

THE INTERFACE OF FOOTBALLING AND GAMBLING SAGA AMONG MUSLIM YOUTHS IN NIGERIA: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND ISLAMIC SOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

Online football betting has become prevalent among Nigerian youths and for which Muslim youth are deeply involved. Betting of any kind is prohibited in Islam with evidence stated in many verses of the Glorious Qur'an and Ahadith. Therefore, this paper studied how Muslim youths participate in online football betting and the negative effects therein. It is also observed that due to the get rich quick syndrome and lack of the true Islamic knowledge led most of the Muslim youths into online football betting. The paper discussed most of the prevailing effects of betting/gambling on Muslim youth. The work suggested ways to eradicate or reduce the growing prevalence of online betting among Muslim youth. Furthermore, it has discussed the Islamic rulings regarding all forms of gambling or betting with verses from the Glorious Qur'an and Ahadith of Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Content analysis was adopted as the methodology for the research.

KEYWORD

Muslim youths, Football, Online betting, Islamic perspective

1. INTRODUCTION

The growing popularity of Sport Gambling/Betting in Nigeria and the fact that many more youth across the country are getting involved in it daily may prompt several questions, such as: Is sport betting gambling, is it a legitimate business, by that I mean, is it legal and is it sin....? Sports betting and other forms of gambling are becoming a phenomenon across Africa and Nigeria in particular. Betting over which sport team may win have become a multi-million Naira business. Nigeria is witnessing a huge expansion in sport betting and other forms of gambling. Lotteries, poker, sport bets, slot machines, casino games, and online gambling are all new trends. Many entrepreneurs and foreign companies are pocketing millions of Naira from Nigerians who wants quick money.

Gambling and other terms such as gaming and 'games-of-chance' are driven from the Anglo-Saxon terms 'gamen' and 'gamon' which mean sport or play. The general use of the word gamble denotes any decision executed in any transaction or pursuit involving risk and uncertainty. Hence, gambling is to play a game of chance for money or to take a risk for some advantage or a risky venture. Risk and uncertainty are faced in gambling since the outcome of the decision taken is unknown even though a good outcome is always expected. Therefore, it is said that politics, in fact, is 'a big gamble' since judgements passed in this area are always uncertain and risky. The

use of the word gambling is usually refers more specifically to economic activity that is mainly based on gain, loss, risk, and uncertainty as relate to the 'game of chance'. Economically, therefore, to gamble is to “play 'games-of-chance' for money especially for unduly high stakes, or to stake money (especially to an extravagant amount) or on some fortuitous event” (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).

However, this definition is too narrow because the words ‘to play games’ does not accommodate all types of gambling. There are business transactions which are certainly gambling in nature but could not be included under the definition of 'games'. Such kind of transactions are not based purely on chance such as betting on horse races, boxing and other sporting events, even though outcomes are unpredictable. In addition, the words ‘for money’ in the above definition do not suit all kinds of modern gambling. Although, monetary gain remains the main objective of much gambling, it is not considered the sole purpose of a 'game of chance'. There are various alternative prizes to be won including political power, leadership and, to a certain extent, women. As mentioned by Cohen and Hansel in their writing, Scythians stake not only their teeth, eyebrows, wives, families, and freedom but also risked their lives on a single throw of a dice (Cohen, 1956).

Green, in his work, *Betting and Gambling*, suggested a definition he claimed to be more comprehensive. He defined ‘gambling’ as an agreement between two parties whereby the transfer of something of value from one to the other is made dependent on an uncertain event, in such a way that the gain of one party is balanced by the loss of another (Green, 1930). Accordingly, this definition fits all types of gambling such as playing 'games-of-chance' or betting on horse racing and other sporting events between clients and bookmakers or between individuals; including all kinds of sweepstakes, lotteries and similar enterprises (Gambling, 1931). The definition and includes certain business transactions (Green, 1930).

In Arabic lexicon, the word *Maysir*, the equivalent word for gambling, is derived from *al-yasar* (easy) that literally means availability of wealth or game of chance (al-Qurtubī, ed. 2010; „Imārah, 1993), or refers to acquisition of wealth by chance whether or not it deprived other people’s right and cause them harm (al-Qurtubī, ed. 2010), or obtaining something easily without any hardwork or receive benefits without working. According to Al-Misri (1993), *Maysir* and *qimar* has the same meaning, that is a game of chance with a combative relationship between two contracting parties, each of whom undertakes the risk of loss, and the loss of one means gain for the other. In other word, it is a person puts some of his money or a part of his wealth at stake wherein the amount of money at risk may or may not bring huge sums of money. In the common practice, *maysir* is used as a gambling, and in usage, the Qur’an also adds the word ‘*azlam*’ as synonyms to gambling (Kamali, 2000).

Still in Arabic, the word “*al-maysir*”, which means "gambling" has the same meaning with “*al-Qamar*”. Qal’aji (1988) has defined it "as any game that allows the winner to take the bet items from the one(s) who lost." Ibn Manzur says that “*qamara*” is equivalent to “*rahana*” (Ibn Manzur, nd.). It also has the meaning of “*al-muranah*”, that is “*al-Mukhatarah*”, which is "the taking of risk." (Ibn Manzur, nd.) Ibn Faris says that “*al-muqamir*” is the person who gambles (Ibn Faris, 1981).

2. THE EVOLUTION OF FOOTBALL

Although nobody really knows when people started to play football, historians think that some form of the game was played in ancient cultures like Egypt, China or Rome. Modern football, however, started in England at the end of the 17th century. It was played by young people from

rich families and between school teams. In 1863 the Football Association was founded in England and the first sets of rules were made. By the end of the 19th century, the game had spread throughout the rest of the world (www.english-online.at/sports/soccer/european-football.htm).

In 1904, the International Association of Football now known Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) was formed. It has become the world's most important football organization. Today, all countries have national leagues in which teams played against each other for the national titles. In Europe, the best teams that compete in a tournament is called the Champions League (www.english-online.at/sports/soccer/european-football.htm).

The European football season has come, gone and upcoming, including the mad hurry of Nigerian youths involving thousands of Muslims that visit online betting houses and companies. It is now a normal spectacle when you go into the streets in major cities in Nigeria and you see queues of young men fighting to place their bets on the five major leagues in world football. The English premier league, Spanish premier La Liga, Italian Serie A, German Bundesliga and the French league and other minor leagues are not excluded when desperate jobless Nigerian youth jolt to make cash through football betting (Victor, 2016).

It is not something entirely new when you put on a television set and see adverts by mega betting houses, on Super Sports and other sports channels. It is not false to say that the betting houses are becoming the number one sponsors of football clubs, television viewing rights, sponsor of major sports programmes and more. With the winning and the sweet mouthed nature of bookmakers, many Nigerian youths have incurred huge debts that come with undesirable consequences from folks that give them the credit.

3. FOOTBALL BETTING: HISTORICAL SKETCH

Football betting is all about placing money against bookmakers. It is different from betting against other people the way most people do. Bookmakers are betting companies that provide the platform for betting activities. They also provide the prices and expected winnings on each football match and other sports.

Betting is probably as old as mankind; it was in any case known to the primitive man (Arnold, 1978). Ancient sources, such as Homer, describe antique races and the bets placed on them, and we can only imagine the intense betting activity that probably surrounded the first Olympic chariot races, introduced in 680 BC during the XXVth Olympic Games. There is no perfect history of football betting. When did football betting start is as good a question as when did the sport itself start, it's safe to assume that betting in some form was going on throughout the history of the sport. But, ultimately, before the 1960s, betting on football was illegal and done in the streets or in criminal safe houses (<http://www.bestbettingsites.uk/football/history/>).

In years past, if a gambler wanted to bet on football he or she would place a wager with the neighborhood bookie. In the nineteen-sixties, in an effort to control what had become an enormous underground industry, the Federal Government legalised sports betting within the state of Nevada, and made it illegal everywhere else in the U.S. With the rise of the World Wide Web, online football betting has become an internet commonplace and online sports books take in billions of bets each year. This didn't all happen overnight (Stephen, 2017).

Football betting has been around longer than many of the more traditional sports bettors care to remember. Originally, football betting took place in a back alley or a local pub and the local bookie was the person who cashed in on the wagers placed on football. The only choice many people had for gambling on games was through the local bookie (Stephen, 2017). Back then, bookies had an image of being the tough guy. They flashed the money they made, and when credit came due and a bettor couldn't pay, bookies often resorted to violence. It was this image and violence that led to their eventual downfall.

One aspect of the football game to have evolved substantially over the last decade or so is betting on football. What once appeared to be a jovial stab in the dark or a bit of fun has become a global obsession based around the best betting sites. In days gone by, a British football fan would walk down to the local bookmakers and place a wager by checking boxes on a betting slip. Most towns only had one bookmaker, with the odds on offer the best you could get. Fast forward to the modern day and betting in football is a massive industry. Most Premier League clubs have betting partners, many are sponsored by betting websites and some modern stadiums have had their naming rights claimed by these wealthy organisations (<https://www.11v11.com/history-football-betting-global-obsession-spawned/>). A betting company is not worth its salt if a punter is unable to bet on the number of corners a team will win, the total number of yellow cards in the game or if a certain player will hit the woodwork. The days of ripping up a betting docket after something went against you are also all-but defunct, with in-play betting meaning that cashing out is a live option. Technology has completely transformed the betting industry and the number of people across the globe doing everything in their power to make a correct prediction and win their fortune shows no sign of subsiding.

However, football betting has been taking place for many years, the most popular of which being horserace betting. Since the advent of online sports betting sites, soccer betting has increased dramatically and has become a worldwide phenomenon that is worth billions each year. It is currently estimated that the sports match betting industry (online and offline) is worth between \$700 billion and \$1 trillion per annum, and soccer betting accounts for almost 70% of this (www.betxchange.com/soccer-betting-industry/).

Online football betting was born in the late 1990's when a number of neighbourhood bookmakers realised there was a way to reach larger audiences as well as to escape the legal issues that had become a hindrance to their business. The increasing ubiquity of the internet allowed football betting to become more secure, more accessible, and lastly but not least, more fun (Stephen, 2017). Offshore sports books really started to catch on in the early 2000's and have since become the most popular method for football betting. Online gaming companies took over \$12 Billion in bets in 2005, and those numbers are predicted to grow by at least 20% every year.

The early 20th Century also saw some of the UK's major bookmakers establish their companies. William Hill and Coral followed Ladbrokes, which had already opened in 1902, but at that time, were still focused almost entirely on horse and dog racing. Outside of the pools then, football gambling during this period would have had a seedy element to it, with punters likely forced to place their bets with criminal gangs (<http://www.bestbettingsites.uk/football/history/>).

The advent of the Internet brought a spectacular increase to the betting sector (Miller, 2001). One major change was the introduction of betting exchanges, who act as online intermediaries between individual bettors, allowing them to bet against each other. The punters can either take the traditional role of backing the bet offered by somebody else, or they can also act as "bookmakers" themselves and lay bets.

Nowadays, bets can be placed on numerous football matches, races, such as greyhound races, motor and car races, cycling, the marathon, yachting races etc., on fighting sports engaged into by humans, e.g. wrestling, boxing, taekwondo, etc., or animals, such as dog or cockfighting, but also on other sports, such as football, rugby, cricket, basketball, tennis, hockey etc., and even on non-sporting events. Betting activities have a close link with sports. Revenues stemming from betting, which are injected into sports through different financing patterns, constitute a vital funding source for many sports organisations. However, the threats brought about by the same are equally prominent.

Sports betting are form of gambling that entails placing a wager, also known as a bet, on the outcome of a sporting event. The primary intent of sports betting is to win additional money. With the exception of spread betting, 'draw no bet' wagers and a few other examples, a bet will have two possible outcomes. Either you win a profit based on the bookmaker odds, or you lose your wager (Hamza, 2013).

While sports' betting obviously incorporates wagers on sports like football, rugby, and tennis, it also includes betting on entertainment, such as the winner of Dancing with the Stars, and finance, such as interest rate changes. Sporting wagers can be on fixture or tournament results, or on events that take place during a fixture. For example, in a football game between Arsenal and Chelsea, possible bets include Arsenal to beat Chelsea, Arsenal to win 2-1, Arsenal to win by one goal, Arsenal to be leading at half-time, and a particular player to score a goal (Hamza, 2013).

One point of difference between sports betting and casino gambling is the probabilities of winning are not known with sports betting – they are only estimated. Unlike a casino game, where the house edge is known with certainty, sports betting rewards patience and research, because bookmakers are only guessing the true probability of each possible outcome. While bookmakers provide accurate odds on average, good value can be found for the experienced punter.

From time immemorial, lottery has been going on in Nigeria. Until recently, however, it was the elderly and some specialized interest groups and individuals who mainly engaged in it. Pool betting had also been popular among the middle aged. Unlike other forms of lottery that have been in existence in the country, many people treat pool and its players with disdain because it was seen as a game that allegedly impoverished its players who hung on an everlasting hope of winning but without actually winning. Others saw it as outright gambling, a habit that was easy to start but very difficult to stop.

Today, however, lottery has been re-branded and made more attractive, especially targeting the youth and adolescents. Prominent among the captivating features of today's lottery is not only that it is sports-oriented, which often fascinates the youths, but also due to its use of the internet and other hi-tech inputs which makes it easier, accessible and quick. They can be played online or at designated offices. This was unlike before when lottery was analog and only played at designated offices/centres.

4. GAMBLING/BETTING AMONG MUSLIM YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

Betting on football games among the youth is big business in Nigeria. According to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), N1.8 billion is spent on sports betting daily in Nigeria. It is not surprising that Nigerians in the youth demographic are heavily involved in betting. The poll states

that 60 million people within this age range are into betting and gambling. This is not surprising. Nigeria is a football crazy country that has a huge youth population (Ayomide, 2017).

Gambling/Betting is a risky business which is very common among the world of young adult and the rate at which people are engaging in the activities every day is increasing. Gambling activities include and not limited to 1960 bets, online gaming, lotteries, and speculation. Generally, gambling behaviour is not illegal activities, this has increased the prevalence of the activities in the societies and almost all part of the world allows one form of gambling or the other. Lack of sanction the part of gamblers has paved the way for the introduction of new forms of gambling activities such as the emergence of 1960 bet in Nigeria.

Today among Nigerian youth 1960 bet is a very popular gambling activity where people have to predict the outcome of matches. The higher the number of matches individual predict the higher the expected outcome if the prediction is right at the end of the match. Due to technological development, the emergence of new forms of gambling such as online gambling like 1960 bet, this increases the prevalence of this behaviour in the society as people just need to sit in their room and apply online for match prediction, this, in turn, has increased various implications of gambling among this population (Oyebisi, Alao, & Popoola, 2012). Gambling/betting behaviour is a big problem among Nigerian youth today, high level of involvement in gambling may result into problem gambling which is otherwise referred to as gambling addiction, this problem has been reported to predispose youth to various health-related problems such as depression and even to the abuse of psychoactive substances.

Today's youth are living in a digital age. Relying heavily on technology for entertainment, their recreational activities increasingly consist of activities that interact with computers, tablets, cell phones, and other mobile devices. Video games, and to a larger extent gambling/betting, have become a routine part of their leisure activities. While traditionally gambling and video game playing were thought to be distinct - one plays for points, the other for money; one is skill based, the other based on chance - these distinctions are becoming less clear. There are definite psychological and behavioural parallels between slot machine gambling and video arcade game playing (Griffiths & Wood, 2004; Gupta & Derevensky, 1996). Both activities operate on behavioural principles of variable reinforcement schedules in order to reward and prolong play, use exciting and stimulating sound and light effects with game play to promote physiological arousal, require a response to predictable stimuli, involve eye-hand coordination, and necessitate varying degrees of concentration and focus. Additionally, both activities have similar negative effects associated with excessive play (for instance, poor academic performance, moodiness, loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, interpersonal conflict) (Griffiths & Wood, 2004).

The fever of sports betting is spreading all over the world and it has caught up with Nigeria. Sports betting have become a 21st Century money-spinning, entrancing venture for the Nigerian youth population, who has embraced it with both hands for financial succour. Gambling/betting is as addictive as intoxicants if not more, but just as it is with the tobacco industry, the henchmen of betting industry keep promoting the slogan that "winners know when to stop". However, the reality is "winners do not know when to stop" until they are completely drawn into it and are finished financially, psychologically and become suicidal. Now, will the society fold its arms and watch the cancer of betting and gambling dominate its economic-landscape until it reaches every corner of the society from the cities to rural areas and even remote settlements? Traveling across Nigeria exposes anyone to the reality of how far-reaching betting/gambling is, it is bet9ja, bet365, everywhere (Abdullah, 1).

Some prevalent sports lottery played today are Bet9ja, Naira bet, Cash bet, 360 bet, Fast bet, Sure bet, Sahara bet, 1960 bet, Bet revolution, among others. Some of the criteria for winning include: predicting the team that will win a match or the person that will win a race; predicting the team(s) that will qualify for a competition or the first to qualify; predicting the player who will score/amount of goals to be scored in a match; predicting the player who will receive the first yellow/red card and/or the number of cards that will be received, etc. (Daily Trust, 2016).

Sports betting have badly diverted the attention of youths from forging ahead in life. Some have relegated their religious duties, school, work, businesses and domestic work/family duties to the background and have given substantial attention, time, resources and energy to sports betting. Gambling/betting is tearing not only individuals apart but also families and societies. Betting especially as it relates to football, which has unfortunately bedevilled most youth today, leads to a total waste of time and effort, breeds laziness among the Muslims and pushes them away from Allah's remembrance. When the heart is not filled with the remembrance of Allah, then all evil actions become easy and attractive, hence alcohol, drugs and other social vices. If one is told that about 70% of active youth are directly or indirectly involved in one form of betting or the other, it would be correct and this is how badly affected the society is (Abdullah Musa Abdul, 2).

5. NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GAMBLING/BETTING ON YOUTHS

According Philip (2014), Gambling/betting makes you wager your money or other valuable items on an uncertain event. It is dependent, partly or wholly, on chance. In the long run, the bet causes harm to the gambler after he loses his chance. Gambling is a game of chance in which the probability of winning is an independent event. That is, just as there are only two sides to a coin, there are also only two sides in gambling. It is either you win or you lose. There is no such thing as sitting on the fence in a bet. In recent times, betting rate has increased in geometric proportions and this is because of the desire to cheat greedy person by lottery firm and to generate revenue for government. The lottery industry is becoming lucrative as it has become a huge employer of labour through the establishment of different lotteries and sweepstakes.

Anyone can develop a problem with sports betting; however, specific populations have been identified as at-risk for developing a problem. Youth Sports betting is becoming more popular and reaching younger audiences. March Madness and fantasy sports make betting on sports attractive to younger audiences. Some individuals experiencing problems with sports betting may accumulate debt, experience the loss of significant relationships, become involved in other illegal activities, and even become addicted (Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), 2012).

The casinos, movie viewing centres, restaurants, bars etc. become the pride rendezvous for gamblers to engage in betting. While gambling/betting may generate revenue for the government and its agencies, some communities and religious institutions have continued to oppose it. This may not be unconnected with the concern that gambling leads to crime, corruption and other vices, which may be occasioned by the desperation to win at all costs (Philip, 2014).

Sadly, the most active participants in this trade are adolescents and youths whose main objective, rather than being on how to lay good foundations to better their tomorrow, is on the desire to get rich at all cost and crush any obstacle that might stand against their desire.

To Philip (2014), Gambling/Betting poses a significant challenge to our public health. Recent statistics show that adolescents and young adults face highest risk of developing gambling problems. This is because of the increase in gambling centres, where the underage are daily being

exposed to unregulated forms of gambling and are daily succumbing to the temptation and pressure to engage in the act. As in most game of chance, money is spent to get more money. And for adolescents and youths who rely on their parents for their daily bread, the money to bet has to be gotten from their parents under false excuse. If this fails, they look for other means of getting the money to satisfy their urge to bet. At this point, gambling becomes an addiction. Its effect devastates both to the doer, the family and the society at large. When the money stops coming the way of gambler, he may engage in drugs in frustration.

For the occasional gambler, these behaviors may provide an innocuous opportunity for excitement, socialization, or boredom relief. When these behaviors increase, however, problem and pathological gambling create negative consequences in an individual's financial, social, and overall health. Gambling explored through the public health perspective looks at the effect of gambling on individual well-being and health, familial health, community health, health care system and public policy. Shaffer and Korn (1999) identified eight negative health and social consequences of gambling: gambling disorders, family dysfunction and domestic violence, youth, and underage gambling, alcohol and other drug problems, psychiatric conditions, suicide and suicide ideation, significant financial problems, and criminal behaviour.

And according to Blinn-Pike *et-al*, (2007) financial behaviors were associated with sensation-seeking and risk-taking activities like gambling. Youths often use resources such as credit cards, debit cards, or borrowed money to gamble; this is common for adult gamblers as well, but these habits may have greater negative financial consequences in a younger population. Atkinson et al, (2012) found that the mean amount of money spent on gambling a month was just under \$200 by college students. Further, the authors found that 48% of college aged gamblers said they had spent more money on gambling than they wanted to and 32% said they lost more than they could afford.

Poverty: football betting can turn into a dangerous two-way street when you least expect it. Weird things happen suddenly and your life can go all to pieces. One minute you are rich and the next you are down to your last kobo.

Health Issues: Do you know that losing to a bet can cause sadness, high Blood Pressure, regret, depression and a whole lot of negative emotions including insanity.

Frustration and anger: You need to see the anger and frustration in the eyes of those who lost to a bet. It is quite frightening and frustrating.

Laziness: It makes youths so lazy that they forget about doing anything for their lives. Most of them don't take their bath because they are busy gambling away their lives.

Waste of Financial Resources: I heard a young man who used his school fees to bet online and have never stopped regretting his actions after he lost. Some people sell even their properties and personal belongings to bet. What a sorry life!

Family Conflicts: It destroys one's relationship with family, friends, and colleagues. Due to obsession with the game a person is isolated from the family members which can cause serious family crisis. Certainly, no mother will proudly introduce his son as a football betting maniac.

Islam prohibits any game which involves betting, that is, which has an element of gambling in it. It is not lawful for the Muslim to seek relaxation and recreation in gambling, nor is it lawful for

him to acquire money through it. According (Al-Qaradawi, 2003) there are sound and noble objectives behind this strict prohibition of gambling:

1. The Islamic teachings urge the Muslim to follow Allah's directives for earning a living, to use natural laws and direct means for the attainment of his objectives, and to employ such causes to produce the desired effects. Gambling, which includes raffling or the lottery, on the other hand, makes a person dependent on chance, 'luck' and empty wishes, taking him away from honest labor, serious work, and productive effort. The person who depends on gambling loses respect for the laws of causation which Allah has established and commanded people to use.
2. In Islam, an individual's property is sacred; it may not be taken from him except through lawful exchange or unless he gives it freely as a gift or in charity. Accordingly, taking it from him by gambling is unlawful.
3. It is therefore not surprising that gamblers develop hatred and enmity towards one another, although they may claim that losing does not trouble them. There is always a winner and a loser. The loser may seem composed but behind his composure is frustration, anger, and regret: frustration due to disappointment, anger at the loss of money, and regret for not having played a winning game.
4. Gambling has its own compulsion. The loser plays again in hope of winning the next game in order to regain his earlier losses, while the winner plays again to enjoy the pleasure of winning, impelled by greed for more. Naturally, luck changes hands, the loser becomes the winner and the winner the loser, and the joy of winning changes into the bitterness of loss. Thus the gamblers may persist at playing the game, unable to bring themselves to leave it; this is the secret of the addiction to gambling.
5. Because of this addiction, gambling is a danger to the society as well as to the individual. This habit consumes gamblers' time and energy, making them non-productive idlers and parasites on society, who take but do not give, who consume but do not produce. Moreover, due to his absorption with gambling, the gambler neglects his obligations towards his Creator and his duties towards his community. It often happens that a gambling addict sells his honor, religion, and country for the sake of the gaming table since his devotion to this table dulls his sense of values and kills all other devotions.

6. ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON GAMBLING/BETTING

Gambling is fast becoming a norm in the society nowadays, from Street gambling to online football betting and other sport gambling/betting. Seen Muslim youths gamble is so frustrating, especially when they refuse to understand the Islamic stands on gambling. The legal ruling concerning gambling/betting in Islam is not contestable. It is as clear as the bright moonlight on the fifteenth day of the lunar Month. Qur'anic injunction is clear on it as enshrined in Qur'an 5:90 Shaykh Sayyid Saabiq (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Fiqh al-Sunnah* that It is not permissible to bet in any case where money is offered by all, so that the one who wins will take all the bets, and if a person loses he will lose to his companions, because this comes under the heading of gambling, which is *haram* (Fiqh Al-Sunnah, 3/373).

The prohibition on gambling is clearly stated in the Qur'an and stands immutable. This is based on the command of Almighty Allah which states:

O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, sacrificing to stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. Eschew such (abomination) that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you not then abstain? (Qur'an, 5: 90-91).

Almighty Allah also says,

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say, In them is great sin and some benefits, but the sin in them is greater than their benefit. (Qur'an 2:219).

Islam forbids gambling in all ways and forms. The very idea of taking someone else's money as a result of winning a game of chance is abhorrent to Islam. Allah describes *Maysir*, which we often translate as "games of chance" or gambling, as "abomination devised by Shaytan" which all Muslims should avoid at all costs. There are many Hadith that speak of different games often used for gambling, showing that they are all forbidden to play. One such game is backgammon, an Old Persian game using dice to move pieces across its board. The movement is determined by the throw of dice, which makes the whole game dependent on an unknown. Thus, it is a game of chance, and it is forbidden to play.

It is reported on the authority of Abu Musa Al-Ashari that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

Whoever plays backgammon disobeys Allah and His Messenger. (Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad).

This Hadith is very clear in its import. It describes playing backgammon as an act of disobedience of Allah and His Messenger. Needless to say, when something is described as constituting disobedience to Allah or the Prophet then it is forbidden. Another Hadith quotes Abdullah Ibn Masoud as saying:

Refrain from these two marked cubes that are associated with omen, for they are a form of gambling. (Related by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad).

This is a clear reference to backgammon which relies on two cubic dice with a number given to every side of each dice. It is not the dice itself that is a form of gambling, but the purpose for which it is used in a game. Since the throw of a dice is unpredictable, the whole game becomes a game of chance and such games are gambling. Hence, they are forbidden. A more detailed description is given by Abu Hurayrah:

Whoever plays backgammon in a game of gambling is like one who eats pig meat, and the one who plays it without gambling is like one who dips his hand in a pig's blood, and the one who sits there watching a game is like one looking at pig meat. (Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad).

Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubayr, a companion of the Prophet who ruled *Hijaz* and Iraq for several years, once addressed the people of Makkah saying:

I have heard that some men from the *Quraysh* play a game called backgammon. Allah says “Believers! Intoxicants, games of chance, idolatrous practices, and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan. Therefore, turn away from them so that you may be successful.” (5: 90) I swear that anyone who is brought to me for having played it will be punished physically in his hair and body, and I will give his belongings to the person who brings him to me. (Related by Al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*).

All these Ahadith and reports confirm the strict prohibition of backgammon as an example of games of chance that is associated with gambling/betting. Some of us may wonder about the reason for such strict prohibition that extends even to playing games without betting on the result. The answer is that such games of chance, like backgammon, always tempt to add a little bet “to make the game more exciting.” They also have the same characteristics of gambling in making a person hooked on them, wasting too much time playing them.

When gambling is involved, it means that the winner takes the money of the loser without having earned it. Islam teaches us to follow the proper practice in earning money through our work and effort, not relying on chance. Moreover, property has its own sanctity.

It cannot be taken by another person except in exchange for something else, i.e. goods for money, or as a gift or charity. To take it through gambling is to take it forcibly, without any returns.

It is not surprising that those who gamble often harbor grudges against each other, even though they put up appearances of friendship and acceptance. This is due to the fact that they are always divided into winners and losers.

If the loser does not speak out against the winner, it is because he cannot do anything about his loss. Moreover, failure in one game prompts the loser to seek another game in order to have a chance to regain his lost money. The winner also wants another game, feeling that if his luck holds he stands a chance to double his winnings. If the roles are changed, each would experience moments of success and failure. They want to play more and more. This leads to compulsive gambling, which is a serious condition. The gambler ends up gambling away everything he has, including his family, honour, and integrity.

This proscription is not only limited to gambling for the acquisition of money but it is also applicable to 'games-of-chance' or gambling for the purpose of entertainment and recreation (Qaradawi, 1985). If one's involvement in a game-of-chance even for relaxation is forbidden, this same prohibition becomes more easily grasped in cases of gambling to attain profit at the expense of others. Hence, the application of this position extends, therefore, also to the process of passing similar judgements on speculative stock market transactions.

With regard to the wisdom behind this prohibition, any wise person will see that there are many reasons for it, including the following:

Gambling makes a person rely on accidents, luck and wishful thinking for his earnings, instead of hard work, the sweat of his brow and paying respect to the ways prescribed by Allah.

Gambling destroys families and causes the loss of wealth through haram means. It makes rich families poor and humiliates proud souls.

Gambling results in enmity and hatred among the players, because they are consuming one another's wealth unlawfully and getting wealth unlawfully.

Gambling turns people away from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer and pushes the players to have the worst of attitudes and habits.

Gambling is a sinful hobby that wastes time and effort and makes people get used to laziness and idleness. It stops the *Ummah* from working and producing.

Gambling pushes people to commit crimes because the one who is penniless wants to get hold of money in any way he can, even if he has to steal it or take it by force, or through accepting bribes and cheating.

Gambling causes stress, illness, and nervous breakdowns. It breeds hatred and in most cases leads to crime, suicide, insanity and chronic illness.

Gambling pushes the gambler to bad behaviour such as drinking alcohol and taking drugs. The atmosphere in which gambling takes place is dimly lit and filled with cigarette smoke; people talk in hushed voices and whispers and sneak in and out as if they are up to no good. They come in hesitantly, filled with suspicion, and gather around the green table, breathing uneasily and with their hearts pounding. They are supposed to be friends playing a game, but in reality, they are enemies, each of them lying in wait for the other and trying to make gains at the expense of the other and his children. The owner of the place tries to numb the feelings of all participants by offering dreamy music, fallen women, all kinds of drinks and cigarettes. The green table is surrounded with cheating and deception. The waiters and girls may tell one player about another player's cards, helping one player to beat another by means of nods and whispers. Sometimes they achieve a kind of balance to make sure the game carries on and people stay for longer. No doubt everyone loses in the end, they lose the money they spend on drinks and cigarettes, the money they give to the waiters, the money they spend on drinks for the girls, and all kinds of other losses. Even the one who wins all or most of the games loses all or most of his winnings, and the loser loses everything. And at the end of the night, they all sneak away, showing the signs of depression and humiliation, and the loser warns the winner to look out the next day. (Ahmad Shalabi, nd.)

However, many families have become poor because of gambling? How many mouths have gone hungry, how many bodies have become Unclad or been clothed in nothing but rags? How many marriages have failed, how many jobs have been lost, because of a person who stole money to support his gambling habit? How many men have sold their religion and honour at the gambling table? Gambling destroys everything, even when the aim is money. It includes wine, smoking, bad company, darkness, confusion, cheating, and hatred, watching for opportunities to take advantage of others, deception and all other kinds of evil (Abdullah, 1).

The Muslim jurists have not given direct and clear definitions of gambling. However, in their writings, it can be concluded that the main criteria for gambling are;

The source of the prize is comes from the items (e.g. money) deposited or bet by all participants.

Every participant has to take a risk: either he will win in the competition or he will lose. Thus, one of the participants, when he wins, will gain all that were bet by the others, but when he loses, loses all that he has bet.

7. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROHIBITION GAMBLING/BETTING

Every society reacts against the behaviour of individuals which infringes upon public interest and it is universally believed that acts which provoke social relations must be punished.

One may ask, Why Islam prohibit gambling? Why gambling is liable under “*ta’zir*” punishment? Is the punishment justified?

To answer these questions, a careful study and attention must be given to the nature of gambling itself and effects entail from the act.

Gambling brings about religious, social, moral and economic harm. From the Qur’anic verses that have been discussed before it is clear that gambling entails following evil effects.

First, gambling distracts those who partake in the game from the remembrance of Allah and Prayer. When a gambler sits continuously for hours together, he is so absorbed in it that he forgets everything around him; rather he becomes unconscious of his own self. He forgets his household and family’s responsibilities. How then, can he take care of his prayer?

Second, it sows the seeds of disputes and quarrels among the gamblers which ultimately assume the shape of enmity and hatred among them. This point is made clear in the following verse:

Only would Satan sow hatred and strife among you, by wine and games of chance and turn you aside from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer. Will you not, therefore, abstain from them? (Qur’an 5:91).

Third, the sin of gambling is greater than its benefit. The verse 2: 219 enunciated two invaluable principles namely:

Dispelling mischief is precedent to acquiring benefits and the commission of lesser evil is obligatory when the commission of either of the two evils is necessarily essential.

Fourth, it corrupts morals making people sluggish in waiting for providence by whimsical means and giving up activities essential for making earnings such as agriculture, industry, business which are the foundation stone of social living and human prosperity and happiness in this mundane life.

Fifth, it enslaves the gambler who becomes a mute slave in the hands of gambling and seldom succeeds in abandoning it. When he earns some benefit, his greed for gambling increases and when he loses the game, even then his interest in the games of chance increase to make good the loss. In this way, he remains awfully engaged in gambling till he becomes a destitute.

Gambling/Betting corrupts morals, making people sluggish in waiting to get wealth by luck and chance. It turns their heads away from hard work and production through agriculture, industry, business- the foundation stone of social living human prosperity.

It enslaves the gambler, who becomes a mute slave in the hands of gambling/betting seldom succeeds in abandoning it. When he earns some benefit, his greed for gambling/betting increases

and when he lose the game, even then his interest in the game of chance increases to make good the loss. In this way, he remains awfully engaged in betting/gambling until he becomes poor.

Gambling/Betting brings about sudden chaos in the society due to sheer waste of wealth by losing the game. It usurps the wealth of the country and transfers it to the hands of the mischief-mongers within and outside the country. Thus gambling/betting is a root-cause of countless economic evils, reducing many rich people to poverty and ultimately forcing them to commit suicide.

Gambling/Betting is usually associated with increase of crime, suicide, divorce and other major epidemic in the society.

8. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this paper is to provide information on Muslim Youths involvement in Football Betting/Gambling and its effects on the society. Football betting is one of the new forms of gambling/betting among Muslim youths today in almost all communities in Nigeria. And Islam vehemently prohibits such activities. Betting on football by Muslim Youths has emerged from what was originally seen as a seedy or criminal activity of the working class to having betting shops on each corner and online betting sites screening adverts on to TV screens nationwide. It has been a gradual development, but over the last century, everything about football betting and how it is perceived has completely changed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government should organise an orientation program to educate the youths on the negative effects of football betting and gambling.
2. Gambling should be declared illegal, and gamblers should be arrested and punished by the government.
3. There should be proper security prohibiting any form of gambling/betting in Nigeria.
4. Islamic Organisations and Religious Leaders should create an avenue to educate the Muslim youths on the dangers of football betting/gambling.
5. There should be raising awareness particularly among Muslim Youths on the dangers of football betting/gambling and its effects on the country.
6. Government should make a legislation that would restrict betting/gambling in the country. This is in order to address its danger on the economy of the nation.

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