

Almajiranci: A Challenge to National Development in Northern Nigeria

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijeld.2013/vol11n9926>

Published September 11, 2023

Citation: Katami NA. and Teke AM. (2023) Almajiranci: A Challenge to National Development in Northern Nigeria, *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, Vol. 11, No.9, pp.9-26

ABSTRACT: *The study examined Almajiranci and its challenge to national development in northern Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and answered through descriptive survey using purely qualitative research design. The sample of the study is 44 Almajiri, their mallams, parents and community members from 2 Local Government Areas in Sokoto State. Structured interview was used for data collection, after which it was transcribed, coded and arranged in themes and sub-themes with detailed explanation. The study reveals that, Almajiris engaged in petty business and services like; nail cutting, selling potatoes, selling sugar cane, wheel-barrow services, selling perfume, shoe shiners (cobbler), selling date (dabino), farm labour or garden work, selling of pure water, selling of ice block, roasted groundnut, upload and unload goods, selling forage, mason, labourer, carpentry, tailoring, travelled to southern Nigeria for trade, selling shoes, sewing caps, sticker and leather, which could not contribute meaningfully to national development. Therefore, people are of the opinion that Almajiri Qur'anic Education should be accompanied by formal and or vocational education for them to contribute meaningfully to public service in northern Nigeria and Sokoto state in particular, because there is no much to say about the initiatives of Almajiris in Sokoto state. A significant number of the respondents believed that Almajiris have no initiatives. The study therefore recommended that, government should integrate Almajiri education into the mainstream formal education properly and proscribe the Almajiris from roaming the streets. Alternatively, there should be government intervention to re-organize Almajiri education in Sokoto state and Northern Nigeria in general, where functional skills and knowledge are acquired.*

KEYWORDS: Almajiranci, Almajiri, challenge, national development, petty trades formal education.

INTRODUCTION

National development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) described national development as, development of a nation as a whole. It can be best defined as the all-round and balanced development of different aspects and facets of the nation viz. political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material. Vaizey noted that “National development is the total effect of all citizen forces and addition to the stock of physical, human resources, knowledge and skill”. In this regard every citizen is expected to contribute his/her own quarter in the holistic development of the nation in all dimensions. According to Pearson (2000) development involves “An improvement qualitative, quantitative or both - in the use of available resources”. He also asserts that development does not refer to one particular perspective on social, political and economic betterment. Instead, it is a hybrid term for a myriad of strategies adopted for socio-economic and environment transformation from current states to desired ones. The current state of Northern Nigeria requires machineries and approaches that would foster the development of the region in concord with the standard of the 21st century. This requires the giant effort of government and individuals in the region. But a significant number of the individuals were engaged in Almajiranci which push them out of the formal system and make no meaningful contribution to the national development. At the same time posed threat to the existing structures of development in the name of underdevelopment.

Almajiranci is a practice in Northern Nigeria where some Muslims’ children and youths mostly from the villages left their parents’ homes to other places in search for Qur’anic knowledge. Mohammed and Yusuf (2015) opined that, in Nigeria, the social manifestation of the Almajiri phenomenon over the years has generated divergent views on the rationale and contradictions of its practice in Islamic perspective. In the Nigerian context Almajiri educational system is viewed within two prism Islam and Hausa/Fulani tradition. This perception is reflected in the political, social, economic and religious institutions of the Nigerian-state over the years. These children or youths in the Almajiranci continue to remain out of formal school system. ENACTUS (2020) described that, majority of Nigerians 13.2 million out of school children are from the Almajiri system. Mojeed (2021) specifically reported that, the system has been blamed for significantly contributing over 10 million out of school children in Nigeria. Majority of them would continue to be in their residence cities and towns. Studies had shown that a significant number of those children and youths would not find their way back home even after the Qur’anic schooling. The situation that makes them to live without proper guidance and direction which make it difficult to make a meaningful contribution to the development of the society.

Sardauna (2021) stated that, it was perhaps to avoid a situation whereby the large pool of uneducated children would be ready tools for hoodlums that the then President Goodluck Jonathan built schools that would accommodate the large number of Almajiri in some northern states. But the effort could not serve the purpose because all the parties involved are

not fully ready to end the Almajiranci in Northern Nigeria. The unserious parties are; the parents, government at all levels and the Almajiris themselves. Reliefweb (2021) described that, over the years, the Almajiranci has co-existed alongside the formal school system; it has failed to be subsumed into the formal education sector. For instance, Nigeria's former president, Goodluck Jonathan, reportedly spent about N15 billion in building Almajiri schools in an effort to integrate basic education into the Almajiri system. The present study therefore, set to investigate the extent to which Almajiranci in Northern Nigeria posed challenges and hindered national development.

Statement of the Problem

Almajiranci made Almajirai to be out of formal school system. Reliefweb (2020) described that, put into perspective, Nigeria has about 13.2 million out of school children. In West Africa, Nigeria accounts for 45 per cent of out-of-school children. 69 per cent of the out-of-school in Nigeria are from Northern Nigeria, with 60 per cent of them comprising of girls. The number of out-of-school children in Nigeria has increased from 10.5 million in 2010 to 13.2 million in 2015. Most of these out of school children are Almajiris, the situation made them not having a trade or skill that would make them employable as such they engaged only in menial jobs and petty trade. ‘We aimed at empowering the Almajiris with various skill acquisition and providing a work space/industry that will be established at the end of their training for them to work in and earn a living. All products produced and manufactured in the industry will be marketed and sold for generating income to ensure the sustainability of the project (ENACTUS 2020). This is an effort by the non-governmental organization to engage Almajiris in skills that would make them active and contribute meaningfully to the life of the society’.

National development requires the participation of all citizens without prejudice into political, economic, technological, and social spheres of the society, but unfortunately, millions of citizens were missed out from active participation because they found themselves out of school in the name of Almajiranci. The situation that make them not to contribute meaningfully into the development of the society. Most of their engagement is on petty trades and businesses that could not be quantify in the national development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the significant economic activities of Almajirai for national development;
2. To find out the extent to which Almajirai contribute to public service for national development;
3. To examine the initiatives and impact of Almajirai to the for national development.

Research Questions

1. What are the significant economic activities of Almajirai for national development?
2. To which extent Almajirai contribute in public service for national development?
3. What are the initiatives and impact of Almajirai to the national development?

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is purely qualitative using descriptive survey design. The number of population for the study cannot be ascertained, because they have no sampling frame but all parents of Almajirai, Almajirai and their teachers (mallams) as well as members of the public who have good awareness about the activities of Almajiranci and are within the study area in Sokoto state are considered as the population of the study. Convenient or purposeful sampling was used. Two local government areas were sampled to represent the state at urban and rural areas. The local governments are Sokoto South and Bodinga. Six Almajiri schools were selected from each local government area. One respondent was selected from each targeted group (Almajiris, Mallams, parents and members of the public) that is 44 respondents for the study. Table 1 described the distribution of the sample size for the study;

Table 1: Sample of the Study

S/N	L/ Govt.	Districts	Schools	Mallams	Almajiris	Parents	Public	Total
1.	Sokoto South	3	6	6	6	6	6	24
2.	Bodinga	3	6	6	6	6	6	24
	TOTAL		12	12	12	12	12	44

The instrument used for data collection is structured interview. Four sets of interview guides were designed by the researchers thus; Almajirai Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (AIGCAHSNDNN), Mallam Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (MIGCAHSNDNN), Almajiri Parents' Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (APIGCAHSNDNN) and Community Members Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (CMIGCAHSNDNN). The method of data collection for the study is face to face contact between the researchers (interviewer) and respondents (interviewees). The researchers met every respondent in his domain for the interview. 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 was presented and analyzed under the following themes and sub-themes

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF ALMAJIRAI FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This theme discussed the economic activities of Almajiris under the following sub-themes;

1. Petty Business and Services of Almajiris

Most of the Almajiris engaged in small business and services because capital used to be the problem. The business they usually ventured into are mainly to maintain survival in school.

For instance, respondent 19 explained that, usually, after 9:00am recitation we used to depart for various business and services until the next session after 2:00pm for instance I used go for nail cutting others will sell sugar cane, some will work in houses, the junior ones would go and beg. Respondent 27 stated that, during Almajiranci, Almajirai used to be invited for different paid labour that they can do. Respondent 26 highlighted that, during Almajiranci, the Almajirai engaged in various business, like selling potatoes, selling sugar cane wheel barrow services and nail cutting. Respondent 1 added that, yes, they do engage in different services and trades. Some of them sell perfume, others shoe shiners (cobbler) others nail cutting, others sell sugar cane. Respondents 3, 6 and 22 described that Almajiris engages in cobbler, perfume sell and nail cutting. While respondent 25 and 21 explained that, some do farm labour or garden work. Respondent 26 said this, after graduation, they ventured in business like, selling date (dabino) sugar cane, shop keeping among others.

Respondent 8 narrated that,

Part of what Almajiri engaged in during Almajiranci include; selling of pure water, selling of ice block, roasted groundnut. There are others who are becoming more strong; like this boy (shoe maker) he started with fire wood selling. Then he later learns shoe making now he can make and repair any shoe perfectly and he is making money out of it. In addition, there are sugar cane dealer among them, just yesterday he brought one truck of sugar cane from Wamakko and distributed within and outside this area.

Respondent 26 added this, if you look at the school premises you can see different items of the Almajiris' trades. Some sell potatoes, others sugarcane and some will provide wheel barrow services to feed themselves. The junior ones would go out and begged for food. Respondent 23 narrated we do upload and unload goods with payment in return among others services that we get money to sustain ourselves. Respondent 15 stated that some Almajiris sell forage after morning recitation and come back in the late afternoon for evening recitation. Respondent 4 and 18 stated that, the older ones among the Almajiris run services and business like nail cutting, cobbler, mason, labourer, carpentry and other business. Respondent 20 stated that, the younger Almajiris used to go for tailoring, nail cutting and others while the junior ones would give them water to sell which I can add to take care of their needs. And no one should stay beyond the school time. Respondent 20 added that, after graduation, they do engage in tailoring, nail cutting and some travelled to southern Nigeria for business. Respondent 22 yes, many of my graduated Almajiris are into various business and services and they prosper. Some are selling shoes, tailoring, sewing caps and nail cutting. Respondent 6 added this, nail cutting, shoe shiner, sticker and leather are the common businesses and services they engage in. In addition, some used to have provision store (trader).

Therefore, the petty business and services engaged by Almajiris according to the study are; nail cutting, selling potatoes, selling sugar cane, wheel barrow services, selling perfume, shoe shiners (cobbler), selling date (*dabino*), farm labour or garden work, selling of pure water, selling of ice block, roasted groundnut, upload and unload goods, selling forage, mason,

labourer, carpentry, tailoring, travelled to southern Nigeria for trade, selling shoes, sewing caps, sticker and leather, as well as provision store (trader).

2. Business of Almajiris' Mallam and Parents

Some Almajiris take the business of their mallams whom they take as their mentors in all aspects of life. For instance, respondent 1 stated that, it depends on the orientation from the mallams, sometime they do engage in the business of their mallams like selling shoes and blouse, while others take other directions of businesses. But the popular business among us is the farming and animals rearing (livestock farming).

Some Almajiris follow the business of their parents. For instance, respondent 10 narrated that, sometimes it depends on what Almajiris parents do, most of the parents are farmers, therefore, the children would take farming as a job after graduation especially those coming from Katsina state they are very productive in farming you can imagine as a mallam your Almajiri can give you a sack of grains.

This shows that Almajiris used to take business of their mallams and parents, which include; selling shoes, blouse, animals rearing and farming.

3. Sustenance of Almajiris by the Ventured Business

People ventured into business with the aim to sustain their personal needs and assist relatives and other people. Let consider the level at which those businesses sustained Almajiris. For instance, respondent 1 stated that, yes, the businesses do sustain for intermediate life style. Because you know Almajirai learned to be humble and make easy live and be contented based on Islamic teaching. Respondent 6 and 8 described that, what they engaged in, really sustained them. They feed, clothe, health care and even assist their parents some even sponsored their marriage expenditure through h the businesses. Respondent 24 narrated that, yes, the business can do well they do marry, build houses, pay for pilgrimage and even assist others. You know our income are based on our lucks and destiny. Respondent 22 stated that, the services they rendered really sustain them and their families. In another narration, respondent 26 described that, Really, what they usually ventured after graduation do take care and sustain them even assist others but for some of them can only eat food, you know it depend on capital and luck. Respondent 20 stated that, tailoring and business do sustain them. But for nail cutting they can only feed themselves.

This shows that a significant number of the Almajiris are sustained by their business but for some it is not sufficient.

4. Almajiris' House Work for Payment

Some Almajiris do engaged in fix pay work during Almajiranci. For instance, respondent 10 stated that, Almajiris do house work like washing of children clothes and they are rewarded with food and monthly payment of between 1500-2000. Respondent 17 described that, during Almajiranci, the little Almajiris do engaged in house work with fix payment or just for food. The younger ones do engage in wheel barrow services or other physical labour and nail cutting.

This shows that Almajiris can work for fix payment.

5. Predominant Business of Almajiris Community

Traditionally, most communities have predominant business in which they are popularly known. Some Almajiris used to take this pattern of business after graduation. For instance, respondent 16 stated that, Almajiris business depend on the community and family of the Almajiris. Some people take the predominant business of their communities like, farming and rearing or business of their families and some may change completely from the two above. Respondent 18 added that, after graduation, Almajiris in our area mostly engaged in farming, business and animal rearing.

Respondent 17 described that,

After graduation, Almajirai commonly ventured into the popular business in their area. For instance, people of Dange-Shuni are known to be butchers, people from Rabah local government area are known for frying fish, people of Bankanu from Kware LGA are known for provision stores. Therefore, most Almajirai follow the line of those businesses in their area.

Respondent 24 stated that,

After graduation, Almajirai ventured into different businesses, like provision store but what is more popular among their people is butcher, even me as mallam, I am a butcher that is what I do at Southern Nigeria after Almajiranci, it was the death of my father (who is also a mallam) that made me to left the business to come and continue with his legacy.

This shows that Almajiris use to take the predominant business in their area or family. Some of those businesses include, farming, rearing, butchers, frying fish, provision stores.

CONTRIBUTION OF ALMAJIRAI TO PUBLIC SERVICE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The theme outlined the level of Almajiris' participation in public service under the following sub-themes;

1. Vocational Skills among Almajiris

Vocational training is also known as Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is Education that prepares people for specific trades, crafts and careers at various levels from a trade, a craft, technician. For instance, respondent 12 lamented that, Almajiranci can best contribute to national development when it is fully or partially formalized where school subjects and vocational skills are taught which are relevant to the society.

Respondent 17 described that,

The best way that Almajiranci can contribute to the national development is through integrating the Almajiri education with formal education, where certificate can be acquired and get gainful employment that can take good care

of both the person and his family. The main cause of insecurity is lack of employment, if one is engaged there is no time for violence.

Respondent 2 added that,

Part of what our school initiated was the introduction of the medical lesson between 3:00pm to 4:00pm on Friday to those who finished their secondary school. With this, the Almajiris can provide first aid treatment to their fellow Almajiris, drip them, or medicine according their sickness. We have a small medical corner in the school. I would show you some of our medicines (see appendix v) there is one of my student who studies laboratory science at India is right now working with Usmanu Danfodio University teaching hospital sokoto (UDUTHS).

Some Almajiris are trained in vocational education. Respondent 1 stated that,

Really Almajiris mostly engaged in the normal trades that they are used to, but recently, there is effort by the government, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and philanthropists who trained Almajirai in different vocations and trades like; carpentry, mechanics, shoe maker, among others, though they have not started in my school yet. In this case most of the Almajirai do follow those trades and vocations they learnt.

This shows that people are of the opinion that Almajiri Qur'anic Education should be accompanied by formal and or vocational education for them to contribute meaningfully to public service in northern Nigeria and Sokoto state in particular. Though there is vocational training going on in Almajiri Qur'anic school in Sokoto state but at insignificant level.

2. Almajiris in Other Services

Almajiris participation in other economic activities. For instance, respondent 4 described that, you know achievement in business varies, but from what I observed Almajiris are doing well for instance there are people like (4 names withheld) they are all expert in mason and recorded various success and achievement. Respondent 6 stated that many of our Almajiris are into businesses like; nail cutting, shoe maker, sticker and leather on motorcycles cars and cell phone, among others. Three names as examples withheld. Respondent 22 added that, after graduation some of the Almajiris joined commercial motorcycle ride (Kabu Kabu or Okada) and tailoring. Respondent 12 described that, yes, there are few Almajiris who used to participate in farm labour, where they get between 800 to 1000 a day, you would see them very need and happy.

Respondent 18 described that;

You see, we people in the rural area are hard to be heard because our services are not connected with the government. Some of us are intellectually blessed on writing, rhetoric and preaching which can all bring peace and progress of our Society but many at times these benefits are limited due to our nature (rural dwelling and non-formal learning).

Based on this, Almajiri Qur'anic Education provide public services like, Mason, nail cutting, shoe maker, sticker and leather on motorcycles, cars and cell phone, commercial motorcycle ride (Kabu Kabu or Okada), tailoring, farm labour, writing rhetoric and preaching.

INITIATIVES AND IMPACT OF ALMAJIRAI TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The theme examined the initiatives and impact of Almajiri education in Sokoto state. This was done through the following sub-themes.

1. Almajiri Education and Initiative

For someone to be initiative, it means he brought a new development, a fresh approach to something or a new way of dealing with a problem. Being Almajiris members of the society, they are expected to contribute meaningfully into the development of the society, either through their system of education or their imagination. Existentialism as a school of thought believed that each individual member of the society has a role to play for the sustenance of himself and society, because all the product you see are the efforts of others what about you? Respondent 13 stated that;

Almajirai in our area have initiated one business of buying groundnuts and cook then sell, and they can sell both small and large quantity (whole and retail seller) they sell in small measures and bags. Other youth in the area have subsequently emulate them and engaged in such business.

Respondent 6 added that;

Our Almajirai become role model of the business or services they engaged to other youths in the area because of the progress they are making it, some even buy vehicles. Even the placement of small provision stall on the frontiers of the house is the emulation of our Almajirai in the area.

In contrary, other respondents stated that is no any initiative from the Almajiris in their areas. For example, respondent 4 described that, so far we don't have any initiative from our Almajirai but, we are hoping to see such in the near future. Respondent 8 added that, definitely, there is no initiative but rather engaged in the conventional business and services. These views were shared by respondents 6, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24 and 26.

There is no much to say about the initiatives of Almajiris in Sokoto state. A significant number of the respondents believed that Almajiris have no initiatives.

2. Almajiranci Produced Prominent Personalities and teaches Morality

Almajiri education produced prominent personalities and teaches morality. For instance, respondent 4 stated that;

Almajiranci can benefit people and national development. For instance, there are people like, Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, a prominent scholar who preaches and published translated Holy Qur'an into Hausa and a popular

tafsir Raddul Azhan among other books Nasiru Kabara Kano reported to have consulted by many university professors for the advancement of education, mallam Mahmud Gwadu, I can recall when a university from England wrote about him all these people were one time on Almajiranci.

Respondent 22 added that;

Almajiranci has impact on national development. It serves as a basis or stepping stone on which many people matched to a successful life. For instance, our product later joined formal school Islamic section (kullia) somewhere islamiyya teachers and others continue as mallams in the system that train them.

Respondent 1 described that;

There are ways through which Almajiranci contribute to national development, but the most important one is morality. Almajirai learn in accordance with Islamic injunction which are the most beautiful teaching on human relations, therefore, they do the right thing at the right time and do emulate good behaviours from their mallams and they also spread the same to the larger society. In Hausa land when Almajiri make an erroneous act, people used to be surprised and said as if he is not an Almajiri!

This shows that Almajiranci have produce prominent personalities in Nigeria and continue to be a ladder or stepping stone on which many people matched and excel in life (through business and switching to civil service). Morality is also known to Almajiris.

3. Almajiris as Economic Advancement Partners

Many people engaging in petty businesses in the study area especially women depend on Almajiris to sell their products without whom they might not have the benefits in the business. This makes Almajiris to be economic advancement partners in the area. For instance, respondent 5 sated that, usually some of us were given things to sell by our house mistresses like pure water, *kunun aya*, *sobo* rice and beans, groundnut among others. Another respondent 7 added that, we do engage in fetching water when we get little money we buy food. Others were given things to sell (*talla*) from the house they work. These are the simple things we do get money. Respondent 12 added that most of the mallams were more concerned with what they got from parents as a gift other than guiding the Almajiris to be initiative and self-reliant after graduation. The wiser among the them and those who are not with stealing would join other children to bush and cut green grass for animal feed in order to have money to buy something.

This shows that Almajiris used to partner with other people to sell things and get their own shares. Some of those things they sell include, pure water, *kunun aya*, *sobo* rice and beans, groundnut, fetching water, cut green grass for animal feed, among other things

4. Spiritual Protection

Almajiranci can be a source of divine protection and blessing to both individuals and society in general. For instance, respondent 10 narrated that;

One important aspect of national development is protection of calamities. For example, the prophet (PBUH) said a society would offer Allah's wraths and prepare a calamity for them but in the morning seeing and hearing the little children reciting Holy Qur'an all over. God now forgives and ordered the angel in charged to push away the calamity on the society (nation) and peace will reign all over.

Respondent 14 added that,

I am not of the view to proscribe Almajiranci because it has impact. It is an opportunity for people to get reward from God. because it is highly rewarding to assist those in the search for Islamic knowledge. What is important is to sanitize and put control in the programme, for instance, mallam can bring five or ten Almajiri under his care, this might not be out of control.

This shows that people can get God's protection and blessings through Almajiranci which entails reading the Holy Qur'an daily by the Almajiris and assisting the seekers of Islamic knowledge (Almajiris).

5. Almajiris Means of Livelihood After Graduation

After graduation Almajiris search for a means of livelihood. For instance, respondent 13 described that, after graduation, they used to work with bricklayers and some of them later become mason. Respondent 14 stated that majority of them after graduation go back home and engaged in farming, and it really paid.

Respondent 12 stated that;

After graduation, some of the Almajiris would follow the chain that train them, meaning that they would became mallams and control their new Almajiris and continue as mallams, others would go for shoes selling, shoe maker becoming big. For instance, there is no former Almajiri who established his own schools and later ventured into selling blouse, as the business grow up, he now possessed three shops in marina market Sokoto and he still continue teaching his Almajiris.

This shows that Almajiris have different means of livelihood, thus; becoming mallams, bricklayers, farming, selling blouse

Summary of the Major Findings

The major findings of the study are summarized as;

1. What are the significant economic activities of Almajirai in Northern Nigeria?

The study reveals that, Almajiris engaged in petty business and services like; nail cutting, selling potatoes, selling sugar cane, wheel barrow services, selling perfume, shoe shiners

(cobbler), selling date (*dabino*), farm labour or garden work, selling of pure water, selling of ice block, roasted groundnut, upload and unload goods, selling forage, mason, labourer, carpentry, tailoring, travelled to southern Nigeria for trade, selling shoes, sewing caps, sticker and leather, as well as provision store (trader). The Almajiris further engaged into the business of their mallams and parents, which include; selling shoes, blouse, animals rearing and farming. The Almajiris can also work for fix payment. They can equally take the predominant business in their area or family. Some of those businesses include, farming, rearing, butchers, frying fish, provision stores. A significant number of the Almajiris are sustained by their business but for some it is not sufficient. Examining the nature of business and services offered by Almajiris it indicates that they do not contribute meaningfully into the economy of Nigeria.

2. To which extent Almajirai contribute in public service in Northern Nigeria?

The study reveals that people are of the opinion that Almajiri Qur'anic Education should be accompanied by formal and or vocational education for them to contribute meaningfully to public service in northern Nigeria and Sokoto state in particular. Though there is vocational training going on in Almajiri Qur'anic school in Sokoto state but at insignificant level. Based on this, Almajiri Qur'anic Education provide services like, Mason, nail cutting, shoe maker, sticker and leather on motorcycles, cars and cell phone, commercial motorcycle ride (Kabu Kabu or Okada), tailoring, farm labour, writing rhetoric and preaching. This shows that Almajiris are not on high profile services that can contribute meaningfully into the civil service.

3. What are the initiatives and impact of Almajirai to the larger society in Northern Nigeria?

There is no much to say about the initiatives of Almajiris in Sokoto state. A significant number of the respondents believed that Almajiris have no initiatives. But Almajiranci have produce prominent personalities in Nigeria and continue to be a ladder or stepping stone on which many people matched and excel in life. Morality is also known to Almajiris. They used to partner with other people to sell things and get their own shares. Some of those things they sell include, pure water, *kunun aya*, *sobo* rice and beans, groundnut, fetching water, cut green grass for animal feed, among other things. Almajiris have different means of livelihood after graduation, thus; becoming mallams, bricklayers, farming, selling blouse, among others. People can get God's protection and blessings through Almajiranci which entails reading the Holy Qur'an daily by the Almajiris and assisting the seekers of Islamic knowledge (Almajiris).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings were discussed based on the study research questions, thus;

1. What are the significant economic activities of Almajirai in Northern Nigeria?

The study reveals that, Almajiris engaged in petty business and services like; nail cutting, selling potatoes, selling sugar cane, wheel barrow services, selling perfume, shoe shiners (cobbler), selling date (*dabino*), farm labour or garden work, selling of pure water, selling of ice block, roasted groundnut, upload and unload goods, selling forage, mason, labourer, carpentry, tailoring, travelled to southern Nigeria for trade, selling shoes, sewing caps, sticker

and leather, as well as provision store (trader). These are petty business and services that maintained only the survival of the owners without making much significant to national economy and development as well as adding weight to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). ENACTUS (2020) described that, most of these out of school children that are Almajiris, the situation made them not having a trade or skill that would make them employable as such they engaged only in menial jobs and petty trade. Sule (2003) also support this finding, he asserted that, the Almajirai that make it usually complete reading of the Holy Quran and eventually became traders, drivers and so on. Those who could not make it are condemned to menial jobs, since they have no skills at hand. They resort to wheelbarrow pushing. Sati (2015) added that, it was stressed that some who have chosen to be good, learn menial task and vocation such as shoe making, conductor and later on – drivers, carpentry, electrical works, business and many others; leaving street begging to the upcoming ones. This class of citizens are just struggling to maintain a survival rather than making serious efforts towards national development. Almost all the services provided by the Almajiris as mention above could not be yardstick to measure any national development.

The Almajiris further engaged into the business of their mallams and parents, which include; selling shoes, blouse, animals rearing and farming. The Almajiris can also work for fix payment. They can equally take the predominant business in their area or family. Some of those businesses include, farming, rearing, butchers, frying fish, provision stores. A significant number of the Almajiris are sustained by their business but for some it is not sufficient. Those Almajiris who could not follow the petty trades and menial jobs for some reasons usually resort to the business of their mallams, parents and predominant business in the locality, most of whom prosper more than those in petty and menial jobs. The researchers were able to discover some traders (provision stores), butchers, farmers, fish dealers and imams who happened to be Almajiris and started the businesses after Almajiranci and are presently successful businessmen and clerics. But these people are insignificant compared to the afore mentioned category. Therefore, Examining the nature of business and services offered by Almajiris it indicates that they do not contribute meaningfully into the economy of Nigeria.

2. To which extent Almajirai contribute in public service in Northern Nigeria?

The study reveals that people are of the opinion that Almajiri Qur'anic Education should be accompanied by formal and or vocational education for them to contribute meaningfully to public service in northern Nigeria and Sokoto state in particular. This was supported by Umar and Abdulkarim (2014) who described that, the only way that Almajirai can be productive and contribute positively to the national development is to take them off the street and integrate them into the main Nigeria education system, where skills and functional knowledge is acquired. Abbo, Zain and Njidda (2017) lamented that, to ensure the full participation of all and sundry in the national development, the Almajirai have to be properly integrated and ensure the reduction of out of school children to the barest minimum. This has clearly indicated that Almajirai have not acquired skills and knowledge at Almajiranci that make them employed into public service where citizens do contribute for meaningful national development. Mojeed (2020) reported Governor Nasiru El-Rufa'i lamenting that, "we have been looking for the ways and means to end this system because it has not worked for the

children, it has not worked for Northern Nigeria and it has not worked for Nigeria. So, it has to end and this is the time". For Almajiris to contribute into the public service the options are two, integrating Almajiri Education into formal school system or proscribe the Almajiranci so that that the Almajiris can attend formal school fully.

Though there is vocational training going on in Almajiri Qur'anic school in Sokoto state but at insignificant level. Based on this, Almajiri Qur'anic Education provide services like, Mason, nail cutting, shoe maker, sticker and leather on motorcycles, cars and cell phone, commercial motorcycle ride (Kabu Kabu or Okada), tailoring, farm labour, writing rhetoric and preaching. Yet, with these the Almajiris have not sufficiently impacted into the public service. This shows that Almajiris are not on high profile services that can contribute meaningfully into the civil service in Sokoto state and Northern Nigeria in general.

3. What are the initiatives and impact of Almajirai to the larger society in Northern Nigeria?

There is no much to say about the initiatives of Almajiris in Sokoto state. A significant number of the respondents believed that Almajiris have no initiatives. This is in line with the nature of their training which has not made any provision for initiatives but rote learning of Qur'anic verses without necessarily understanding the meanings. The Almajiris are not living in comfort that would give them room for extra brain work. Therefore, Almajiris has no means of initiatives. But Almajiranci have produce prominent personalities in Nigeria and continue to be a ladder or stepping stone on which many people matched and excel in life. Thaddeus in Mamud (2014) reported that the system produced graduates that were assigned with very high social responsibilities. The emergence of colonialism which gave preference to Western education resulted in relegation of the Almajiri system of education. A part from the prominent personalities produced by Almajiranci, some Almajiris later connect to formal education and become civil servants like; teachers, *Shari'ah* court judges and other civil servants.

Almajiris used to partner with other people to sell things and get their own shares. Some of those things they sell include, pure water, *kunun aya*, *sobo* rice and beans, groundnut, fetching water, cut green grass for animal feed, among other things. Without Almajiris many of those people especially women engaging into the businesses would not have gotten the benefits. Therefore, the partnership is of mutual benefits. After graduation, Almajiris have different means of livelihood, thus; becoming mallams, bricklayers, farming, selling blouse, among others. These businesses established by Almajiris become their career after Almajiranci. People can get God's protection and blessings through Almajiranci which entails reading the Holy Qur'an daily by the Almajiris and assisting the seekers of Islamic knowledge (Almajiris). The impact of Almajiranci extends to getting blessings and protection from Almighty. Without Almajiranci such opportunities might not be obtained.

CONCLUSION

The study explored and examined the level of Almajiris participation in national development. The study reveals that there is no significant contribution of Almajiris towards

national development. This could be attributed to Almajiranci in which they engaged. The Almajirai were able to participate in petty trades and menial jobs which could not be measure as yardstick for national development though, some of them were sustained by the businesses. The Almajiris have not directly contributed to civil service for meaningful national development. In this regard, it is only through vocational training in Almajiri Qur'anic Schools or integration into formal school system that the Almajiris would contribute meaningfully to national development. It was discovered that Almajiris have no initiatives yet but they partner with other people to run petty trades and Almajiranci exert God blessings through Qur'anic recitation and alms giving. Therefore, Almajiranci has not provided opportunity to contribute meaningfully to national development. The study recommends some useful ways though which this significant number of out of school children can contribute meaningfully to national development.

Recommendations

The study recommended that;

1. Government should integrate Almajiri education into the mainstream formal education properly and proscribe the Almajiris from roaming the streets. Alternatively, there should be government intervention to re-organize Almajiri education in Sokoto state and Northern Nigeria in general, where functional skills and knowledge are acquired.
2. Sokoto state government and the philanthropists that engaged in providing lingering vocational training in Almajiri Qur'anic Schools should inject more fund into the training so that more schools and Almajiris can be covered within short period of time.
3. Mallam should put control in their pupils (Almajiris) admission. A sizeable number of Almajiris should be admitted by mallam so that he can attach them to where they can learn a trade during Almajiranci, in such a way that it is not tempered with their learning.

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SPONSORSHIP

This study was sponsored by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Abuja, Nigeria. Under institutional Based Research (IBR) Sokoto State University, with reference number; TETF/DR&D/CE/UNI/IBR/2022/VOL.1.

APPENDIX

INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Almajirai Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (AIGCAHSNDNN)

1. What is Almajiranci? How does it operate in this area?
2. As Almajiri, what are the main areas or issues mallam advocated to you? Does he (mallam) ever introduced you to a sect similar to that of Jihadists or teaching you Islamic extremism?
3. The operation of Boko Haram in Nigeria, is Jihad or evil?
4. If you are opportune, can you join Boko Haram for Islamic Jihad?
5. Have you ever heard, seen or invited for any paid violence among Almajirai?
6. What are some of the evil acts or social vices Almajirai engaged in.? Among the present and graduated Almajirai, have you ever seen or heard those that are involved in any?
7. Among the graduated Almajirai, have they returned back home or they are still in towns and cities?
8. What about you, are you going back home after graduation or you will continue your life here? Why do you choose to stay here or go back home?

9. How do you get food and clothing?
10. Is the begged food healthy enough for consumption? If not, can you remember how many times you eat food and vomit or pass diarrhea because of its nature or contamination?
11. Which type of sickness is more common among the Almajirai?
12. How do you obtain medication when you are sick?
13. Can you remember any Almajiri/Almajirai that seriously fall sick and how were they managed?
14. During Almajiranci, is there any business or services that the Almajirai ventured into? Please give example.

Mallam Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (MIGCAHSNDNN)

1. What is Almajiranci? How does it operate in this area?
2. Those who completed their Almajiranci, are majority of them still in towns and or went back home?
3. How Almajirai get food and clothing?
4. During Almajiranci, is there any business or services that the Almajirai ventured into? Please give example.
5. After graduation, what Almajirai commonly ventured into, as a means of livelihood?
6. What they ventured into, can it sustain their families and assist others?
7. The Almajirai that graduated from your school, can you please tell us how and where some of them were engaged?
8. After completion of Almajiranci, what are their initiatives?
9. In which ways Almajiranci can promote national development?

Almajiri Parents' Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (APIGCAHSNDNN)

1. Are you aware of the unwanted acts of Almajirai during Almajiranci? If yes, which ones do you know?
2. After your children graduated from Almajiranci, are they coming back home to assist you in the farm? If no, how does it affect the quantity of the yearly products.
3. After your children completed their Almajiranci, which trade or services are they engaged into?

4. What they usually ventured into, is it capable of taking care of their needs and the family?

Community Members Interview Guide on Challenges of Almajiranci on Human Security and National Development in Northern Nigeria (CMIGCAHSNDNN)

1. In which ways Almajiranci can cause insecurity of life and properties?
2. Among the present and graduated Almajirai, have you ever seen or heard those that are involved in evil or anti-social act(s).
3. Those who completed their Almajiranci, are majority of them still in towns and or went back home?
4. How Almajirai get food and clothing?
5. Which type of sickness is more common among the Almajirai?
6. If Almajirai are sick, how do they obtain medication?
7. After completion of Almajiranci, what are their initiatives?
8. In which ways Almajiranci can promote national development?
9. During Almajiranci, is there any business or services that the Almajirai ventured into? Please give example.