

ASSESSMENT OF ALMAJIRI SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the situation of Almajiranci in Sokoto state, Nigeria. Three objectives were set to be achieved among which include determined reasons parents still send their children to Almajiri school in Sokoto state? The study employed descriptive design and purely qualitative with a sample size of 36 respondents. The targeted respondents are; parents of Almajirai, Almajirai and their teachers (mallams) within the study area. Convenient or purposeful sampling was used. Two local government areas were selected with 18 respondents each. 3 sets of interview guides were used. Almajiri Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (AIGAASESS), MIGAASESS and PAIGAASESS were used as the instrument for data collection and data analysis was done through transcription, coding and the use of themes and sub-themes for detail explanation of each research question. The findings of the study revealed that, the major reason behind parents sending their children for Almajiranci is poverty. Mallams are motivated by searching for paradise and God's blessings, similarly they like to inherit the work of their fathers. It further revealed that Almajirai were admitted at tender age, they have various sources of food and they undergo various trouble and hardship during Almajiranci. The study therefore, recommended that, Sokoto state government should consider the process of formalizing Almajiri Qur'anic Schools in the state. The government should introduce a scheme named Poverty Reduction for Rural Areas (PORRA) the programme should target only rural dwellers who are in poverty. Preferably, parents should consider the trouble and hardship undergone by their children during Almajiranci and allow them to learn at home so that they can learn at the same time enroll them into formal school without disruption and watch the growth of their morality at formative age.

Keywords: Almajiranci, Almajiri, Mallam, Almajiri Parents, Qur'anic School.

Introduction

Muslims' children in Hausa land pursue Islamic knowledge in three types of schools. These include; Qur'anic Schools, Islamiyya Schools and Almajiri Qur'anic Schools. In Qur'anic Schools, children learn Qur'an using slates (Allo in Hausa) under the guidance of a male teacher (Mallam) or female teacher (Modibbo or Mallama). Usually after the Qur'anic teaching before closing, children will learn some basic aspects of worship like; Suratul Fatiha, Tahiya, Ayatal Kursiyyu, ablution and prayer with their obligatory and Sunnah aspects, among others. In Islamiyya schools, children learn Qur'an and Hadith without using slates. Other aspects of religion are learned through books just like a formal school system using subject teachers and periods. Qur'anic memorization is highly encouraged in the schools. In Almajiri Qur'anic Schools, children learn in the same pattern with those in Qur'anic Schools, the only difference is that in Almajiri Qur'anic Schools the children left their home towns and villages and sometimes even the mallam is emigrant. The popular practice is that children do not hold any provision during the studies, but they beg for food, clothes and money moving around with dirty and tattered clothes to attract public sympathy and get alms. A reasonable number of Muslims' children in Sokoto state are attending Qur'anic and Islamiyya schools but the reflection of

other children in *Almajiranci* do attract the attention of members of the public thereby having different perceptions about the children and their communities.

Almajiri system in Nigeria used to be a decent and reputable scheme that produced eminent scholars and policy makers. The *Almajiri* system gathered support and solidarity from all stakeholders and boosted the nation to fortunate status in literacy, social, diplomatic and economic spheres, to mention a few. Its prominence however took a plunge with the arrival of the imperialists who hijacked the administrative power in the land and relegated all religious and traditional structures to the background (Abdulazeez and Musa, 2015). The upshot of this scenario paved the way for all forms of adulteration being smeared on the system today, which denigrates the whole structure.

The term *Almajiri* in Nigeria is used to describe those children or youths who left their home towns in search of Islamic education. According to Abdulqadir (2003), this system started in the 11th century as a result of the involvement of Borno rulers in Qur'anic literacy. Over seven hundred years later, the Sokoto caliphate was founded principally through an Islamic revolution based on the teaching of the holy Qur'an. These two empires run similar Qur'anic learning system which over time came to be known as the *Almajiri* system or *Almajiranci*.

In *Almajiri* system of education during the pre-colonial era, pupils lived with their parents for moral upbringing. All the schools were located within the immediate environment from where the pupils came from. The Danfodiyo's revolution brought with it some modifications like, the establishment of an inspectorate of Qur'anic literacy. The inspectors reported directly to the emirs of the province, concerning all matters relating to the schools. This was seen to be the height of Qur'anic education in northern Nigeria. The schools were maintained by the state, communities, the parent, zakkah, waqf and supplemented by the teachers and students. Begging (*bara* in *Hausa*) as it is known today, is completely unheard of (Abdulqadir, 2003).

With the arrival of colonialist in Nigeria, *Almajiri* education system lost its prestige. The education was rendered insignificant by the imperialists government because western education was placed above it and *Almajiri* and their teachers (*Mallams*) were left in hunger because their guardians were either dethroned, killed or changed ideology of leadership. This phenomenon compelled the teachers and pupils (*Almajiri*) to resort to begging (*Bara*) and menial jobs in order to survive. Yahaya (2004) added that the problem of Qur'anic schools started with the colonial invasion of the northern Nigeria, which led to the relegation of Islamic education to the background. This led to the gradual eroding of the Islamic educational system. Curriculum contents, teaching methods, teachers' qualification, infrastructure and administration have been compromised, therefore the Qur'anic schools has remained archaic.

The manner by which *Almajiri* education is pursued in Northern Nigeria raises alarm from different perspectives. The pupils and their teachers (*Mallans*) mostly appear untidy sending a message of poverty, hardship, child abuse and diseases. In the process of searching for food through begging (*Bara*) or menial jobs, the *Almajiri* endanger both their lives and health, mostly through exposure to rituals, bad gangs and street violence. Eventually after graduation this group of people is considered unskilled and therefore unemployable. Mostly their lives and families (dependents) continued in misery. Goodluck and Juliana (2017) stated that the Federal Government of Nigeria is making

attempts to integrate western education with Islamic education so as to transform the *Almajiris* to functional members of society. In order to improve enrolment of *Almajiris* in schools, the federal government has built ultramodern schools as well as declared free education across states where *Almajiris* exist.

Northern part of Nigeria is lagging behind compared to its counterpart in the south, this might be connected with low enrolment of pupils right from primary school, whereby a large number was enrolled into Qur'anic schools for *Almajirci* (i.e *Almajiri* education). Health survey data cited by Goodluck and Juliana (2017) revealed that parents/guardians in the south-south, south-east, and south-west Nigeria have the highest literacy rates of 74, 73 and 72 percent respectively. On contrary, the north-west has 39%, north-east 43.6% and north-central 59.5%. Reports from various educational departments indicated that the north suffers a serious decline in education. For example, in 2000 the six states with lowest number of applications in the university matriculation examination (UME) were from the north. These states had a combined total of 6729 applications or 1.45% of the national total (National Population Commission, In Goodluck and Juliana, 2017). Although the Jonathan's administration designed a programme under which a few *Almajiri* Model Boarding Schools were established by the Federal Government intervention, which was aimed at integrating conventional western education into Islamic education only turned out to that the programme did not properly address the problems of the *Almajiri* children. Less than five percent were captured by the federal government's programme, which was meant to remove the *Almajiri* off streets (Abaro, 2016).

In their struggle to live during *Almajiranci*, the children lost focus or direction regarding to their quest for knowledge. They search for money and food at all cost, sometimes led the *Almajiris* to die in violence, in the hand of ritualists, thugs, as well as killed by diseases and hunger. Those who make it, graduate their reading of Qur'an and become traders or traditional herbalists, those who could not make it are condemned to menial jobs because they have no skills.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are, to;

- i. examine the reasons why parents send their children to *Almajiri* Education in Sokoto state.
- ii. examine the reasons why *Almajiri* teachers (mallams) continue to move *Almajiris* out of their parents' domain for Qur'anic education in Sokoto state.
- iii. find out the problems encountered by *Almajiris* in the course of *Almajiri* Education in Sokoto state

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are;

- i. what are the reasons why parents sending their children to *Almajiri* school in Sokoto state?
- ii. what are the reasons why *Almajiri* Teacher (mallams) continue to move *Almajiris* out of their parents' domain for *Almajiri* Education in Sokoto state?

- iii. what are the problems encountered by Almajiris in the course of Qur'anic Education in Sokoto state?

Methodology

The study is purely qualitative using descriptive survey design. The number of population for the study cannot be ascertained but all parents of Almajiris, Almajiris and their teachers (mallams) in Sokoto state constitutes the study population. convenient or purposeful sampling was used for the study. Two local government areas were sampled to represent the state. They were Sokoto North and Yabo local government areas. To determine the number of schools to be selected for the study, each LGA has six Qur'anic schools, in each Qur'anic school one teacher (mallam), one Almajiri and one parent were selected. 18 respondents were selected from each LGA 36 respondents for the entire study. Stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents. Table 1 described the distribution of the sample size for the study;

Table 1: Sample of the Study

S/N	L/ Govt.	Schools	Mallams	Almajiris	Parents	Total
1.	Sokoto North	6	6	6	6	18
2.	Yabo	6	6	6	6	18
	Total	12	12	12	12	36

The instrument used for data collection is structured interview i.e Almajiri Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (AIGAASESS), Mallam Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (MIGAASESS) and Parents of Almajiri Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (PAIGAASESS). The structured interview enabled the researchers to be focused and not to deviate from the stated research questions in the process of data collection. The instrument was validated by senior colleagues in the Faculty of Education Sokoto State University, Sokoto. The method for data collection for the study is face to face contact between the researchers (interviewers) and respondents (interviewees). The researchers met every respondent in his domain and interviewed him. The data collected was transcribed, coded and arranged according to themes and sub-themes with detailed explanation on each theme and sub-themes as revealed by the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected from 36 respondents for the study was presented and analyzed under the following themes and sub-themes;

Almajiris' Parents and Almajiranci in Sokoto State

Almajiris' parents enjoyed certain benefits and advantages in sending their children for Almajiranci. These differ from individual to individual and community to community. The following sub-themes provided the detail expiations;

1. Reasons Parents Send Children to Almajiri Qur'anic School in Sokoto State

Almajiri parents gave reasons behind sending their children to Almajiri Qur'anic schools in Sokoto state. Poverty is one of the reasons.

Table 1: Reasons Parents Send Children to Almajiri Qur’anic School

S/N	Respondents	Reasons
1.	Resp.; 22, 36 21, 30, 31, 34 23, 32, 24	Opportunity to educate their children. Relief from responsibilities Warranted by condition Free charges made it easy for enrolment
2.	Resp.; 29,	Eye opener for the process of acquiring Islamic Education
3.	Resp.; 22, 33	Banditry makes both formal and Qur’anic Schools to close. We must send them for Almajiranci.

This shows that the major reason behind parents sending their children for Almajiranci is poverty. Other reasons include banditry and Almajiranci as foundation for seeking Islamic knowledge.

2. Impact of Sending Children to Almajiri Qur’anic School

Parents of Almajirai highlighted certain impact attached to sending their children for Almajiranci. Some parents believed that children learned better at Almajiranci than at home.

Table 2: Impact of Sending Children to Almajiri Qur’anic School

S/N	Respondents	Impact
1.	Resp. ;21, 32, 34, 7, 29, 36, 24, 30,	Children pay more attention to learn at Almajiranci than at home. Children do not pay attention at home We need the progress of the children educationally. It tradition in our family to send children for Almajiranci.
2.	Resp.; 23, 33 35,	Relief from the present cost of living. Almajiranci is the only option for our children education.
3.	Resp.; 31	Our children learn Qur’an and other aspects of religion like; purity, prayer, ablution, among others.

This shows that, children learned better at Almajiranci than at home it is also a relief to the cost of living and also as a source of Islamic knowledge.

3. Subsidized Family Running cost

Parents were subsidized on family running cost when children are sent for Almajiranci.

Table 3: Almajiranci and Family Running Cost

S/N	Respondents	Description
1.	Resp.; 21, 22, 30, 33, 34. 36, 31, 23, 24 & 29	Subsidized family running cost, therefore it is considered as relief on family expenditure.

This shows that, Parents were subsidized on family running cost when children are sent for Almajiranci while few parents believed in the destiny of the children’s affairs not as their own making.

4. Assistance of Almajiris during Almajiranci

Parents supposed to assist their children while away for learning, in the case of children on Almajiranci majority of the parents do not provide such assistance to their children but the children struggled to take care of themselves during Almajiranci.

Table 4: Assistance of Almajiris during Almajiranci

S/N	Respondents	Description
1.	Resp.; 21, 31, 24, 30, 34, 33, 22, 32 & 23	No assistance used to be rendered to Almajiris by parents during Almajiranci.
2.	Resp.; 29 & 30, 35	Certain assistance used to be rendered by parents to Almajiris during Almajiranci.

This shows that, majority of the parents do not provide assistance to their children on Almajiranci only few parents provided such care.

5. Almajiranci and Formal School

In this regard parents have divergent stance. Some have their children in Almajiranci and formal school, that is when at home during the rainy season they went formal school and during the dry seasons they left for Almajiranci. The second category are those who are completely out for Almajiranci without attending formal school.

Table 5: Almajiranci and Formal School

S/N	Respondents	Description
1.	Resp.; 21, 22, 30, & 23	Children attend both formal school and Almajiranci. When at home during rainy season (formal school) and when it is dry season (Almajiranci).
2.	Resp.; 24, 29, 35, 34, 33, 32, 36 & 31	Children do not attend formal school.

This shows that, children on Almajiranci mostly do not attend formal school because even those who partially attend formal school do not take it serious because there was no consistency.

According to the study, the major reason behind parents sending their children for Almajiranci is poverty. Other reasons include banditry and Almajiranci as foundation for seeking Islamic knowledge. Parents also enjoy certain impact from Almajiranci they revealed that, children learned better at Almajiranci than at home, it is also a relief to the cost of living and also as a source of Islamic knowledge to their children. Parents were also subsidized on family running cost when children are sent out for Almajiranci while few parents believed in the destiny of the children's affairs not as their own making, as such is not a problem. Almajiri parents who mostly lived in poverty majority of them do not provide assistance to the children on Almajiranci only few parents provided such care. Lastly, children on Almajiranci mostly do not attend formal school because even those who partially attend formal school do not take it serious because there was no consistency.

Mallams and Almajiranci in Sokoto State

Mallams play central role in the continued existence of Almajiranci in Sokoto state and northern Nigeria in general. They enroll, teach and provide accommodation to Almajirai who left their home towns and villages for Islamic knowledge. The subsequent sub-themes provided detail explanation on this theme;

1. Motivation of Mallams Towards the Establishment of Almajiri Qur'anic School

A motive is a reason for doing something. Motivation is concerned with the strength and direction of behaviour and the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways. The term 'motivation' can refer variously to the goals individuals have, the ways in which individuals chose their goals and the ways in which others try to change their behaviour. Mallams must have motives for continuation of receiving children for Almajiranci which made the system to be what it is today.

Table 6: Motivation of Mallams in the Establishment of Almajiri Qur'anic School

S/N	Respondents	Motivation
1.	Resp.; 1, 12, 2, 9, 6, 13, 18, 7, 20, 16, 25, 28.	Orientation and need for continuation. Inheritance and need for continuation of the school. Seeking for God's blessings. Need for the school continuation. Passion for teaching in Almajiri Qur'anic School.

This shows that mallams are motivated by searching for paradise and God's blessings, past efforts not to be in vain, Inherit The Work of their fathers, emulation of good mallam behaviour and passion for teaching.

2. Impact of Almajiranci

Mallams derived certain impacts from Almajiranci which make it difficult for them to surrender. They are seeking for knowledge and Almajiranci is the way through which Islamic knowledge is acquired and disseminated.

Table 7: Impact of Almajiranci

S/N	Respondents	Impact
1.	Resp.; 1, 7, 16, 9, 12 7, 20, 6, 13, 25, 28.	Means for seeking Islamic knowledge Almajiranci triples learning at home. Integration of Almajiri and formal education might have better impact. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said one can go anywhere and learn.

Therefore, Almajiranci to mallams is considered as the way through which knowledge can be acquired and acquiring knowledge through Almajiranci is faster than learning at home.

3. Benefits Derived in teaching Almajirai

Ideally, it is expected that mallams should derive certain benefits for taking much of their time teaching and controlling Almajirai under them.

Table 8: Benefits of in teaching Almajirai

S/N	Respondents	Benefits
1.	Resp.; 5, 1, 18, 7, 6, 13, 20, 25, 9, 12, 28	Teaching for the sake of God. Teaching for the sake of God and sometimes parents presented gifts to mallams.
2.		Working with some Almajirai in mallam's farm to produce food for mallam's family and Almajirai in the year round.

The respondents revealed that, there is no fix charges for Almajirai on Almajiranci but certain amount is paid in the name of *sadaqat* (gift), though it was reported that in some schools, weekly dues used to be paid. But in another way senior Almajiri were used to work in mallam's farm during the rainy season and the food would be use feed mallam;s family and the working Almajirai throughout the year including medication.

Mallams are motivated by searching for paradise and God's blessings, past efforts not to be in vain, inherit the work of their fathers, emulation of good mallam behaviour and passion for teaching. Therefore, Almajiranci to mallams is considered as the way through which knowledge can be acquired and acquiring knowledge through Almajiranci is faster than learning at home. The respondents revealed that, there is no fix charges for Almajirai on Almajiranci but certain amount is paid in the name of *sadaqat* (gift), though it was reported that in some schools, weekly dues used to be paid. But in another way senior Almajiri were used to work in mallam's farm during the rainy season and the food would be use to feed mallam;s family and the working Almajirai throughout the year including medication.

Problems Almajiris Encountered During Almajiranci

Almajiris left their home towns and villages to other places in search of Islamic knowledge, in that process of learning several problems are encountered. The problems were discussed in the following sub-themes;

1. Age and Period spent in Almajiranci

The age range of Almajirai who responded to the study are mostly within the age of 7 to 22 years. For instance, respondent 4 stated that, I started Almajiranci with 7 years. Respondent 10 and 11 added that, they were 19 years old. Other respondents' ages; respondent 12 was 10 years old, resp. 14 has 7 years, resp. 15 has 22 years, resp. 26 has 11 years, resp. 27 was 13 years old. Only respondent 19 was found to be out of the range that is 37 years old. This shows that some Almajiris were sent out at tender age but majority of the respondents started at reasonable age.

The study further examined the period spent in Almajiranci. Respondent 4 stated that I have 13 years in Almajiranci. Respondent 10 added that I have 2 years in Almajiranci. Others are resp. 11 has 2years, resp. 12 has 11years, resp. 14 has 1 year, resp. 15 has 2 years, resp. 27 has 3 years. Only respondent 19 has 30 years because he started at the age of 7. The highest number of the respondents spent between 1 to 3 years in Almajiranci. Only few spent above 10 years.

2. Problem of Feeding

Food is one of the basic necessities of life. Therefore, Almajirai cannot do without food during Almajiranci. The study examined the sources of food for Almajirai.

Table 9: Problem of Feeding during Almajiranci

S/N	Respondents	Sources of Food
1.	Resp.; 4, 10, 27, 14, 12, 7, 17, 11, 19, 15. 26, 3.	Food through begging and house work. Food through begging. Food from house masters. Work in fadama & firewood. Working in mallam's farm.

Based on this study, the sources of Almajiris food are; begging, house work, fire wood, fadama work and some Almajiris worked in mallam's farm for their yearly consumption.

3. Hazards and Accident

Almajiris are sometimes affected by hazards and accident during Almajiranci. For instance, respondent 3 narrated that, there are incidence of hazard that occurred to Almajiris presently in this school we have two Almajiris who are fractured, before is one but recently another one got his accident.

Table 10: Hazards and Accident During Almajiranci

S/N	Respondents	Types of Hazards
1	Resp.; 3, 7, 14, 12, 15, 26, 27, 17 4, 10, 15, 19.	There is incidence of fracture. Sickness. Hurt legs in the bush. Could not recall hazard or inconvenience, it has come and go.

Based on this information, majority of the Almajirai fall victims of road accident, bush accident and sickness during Almajiranci. But for few Almajiris such hazards and inconvenience are no longer an issue.

4. Embarrassment and Social Stigmatization

Begging, pleading for work and appearance in dirty cloth and body are the common features of many Almajirai. Those features do not exert respect from many people, as such Almajirai undergo different embarrassment and social stigmatization.

Table 11: Embarrassment and Social Stigmatization

S/N	Respondents	Types of Embarrassment
1	Resp.; 4, 7, 3, 11, 12, 17, 27, 14, 15, 26, 10, 19.	People harass Almajirai because of dirty. Shouting at Almajirai. Abusing Almajirai. Attempt to beat Almajirai. Lower price of goods and services from Almajirai. Teasing the Almajirai. No embarrassment.

Almajiris faces Embarrassment and Social Stigmatization for instance, people do harass them, shout on them, abuse them, throw their bowls away and go, devaluation of their goods, pretend beating them and teased them.

5. Sleeping and Learning Environment

Accommodation is another basic necessity of life. Almajirai who left their parents' home must find a place to sleep no matter the condition. They also required learning environment which is usually provided by the mallam. Mostly there are complains about the poor condition of the places.

Table 12: Nature of Sleeping and Learning Environment

S/N	Respondents	Nature of the Environment
1	Resp.; 4, 17, 10, 7, 3, 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, 26, 27.	Unconducive sleeping and learning environment. Congested sleeping and learning environment. No definite sleeping environment. Learning and sleeping environment has no problem.

Based on the respondent views majority of their learning and sleeping environments are good and few of them admitted that it is not good.

6. Sickness and Medication

Sickness and medication are inevitable in the human lives, Almajirai who are not directly under the care of their parents how do they manage their sickness and medication?

Table 13: Sickness and Medication

S/N	Respondents	Sponsors of Treatment
1.	Resp.; 4, 19, 14, 26, 27, 17, 7, 3, 11, 12, 10, 15.	Almajiris used to pay for their treatment. Community members do assist. Mallam is responsible for the treatment of Almajiris. House masters do assist in the treatment.

Treatment of the Almajiris' sickness was a joint action, but main medication used to come from the Almajirai themselves, mallams, house masters and Members of the community do assist at lesser extent.

7. Violence and Trouble Attack on Almajirai

Life in Almajiranci consist of different encounters including violence and trouble attacks.

Table 14: Violence and Trouble Attack on Almajirai

S/N	Respondents	Sponsors of Treatment
1.	Resp.; 4, 14, 12, 7, 3, 17, 15, 10, 11, 19, 26, 27.	Escape area boys' attacks. Only sickness. No violence or trouble during Almajiranci.

Based on the data collected, Almajirai used to crossed trouble especially from area boys, others fall into severe sickness, while some were opportune not fall victims of such incidence.

Summary of the Major Findings

The major findings of the study are;

According to the study, the major reason behind parents sending their children for Almajiranci is poverty. Other reasons include banditry, and Almajiranci as foundation for seeking Islamic knowledge. Parents also enjoy certain impact from Almajiranci they revealed that, children learned better at Almajiranci than at home, it is also a relief to the cost of living and also as a source of Islamic knowledge to their children. Parents were also subsidized on family running cost when children are sent out for Almajiranci while few parents believed in the destiny of the children's affairs not as their own making, as such is not a problem. Almajiri parents who mostly lived in poverty majority of them do not provide assistance to the children on Almajiranci only few parents provided such care. Lastly, children on Almajiranci mostly do not attend formal school because even those who partially attend formal school do not take it serious because there was no consistency.

Mallams are motivated by searching for paradise and God's blessings, past efforts not to be in vain, inherit the work of their fathers, emulation of good mallam behaviour and passion for teaching. Therefore, Almajiranci to mallams is considered as the way through which knowledge can be acquired and acquiring knowledge through Almajiranci is faster than learning at home. The respondents revealed that, there is no fix charges for Almajirai on Almajiranci but certain amount is paid in the name of *sadaqat* (gift), though it was reported that in some schools, weekly dues used to be paid. But in another way senior Almajiri were used to work in mallam's farm during the rainy season and the food would be use to feed mallam;s family and the working Almajirai throughout the year including medication.

This shows that some Almajiris were sent out at tender age but majority of the respondents started at reasonable age. The highest number of the respondents spent between 1 to 3 years in Almajiranci. Only few spent above 10 years. Based on this study, the sources of Almajiris food are; begging, house work, fire wood, fadama work and some Almajiris worked in mallam's farm for their yearly consumption. Majority of the Almajirai fall victims of road accident, bush accident and sickness during Almajiranci. But for few Almajiris such hazards and inconvenience are no longer an issue. Almajiris

faces Embarrassment and Social Stigmatization for instance, people do harass them, shout on them, abuse them, throw their bowls away and go, devaluation of their goods, pretend beating them and teased them. Based on the respondent views majority of their learning and sleeping environments are good and few of them admitted that it is not good. Treatment of the Almajiris' sickness was a joint action, but main medication used to come from the Almajirai themselves, mallams, house masters and Members of the community do assist at lesser extent. Based on the data collected, Almajirai used to crossed trouble especially from area boys, others fall into severe sickness, while some were opportune not fall victims of such incidence.

Discussions

According to the study, the major reason behind parents sending their children for Almajiranci is poverty. Parents' poverty affects the choice of parents on where their children should learn. Any learning that involve spending money whatever the meager amount some parents cannot afford, that was the reason many parents send their children for Almajiranci which cost them nothing. According to Ali (2022) mallams usually take Almajiris away from their homes to distant places without any provision for their boarding, feeding and even clothing by their parents, where they end up resorting to begging to make ends meet. Other reasons include banditry, this situation made government to officially declared schools in high risk areas closed and people of the areas disperse to various places as refugees. Almajiranci was considered as foundation for seeking Islamic knowledge. To many parents Almajiranci was considered as the only way through which Islamic knowledge can be acquired, such parents have no any other option than Almajiranci.

Parents also enjoy certain impact from Almajiranci they revealed that, children learned better at Almajiranci than at home, parents believed that some children do not pay attention to learn better at home because of certain distractions at home which are not found outside their home towns. Mohammed and Yusuf (2015) supported the assertion, they described that, Almajiranci was also known where students study outside their home with a generally held belief that they will concentrate more in learning. It is also a relief to the cost of living and also as a source of Islamic knowledge to their children. Parents were also subsidized on family running cost when children are sent out for Almajiranci as such is not a problem. Almajiri parents who mostly lived in poverty majority of them do not provide assistance to the children on Almajiranci only few parents provided such care. Lastly, children on Almajiranci mostly do not attend formal school because even those who partially attend formal school do not take it serious because there was no consistency. Mohammed and Yusuf (2015) described that, many poor families sent out their wards to neighboring countries of the West African sub-region (Ghana, Chad, Niger, Mali, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Senegal) to acquire this type of education without any recourse to the implications to security, economy and social problems (ECOWAS in Mohammed and Yusuf, 2015)

The study reveals that, mallams are motivated by searching for paradise and God's blessings, many mallams were on teaching for the sake God in order to get His blessings. This was supported by Abdulazeez and Musa (2015) who described that, those who were operating Almajiri Education Programme during its heyday were doing so in response to the clarion call made by the Prophet that "the best amongst you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it to others. This assertion by the Prophet (PBUH) attracted many

mallams into the teaching of Almajirai. Though this was challenge by some scholars considering greediness level of the present day mallams. Past efforts not to be in vain, some mallams continued as mallam in order to uphold the existence of the schools. Inherit the work of their fathers, emulation of good mallam behaviour and passion for teaching. Therefore, Almajiranci to mallams is considered as the way through which knowledge can be acquired and acquiring knowledge through Almajiranci is faster than learning at home.

The respondents revealed that, there is no fix charges for Almajirai on Almajiranci but certain amount is paid in the name of *sadaqat* (gift) because even the mallams have the own family to take care and the present society has no care over their affairs, Hilda and Ibrahim (2014) observed that, to make ends meet, some of these mallams began to impose on the Almajiris what is called “kudin sati”, weekly fees for the lessons they derived. This in contrary to the findings of Abdulazeez and Musa (2015) who explained that, sadly enough, majority of those operating the system today lack prudence. They want to live flamboyantly at the expense of their pupils and the society. The departure of the *Almajiri* operators from the traditional life of dedication to their calling to a life of greed and over-ambitiousness. But in another way senior Almajiri were used to work in mallam’s farm during the rainy season and the food would be used to feed mallam’s family and the working Almajirai throughout the year including medication. This is in contrary with Sulaiman (1996) who stated that, Almajiris are exploited by their mallams, which include going to farm, fetching water for his domestic use, collecting fire wood and sometimes bringing even part of what they get from begging. The present study reveals that the Almajiris were paid in return of those services by feeding them and medication from what was obtained from the farm without going out to beg for food.

The study reveals that, some Almajiris were sent out at tender age but majority of the respondents started at reasonable age. The highest number of the respondents spent between 1 to 3 years in Almajiranci. The issue of sending under aged children for Almajiranci is a source of concern by the public, Ali (2022) lamented that the current situation was worrisome because not only adult members of the population engaged in such acts, but even the under aged children. Only few spent above 10 years. BBC (2022) reported that, the Almajirai-based schools admit children as young as five, and they are expected to give their teachers the token sum of 100 naira (\$0.13) every Wednesday the last day of the week in Islamic schooling. Based on this study, the sources of Almajiris food are; begging, house work, fire wood, fadama work and some Almajiris worked in mallam’s farm for their yearly consumption. The various sources of Almajiris’ food indicated that, nowadays Almajiris began to have alternative sources of food other than begging. It also indicated that the age long tradition in Almajiranci can drastically change. Majority of the Almajirai fall victims of road accident, bush accident and sickness during Almajiranci. The struggle by Almajiris to survive during Almajiranci made them to fall into various accidents. Almajiris faces Embarrassment and Social Stigmatization for instance, people do harass them, shout on them, abuse them, throw their bowls away and go, devaluation of their goods, pretend beating them and teased them. Based on the respondent views majority of their learning and sleeping environments are good and few of them admitted that it is not good. Babagana, Idrisu, Ndagi, Danjuma and Kuchi (2018) observed that Almajiris are children living under horrific conditions. Treatment of the Almajiris’ sickness was a joint action, but main medication used to come from the Almajirai themselves, mallams, house masters and Members of the community do assist at lesser extent. Based on the data collected, Almajirai used to crossed trouble especially

from area boys, Babagana et al (2018) described that, the Almajiris come across various kinds of dangerous juvenile and adolescent peer. Others fall into severe sickness, while some were opportune not fall victims of such incidence. Babagana et al (2018) asserted that, most Almajiris withdraw due to hardship that is encounter during the training, they have not only become a source of concern to Islam and their parents but the society at large.

Conclusion

The situation of Almajiranci in Sokoto state concerns parents of Almajiris, mallams and Almajiris themselves, these three remain the major actors in Almajiranci in Sokoto state. Reasons and impacts were identified by parents regarding their continuation of sending their wards for Almajiranci. Some of the reasons include poverty, children learn better at Almajiranci, parents were subsidized on family responsibilities. Mallams on the other hand were mostly teaching because God with the anticipation to be rewarded by God. Other reason includes, the need to maintain the schools after their predecessors, passion in teaching Islamic knowledge. Almajirai have different means of getting their food, in the process of Almajiranci, Almajirai got different accidents, they also used to cross trouble and violence they face Embarrassment and Social Stigmatization. Therefore, collective effort is required to make Almajiranci better, restructure it or proscribe it in Nigeria so that alternative Qur'anic schools and Islamiyya schools can be use.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends the following;

1. Sokoto state government should consider the process of formalizing Almajiri Qur'anic Schools in the state. This would give it a full control and good knowledge of the activities going on in the schools. The government should introduce a scheme named Poverty Reduction for Rural Areas (PORRA) the programme should target only rural dwellers who are in poverty. Alternatively, government or non-governmental organization can engage in sensitization and material support to rural dwellers on dry season farming so that people are engaged all year round. All interventions should be carried out with full sincerity and political will.
2. Government and Muslim philanthropists should assist to ensure most villages in the state have functional Qur'anic Schools or Islamiyya where children of the village can stay at home and learn Holy Qur'an. This can be a replication of the then Governor Bafarawa Administration in Sokoto state, where he built Juma'at Mosques in most of the towns and villages in Sokoto state. The Qur'anic school teachers should enjoy monthly allowances that can hold them and stay at home for the whole year round. In the appointment of the mallam or teachers in the established school consider those who have the history of such school in their families or those with passion in teaching Islamic knowledge.
3. Parents should fear God not send their children to Almajiranci at tender age and mallam should also fear God not to admit children at tender age, at least 10 to 12 years should be the minimum years of entry into Almajiri Qur'anic School. Preferably, parents should consider the trouble and hardship undergone by their children during Almajiranci and allow them to learn at home so that they can at

the same time enroll them into formal school without disruption and watch the growth of their morality at formation stage.

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APPENDIX A

Almajiri Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (AIGAASESS)

The following guide were used for the conduct of the interview;

How old are you? For how long are you in Almajiranci?

How do you feed?

Do you face any hazards or inconvenience during begging? If yes explain how?

Do you use to face any embarrassment or social stigma during begging? If yes, how?

Are you comfortable with your learning and sleeping environment? If no explain the condition.

How do you take treatment during ailment?

Do you escape any violence or trouble attack as an Almajiri? If yes give narration.

Is there anything you observed as going wrong in the Almajiri system of education in Sokoto state? If yes, give narration.

Apart from sending children for Almajiranci, what do you think is the best way of seeking Islamic knowledge?

What do you consider as way forward for effective Almajiri education or seeking Islamic knowledge?

Mallams' Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (MIGAASESS)

The following guide were used for the conduct of the interview;

For how long are you a teacher (mallam) in Almajiri Qur'anic school?

By estimate how many pupils (Almajirai) do you have?

How do you gather or enrolled the pupils in your school?

Do you stay in one place (town) or move from place to place? If you do give reasons for that.

Do you inherit the school from your father or you established it by yourself?

What have motivated you to continue/establish the Qur'anic Almajiri school?

Is Almajirci the best way of seeking Islamic knowledge? If yes explain.

Do you enjoy any benefit for being a mallam?

Is there anything you observed as going wrong in the Almajiri system of education in Sokoto state? If yes, give narration.

How do you think stakeholders can have alternative to Almajiri education in Sokoto state, so that children can stay with their parents for proper upbringing?

What do you consider as way forward for effective Almajiri education or seeking Islamic knowledge?

Almajiri Parents' Interview Guide for the Assessment of the Almajiri System of Education in Sokoto State (APIGAASESS)

The following guide were used for the conduct of the interview;

How many children do you have in Almajirci?

For how long has/have he/they been in the system?
Do the children attend formal school?
What are the best ideas behind sending the children to Almajirci?
Does the absence of the children subsidize your responsibilities as a household?
Do you support the children with any provision that will take care of them while leaving your home for Almajirci?
Is sending children for Almajirci more religious than other means of acquiring Islamic knowledge?
Is there anything you observed as going wrong in the Almajiri system of education in Sokoto state? If yes, give narration.
How do you think stakeholders can have alternative to Almajiri education in Sokoto state, so that children can stay with their parents for proper upbringing?
What do you consider as way forward for effective Almajiri education or seeking Islamic knowledge?

APPENDIX B

Numerical Identity of the Respondents

S/N	Parents of Almajiris	Mallams	Almajiris
1.	21	1	3
2.	22	2	4
3.	23	5	7
4.	24	6	10
5.	29	8	11
6.	30	9	12
7.	31	13	14
8.	32	16	15
9.	33	18	17
10.	34	20	19
11.	35	25	26
12.	36	28	27
TOTAL	12	12	12