

***Masjid* as an Institution of Reforming Almajiri Education System: A Policy Option for State Governments in Northern Nigeria**

Saidu Ahmad Dukawa¹, Abbo Usman², Umar Jibrilu Gwandu³

¹Centre for Islamic Civilization and Interfaith Dialogue;

²Department of Public Administration; ³Department of mass communication, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

Email: sadukawa.cicid@buk.edu.ng¹, altarabee@gmail.com²,

umarungwandu@gmail.com³

Abstract

One of the critical issues bedeviling the Muslim community in Northern Nigeria is the current trend of the Almajiri system of education where children at tender age are made to excruciatingly fend for themselves in the name of search of Islamic knowledge. This has become a source of concern as the children are not only deprived of their basic rights of healthy and decent living, but are also prone to many misdemeanors. Numerous governmental and (non-) faith-based organizations have been struggling to transform the system. This paper highlights the crucial role of Masaajid as a rallying point for Muslims; for prayers, study cycles, holding meetings, conflict resolution, contracting marriages, offering charity, provision of shelter to the destitute, among others. Hence, the paper brings into limelight ways in which Masaajid in Northern Nigeria can be used through zakah and waqf, contribution of philanthropists and other stakeholders in reforming the Almajiri system of education through the use of masaajid as alternative school system thereby implementing better ways of eradicating the scourge. The paper concludes that masaajid provide veritable alternatives for result-oriented learning in serene and descent atmosphere devoid of inhumane treatment and in conformity with the pristine teachings of Islam.

Keywords: *Masaajid*; Reformation; *Almajiri* System of Education; Northern Nigeria.

A. Introduction

Children are trustees of posterity. They are accorded esteem platform in the struggle for knowledge acquisition. However, it is disturbing to note the state at which some pauperized and impoverished children are left languishing in abject poverty, in the name of *Almajiri* education. This situation is manifestly causing great threat to social security, economic prosperity and national development in Nigeria.

Almajiri is a Hausa word derived from the Arabic word *Almuhajir*, meaning a person who leaves his domicile in search of knowledge. The word however came to connote three distinct situations in the Hausa society. The first is referring to any person of knowledge, which is why even highly educated people refer to themselves as *Almajiri*. The second usage refers to children who are attached by their parents to a Qur'anic Tutor so that they gain early knowledge of the Qur'an before venturing into other fields. Often, these Tutors move from the rural areas to the urban during dry seasons and back to rural areas during rainy seasons. Prior to the contact with colonialism, the society used to support the Tutors and their students in one way or another. With the socio-economic and political dislocations that attended colonialism (Dukawa, 2008) however, the society could no longer support the system thereby forcing the children to go on begging in the streets so as to support themselves and to even assist their Tutors. Gradually, every street begging fellow came to be called *Almajiri*, and that became the third usage which comprise of children, the aged, people with special needs, among others. This paper refers to *Almajiri* in the second sense.

The *Almajiri* problem is certainly one of the most pressing challenges facing Northern Nigeria that requires concerted efforts. The magnitude of the problem compelled one to reflect on how even our brethren in Nigeria, the Christian community, and even the International community, have offered to "assist". In any case, the so called offer for assistance indicates how the menace is a cause for concern not only to the Muslim *Ummah* but to their neighbours as well. It is axiomatic that the current trend of *Almajiri* system of

education where parents and governments abandoned their responsibilities by disregarding the care of the entrusted agents of posterity and being oblivious to the plight of the future generation to excruciatingly fend for themselves at tender age is no doubt counter-productive and in dire need of urgent transformation.

This paper posits that the phenomenon of *almajirci* (verb form of *almajiri*) is strictly a problem of Northern Nigeria Muslims which is not beyond their capacity to handle especially if they make use of their traditional institutions especially the *Masjid* properly. The use of traditional institutions in plural is to buttress that it is not only the *Masjid* institution that is relevant here, but that there are others that are supporting of it, as far as the subject matter is concerned.

Children as gift, deserving parental responsibilities

It is an unarguable fact that children are divine gift from the Almighty Allah. *“Unto Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He will. He bestows female [offspring] upon whom He will, and bestows male [offspring] upon whom He will; Or He mingles them, males and females, and He makes barren whom He will. Lo! He is Knower, Powerful”* (Qur’an, 42:49-50).

Another Qur’anic verse states: “And Allah has made for you spouses of your own kind, and has made for you, from your wives, sons and grandsons, and has bestowed on you good provision. Do they then believe in false deities and deny the favour of Allah (Qur’an, 16:72)?

The Hausa people have a saying: *“Yaba kyauta: Tukuici”* (you give a token in appreciation). Hence, it is not inconceivable to expect the parents to offer moral, economic, social and cultural support to their children. The call-in *Surah Tahrim* verse 6 is supportive of this adage, thus:

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded.

Abdullah ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Every one of you is a shepherd and

is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and his children, and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6719, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 1829).

Sociologists have confirmed that the most important aspects of the process of socialization take place during infancy, especially within the family. Generations are not left like abandoned camel placed in the desert or a discarded ship amidst sea and the mercy of winds and tides. (Harolambus: 2005, Leman 2005, Alfaruqi & Alfaruqi, 1986).

Studies found that children left without the influence of/or human parents may have negative impacts on their lives. Leman (2005) asserts that while parents are not the only socializing agents in child development, it appears that parents have some effects on their offspring’s moral behaviour. He reasons that parents need to care for their children because we find consistent correlations between parenting styles and a host of outcomes in childhood and throughout adolescence.

Hence, amidst raging passions and deadly moral violence which are incessant and prevailing in our modern world, the most vital and basic task to offer to humanity is the attainment of infants’ wants and the careful nurture of delicate instincts in a secure climate of loving home.

Despite all this noble teachings, it is not uncommon to find parents shunning and jettisoning their God-given responsibilities, leaving their children at the mercy of winds and tides.

The renowned author of *Risala*, Sheikh *Qirawani* noted that the best mind is that which is filled with virtue and it is the one upon which more good are expected from. The concern of the right thinking people is that infant minds must be filled with good virtues in the early age to serve as intellectual immunization and deterrent against any evil.

The Scourge of *Almajiri* Education in Northern Nigeria

On 5th August, 2016, The Nigerian *Daily Post* published a story where Kano State Governor at the time, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje says “Kano State has become a centre for convergence of *Almajiris* in Northern Nigeria, because there is no legislation outlawing such treatment on children, in the name of Qur’anic education” the Governor however must have forgotten a couple of legislations including the one of 2014 during which he was the Deputy Governor and which prohibits all forms of street begging.

According to the report “At the moment, Kano has the highest number of *Almajiri* and from the statistics we got, their number is equal to, if not more than those attending formal schools”. Certainly, Galadanchi (undated) puts their population on the ratio of three to one. This means for every one child that goes to a formal primary school there are three that go to Qur’anic school. The same story was equally reported by the *Sun* newspaper of August 8th, 2016.

Crucial issues that the members of the society may deliberate upon may include; how truthful was the report? From whose perspectives the governor was speaking? Are they talking from the angle of distortion of facts? What are they doing to address the issues? Are there coordinated responses? How responsive are the stakeholders? How effective are the responses?

A report attributed to Agence France-Presse (AFP) shows that there are over two million *Almajiri* in Kano. An issue at stake is whether this is an over-blown statement or an underreported fact. According to Hussain (2015), there were efforts from governmental and non-governmental bodies at local and international levels to address this phenomenon. Hussain (2015) conducted a Masters study on “Urban Management Implications of *Almajiri* Schools in Kano Metropolis” at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and argued that a onetime superior system of Education ‘*Almajiri*’ has been converted into another form of modern slavery and the worst form of child abuse” (2015:10)

According to Hussain (2015) "It is agreed that when Quranic schools first came into this part of the world, neither the teachers nor the students had to beg in order to make ends meet. Indeed, in those

early days, wealthy individuals and other society members took sole responsibility for the schools. The *Almajiri* system, as practiced today, in Northern Nigeria, is a completely bastardized system, compared to the form and conditions under which the system was operating and its output during the pre-colonial period.

The system has been forced, especially with the coming of the British to its present pitiful state because during the pre-colonial era, begging was never involved and certainly, the pupils lived with their parent for moral upbringing. All the schools were located within the immediate environment from where the pupils came from.

The *Danfodio* revolution brought with it some modification such as the establishment of an inspectorate of Qur'anic literacy. The inspectors reported directly to the Emir of the province, concerning all matters relating to the school. It was even established that this period was the height of Quranic education in northern Nigeria” (2015:9).

Part of the issues that may interest the reader in the current *Almajiri* Education System, as pitifully noted by educationists, is characterized by: the absence of curriculum, gender bias, operating in places of poor housing environment, prevalence in medium and low income communities, begging as a means of livelihood and poor health status of *Almajiri*

It is common knowledge that the current *Almajiri* system of Education has caused a lot of negative impact in our society. The poor *Almajiri* child is subjected to child abuse, child labour, child trafficking, sex exploitation, dubious and unprintable harmful practices. Recent studies are trying to link *Almajiri* education to joblessness and security challenges (Abbo et al 2017).

State of *Almajiri* Education in Northern Nigeria

The *Alarammas* (*Almajiri Tutors*) are as important in the discourse as the *Almajiri*. *Alarammas* are the fulcrum upon which the *Almajiri* system of education revolves. They doubled as producers and the end products in the chain of *Almajiri* process. The *Alarammas* are the custodians of *Almajiri*, the moulders of their opinions, the source of their instructions and inspirations, the

reference points for the *Almajarai* (plural of *Almajiri*) and possibly the destination of some of the *Almajirai*. Not only is that *Alarammas* are the “prayer warriors” to the businessmen, rich men, politicians and kings, thereby earning great influence and respect from the important segment and essential figures of the society, the *Alarammas* are religiously followed, to the extent that disrespecting their opinions, whenever voiced, is sometimes considered as sacrilegious. No doubt, *Alarammas* are important members of our society. This is largely because they are associated with the quest and dissemination of knowledge.

It is evidently clear that the religion of Islam emphasizes the importance of striving for the acquisition of knowledge in all its ramifications. In a number of Qur’anic verses and *Ahadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), Muslims have been commended to acquire knowledge. The following are examples: "Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have been granted knowledge to high ranks." (Qur’an 58:11) “It is only those who have knowledge among His servants that fear Allah." (Qur’an 35:28), Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “Whoever follows a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah makes his way easy to paradise.” (Bukhari); Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “When a man dies all his deeds comes to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge and a righteous son who prays for him.” (Bukhari)

According to Neem Foundation (a Nigeria-based NGO working on the state of *Almajiri* Education) “The unstructured management of the system has left majority of the *Almajiri* vulnerable to different types of abuses and exploitation including physical, emotional, sexual as well as psychological distress. This has increased their vulnerability to radicalization as well as other social ills”.

Therefore, it is not surprising to note that, on Sunday May 21, 2017, *The Nation* Newspaper published a story titled “*Almajirci* is *Unislamic*, says Sultan”. The paper reported that the Sultan of Sokoto (the Supreme Leader of Nigerian Muslims), Alhaji Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar III, made the remark at a Pre-Ramadan Meeting of the *Jama’atu Nasril Islam* (JNI) Central Committee at JNI

Headquarters, Kaduna. The Sultan was unequivocal when he says: “*Almajiri* system of begging is not representing Islam and must therefore be distinguished from Islam. Islam encourages scholarship and entrepreneurship and frowns at laziness and idleness as exemplified by itinerant *Almajiri*.”

Therefore, an attempt must be made to stop the practice of *Almajiri* system of begging among Muslim faithfuls, says the Sultan. He attributed the street begging, which is alien to the *Almajiri* system of Education, to hunger and poverty and charged governments, especially at states level to prioritize the welfare of their citizens to address hunger and poverty.

The *Kukah Centre* (an NGO owned by a Christian Clergy in Nigeria) also was in the news that it will train *Almajiri* on vocations. According to the Centre, most social vices in society would be reduced when the *Almajirai* (plural of *Almajiri*) are empowered and gainfully engaged. “One of the greatest concerns in Nigeria now is to get the *Almajiri* children off the streets”. “The centre will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding with a foreign partner to make sure that we get the *Almajiri* children off the streets”.

The English Service of the Voice of America has on November 28, 2007 published a story titled “NGO Works to Improve Muslim Education in Nigeria” where an opinion of one specialist with ENHANSE (a consortium of six international NGOs working in developmental areas), Fatima Shagari, was reported as saying “The *Almajiri* child presents only a picture of a street begging child. People of the society have used the *Almajiri* system to abuse the Muslim child, to traffic the Muslim child, to make the Muslim child vulnerable to all sources of disease, expose them to unsafe conditions and to some extent expose them to terrorism, thuggery and other menaces, to be used as social destructors, and to some extent also to be used as sex hawkers or homosexuals in particular” (VOA 28/11/2007).

In her submission, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)’s leader, Hajiya Bilkisu, in the “*Almajiri* Education Agenda” published on 13th January, 2011, notes that The *Almajirai* have fundamental human rights to education and other basic

necessities of life and they are potential human resources for their communities which should be harnessed and tapped for national development. For Nigeria to achieve its dream of becoming Africa's giant in technological and economic development the country must have a well-educated and skilled population.

Yet there is equally the need to reflect on the *Alarammas* of the present *Almajiri* system of education. This can be done by taking stock of the multiple challenges facing the *Alabama*

Challenges of *Alabama* Education

The following are some of the challenges facing *Alaramma* education in Northern Nigeria such as large number of (usually uncontrollable) pupils, parent shunning their responsibilities at the expense of the *Alabama*, lack of basic health care facilities to the schools, poor funding for the schools, insufficient classrooms/learning space, absence of toilets or acute shortage of them, poor remuneration: a weekly stipend is paid by parents on erratic basis), stigmatization, dependency syndrome: many depend on what the *Almajirai* source through begging , proliferation of unregulated number of such schools and chunk of untrained teachers.

It is worrisome to note that these children under the *Alabama* have been deprived of so many rights, such as the right of the child to a healthy start in life, the right of the child to a family, the right of the child to health care and proper nutrition, the right of the child to education and the acquisition of skills, the right of the child to lead a dignified and secure life, the Right of the Child to Health, care for early infancy and the right of the child to live in good health and happiness, parents' responsibility to preserve the life, health and growth of their child, personal cleanliness and hygiene, protection from violence and abuse, protection from physical or sexual violence, protection from economic exploitation, protecting children deprived of parental care, protecting children in armed conflicts and natural disasters, the Right of the Child to formal Education and the right of the child to continuously learn and acquire skill

Part of the solutions is to ensure that parents pay school fees and other related funds to cater for the welfare of their child.

Modernization of the system could greatly help. Integration of the system with the Universal Basic Education programme of the government, incorporating skill acquisition programme and other measures to include age restriction would in no doubt help the plight of *Alaramma* and improve the system. Above all, the *Masaajid* can be used to administer the system through systematic use of other Islamic institutions and resources.

Previous attempts at addressing the *Almajiri* Education System

Some of the state governments in Northern Nigeria have made efforts to address the challenges facing the system. The most elaborate effort being that made by Kano State Government between 2003 and 2011. During this period, an office of a Special Advisor for *Tsangaya* (*Almajiri*-based schools) was established and empowered to reform the system. The office made relentless efforts towards empowering the *Alarammas*, first by conducting training for them in the areas of skills acquisition in traditional and modern crafts, including computer training. Secondly, their learning spaces were renovated and provided with some of the basic needs such as toilets. Thirdly, capital was provided to them in the form of what each *Alaramma* is trained for. Thus, those who had training in farming were provided with farm implements including seedlings and pesticides. Those who received training in the area of traditional crafts such as leather works were provided with the raw materials of the relevant crafts, and those trained in modern crafts such as computers were provided with the necessary hardware that will enable them to provide commercial services in such areas. The ultimate aim of doing all this was to enable the *Alaramma* to be self sufficient to the extent of catering for the basic needs of the *Almajiris* under his tutorship.

Another effort made by Kano State government over the same period was that of calling households to each adopt an *Almajiri* and provide him with three square meals so that the child doesn't need to go out begging.

Yet another approach by the same government was making its employees to sign undertakings of monthly contributions that are

deducted from their salaries (code named *Tsangaya* levy) which were meant to sustain the first program of training and empowering the *Alaramma*. However, the Kano attempts did not reach maturity level and were abandoned with the coming of a new political regime.

Another attempt was that made by the Federal Government of Nigeria, 2011 - 2015, in which model *Tsangayu* (plural of *Tsangaya*) were provided in some selected states of Northern Nigeria in the image of conventional modern boarding secondary schools. Although it has shown signs of success in that many parents who were reluctant to enroll their children in modern schools have given them out to *Tsangaya* boarding schools, this attempt has also faced the dilemma of a changing policy preference with a change of political regime.

Equally important in noting previous attempts at sanitizing the system is the attempt made by the Emir of Kano (Muhammadu Sanusi II) since his assumption to the throne in 2015. The Emir has set up a high powered committee, the ***Social Reform Committee***, under his leadership which comprised of many senior academics from the Bayero University, Kano and a cross section of the Kano *Ulama*. The Main Committee has three sub committees, one on marital matters, one on *Zakat* issues, and another on education. The latter is specifically aimed at addressing the *Almajiri* Education System. It is our hope that this paper will form a contribution to the cause of the sub-education committee of the Social Reform Committee.

B. Theoretical Framework

This work revolves around the Evolutionary theories of institutional change which emerged as an alternative to the Designed-based theories of institutional change that was premised on the notion that institutional change is a centralized and collective-choice process in which rules are explicitly specified by a collective political entity, such as the community or the state, and individuals and organizations engage in collective action, conflict and bargaining. However, these theories, based on institutional change as the outcome of a deliberate, collective-choice process of rule-creation, may not explain why formal rules fail to produce their

intended outcome as is the case with the Almajiri education system in Nigeria. Therefore, the evolutionary theories appear to be the most suitable academic proposition in reforming the Almajiri Education system within the Nigerian context.

According to theories of evolutionary institutional change, human behaviours like learning, imitation, etc., are the important precursors for institutional change. The distinction between theories based on evolution and those that are based on design is whereby rules emerge and change as a result of the selection process socioeconomic settings. Theories of evolution do not take a primary mechanism that creates a coordinated change in how the rules are perceived, such as legislation. A decentralized selection process results in new laws or practices, and as a result, successful institutions adapt and advance in society while failing institutions perish. In short, rather than through collective decision-making or political procedures, new rules and patterns of behavior arise from the uncoordinated actions of numerous people.

Veblen's (1899) evolutionary theory of change takes into account the idea of "habits of thinking," which are enduring and long-lasting propensities to think and act in specific ways. The evolution of social structure, according to Veblen (1899, p. 188, *passim*), has been a process of "natural selection of institutions," or "natural selection of the fittest habits of thought," both through the "selection of individuals endowed with the fittest temperament" and through "the adaptation of individual temperament and habits to the changing environment through the formation of new institutions." Institutional change in this context refers to the simultaneous evolution of institutionalized, widely held ways of thinking and individual ways of thinking. As a result, both collective and individual thought patterns are "received from the past," are influenced by the present, and combined they have an impact on how institutional change will proceed in the future (cf., Brette, 2003).

According to Hayek's evolutionary theory of institutional change (1973), standards of conduct "have evolved because the groups who practiced them were more successful and replaced others" (p. 18). Thinking and doing are guided by rules that have

evolved in society through a process of selection (p. 11). According to Hayek (1973), group selection creates an overall configuration of laws that progresses toward an ideal configuration based on unchanging general principles (the "law of liberty" based on the preservation of property rights).

According to Young (1996), historical events may have accidentally chosen certain norms, and over time, institutional change may take the form of a process known as "punctuated equilibrium," in which conventions shift quickly and then remain stable for extended periods of time. According to Knight (1995), different sets of rules have various distributional effects, which could lead to various actors favoring the formation of various rules. According to Knight (1995), the sort of rule that is adopted by the entire society may be systematically influenced if some players have more negotiating power than others. According to Levi (1990), formal norms can grant certain groups "power" and marginalized groups might compel institutional reform by "withdrawing their permission" from current institutional frameworks. This loss of consent could happen through coordinated group action, but it could also be brought on by the decentralized activities of numerous people by the participants' actions or ideologies.

To this end, the evolutionary viewpoints of Young (1996), has provided a sound theoretical footing upon which this work strongly believes that masjid provide a better platform and institutional framework for the reformation of the Almajiri education system in northern Nigeria in the sense that the crucial role of *Masaajid* as a rallying point for Muslims; for prayers, study-cycles, holding meetings, conflict resolution, contracting marriages, offering charity, provision of shelter to destitute, among others has unequivocally confer on it all the vital ingredients needed for the reformation of the Almajiri education . Hence, the paper brings into limelight ways in which *Masaajid* in Northern Nigeria can be used through *zakah* and *waqf*, contribution of philanthropists and other stakeholders in reforming the *Almajiri* system of education through the use of masaajid as alternative school system thereby implementing better ways of eradicating the scourge.

Reforming the *Almajiri* Education through *Masjid* and other Islamic Institutions

Arrays of Islamic Institutions, including the *Masjid*, exist to cater for child education, the *Almajiri* system inclusive. Using such institutions will overcome the problem of lack of continuity which is associated with change in regimes. We take Islamic institutions together to show that other institutions need to compliment the *Masjid* in this all important task.

The *Masjid*:

The *Masjid* is defined as “a place of prostrations” based on Egyptian dialect *masqid*. The *Ka’abah* was the first *masjid*. In Madinah after *Hijrah*, *Masjid Quba* was the first to be built by the Prophet (SAW), [Glasse, C. 2002: 316]. It is a rallying point for Muslims in which they pray, hold meetings, settle conflicts, contract marriages, and do many things other than trading save in its exterior vicinity. Many *Tsangaya* (Qur’anic School) in Northern Nigeria is built around a *Masjid* and the *Almajiri* child takes shelter in the *Masjid*. But this tradition was later discarded.

There is need for revisiting the use of *masjid* as a nucleus of *tsangaya* education with all the necessary improvement that modernity requires. For instance, a standard Friday *masjid* should have boarding facilities, a conference room, and income generating facilities. There should also be a standard administration department for the purposes of day to day monitoring and control of activities. If each *masjid* takes care of the education needs of its immediate neighbourhood there will be no itinerant scholarship that will end up in exposing children to begging. In addition to levies by parents and income from investments, the *Masjid* can also derive financial and other forms of support from other Islamic institutions.

The Family: the first institution to reckon with is the family. The Qur’an instructs thus:

O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels,

harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded. (Qur'an28:6)

Muslims therefore consider this and similar instructions as conferring the institution of the family the basic ground for the right training of the child, which normally commences with the teaching of the Glorious Qur'an. Each family should in this regard, choose a *masjid* with which to attaché its children for the purposes of Qur'anic and related education and to make commitments regarding periodic payments to the *masjid*. This could be according to a number of children that are attached to a *masjid* by a family, although those with means can pay above the average.

The *Khalif* (*Amirul Mu'mineen/Amir* (Emir))

The *Khalif* means *vicegerent* as in the Qur'anic verse:

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth...' (Qur'an2:30)

The *Khilaf* leadership comprises of spiritual, political and administrative leadership, and the *Khalifa* considers leadership as an *amanah* (trust), to be accounted for in the day of judgement. The present day Emirates in Northern Nigeria are the equivalent of *Khilaf* leadership, and they played important roles in *almajirci* devoid of begging, in the past, that is to say. They should therefore revisit their roles and align them with the system that is here suggested. Up until now the Imams of Friday masjids are appointed by the Emirs and permission of the Emirs is required before establishing Friday prayer offering masjid or in converting an existing five daily prayer offering masjid to that in which Friday prayer is observed. The Emir can give a condition that will include a provision of *Almajiri* education facilities before approving an establishment of a Friday *masjid* or appointing an Imam for one. Financial assistance from the emirates can also be extended to *Masjids* either as a regular exercise or to those *Masjids* that are observed to be in a state of distress.

The *Shurah*:

The *Shurah* is a political institution that guides decision making and promulgation of laws in an Islamic State. It is necessary in guiding the leader of the Islamic State (*Khalifa*), and its decisions are binding on him. It presupposes the supremacy of collective will over and above individual whims and caprices, so long as it is guided by the principles of *Shari'ah*. A fundamental factor with the *Shurah* is its divine roots: The Qur'an (42:38) states – "... and those who are constant in prayer; and whose affairs are guided by mutual consultation (*Shurah*); and who spend on others what we provide for them as sustenance" and Qur'an (3:159) says "... and consult them in affairs of the moment". Where *Shurah* institution obtains, every subject in the state is discussed and solutions found and relayed to the *Khalifa* for the purpose of taking appropriate action (Muhammad, G.A. 2011).

A fully functional *Shurah* will be required in each state, and it should be one of its cardinals sponsoring research into ways of sustaining and improving the system hereby proposed. They should also advise the Emir on what to do regarding the management of *Masjids* and the *Almajiri* education programme.

The Hisbah:

The term Hisbah refers to commanding what is good when it is being neglected, and forbidding what is bad if it is openly practiced. The Islamic state uses Hisbah to exercise comprehensive socio-economic regulations on trade and business transactions. The main functions of the Hisbah are essentially in the economic sphere: regulation of trade, so as to ensure honest transactions; standardization of products; checks against hoarding, middlemen and *usury* (interest), among others. A secondary target for Hisbah intervention comprise of fight against social vices such as alcohol consumption, prostitution, marital conflicts, and child abuse of which *almajirci* is one.

Like many a subject in Islam, Hisbah has its roots in the Qur'an, *Sunnah* (Prophetic Traditions) and generations of Muslim societies. The Qur'an (3:104) instructs thus: " let there arise out of

you a bond of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity.” The Prophet (SAW) has said: ‘you should enjoin good and forbid evil or Allah would place the evil ones among you (over your affairs), and when the good ones among you pray it would not be answered.’” Accordingly, all the four rightly guided *Khalifs* (Abubakar, Omar, Uthman, Ali) have practiced Hisbah personally; so also those who succeeded them (Dogon Daji, S. 2011; Dukawa, S.A. 2013). The Hisbah institution can play a great deal of role in the system here dis

The *Zakah/Hubusi (Waqf)*:

Zakah is taken to mean ‘purification’, from the verb ‘*zakaa*’ meaning ‘to thrive’, to be ‘wholesome’, ‘to be pure’. The giving up of a portion of the wealth one may possess, in excess of what is needed for sustenance, to purify or legitimize what one retains. *Zakah* is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is in effect a tax on one’s possessions. It may be paid directly to the poor as alms, or to travellers, or to the state. *Zakah* may be used for the upkeep of the poor, for those who own less than that prescribed for the paying of *Zakah* and who have no earning capacity; *for the destitute*, Muslims in debt; those serving the cause of Islam, and fighting in the way of Allah; for slaves to buy themselves out of bondage; for benevolent works. Those who collect tax on behalf of the state for disbursement are also allowed to take the needs of their livelihood from it (Glasse, C. 2002). Masjid can be the hub of collecting and utilizing *zakah*.

The *Baitul-Mal*:

Sultan Muhammad Bello was quoted to have defined *Baitul-mal* as ‘the totality of the resources in which Muslims have unqualified right and which does not belong to a particular group of Muslims nor to a specified people’ (Sha’abah: 2011:357). The resources of Baitul-mal are used to cater for the basic needs of the poor and destitute Muslims and non-Muslims living under the Islamic State. It is also used for the education of the less privileged and for the provision of basic infrastructure. The main sources of *Baitul-mal* include *Zakat* and *Hubusi* (Endowment). Malaysia is said to have

poverty drastically reduced from 50% to 5% within a period of 30 years through effective and efficient use of the *Baitu-mal* (Sha'aba, 2011:371). The Malaysia experience can be harnessed with a view to addressing the challenges of *Almajiri* Education System.

How Islamic institutions can be used to address *almajiri education*

It is our contention that a careful and conscious effort at addressing *almajiri education* would require utilization of the combined capacity of the identified institutions. First and foremost, the *Khilafa* institution (now Sultanate/Emirate system), with its elaborate centralization of authority from the Emir to the District Heads (*Hakimai*), to Village Heads (*Dagatai*), to Ward Heads (*Masu Unguwanni*) can form the bed rock upon which the reform takes place. In addition, each major trade/craft has its head, an appointee of the Emir. Thus there are offices like Sarkin Kasuwa (Market Head), Sarkin Kira (Blacksmiths Head), Sarkin Fata (Head of Leather production), Sarkin Dukawa (Head of Leather Workers), and many more.

State governments in Northern Nigeria can therefore tap on these resources/institutions and address the challenges of *the Almajiri* Education System. The *Masjid* can form the core institution around which other institutions and resources can be channelled until the problem surrounding *almajirci* are completely eradicated.

The first step would be to organize an activity around the *Masjid*, to which we will recommend mass feeding of *Almajirai* since they essentially go begging for food. This should commence in Juma'at *Masaajid* only. The feeding can be sponsored by the government or any willing Philanthropists with the assistance of the Hisbah. It is instructive to note that in many states in Northern Nigeria, there is a body of Hisbah Corps in virtually every Local Government Area and they are a normal site in *Juma'at Masaajid* where they provide security and control crowds. In states where *iftar* (breakfast during Ramadan) obtains, the Hisbah Corps are the principal agents of serving the food, controlling the crowd, and cleaning the environment after the *iftar*. They can therefore easily serve the purpose we are proposing here.

It is our expectation that within a period of two months, a number of benefits will accrue. These include concentration of *Almajirai* in flashpoints – the *Masaajid*, taking their census including their bio-data and their *Tsangaya*, which can be the additional duty of the Hisbah Corps. The *Masjid* Attendees will also take visible note of the feeding process and would therefore respond more positively if called upon to contribute in one way or another. The cost of feeding will also be calculated within the first two months of the commencement of the exercise, after which the exercise can move to a second phase.

The second phase, which should take a period of two months, should consist of mass mobilization in support of *Almajiri* education through *khutbah* (Juma'at sermons) pre-*khutbah*, media programs, public lectures and other means of mass mobilization. This can be done by Imams, Preachers, Academics and NGO activists. Some of the anticipated benefits include rapid response by members of the public and moving the feeding away from the *Masjids* to the *Tsangayu* (plural of *Tsangaya*) so that the *Masjid* retains administrative and mobilization functions only.

The third phase will be that of moping the streets of *Almajiri*. This is aimed at identifying and apprehending any recalcitrant *Almajiri* or new comers and promptly returning them to their origin. This phase should also last for two months. Thus in a total period of six months the streets of Northern Nigeria will be rid of *Almajiri* and associated menace.

The empowerment of *Masjid* in the project of the *Almajiri* Education will have several benefits. It will mean a return to the base for the Muslim *Ummah* in the sense that when the Prophet Islam (Peace be upon him) migrated from *Makkah* to *Madina* the first social project he undertook was provision of *Masjid*, partly to signify that it should be the first social institution for any Muslim community. It will also imply increasing the capacity of *Masjid* management in social services beyond the observance of *Salat* (Muslim prayers). It will also imply augmenting the efforts of governments in the area of social services. It will breed greater confidence of the people over their religious leaders and it will mean

more people having a stake in *Masjid* management beyond their owners or the *Masjid* Committees that are formed in some places. In the end it will guarantee sustainability.

Table 1. Phases of the *Masjid* Management of *Almajiri* Education in Nigeria.

Action	By whom	Anticipated result	Time limit
Free Lunch (<i>sadakah</i>) for <i>Almajiri</i> in every Juma'at <i>Masjid</i>	Philanthropists with assistance of the Hisbah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concentrating <i>Almajiri</i> in flash points; 2. taking their census, including their bio-data and <i>Tsangaya</i>; 3. Visible identification of the <i>Almajiri</i> & the feeding process by <i>Masjid</i> Attendants; 4. Calculation of cost of feeding. 	Two months
Mass mobilization for support of <i>Almajiri</i> (Khutbah, Radio programs)	Imams; Scholars; Preachers; Academics; NGO Activists	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid response by members of the public; 2. Moving feeding away from <i>Masjids</i> to <i>Tsangayu</i> 	Two Months
Moping the streets of <i>almajiri</i> ;	Hisbah and other security outfits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identifying recalcitrant <i>almajiri</i> and new comers; 2. taking them back to their source. 	Two months
Sourcing Initial Funds Subsequent Resources Overall Supervision	Philanthropists /Foundations/S tate Governments Zakah/Hubusi/ Sadaqah Emirate Council	Demonstration of feasibility to the public More Givers Restoration of responsibility	First Two Months of Exercise Sustainable Sustainable

The table 1 summarizes the phases of the *Masjid* Management of *Almajiri* Education such that begging will be eradicated and a sustained arrangement put in place which will be maintained with *zakah*, *waqf* and other forms of philanthropy all under the management of the *Masjid*.

Table showing how various sectors can contribute to the reform of *Almajiri* Education in Nigeria.

Summary

Each Emirate can organize the formation of independent Non-Governmental *Baitul-Mal*, through the layers of the heads, which will draw its funds from *Zakkat* and *Hubusi*, for the purpose of addressing the *almajiri* menace and other social vices.

Masjids (Mosques) can be the rallying points for the collection of *Zakkat*, *Hubusi* and even *sadaqah* (voluntary alms). They can be used as registration centres for the *almajiri* and their *tsangaya* (Qur'anic memorization Schools). For instance, each *Jumu'at Masjid* can be required to cater for, say, ten *Tsangaya*, around it, in terms of taking Census of the *almajiri*, in collecting *Zakah*, *Hubusi* and *sadaqah*, and in disbursing same to the designate *Tsangaya* surrounding it.

The labour requirements of managing the *Masjids* can be the responsibility of the Hisbah. The task for the Hisbah becomes the easier in states with formal Hisbah Boards/ Commissions. Where there is no formal Hisbah Institution, the Independent Hisbah can be utilized, only with a little more resources for logistics when compared to the former situation.

Next, each Emirate should have a *Shurah* Committee that will monitor the *Masjids* and how each relates to its designate *Tsangaya* and provide the necessary advice to the Emir on the matter. Finally, the entire society, being the aggregate of the family, should be mobilized and sensitized through *khutbah* (Friday sermons), public lectures/preaching, media campaign, and every other outfit for public enlightenment on the need to support the system. State governments in Northern Nigeria can provide initial logistics for bringing together the various Islamic institutions and supervise the take off of the

project after which they hands up and allow the people to own the project.

C. Conclusion

In conclusion, the *almajiri* problem needs urgent attention by taking concrete measures for reforms. State governments can take these measures together with Islamic institutions until the project is taken to a level where the people can own it as theirs. The Sultanate/Emirate institution can assist the state governments in harnessing the potential of other relevant Muslim institutions in confronting the task.

There is a need for the mobilization of the general public to appreciate the menace and to take corrective measures. To this end, *Juma'at* sermons, media programs and public enlightenment campaigns are needed simultaneously.

Recommendations

This paper recommends the following measures as complementary to what has been said so far regarding the *Almajiri* Education System, such as Participatory Action Research based on empirical data should be encouraged in order to address the menace. The Governments should also declare a state of emergency on *Almajirci* Education System. Other initiatives by the past administrations should be reviewed and consolidated for the attainment of the desired result, most especially in line with what this paper proffers. Moreover, a considerable percentage of the state's internally generated revenue be dedicated to salvage the *Almajiri* up to its sustained takeoff, after which the system can be handed to the populace under the *Masjid* management. The other recommen

1. Governmental and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to address the *Almajiri*.
2. Mass mobilization through various media outlets, advocacy, and stakeholders' fora be encouraged.
3. *Masajids* be used as places to take lessons to address the shortage of classes and overcrowding.

4. Scholars should develop a study into the use of *Zakkat* for the welfare of *Almajiri*.
5. Mass production of hand-written Qur'an by the *Almajiri* be encouraged for sales to complement resources devoted to the system.
6. Films and documentaries be produced to mobilise people on the need for reform.
7. *Jumu'a* talks at *Masajid* can be of great help.
8. Stakeholders like proprietors, religious scholars, Islamic organizations, Muslim intellectuals should rally round and support the system.
9. Begging should be outlawed once the *Masjid* former gains ground.
10. Parents must be made to pay necessary token for the education of the children.
11. *Almajiri* education should be integrated with the Universal Basic Education.
12. *Almajir* Education Development Committees be formed at the grassroots levels.
13. Collaboration, network and partnerships between relevant agencies are encouraged to address the issue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbo, U., Zain, Z. M., & Njidda, B. A. (2017). The almajiri system and insurgency in the Northern Nigeria: A Reconstruction of the existing narratives for policy direction. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 6(8), 346-357.
- Alfaruqi, J. R and Alfaruqi, L. L. (1986) *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Dogon Daji, S. (2011) *Hisbah: A Review of Development and Challenges* in Aisha A. & Shehu, S. (2011), *Islamic Political Thought and Institutions*, IIIT Nig.
- Dukawa, S.A. (2008) *Colonialism and Socio-Political Dislocations in Sub Saharan Muslim Communities: a case study of Central Nigeria*, in *al-Ijtihad*, Vol 7 No 1, 2008.
- Dukawa, S.A. (2013). Shari'ah Implementation in Nigeria: structural, administrative and political obstacles in Bello, S. et al (2013), *Perspectives on the Study of Contemporary Kano*, ABU Press.
- Glasse, C. (2002) *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Revised Edition, Stacey International.
- Haralambos, M. (2005), *Sociology: Theme and Perspectives*: Oxford University Press.
- Hussain, A. (2015). *Urban Management Implications Of Almajiri Schools In Kano Metropolis*. Dissertation Submitted To The Department Of Urban And Regional Planning Faculty Of Environmental Design Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For The Award Of Master Of Science In Urban Management
- Leman, P. J. (2005). Authority and Moral Reasons: Parenting Style and Children's Perception of Adult rule justification, in *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 2005, 29(4) pp 265-270.
- Muhammad, G.B. (2011) *The Shura Institution in the Islamic State: Concept, Powers, Duties and Obligations*, in Aisha, A. & Shehu, S.(2011) *ibid*.

Qur'an: *English Meanings* revised and edited by Saheeh International, Al-Muntada Al-Islami (2001 – 2009).

Sha'aba, U.H. (2011) Batu-Mal: the Public Treasury in Islam, in Aisha, A. & Shehu, S. (2011) *ibid*

