to Yildiz, hyperandrogenisms is very common among the female, in fact, about 5-10% of women of reproductive age, because hyperandrogenism is

characterized by elevated male sex hormone levels.<sup>3</sup> Symptoms of hyperandrogenism in men are often negligible but in women it is typically diagnosed in late adolescents but with a medical evaluation which involves examination of the pelvis.

Hyperandrogenism, in women, if left untreated can lead to obesity, high blood pressure, menstrual irregularity. Sometimes it can also lead to infertility, diabetes high cholesterol, and unnecessary anxiety.<sup>4</sup> In men hyperandrogenism often lead to ag-

gression, acne, enlargement of the prostate, and hypertension to mention but few.

There are controversies among Muslim scholars on the status of Hermaphrodite, Transsexuals and Transgenders.<sup>6</sup> Individuals who had accepted and live with any of these statuses do encounter tough challenges which include but not limited to stigma, cynicism, discrimination, inferiority complex, harassment, intimidation and religious prejudices to mention but a few. These challenges are met in different parts of the world, despite the enormous socio-economic development in certain countries. Apparently, there is no way for anyone to deny the existence of these categories of people in the Muslim societies around the world and Nigeria in particular.

### **An Exposé on the Term Transsexualism**

Transsexuality is described in the fifteenth edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* as a gender identity disturbance in which an affected individual believes that he or she should belong to opposite sex.<sup>7</sup> There is a transsexual male and female. The male is born with normal male genitalia and other secondary features of masculine sex, in early childhood, however, he identifies with women and behaves in a manner appropriate to the female sex. The socio-physiological factor determines how he identifies with male folks. The transsexual male wants to relate more with the female folk.

With the development of surgical techniques and hormone therapy, there is a way out for transsexual people. Male to female transsexual surgical operations

are more common than the opposite, because the genital reconstruction is more satisfac-

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tory. Male Transsexual's penis and testes are removed and an artificial vagina is created. Breast implant maybe inserted. The use of feminizing hormones at times are used. Female Transsexual's often sometimes undergo mastectomy and hormone treatment to produce male secondary sexual characteristics. Attempt to create artificial penis have not been satisfactory

Transsexuality is an act where by an individual opted to change his/her sex from what was assigned right from birth to another one, this is possible through Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS). It involves sexual reassignment therapy and surgery to assume another new sex after such individual have identified his/her true gender. The one who decided to opt for SRS according to medical scientists are the Transsexuals, while the one who opted not should be considered as transgender.<sup>9</sup> In fact, according to Long, transsexuality is the subset of transgender. The transsexuals often experienced different gender identity that is contrary to the one they're assigned at birth, and are adamant to seek for medical attention and assistance to transit to the preferred gender.<sup>10</sup> To achieve their ardent desire involves going under the knife (SRS) and embarking on hormone reassignment therapy. Although, transsexual people still prefer to use the term to describe themselves, many transgender people prefer the term transgender to transsexual.”

Towards the tail of the 20th century, medical scientists argued that, there are differences between transsexual and transgender. The lucid distinction between the two is that, while the former preferred SRS, the latter i.e. transgender is okay with his or her present status.<sup>11</sup> The deliberate transition from assigned sex at birth to newly identified gender “sex,” via SRS differentiate a transsexual individual from transgender. For instance, an individual whose assigned sex at birth was male, despite having scrotum, pubic hair, muscles, also has vagina and breast. Such individual then decid-

12 ed to

go for SRS and Hormone Reassignment Therapy (HRT).

The Trans man is a person who was assigned the female sex at birth on the basis of his genitals, but despite that assignment, identifies as a man and is transitioning or has transitioned to a male gender role. According to Zabidi, the terms transgender

and transsexual are inter-related and it can be referred to a person who has a differ-

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gender identity to the sex that a doctor assigns them at birth. However,

many people find the term transsexual outdated and offensive. Schenebly, while explaining this term, states that “transgender” is an umbrella term that describes those who have a gender that is different from the sex assigned at birth: male, female, or intersex. While, “transsexual” is a more specific term that fits under the transgender umbrella.<sup>14</sup> Anyone who is transgender can be identified as a woman, man, a combination of both, or something else altogether.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, transsexuality is a variant of gender identity. It affects anyone who initially had challenges with his/her gender identity. The affected person often believes that he or she should belong to the opposite sex from what was assigned at birth.<sup>15</sup> Transsexualism or transsexuality, is, the psychological phenomenon of an individual, identifying with the opposite sex, sometimes to the extent of undergoing surgery for change of sex.<sup>16</sup> The Free Dictionary defines transsexualism as a condition in which an individual assumes the identity and permanent-

ly acts the part of the gender opposite to his or her biological sex. Assigning sex to an individual is based on biology, chromosomes, anatomy, and hormones. However, a person’s gender identity, the inner sense of being male, female, or both doesn’t always match their biology.<sup>18</sup> Transgender people thus alleged that; they were assigned a sex that isn’t true to who they are. The one who want change through SRS and HRT are considered as transsexual. It is imperative to note that, the issue of gender identity is crucial to our discussion.

## **A Comparison between Sex and Gender**

Majority of people erroneously consider the term gender and sex to be synonymous. In fact, they sometimes used both words interchangeably whereas, they are not the same. Sex is described as the physical differences between people who are male, female, or intersex.<sup>19</sup> Sex is assigned to individual at birth based on physiological characteristics, (based on anatomical and physiological markers) including their genitalia and chromosome composition. Gender on the other hand, involves how a person identifies himself.

According to the World Health Organization, gender can be described as the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed.<sup>20</sup> Gender is related to with but is different from sex. Sex is the biological and physiological differences in terms of characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, what determines sex includes but not limited to: chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.<sup>21</sup> As for gender, it is determined by socio-psychological factors such as norms, behaviours and roles associated with being

a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. There is this idea among medical scientists that sex may be a spectrum. Gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

### **Gender/identity**

Individual self-conceptions as male or female. Gender Identity is the same as biological characteristics. Transsexualism is seen as a situation whereby an individual experience little or no connection between sex and gender. Gender Identity shouldn't be fixed from the birth; hence, physiological and social factors determine how an individual identify himself. There are times when biological sex is ambiguous, mystery and can't be determined.<sup>22</sup> Sex and gender can never be the same and as such, genetic factors is determinant of person's sex, gender refers to how they identify on the in-

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side. However, only the person themselves can determine what their gender identity is. She there after highlighted that, an individual gender is how he/she internally and how he/she expresses this externally. Hence, people may use clothing, appearances, and behaviours to express the gender that they identify with. A person may decide to present him or herself as wholly masculine or wholly feminine or even as androgynous or non-binary.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore important to investigate Islamic perspectives on this.

A correspondent of the mail on Sunday, while appraising the future of Britain as regards guidelines for national census, was of the opinion that, gender is more than two (male and female).<sup>25</sup> Hence, there are twenty-one genders identities any Briton can pick from. These genders include but not limited to: Agender, Neutral gender, Null-gender, Genderless, Neutrois or Androgyne.

**Agender, neutral gender, null-gender, genderless, neutrois or androgyne** A person who is agender does not identify with any particular gender, they might be considered as genderless. An androgyne individual has a gender that is either both masculine and feminine or between masculine and feminine.<sup>26</sup>

### **Bigender/butch/cisgender**

There is also the Bigender. This is anyone who identifies as has two genders. They often display cultural masculine and feminine roles. This is for the women folks, especially lesbians. They, tend to use this term to describe the way they express mascu-

27 linity, or what society defines as masculinity. Although, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) considered the "Butch" as a variant of gender identity in

itself.<sup>28</sup> A Cisgender person, on the other hand, identifies with the sex that they were assigned at birth.

### **Gender expansive**

The LGBTQIA Resource Center defines gender expansive as an “umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture’s commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms.”<sup>29</sup> Those who are gender expansive include people who are transgender and people whose gender broadens the surrounding society’s notion of what gender is.

### **Genderfluid /gender outlaw/ genderqueer**

A person who identifies as genderfluid has a gender identity and presentation that shifts between, or shifts outside of, society’s expectations of gender. A person who identifies as a gender outlaw refuses to allow society’s definition of “male” or “female” to define them. A person who identifies as genderqueer has a gender identity or expression that is not the same as society’s expectations for their assigned sex or as-

30 sumed gender. Genderqueer can also refer to a person who identifies outside of how society defines gender or someone who identifies with a combination of genders.

### **Masculine of center/ non-binary**

A person who uses this term is usually a lesbian or a trans person who leans more toward masculine performances and experiences of gender. A person who identifies as non-binary does not experience gender within the gender binary. People who are non-binary may also experience overlap with different gender expressions, such as being gender non-conforming.<sup>31</sup>

### **Omnigender/ polygender/ pangender and transgender/trans**

A person who identifies as omnigender experiences and possesses all genders. People who identify as polygender or pangender experience and display parts of multiple genders.<sup>32</sup>

Transgender/trans is an umbrella term that encompasses all people who experience and identify with a different gender than that which their assigned sex at birth would suggest.<sup>33</sup> Although most people think of trans men and trans women when hearing the word transgender, this term also encompasses people who identify as a gender other than man or woman, including nonbinary and genderfluid. Trans is a more inclusive term that covers those who identify as nonbinary and those who are genderless.

## Two spirit

Two spirit is an umbrella term that encompasses different sexualities and genders in Indigenous Native American communities.<sup>34</sup> Although, different definitions arise as to what's really Two Spirit. It is a cultural term that is allegedly reserved for those who identify as an Indigenous Native American.

## Transsexuality, Sexuality and Gender: An Islamic Discourse

The creation of man *ab-initio* started with the creation of Ādam, followed by Hawa' The latter, according to the Qur'ān, was created from the ribs of the former. However, it is imperative to note that, Allāh unequivocally stated in the Qur'ān that He created mankind as well as other creatures in pairs i.e. into two major sexes (male and female). Allāh declares in different chapters that: "And of all things We created two mates [i.e., counterparts]; perhaps you will remember" (Qur'ān 51:49). "And that He creates the two mates the male and female" (Qur'ān 53:45). In a similar declaration as regards creations of all things, Allāh declares that:

And it is He who spread the earth and placed therein firmly set mountains and rivers; and from all of the fruits He made therein two mates; He causes the night to cover the day. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought. (Qur'ān 13:3). Similarly, in particular reference to mankind, Allāh states: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another" (Qur'ān 49:13).

From the preceding verses, it is significant to note that, Allāh has designed different roles and responsibilities for each of His creations because, they differ in anatomy, physiology and psychology.<sup>35</sup> It is evidently clear that, the Qur'ān acknowledges the existence of people with a wild sexual disparity i.e. people like hermaphrodite, queer genders and different sexual tendencies.<sup>36</sup> Pertinently, it is important to note that, the term *liwāt* (homosexual), *sihaq* (lesbian) is quite different from Transgender and Transsexual. While the former (homosexuality and lesbianism) is tabooed in Islām right from the time of Prophet Lut, the Qur'ān was not specific about the term transsexuality. There are innumerable issues mentioned in the Qur'ān, but modern issues such as; homosexuality, fertilization and simulation in particular were not specific-

ly mentioned. Some scholars have the opinion that, classical jurists recognize four genders among human beings and these are: male, female, intersex (*khunthā*) and ef-

feminate male (*mukhannatha*). It is thus important to investigate what these two terms (*khunthā* and *mukhannathā*) are all about.

## **Khunthā in Islamic Parlance**

The term *khunthā* can be defined literally as anyone born with both male and female genital organs. The *khunthā* is said to be a situation whereby a child has both penis and a vagina. They are often referred most times as hermaphrodite.<sup>39</sup> An individual with ambiguous sex, according to Trinidad House of Jurisconsults, “*Darul Iftaa Jamia Madinatul Uloom*,” hermaphrodite, pseudo-hermaphrodites and intersex, are a general term used for a variety of conditions in which person born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.<sup>40</sup> Transgenderism are thus, are people who are born with typical male or female anatomies but feel as though they’ve been born into the “wrong body.”

According to classical jurists, there are two types or categories of *khunthā*. These are *khunthā ghayr mushkil/ghayrwāḍih* (discernible *khunthā*) and *khunthā mushkil* (intractable *khunthā*). The former is an individual that has both male and female genital organs but one is more dominant, hence it is correctable via sexual reassignment therapy and surgery.<sup>41</sup> The other is controversial, because, there is more or less, 50-50 % ratio of genital organs.

### **Mukhannath**

*Mukhannath* etymologically is from an Arabic verb *khanatha*. *Khanatha* means “folding back the mouth of a water skin for drinking.” However, the term *mukhannath* has been defined by lexicographers as “a man who imitates female folks in softness and tenderness voice.”<sup>42</sup> Specifically, *mukhannath* can be said to be “an effeminate, manlike, manly, mannish, or virile,” i.e. having feminine qualities untypical of a man: not manly in appearance or manner. A *mukhannath* is anyone who is anatomically male or female, their characters and behaviours are opposite of assigned gender. Other scholars however, opined that, the term *mukhannath* is not mentioned in the Qur’ān but traditionally, it is used in legal scholastic literatures.<sup>43</sup>

While the Jurists were of the opinion that Islamic law recognizes the hermaphrodite, it did not recognize transgenderism or gender dysphoria. According to Trinidadian Jurisconsults, a person who is physically male or female is not permitted to alter his or her behaviours or appearance in a way that makes him/her the opposite gender. In fact, they submitted that, it is a major sin for a person to undergo surgical procedures to alter his/her gender. Their submissions was indeed based on the following narration by Ibn Abbās that the Prophet PBUH said:

Allah’s Messenger cursed those men who are in the similitude (assume the manners) of women and those women who are in the similitude (assume the manners) of men. (Sahih al-Bukhari: Book 77, Hadith 102)

In a similar narration by Alqama:

`Abdullah (bin Mas'ud) said. "Allah curses those ladies who practice tattooing and those who get themselves tattooed, and those ladies who remove the hair from their faces and those who make artificial spaces between their teeth in order to look more beautiful whereby they change Allah's creation." His saying reached a lady from Bani Asd called Um Yaqub who came (to `Abdullah) and said, "I have come to know that you have cursed such and such (ladies)?" He replied, "Why should I not curse these whom Allah's Messenger has cursed and who are (cursed) in Allah's Book!" Um Yaqub said, "I have read the whole Qur'ān, but I did not find in it what you say." He said, "Verily, if you have read it (i.e. the Qur'ān), you would have found it. Didn't you read: 'And whatsoever the Apostle gives you take it and whatsoever he forbids you, you abstain (from it). (59:7) She replied, "Yes, I did," He said, "Verily, Allah's Messenger forbade such things." "She said, "But I see your wife doing these things?" He said, "Go and watch her." She went and watched her but could not see anything in support of her statement. On that he said, "If my wife was as you thought, I would not keep her in my company." (Sahih al-Bukhari Book 60, Hadith 408)

Majority of Islamic jurists were of the opinion that, SRS is permissible for the *khuntha* but that of *mukhannath* is tabooed. The submission of the Trinidadian Jurisconsults on transgenderism as a major sin is subjective because, going with the dictate of the above traditions, there are differences between imitating a gender through walking, dressing, tattooing, fixing nails and hair to mention but a few, and undergoing procedures to correct one's sexual abnormalities through sexual reassignment therapy and surgery.

Similarly, a professor of pediatrics at King Saud University, Al-Jurayyan was of medical juristic opinion and recommendations in line with the verdicts of Council of Saudi Arabian Scholars that:

Sexual reassignment surgery (SRS) is totally unacceptable and considered as criminal act in accordance with the dictate of Allah and His Prophet. In case of ambiguities in determining one's sex, or there is conviction that, an individual possesses both male and female organs, there must be a thorough investigation before "SRS"

could be carried out. Similarly, parents, guardians, or concerned family members of

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the person must be duly informed, advised before such SRS is carried out.

In Egypt, according to medical jurists, SRS is only permitted in a situation where the medical experts were able to determine the dominant hormone and can successfully remove any other features that may cause "suspicion."<sup>45</sup> The scholars maintained further that, before the jurists decreed the above opinion, SRS was not permissible because it is tantamount to altering the creation of Allah as established in the following verse that:

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And I will mislead them, and I will arouse in them [sinful] desires, and I will command them so they will slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them so they will change the creation of Allah.” And whoever takes Satan as an ally instead of Allah has certainly sustained a clear loss. (Qur’ān 4:119).

In the Fatwa of Tantawi, Sally Muhammad Abdullah was criticized in his interpretation of the above verse, where he argues that, the phrase “they will alter Allah’s creation,” means the religion of Allah, because the true religion is the natural religion of man and that it’s synonymous with the message of Qur’ān 30:30. He concludes that there is no altering Allah’s creation.<sup>46</sup> Some other commentators argue that, the phrase means the using of His created things for an object other than that for which they were created and worshipping such created things like sun, moon, or star etc. Similarly, Ibn Kathīr in his Interpretation, argued that, the phrase “and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allah,” means nothing but tattooing. He added that this is in accordance to the submission of Hassan al-Basri.<sup>47</sup>

As regards the juristic opinions among Malaysian scholars on SRS, the extracts from Fatwa Committee of the National Council of Islāmic Religious Affairs Malaysia, revealed that, SRS is allowed under very strict considerations. The Malaysian Jurists, as reported by Chen and others, were of the opinion that, anyone who want SRS must be counselled properly before such surgery should take place. His or her family must be consulted and counselled in both societal and religious implications of the surgery. The timing of the surgery must not be decided only by the transsexual but also, the family and the surgeon who will carry it out.<sup>48</sup> The permissibility was to prevent malignancy and to give such individual sense of belonging.

### **The Silence of Scholars in Nigeria**

Nigeria as a country came into existence in 1914 with the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate by Lord Lugard. In October 1, 1960 the country got her independence from the colonial administration and later became a republic in 1963.<sup>49</sup> During the course of the colonial administration, the colonial masters adopted two different ways of ruling the people. These were direct and indirect rule respectively. Indirect rule was very common in the northern part of the country due to the respect and high sense of obedience the people had for their emirs and traditional rulers. The element of Shaykh Uthman Dan-Fodio’s Jihād of 1804 was still strong before the colonial administration. The northern part were predominantly Muslim. Direct rule was common in the south due to decentralized system of governance common among in-

dependent communities and empires before the arrival colonial masters.

Nigeria as country is a multicultural and heterogeneous country with diverse religious groups. For easy administration and governance, the country is divided into six (6) geo-political zones which includes: north-east, north-west, north-central, southwest, south-east and south-south. The people of the first three zones and about 50% of south-western zone, are predominantly Muslims.<sup>51</sup> Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) is the body in charge of Muslim affairs in Nigeria. Although, there are innumerable Islamic oriented organizations in the country like; Jama'at Nasrullahi Society of Nigeria, *Jama'atu Al-<sup>c</sup>Izalalat-ul-Bid'a wa 'iqamat-us-Sunnah* JIBWIS, Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, NAŞFAT, Nawair-ur-Deen Society of Nigeria, *Ansar-ul-Islam* Society of Nigeria, The Companion, Muslim Student Society of Nigeria, Anwar-ul-Islam etc. These organizations have outstanding Islamic scholars in their ranks and file. They often organized weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual Da'wah workshops, seminars, conferences and lectures. The table below shows responses, given by respondents across different organizations, to our enquires on whether or not famous Muslim organizations contacted had in any way, organized seminars, lecture, workshop or conference on transgender.

	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Any public lecture organized?</b>	<b>Any seminar/workshop organized?</b>	<b>Any conference organized?</b>	<b>Any collective fatwa?</b>
1	Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)	None	None	None	None
2	Jama'at Nasrullahi Society of Nigeria	None	None	None	None
4	<i>Ansar-ul-Islam</i> Society of Nigeria	None	None	None	None
4	Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria	None	None	None	None
5	Jama'atu Al- <sup>c</sup> Izalalatul-Bid'a wa 'Iqamat-usSunnah (JIBWIS)	None	None	None	None
6	The Companion	None	None	None	None
7	Nawair-ur-Deen Society of Nigeria	None	None	None	None
8	Muslim Student Society of Nigeria	None	None	None	None

9	Muslim Lecturers Association of Nigeria (MLA)	None	None	None	None
10	Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS)	None	None	None	None

It can be deciphered from the above table that, as at today, there is no nationally recognized or registered centre for Islamic orientation (or *Dārul-Iftā*) in Nigeria, not even from the organizations mentioned above, that has presented any form of public lecture, workshop, seminar or conference on the subject matter. Hence, it is absolutely difficult if not impossible, to get a nationally juristic opinion or verdict on transgender. Similarly, after thorough investigations through structured interviews with heads of some of the Muslim organizations mentioned above, it became obviously imperative to assert that, there is complete silence on this issue among scholars in Nigeria. Although few as less than hand count, some Muslim groups recently started discussion on related topics via zoom, precisely in 2023.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Having established that, there are controversies surrounding hyperandrogenisms, transsexualism and related sexual and gender concerns, Muslim scholars must begin on note of identifying the community of those with such challenges where they are inhabiting. The Middle East comes up for mention here, where to date they are heavily discriminated against and extreme cases killed. It is a fact that Islām condemns the duo of homosexuality and lesbianism, but these other categories must be well comprehended and more knowledge disseminated, while assistance provided.

This paper, being expository in method, calls for collaboration among Muslim Medical Scientists and Islāmic Scholars and Jurists in various Muslim communities, countries and across the world to come together with a defining unified opinion. This could be possible if, there is massive awareness among Muslims on the fact that, there exist among us, people suffering with their identity and this is not a cause on them or for us, but, one of the amazing wonders of Allah, the unequal *Khāliq* (The Creator) that was never created.

Similarly, the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) is the umbrella body of Muslims in Nigeria. The activity of this body is more pronounced when Ramadān is fast approaching and when there is need for interface with the Government. This paper suggests further that, the Council should establish a committee that will be in charge of Islamic orientation (*Fatwa*),

the committee will be in charge of establishing and giving juristic stand for Nigeria Muslims. This can be achieved in many ways. Muslim Academia; (Professor of Islamic Studies, Physiology, Surgeon, and Gynecologist), Imāms, Qādis and devoted Muslim professionals in other fields of human endeavors should be incorporated into this committee. The Council's role needs to transcend its annual declaration of the day of commencement of Ramaḍān fasting or interfacing with Federal Government on the affairs of Muslims in the country. It ought to include organizing an all-encompassing national juristic seminar and symposium where critical issues, challenging the Muslims thought in the 21st century, shall be discussed.

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