

IMPACT OF NASRUL LAHI AL FATIH SOCIETY IN OSOGBO, 2001-2018

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ABSTRACT

Institutional establishments often generate significant public excitement and initial hype, yet such enthusiasm tends to diminish over time, even when success is evident. Previous efforts to sustain this early momentum have largely been unsuccessful, prompting scholars to advocate for the systematic documentation of institutional processes as a means of preserving their initial impact. In this study, we examine the evolution and activities of the Nasrul Lahi Al Fatih Society (NASFAT) in Osogbo from 2001 to 2018. The paper details NASFAT's development, its missionary enterprise, and its impact on the fields of religion and education in Osogbo. Employing historical research methods, the study utilises primary sources—comprising oral interviews with key stakeholders—and secondary sources such as journal articles, newspapers, and books. Findings indicate that NASFAT's establishment and proliferation have fostered significant developmental outcomes in Osun State, although various challenges continue to impede its progress

Keywords: Innovation, Feasible, Pundits, Phenomena, Engenders

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Scholars seem to agree that the most constant phenomenon in the world is change which embodies several dynamics. One of the commonest and most conspicuous changes in the world is development. Development's growing popularity is marked by intense controversy, as scholars with diverse ideological perspectives have each attempted to shape its definition according to their own views. Development means dynamic changes in the sociopolitical and economic trajectory and status of any phenomena. Development has both qualitative and quantitative impacts. It concerns every aspect of human endeavour including education, access to information, infrastructure, housing, employment opportunities, and a host of others.

Various studies on socio-religious organizations, such as Nasrul Lahi Al Fatih Society (NASFAT), exist; however, most of these studies primarily

focus on religious controversies, comparisons, and structural analyses rather than exploring the evolution and continuity of such organizations. This focus is significant because religious organizations have gained remarkable global relevance, serving as platforms that embody and express spiritual, social, political, legal, and economic values that directly impact human lives. Additionally, the democratisation of political systems and the westernisation of various religious doctrines and ideologies have further propelled religious organizations into the spotlight, often placing them at the center of ideological debates.

Based on the foregoing, it is crucial to delve into the developmental structure and initiatives of Nasrul Lahi Al Fatih Society (NASFAT). Nasrul Lahi Al Fatih Society (NASFAT) is a prominent Islamic organisation that has played a significant role in the development of Osogbo since its inception in Osun state, Nigeria. The organisation stands as a beacon of community engagement and religious dedication in Osogbo, leaving an indelible mark on the city's landscape. NASFAT has influenced and enriched the cultural and social tapestry of Osogbo and its environs in Osun state, Nigeria. It is on the above cognizance that it becomes expedient through this paper to unravel the growing recognition of religious organizations like NASFAT.

1.2. THE EVOLUTION OF NASFAT MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE IN OSOGBO

The word, NASFAT, is an acronym for an abridged verse of the Quran which goes thus: Nasrun Minimal-Lahi Wa Fathiun Qarib.... which means

"With strong help from Allah, victory is surely attainable".¹ From that Quranic verse, the name of the organisation, 'NASRUL-LAHI-AL-FATIH', was formed and shortened as NASFAT for easy pronunciation. NASFAT was founded as another Islamic Organisation for the Nigerian Muslim elite in March 1995 by a group of young Muslim bankers.² Before this time, there had been a myriad of elite Islamic organisations in Lagos and other parts of Southwest Nigeria. Some of such elite organisations include Ahmaddiyyah Ja'maat, Jam'aatu Islamiyyah, Anwarul Islam Movement, Ansar ud Deen Society, Zumuratul Islamiyyah, Muslim Association of Nigeria, Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), National Council of Muslim Youth (NACOMYO), Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), The Companion, The Criterion, Yusrullah Association of Nigeria (YAN) and a host of others.³

NASFAT became a reality as a result of the cooperation of five people of like minds. The initial aim for establishing this group was to have a prayer group of ten Muslim men which was to meet regularly.⁴ It metamorphosed into a formal organisation when it was registered in December, 1999.⁵ The objective of NASFAT reflects in its mission statement which goes thus: 'To develop an enlightened Muslim Society nurtured by a true understanding of Islam for the spiritual uplift and welfare of mankind'.⁶ The small group that had such a dramatic dream over two decades ago has now grown in limbs and bounds into such a miraculous magnet attracting members in their

thousands to form a formidable Organisation that cannot be taken for granted anywhere. NASFAT's membership comprises young professionals, educationists, Muslim scholars, civil servants, journalists, company directors, business executives, computer experts, members of the security forces, members of the judiciary, politicians, state commissioners, legislators, traders, artisans, farmers, students and a host of many other professionals.⁷

The establishment of the "Nasrul Lahi Al Fatih Society" (NASFAT) Islamic mission is intended to help in the re-awakening of the relationship of Muslims with almighty Allah through aggressive group devotional prayer.⁸ Particularly, it was established as a way of encouraging Islamic adherents to improve in their communication with Allah by offering frequent and effective congregation prayers toward solving their major physical and spiritual problems, as prayer is a channel of communication through which man may enjoy God and make use of the means to achieve divine ends.⁹ Objectively, praying is an indication of an inward end. Praying is an indication of an inward attitude of submission, homage, and devotion. Significantly, praying may indicate a ritualistic supplication technique towards defending one against a danger from a superhuman being.¹⁰

Furthermore, as NASFAT grew unmanageably large due to an unexpected surge in its membership roll, the organization's leadership decided to establish branches both nationally and internationally to accommodate its expanding congregation. This

decision was made as far back as 2002 when the organization was just about seven years old. Today, NASFAT has approximately 400 branches worldwide.¹¹ The Osogbo branch was established in 2001, made possible by the efforts of some indigenes of Osogbo and its environs who had been attending NASFAT programmes in Lagos. These individuals sought to create a local branch to bring NASFAT's salat activities closer to the people. The initiative was led by Alhaji Yekeen (of blessed memory), accompanied by Alhaji Popoola and Engr. Ajala. Their first step was an important visit to the Kosemani Central Mosque, located in the Salako Area, behind the Osogbo Sports Stadium, Omo West, Osogbo.¹² After assessing the Mosque, they concluded that it could serve as a temporary venue for NASFAT's development in the town and the state as a whole. The team, along with representatives from NASFAT Headquarters in Lagos, visited the Mosque and expressed their intentions to Alhaji Kosemani, the Mosque's owner and Imam. During the visit, Alhaji Kosemani warmly welcomed them, and Alhaji Saobana Adegbenro considered their request to establish the NASFAT Osogbo branch at the Mosque.¹³

Consequently, the Osogbo branch of NASFAT commenced operations in November 2001 at Kosemani Central Mosque 1, Salako Area, Omo West, Osogbo. The branch thus became the second NASFAT Salat group to be established, following the Offa branch, which was the first NASFAT branch founded outside Lagos.¹⁴

The maiden Asalatu programmes in Osogbo were conducted by leaders from NASFAT's Lagos Headquarters. Although a mission board was inaugurated under the supervision of Alhaji Musbahudeen Muhali, in the presence of eminent Muslim personalities, the activities continued to be directed by the leadership from Lagos. Subsequently, pro-tem executives were inaugurated on Sunday, June 24, 2002.¹⁵ The newly appointed executives were entrusted with the responsibility of organising and overseeing all Asalatu activities in Osogbo to ensure the rapid growth of the mission in the state. They were also mandated to strictly uphold NASFAT's vision statement: "To be a pacesetter Islamic organisation with widespread acceptance within and outside Nigeria." The pro-tem executive council members included:

1. Alhaji Ganiyu Oyeladun - Chairman
2. Alhaji Aliyu Kayode Afolabi - Vice Chairman
3. Engr. Buliaminu Ishola - General Secretary
4. Alhaji Balogun - Welfare Secretary
5. Alhaji Ganiyu Ishola - Financial Secretary
6. Alhaji Yekini Ibaheem - Educational Secretary
7. Alhaja Aminat Badmus - Women Affairs Secretary.

To ensure the effectiveness of the executive committee, the Osogbo Branch Council of Elders was also established, with Alhaji Lateef Adegoke serving as the overall leader.¹⁷ This pioneering group of executives successfully facilitated the acquisition of a ten-acre parcel of land in Okinni,

along the road to Ilobu. This achievement was made possible by the grace of Allah and the support of several prominent Osogbo indigenes, including Late (Oba) Ataoja Oyewale Iyiola Matanmi III, Alhaji Tunde Badmus (the Asiwaju Adeen of the South West, Edo, and Delta), and others. The formal inauguration of the Osogbo Branch of NASFAT took place on June 15th, 2002, at the newly acquired land in Okinni. The event was attended by notable dignitaries from Osun State, including: The then Executive Governor of Osun State, Chief Bisi Akande, the late Ataoja, Oba Aransi Iyiola Oyewale Matanmi III, the late Chief Imam of Yorubaland, Edo, and Delta, Sheikh Mustapha Olayiwola Ajisafe, the late Aare Musulumi of Yorubaland, Alhaji Abdul-Azeez Arisekola Alao, Alhaji Khamis Tunde Badmus, Alhaji Tijani Oladosu, Managing Director of TILAD Nigeria Limited and several other dignitaries, along with the NASFAT executives from Lagos, who graced the occasion.¹⁸

Interestingly, the inauguration of the Osogbo NASFAT branch was significant because, afterward, the pro-tem executives were dissolved, and substantive executives were appointed. The new executives were restructured, expanded, and officially sworn in, resuming their duties immediately. In the same vein, the National Executive Council, who were present at the inauguration, held a brief emergency meeting at the venue to discuss the growth and development of NASFAT in the Osogbo branch.¹⁹ By the grace of God and through the hard work and commitment of the executives, the formation of the Elders' Council, the efforts of the Mission Board, and the resilient

cooperation of its members, NASFAT has continued to grow from strength to strength. Guided by NASFAT's shared values, the mission has gained widespread acceptance in Osogbo and its environs.

Furthermore, as other groups and branches began to grow, local government branches were inaugurated. The Ikirun branch was the first to be inaugurated in 2004, followed by others, including Ede, Iwo, Ile-Ife, Modakeke, and several others. The first executive leader of NASFAT Osogbo was Alhaji Ganiyu Oyeladun, who served for two terms (four years each). Afterward, Alhaji Aliu Kayode Afolabi took over in 2006, followed by Engr. Buliaminu Ishola, who led from 2010 to 2014. He then handed over to Alhaji Abdulrasheed Adekunle Adeyemo and his executive team, who served until 2016. This group, along with subsequent NASFAT leaders, brought monumental developments to the Osogbo Asalatu.²⁰ The story of NASFAT Osogbo would not be complete without acknowledging the mission's missionaries, who contributed significantly to the growth of Asalatu in Osogbo. Also crucial to this progress were the Youth Wing and the NASFAT Women's Wing.

Initially, the first set of missionaries came from the Lagos headquarters until Alhaji Musbahudeen Olawale Muhali was appointed as the first Osogbo missionary. He was succeeded by Alhaji Yunus Zakariyau, followed by Alhaji Kehinde Busari. The executive council carefully screened missionaries to ensure they were well-versed in Islamic and Arabic knowledge and capable of effective leadership. Consequently, the next set of missionaries, including

Dauda, Maruf, and Lawal, were sent to the Lagos headquarters for training.²¹ The missionaries in NASFAT play a dual role of teaching the congregation the general aspect of Islam through lectures and other information dissemination techniques, and problem solving or healing through prayer ceremonials or devotional prescriptions which the members are required to carry out on their own.²²

Similarly, the role of women in the development of NASFAT Osogbo cannot be overlooked. Women have made significant contributions to the growth of NASFAT and the spread of Islam in Osogbo. Notable among them are Alhaja Aminat Badmus, Alhaja Muslimat Alabi, Alhaja Misturah Liasu, and Alhaja Risikat Sade Omidiran. In recognition of their efforts, Alhaja Aminat Badmus was appointed as a member of the pro-tem executive council when NASFAT Osogbo was established. She later became the pioneer Women's Affairs Secretary and the leader of the women's wing of NASFAT upon its inauguration. She was succeeded by Alhaja Risikat Sade Omidiran, followed by Alhaja Muslimat Alabi, and then Alhaja Misturah Liasu. Like their male counterparts, women leaders in NASFAT are also allowed to serve for two terms of four years each. It is important to note that those who successfully serve as the Chairman of NASFAT for two terms have the opportunity to become members of the Elders' Council or Committee.²³ NASFAT Osogbo is the leading branch for the entire Osun State, with its members making up approximately 70% of the total NASFAT membership in the state. Beyond their numerical strength, NASFAT Osogbo members also

play a dominant role in the mission's activities and initiatives across the state.²⁴

1.3. NASFAT AND THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN OSOGBO

Indeed, the establishment of NASFAT Osogbo became imperative because many Muslims were gradually distancing themselves from result-oriented prayers. At the time, there was a common misconception that it was solely the duty of Alfas, Imams, or Mukaddams to approach God on behalf of others. This belief led to growing reluctance among many Muslims, making them passive and less engaged in purposeful prayers or traditional congregational worship. However, NASFAT created greater awareness of the importance of personal devotion and supplication, encouraging Muslims to actively participate in their own spiritual journey rather than distancing themselves from salvation. During the weekly Asalatu sessions, NASFAT promotes the recitation of a prayer book, which contains selected supplications from the Holy Quran, prayers of the Prophet (SAW), and other Islamically approved means of supplication. Additionally, a fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) session is incorporated, providing members with an opportunity to discuss the basic tenets of the Islamic faith. Special tutorial classes are also organised, allowing members—especially professionals and individuals aspiring for leadership positions within the group—to learn and improve their recitation of the Quran. As a result, several NASFAT members have been able to train others in Quranic recitation, ensuring that future Islamic leaders are well-

equipped with proper knowledge and confidence in teaching the Quran.²⁵

Furthermore, Dawah Week is organised annually for both youth and adults. During this period, public lectures are arranged for members, with a guest lecturer invited from higher institutions in Nigeria and abroad. The objective is to educate members about Islamic injunctions and raise awareness of socio-economic development. In addition, youth camps are held at the end of every year during NASFAT Week. This provides an opportunity for members to review the year's activities while also encouraging youths to grow in Islam and remain resilient in their faith.²⁶ Quranic classes are also organised for children, focusing on Quranic recitation, Hadith studies, and instilling Islamic culture and values from an early age. These programmes are typically scheduled to take place during long vacation periods. NASFAT remains committed to nurturing future leaders through various youth programmes. Young members are expected to develop leadership skills based on the teachings imparted to them and by observing the good Islamic conduct demonstrated by their leaders, which they can emulate in their own lives.²⁷ Ogunwale observes that:

*NASFAT is an organization that many people are proud to be a part of. If not for NASFAT, many individuals might have gone astray or been misled. What is most important today is Dawah, through which many people have been religiously motivated. As a result, individuals have been able to abandon their wrong ways and draw closer to God.*²⁸

NASFAT has also been publishing educational and enlightening books, journals, periodicals, newsletters, magazines, and programs of events. These publications are designed to provide Muslims with informative religious content that can positively impact the lives of people in Osogbo and the state at large. These works serve as constant reminders of Islamic duties and injunctions. They are not just for enlightenment but are specifically aimed at promoting Islam. Additionally, the mission organizes various school projects through which Muslim youths can receive a quality education to enhance their understanding of Islam. This initiative is intended to educate Muslims and equip them with the necessary knowledge for spiritual growth and religious propagation. In the schools, quality education is encouraged. This initiative has further enhanced youths' understanding of Islam, helping them move closer to Islamic culture and practices.²⁹ Whatever NASFAT has been doing toward the propagation of Islam in Osogbo and Osun State has been part of its program of action since the mission's inception. The mission statement of NASFAT is centered on finding an effective medium to instill Islamic culture in the people of Osun State. The mission is to develop and enlighten a Muslim society nurtured by a deep understanding of Islam for the spiritual upliftment and welfare of mankind.³⁰

Furthermore, NASFAT is operating their Dawah with the fear of God and many programmes are designed for the propagation of Islam for the betterment of Muslim Ummah and particularly for

the people of Osogbo. These they have been doing with their shared values which include:

- ❖ Projecting the beauty of Islam in words and deeds
- ❖ Strict adherence to the Holy Ouran and the Sunnah
- ❖ Promotion of Islamic Brotherhood
- ❖ Pursuit of knowledge
- ❖ Efficacy of prayers
- ❖ Recognising the equality of all Muslims
- ❖ Recognising the equality of all Muslims
- ❖ Being caring, humane, tolerant, patient and steadfast.³¹

1.4. CHALLENGES FACING NASFAT IN OSOGBO

Since the emergence of NASFAT in Osogbo, the Islamic mission has been confronted with several challenges, both internal and external. These challenges have hindered the mission from achieving some of its goals in Osogbo and its surroundings. The major challenges include financial, leadership, social, and political issues which are discussed below:

Financial Challenge

The society faces economic and financial challenges that affect the proper coordination and planning of its activities in Osogbo. NASFAT solely depends on charity, Zakat, voluntary donations, assistance, and contributions from its members to carry out its activities and projects. The committee members responsible for implementing development programmes are always on the move and must also

convene regularly to deliberate on their next course of action. However, these committee activities have been hindered due to financial constraints, particularly the inability to acquire vehicles for the mission.

The lack of logistics has also impacted some activities of the youth and women's wings of the mission, preventing them from reaching grassroots communities to provide financial assistance and empowerment where it is needed most. Areas such as Koledowo, Odofin, and Agbabiaka along Ilesha Road, Osogbo, do not benefit from the mission's developmental activities due to their remote locations and the lack of transportation. This challenge has also affected the establishment of new NASFAT branches in these areas. NASFAT leaders have attempted to expand the mission's current scope of operations, but financial constraints have made this impossible. Some programmes remain inactive, awaiting reactivation, but the shortage of funds has prevented their implementation. The financial limitations also hinder both internal and external expansion efforts necessary for the mission to achieve its objectives.⁴⁰

Leadership Challenge

Another significant challenge facing the mission is the internal issue of leadership. The Osogbo branch of NASFAT comprises groups from various local government areas of Osun State and other Yoruba communities. However, the chairmanship position of the mission has been exclusively reserved for indigenes of Osogbo, disregarding the interests of other members who contribute to the branch's

population. This decision has not been well received by non-indigenous members, who feel excluded from the leadership selection process. As a result, tensions have arisen, with some members expressing dissatisfaction and calling for a review of the selection system. This challenge has caused discontent among certain members, leading to divisions within the mission.⁴¹

Social Challenge

The major social challenge facing NASFAT often relates to the youth and some adults in the women's wing. The youth wing, one of the most vibrant units of the mission, also presents some of the challenges confronting the organisation. Ensuring that young members fully engage in every creative religious programme has been a significant challenge. Some youths have been difficult to integrate into NASFAT's policy programmes, especially when financial incentives are not involved. Additionally, issues concerning appropriate dressing among the youth remain a challenge. Some young members are resistant to adhering to Islamic dress codes, preferring modern, trendy, and often revealing clothing, without recognising that such attire contradicts Islamic cultural values. This has posed difficulties for both youth leaders and NASFAT leadership in general. The shift toward modern fashion trends has affected NASFAT's public image and contradicts its mission statement: *To develop an enlightened Muslim society nurtured by a true understanding of Islam for the spiritual upliftment and welfare of mankind.* A true understanding of Islam upholds proper Islamic dressing, and the

reluctance of some youths to conform has presented an ongoing challenge for the mission.⁴²

Political Challenge

Even though the society is not a political organization, the mission has not been able to sponsor any of its members for top political positions that could bring more recognition and development to the mission, particularly in Osogbo township and Osun State in general. However, members are allowed to associate with any political party to ensure they are not left out of the political affairs of the town and the state.⁴³

1.5. THE IMPACT OF NASFAT YOUTH WING OSOGBO

Despite various challenges, NASFAT has demonstrated resilience time and again, as reflected in its widespread influence. The organisation remains committed to transforming the lives of Muslims and the Osogbo community, including the youth, the elderly, and the less privileged. Since its inception, NASFAT has prioritised knowledge acquisition and economic empowerment, establishing various committees to effectively manage its programmes and policies. Recognising that proper organisation is key to reaching people without obstacles, NASFAT entrusts its development initiatives to capable and trustworthy leaders. These committees include Education, Welfare, Finance, Cooperative, Health, Security, Children's Affairs, Ramadan, Elders' Council, and many others.³² The impacts of these NASFAT Osogbo committees can be categorised into the

following: Economic, Educational, Health, Humanitarian, and Financial. Each of these impacts is discussed below:

Educational Impact

Education takes center stage in all NASFAT activities, and the impact of its educational policies and programmes extends beyond borders. In Osogbo and Osun State, NASFAT's educational initiatives are organised without discrimination or religious bias. The organisation has played a pivotal role in advancing education in Osogbo by establishing nursery and primary schools within and outside the community, as well as supporting the development of secondary schools. A model school was established in 2013 to showcase the mission's educational ideology to the people of Osogbo. Many children and youths have benefited from this initiative. In Islam, seeking knowledge has no limits and is a compulsory duty for both male and female Muslims, regardless of their location. Beyond fostering an understanding of life's purpose, educating the youth is seen as a crucial step toward building a better future.

As a result, NASFAT also established *Ile Kewu*, an elementary Quranic school for Muslim children, where they receive foundational teachings in the Quran and Hadith. The establishment of these schools complements NASFAT's broader educational programmes and supports the Western education schools provided for the community. Additionally, it plays a vital role in training elderly men and women who previously lacked formal education. Below is a picture of NASFAT Model

Nursery and Primary School at NASFAT Village, Ring Road, Osogbo, and Fountain University, located in the Oke Osun area of Osogbo.

Picture 1: A picture of NASFAT Model School, Osogbo



Source: Snapped by the Researcher during fieldwork 22/03/ 2020

Furthermore, following the inauguration of NASFAT Osogbo in 2002, the mission immediately demonstrated its commitment to educational development. The National Executive Council (NEC) of NASFAT decided to establish the mission's proposed university in Osogbo after deliberations revealed that Osogbo was their second-largest branch outside Lagos. At the time, Osogbo was one of the state capitals in Nigeria without a tertiary institution.

Years later, in 2007, NASFAT University, also known as Fountain University, was licensed by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and commenced operations in 2008. Fountain University is the first faith-based Islamic university in Nigeria. It is a conventional private faith-based institution offering programmes in the College of

Management and Social Sciences (COMAS), which includes courses such as Accounting, Finance, Business Administration, Economics, Sociology, Political Science, and Mass Communication. The College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CONAS) offers programmes in Microbiology, Biochemistry, Physics and Electronics, Computer Science, and Industrial Chemistry. The university also runs postgraduate programmes. Regarding its ranking among universities in Nigeria, Fountain University holds the 79th position and is ranked 25th among private universities. True to its name, the university has become a fountain of knowledge, providing educational opportunities for the people of Osogbo and Osun State. Today, the university's educational benefits extend beyond the Muslim community, welcoming students from all religious and ethnic backgrounds.³⁵

Picture 2: A picture of Fountain University, Osogbo



Picture 3: The Senate Building of Fountain University Osogbo



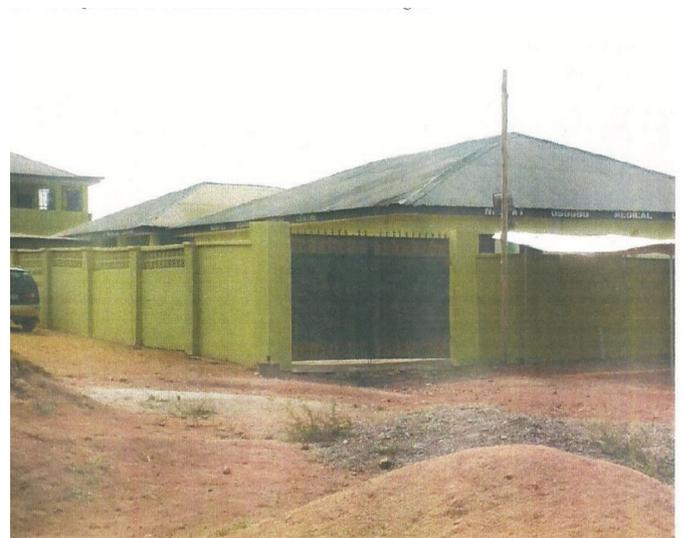
Source: Fountain University Osogbo - Retrieved on 22/03/2020 from school website

Health Impact

The health of members of the Osogbo community is of great importance to NASFAT. As a result, the mission provides public healthcare services designed to benefit the people. In an effort to support the state and local governments in the area of healthcare services, NASFAT has established a healthcare centre in Osogbo to address the health needs of the people. This center operates based on

practical and scientifically sound medical practices that are both accessible and affordable. The medical team plays a crucial role in conducting annual free surgical operations for both Muslim and non-Muslim members of the community. Also, NASFAT provides health assistance to the less privileged, and in some cases, wheelchairs have been procured for physically challenged individuals.³⁶ Below is the picture of NASFAT Medical Center:

Picture 4: A Picture of NASFAT Medical Center, Osogbo



Source: Snapped by the researcher during fieldwork on 22/03/2020

Humanitarian Services

NASFAT has been making efforts to give new meaning to people's lives in Osogbo. Their efforts strongly include providing humanitarian services to the community. Through its welfare committee, the mission visits prisons annually to give alms to inmates and provide support whenever necessary to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Some inmates are also given religious

guidance to help them find new hope in life, particularly after their release.³⁷

Financial Impact

NASFAT visits hospitals around Osogbo, particularly government hospitals, where they offer encouragement to patients on their sickbeds. In cases where patients are detained in the hospital due to financial constraints, monetary assistance is provided. NASFAT has also been able to secure financial support for elderly members, which is done annually and monitored by the welfare committee.³⁸

Economic Impact

The mission is also working toward the economic independence of members of the Osogbo community. This has been achieved by organising annual training programmes where people acquire skills that provide employment for those who are jobless or seeking better opportunities. Participants are also trained on how to excel in their chosen professions. Professionally trained members of the mission are linked with potential clients, while NASFAT also helps members secure employment by announcing job opportunities for qualified candidates within the mission. NASFAT's presence in Osogbo has created various employment opportunities through its schools, clinic, and the establishment of Fountain University. Members of the community, regardless of their religious background, are employed in these establishments. Additionally, employment opportunities have been made available for non-educated individuals, such

as motorcycle operators ("Okada" riders), minibus transporters, food vendors, artisans, and technologists, who provide essential services to university students. This, in turn, has boosted the local economy.

NASFAT empowers its members not only by providing jobs but also by creating sustainable sources of livelihood. It supports artisans by acquiring occupational equipment for them. Machines such as sewing machines, grinding machines, and laptops have been provided to help individuals grow their businesses. On Sundays, during the weekly Asalatu prayer sessions, market men and women are encouraged to display their goods for sale. However, they are required to register with the business section of the mission to participate regularly. NASFAT also promotes and engages in farming, including crop cultivation and livestock rearing. Importantly, the mission operates a business arm called TAFSAN, which is responsible for producing NASMALT, the official health drink of NASFAT. TAFSAN also organises NASFAT travel and tour programmes, including the facilitation of Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. Also, NASFAT operates a cooperative society for its members and other residents of Osogbo, enabling them to access funds to grow their businesses. Loans from the cooperative are granted with zero interest, making it easier for individuals to invest in their economic ventures.³⁹

1.6. CONCLUSION

Without mincing words, the evolution and continuity of NASFAT in Osogbo have been

unveiled through its multifaceted roles in the propagation of Islam, as well as its socio-economic and political impact on the community during the study period. Most notable are its contributions to education and healthcare, where major developmental initiatives of NASFAT have been implemented. As the first Islamic mission to establish a university in Nigeria, NASFAT embodies significant potential that is pivotal to both local communities and national progress and sustainability.

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