

## Challenges Affecting Implementation of Almajiri Model School Policy in Sabon Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State

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### Abstract

The Almajiri System of Education has been age-long practice in the Northern States of Nigeria. It started as an organised and a well comprehensive system of education for learning Islamic principles and knowledge and as a centre well known in producing productive adults working toward the wellbeing of their immediate society. Unfortunately, the Almajiri system of education in Northern Nigeria is now been poorly managed which is threatening the security and the health care delivery system in the north. Many attempts have been made by government at different level to address the challenges caused by the Almajiri system of education but proved abortive. This study assessed the implementation of the Almajiri Model School system with empirical focus on Umaru Musa 'Yar'adua Almajiri Bi-lingual Model Primary School, Maraban Gwanda, Sabon Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Qualitative data was employed to collect data through the instrumentality of in-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion. The study found that Sabon-Gari Local Government in spite of its financial challenges do contribute immensely in running the affairs of the school especially in the area of recruitment and payment of staff salary; payment of allowances to Qur'anic Teachers; and provision of teaching and administrative materials The study therefore, recommends among other things, that host communities should partner with security agencies to provide adequate security to the school community to guarantee effective teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** Almajiri, Implementation, Model School Policy, Sabon Gari Local Government

### Introduction

The idea and the practice of the Almajiri system had started long before the introduction of formal western education in Nigeria (Babangida. 2020). But, the current practice of almajiri system of education differed in many ways in the manner in which the system was practice in in its early period (Omeni, 2015) The people of Meccah and the Prophet were always called immigrants, meaning in Arabic "*Almuhajrun*." Many of the Islamic Scholars are of the opinion that the word Almajiri was originally derived from the Arabic word *Almuhajrun*. It was evidently clear that the practice of Almajiri system of education started in medina during the period of Prophet Muhammad. However, it is important to mention it here that the manner in which the system was practiced in medina was quite different with the way and manner the system is currently practiced in Nigeria (Onwumere, 2019). This is due to the fact that during the period of the prophet, the migration and the practice of the Almajiri system of education is a child of necessity.

It is obvious that the various government educational programmes on integrating Almajiri System of Education with formal education woefully failed due to government's inability to sustain the financial need of the programmes. As fundamentally argued Babagana (2019) that, government integration programme is facing serious challenges due to some bedeviling challenges such as poor planning; lack of financial support for sustainability, mismanagement of resources allocated to such programmes; changes in Government; inconsistency on the part of policy makers and implementation; lack of monitoring and evaluating mechanism as well as supervision.

Despite that several schools currently operating Almajiri boarding school in different areas of Kaduna state, but Umaru Musa 'Yar'adua Bilingual Model Primary Maraban Gwanda stand out to be different. For now, there are many of Almajiri graduates who are currently in the higher institutions of learning for diploma, NCE and degree programmes in FCE Zaria, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University Kano and Kaduna state University among others. The school also stand to be different with other Amajiri Model School in Kaduna state due to the fact that it was the first to be established in Kaduna State.

## **Literature Review**

### ***The Concept Almajiri***

The term Almajiri was originally derived from Arabic word of "Almajiri" meaning an immigrant. It connotes to a person who migrates from luxury and superfluity of his home to a long-distance place or apartment or to a teacher on his mission for getting sound and adequate Islamic knowledge to Worship Allah. It can also be referred to as "those knowledge seekers who move from one place to another in search of knowledge like the Qur'anic knowledge and other Islamic education" (Adeyanju, 2015:8). In this content thus, the word almajiri is always refer to as a person who migrate from his parent care and shelter to learn Qur'anic education under the care guidance of Mallam

### ***The Concept of Public Policy***

According to Egonmwan (2002), public policy is a government or body who is entrusted with the position of authority or programme of action to achieve a desirable target. He further asserts that, the raging debate over the parameter and the scope of what could constitute public policy is an issue of concern Egonmwan (2002). Some have raised the question as whether public policy should be posited at the level of decision making, intention or action of government. Others assert that, policy is what government actually implemented not what it intended to do (Egonmwan, 2002). Therefore, public policy in this context however has to do with formal and intended action plan to be implemented by the government at every level

### ***The Concept of Basic Education***

According to Tahir (2007) basic education is fundamental to human and national development, as it is the foundation upon which other levels of education are built upon and a necessary requirement for human and national progress. It is self-evident that no nation ever develops technologically, economically and politically without accord to its topmost priority or to heavily invest in its basic education. As categorically stated by the national policy on education the basic education involves education given to a child in early child care and development

education, six years' primary education and three years of junior secondary school (Adeyanju, 2015).

### **Empirical Review**

Several empirical studies have been conducted on Almajiri school system largely to addressing the contradiction and the quagmire that is about to consume the system in northern Nigeria. The notable ones found by the researchers are:

Jibrin, (2021) argued that the negligence and poor handling of roving students in particular Almajirai which is responsible for increasing the incidence of child labour in Kaduna North Local Government. The study further explains that the manner in which the society, parent and government mishandled the Almajiri System of education contributed to a large possible extent the widespread cases of child labour in Kaduna North Local Government. The study used qualitative data to investigate the variables. The study found that old approach of Almajiri system of education is responsible for the increase of child labour in the study area. The study finally recommends that government and other education stakeholders must be up and doing to reform the Almajiri System of Education largely to check the menace of widespread cases of child labour in the study area and Northern Nigeria at large

Agbo, (2018) asserted that for some time now, factors such as poverty, government neglect, parental irresponsibility, population explosion occasioned by culture of marrying many wives, undue emphasis on Qur'anic literacy, etc., have bedeviled the Almajiri system of education in Northern Nigeria. This no doubt has affected the socio-economic development of the zone as well as national development. The study uses qualitative data for empirical analysis to arrive into valid conclusion. The study found that the growing number of Almajirai in northern Nigeria had negative consequences on the region development. For this reason, therefore the study finally recommends that government at all levels should eliminate street begging; and ensure that all children are compulsorily enrolled in an integrated education system with emphasis on vocational and entrepreneurial education. This is necessary because to continue having a growing army of uneducated children roaming the street will end up spelling doom to the country

Achus, (2021) explained that the growing incidence of Almajirai students in Northern Nigeria is currently threatening the peace and the stability of the region. The situation according to the study is also retarding the development of the region. The study found that ending street begging in the name of Qur'anic education must put to an end for the region to enjoy unending peace and stability. The study finally recommends that education being in the concurrent legislative list, the Federal and the States Governments of the Northern Nigeria should consolidate and intensify the hitherto efforts in integrating Almajiri system of education with the conventional system. Northern states should leverage on the repatriation of Almajiri to their states of origin occasioned by Covid-19 pandemic.

This will ensure a stoppage in dissuading the Almajiri to join violent groups thereby making a peaceful and guaranteed security in Northern Nigeria. Auwal, (2019) explains that the nexus that exists between the Almajiri School system and the security crisis in Northern Nigeria". The study further explains lack of skill acquisition needed in the system that contributed a lot for the

system to breed a ground for the growth of insecurity situation. The study used mixed method to get and analyze data on the variables investigated. The study found that the system must be reformed to conform to the desired skill needed in the present time. The study finally recommended that the government and other security and education stakeholders must work together to reform the system.

Despite the several empirical studies on the Almajiri System of education there is still a gap in the body of the empirical works. This is due to the fact that none of the literature studied the Almajiri Model school policy that was initiated and implemented during the Goodluck Ebele Jonathan regime this shows there is still a gap in the body of the empirical literature and this study is an attempt to bridge the existing gap

### **The Methodology**

Qualitative Research Design is employed. This involves collecting information from a person or group of people with adequate knowledge of the variables investigated. But, for the purpose of this study, the population of this research consists of different categories of individuals such as the entire teaching and non-teaching staff of 'Umaru 'Yar'adua Almajiri Bi-lingual Model Primary School Maraban Gwanda, Sabon Gari', traditional authorities (specifically, village heads and district heads), top officials of Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in the study area.

The study area (i.e. 'Umaru 'Yar'adua Almajiri Bi-lingual Model Primary School Maraban Gwanda, Sabon Gari') has the total staff population of 22 staff (both teaching and non-teaching) which comprises of 1 Head Master (HM), 16 Teaching Staff, 5 Non-Teaching Staff and 4 supervisors from KSUBEB (KSUBEB, Kaduna (2023)). Also 10 village heads and 12 casual staff. Also senior primary students in Yar'adua Bilingual Primary School This made the total population for this research work to be 48 informants. For the purpose of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) a group was formed comprise mainly the Qur'anic teachers of the school.

The sample size of the study is 28 that were selected from various categories of informants as conform with Creswell (2014) sampling criteria who believed that the sampled size of 28 populations can adequately help a researcher to reach saturation point. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the informants; this could enable the researcher to select with adequate knowledge of the Almajiri model policy was made and implemented (Sunders Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The qualitative data was analysed using NVivo software, which is suitable for qualitative data analysis. It will also enable the researcher to identify themes, patterns, and meanings in the data and to develop a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

#### **Funding of Almajiri School System**

The funding of Almajiri School System includes among others: payment of staff salary; building of classes and offices; running cost and maintenance fee; feeding and the provision of boarding facilities. The school management, teachers and SUBEB officials responded to this issue.

The government are doing their best in payment of staff salary and maintaining of school infrastructure as well feeding and boarding allowance. In most cases we do invite the head teachers to collect monthly allocation of their school for proper maintaining of

school infrastructure. We always make sure that the students are well fed, staff are also well paid and teaching aids were also provided adequately. In fact, we do give them special attention always (Interview, 2023).

In response to school funding, one of the management members argued that “yes government do pay us our salary like every civil servant at the end of every month”. He also pointed out that “The payment of our salary is the same as other primary school teachers” (Interview, 2023). But the FGD discussants pointed out that although the government pays us our salary at the end of the month like every civil servant, but emphasis of the government was more feasible on formal education. Little attention was paid by the government on Arabic or Qur’anic Education. Some of us (Arabic and Qur’anic Teachers) are voluntarily doing it without receiving anything from the government (FGD, 2023).

With regards to staff promotion and provision of relevant teaching aids or materials as well as medical facilities, one of the management member argued that “We hardly get promotion and we sometimes pay to get relevant teaching aids or materials, we in most cases look after the needs of the health of our students, when there are serious health problems we refer students back to their parents” (FGD, 2023).

### **State and Local Government’s Roles in Running of Almajiri Model School System**

The school is structured in such a way that all the levels of government should contribute toward the smooth running of the school. School management, teachers and SUBEB officials responded that:

Most of the responsibilities of running of the school are currently undertaken by state and local government. “Kaduna State Government takes most of the responsibilities of running the school. The government at the state level provides all for the running cost feeding and other boarding facilities. The state government under its ministry of education and Kaduna State Universal Basic Education regularly supervise the school activities. State government also provide for hygienic and health facilities and drugs. While on the other hand, local government at their own part pay teachers salary and allowances for *Alarama* (Qur’anic Teachers) and also supervision of teaching and learning activities in the school (Interview, 2023).

Most of the school activities are funded by the state government under the ministry of education or Kaduna State Universal basic education. But the major activity funded by local government is payment of staff salary and allowance. Federal government for long stopped paying its part long after the building of the school structure (FGD, 2023). “The major responsibilities of school activities are funded either by the state or local government” (Interview, 2023).

### **Almajiri Model School and the Non-Governmental organization and Individuals**

It has now become apparent that non-governmental organizations and individuals are contributing toward the success of provision on basic education in our country. Just of recent Centre for Democratic Development Training and Research (CEDDERT) gave their contribution to our school. They provided mats and other hygienic materials for our use. Likewise, AMA Foundation is currently building additional classes in our school (Interview, 2023). “We have gotten a little from non-governmental organizations for the running of our school. But just of recent an organization came to our school and engaged in building classes for our use (Interview,

2023). One very good example one can easily cite regarding non-governmental individual contribution is the contribution we do collect from a business mogul, Abbas Likkoro,” (Interview, 2023). Non-governmental organizations are contributing factors towards the progress of our school. They use to come for supervisions or they in most cases donate health and hygienic materials for our use (FGD, 2023). There is one popular organization that used to donate health and hygienic material for our use. This organization is called *Nissa’u Sunnah* (FGD, 2023).

### **Enrolment into Almajiri Model School System**

Students were enrolled into the school as far as they are able to take care of themselves such as washing their clothes and having a bath. Similarly, quota system is used for the admission into Yar’adua Bilingual Primary School with special consideration of host communities.

The enrolment of pupils into the school usually is on the basis of quota system, because SUBEB notified each local government to produce some certain number of Almajiri through the consultation of the Alarama. Each local government is given four to five pupils. We do give special considerations to neighbouring communities by giving them some vacancies for their children. In fact, about 20% of our students are now children of our neighbouring communities e.g. Maraban Gwanda, Zabi and Shika Gwanda. (FGD, 2023)

“It is obvious that we do get our students from 23 local governments of the states with special consideration of neighbouring local government” (Interview, 2023). “We don’t really admit more students because we don’t have sufficient facilities to enroll large number of the students (FGD, 2023). We do give equal chance to every local government to enroll the Almajirai into the school (Interview, 2023).

In view of the above, the admission policy of the school is based on the quota system but special consideration is given to neighbouring communities to enroll their children into the school.

### **ICT Facilities in Almajiri Model School System**

For effective and functional basic education, ICT facilities are inevitable. Therefore, many questions were asked related to the provision and effective utilization of ICT facilities. “ICT facilities were provided during the take up of the school, but due to the complete absence of electricity or generator we were unable to use them” (FGD, 2023). It is true we have some desktop computers but we don’t use them due to the absence of electricity (Interview, 2023). “We have the computer and the computer lab, but they are all old and new ones need to be installed if we want to use them. Likewise, we equally need internet service for effective utilization of ICT Materials” (Interview, 2023).

“We hardly provide them with ICT facilities until security is guaranteed (Interview, 2023)

In view of the above, the school does not have ICT facilities but old computers in the old computer lab that were not put to use due to absence of electricity and other facilities.

## **Challenges**

### **Poor Primary Health Care Delivery in Almajiri Model School System**

Since, Umaru Musa Yar'adua Bilingual Model Primary School is a boarding school provision of health care facilities is necessary for the wellbeing of students and staff. Some questions during In-Depth-Interview and Focus Group Discussion were asked.

Yes of course we have a Health Clinic and one auxiliary health worker for the health care delivery of our students. But the major problem is that the health clinic is without drugs. In fact, is not far better than First Aid Box. Thus, in most cases we do send our children back home for serious health complication. Sometimes we do buy drugs like Panadol for our children. So we are just lack the necessary health facilities. In this case we need serious government attention for the provision of basic health care facilities (Interview, 2023)

“If not for the intervention and assistance of some non-governmental individuals and organizations one can conclude by saying our school is without health care facilities. But of course we have clinics and ill-equipped health care worker” (FGD, 2023). “We have serious problems regarding health care facilities. Our clinic is always without drugs and other medications. Our health worker is not able to cater for students’ health needs. But we do get some health facilities from CEDDERT and other non-governmental individuals (FGD, 2023) “Government is doing their best but don not always cater for the health need of the school” (Interview, 2023).

### **Vocational Training in Almajiri Model School System**

It is factual that vocational education is instrumental in making an individual productive and functional to his immediate environment. Thus, some questions were asked in relation to vocational education of Umaru Musa Yar'adua Bilingual Model Primary school.

**1.2.**“We don’t have provision for vocational education which may require workshops and teachers from technical education, which is why the government has not made any provision in relation to that” (Interview, 2023) “the school does not have provision for practical vocational education yet. But, they are being taught the theoretical aspect of the subject matter, government are still making plans to introduce the idea in their attempt of making our students self-reliant individuals” (Interview, 2023). “Students were only taught formal and Qur’anic education in theoretical memorization style” (FGD, 2023). “We were only instructed to teach them formal education as we normally have it in our conventional basic school but government has not introduced the idea of teaching vocational education” (FGD, 2023).

### **Others Challenges of Almajiri Model School system**

Despite the numerous achievements recorded by the Almajiri Model Primary School in Sabon-Gari Local Government area of Kaduna State, there exist some challenges currently faced by the school for the smooth, effective teaching and learning in the school as stated below:

We have many challenges militating against the effective teaching and learning in the school, such problems include among others: inadequate running cost, lack of electricity and ICT facilities, absence of vocational coaching in the school curriculum, bushy location of the school, and insufficient medical and hygienic facilities among others (FGD, 2023).

Supporting the above submission, one of the interviewee from the school management member categorically stated that “we have problem that hindered the smooth and effective performance of the school, such major problems include: insufficient finance to run the school activities and poor medical facilities for students’ medical care and attention” (Interview, 2023). In addition to the above mentioned problems, FGD discussants identify government’s emphasis and priority given to formal or western education section as a challenge or problem and detrimental to Qur’anic and Arabic section particularly the Qur’anic and Arabic personnel. According to them “one of the fundamental problem facing the school particularly the Arabic and Qur’anic is too much emphasis on formal education which is detrimental to Qur’anic education particularly when it comes to leadership “(FGD, 2023). They also pointed out that “the teachers of formal education are getting higher pay and the leadership of the school are exclusively affairs of teachers of the formal education (FGD, 2023).

### **Summary of Findings**

From the data presented and analysed above on the subject studied, the following deductions or findings can be drawn:

1. The study also found that Sabon-Gari Local Government in spite of its financial challenges do contribute immensely in running the affairs of the school especially in the area of recruitment and payment of staff salary; payment of allowances to Qur’an Teachers; supervision of school administrative and academic activities and provision of teaching materials.
2. The study also found that state government is also playing its part for the smooth running of the school activities which include among others; payment for running of both academic and administrative activities; provision of boarding facilities; provision of school infrastructure; provision of medical facilities and supervision of both academic and administrative activities through the State Ministry of Education and Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board. But the provision of such resources is not adequate.
3. The study also found that non-governmental organizations such as Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training (CEDDERT), *Nissa’u Sunnah*, AMA Foundation do contribute for the smooth running activities of the school. They do provide hygienic materials, mats and teaching aids to the school.
4. The study also found that the school since its establishment has achieved a lot, To the present the school has graduated up to 1,500 (One Thousand Five Hundred) students. Some of the students are currently in various secondary schools of the state.
5. The study found that despite the significance of vocational training and education the school does not have any provision of vocational education in its curriculum which is a vital aspect of today’s basic education.
6. It was also found that health care delivery system in the school is very poor. The personnel recruited to cater for the health care need of the students and staff is grossly ill-equipped. Likewise, the school clinics are without drugs and medicine for primary health care delivery.

### **Conclusion**

The study finally concluded that despite numerous challenges faced by the school, the school was able to attain its goals by teaching functional literacy skills to some Almajiri pupils in



Sabon-Gari Local Government in particular and Kaduna state in general. It is factual that the school could have achieved more than expected if government had allocated sufficient fund for its running. It is important to note that running a school in this nature requires honest participation of many educational stakeholders such as host community, non-governmental organizations and individual, local, state and federal government. Thus, government at every level should provide a peaceful atmosphere that facilitates the participation of other stakeholders in running the affairs of the school.

### Recommendations

It is in the light of the major findings of this study that the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government at the federal level should return to fund necessary aspects of Almajiri education through this model of boarding school by allocating sufficient funds to provide electricity, adequate medical care, vocational education and security apparatus for smooth and effective teaching and learning in the school.
- ii. Host community should partner with security agencies to provide the school with adequate security for effective teaching and learning.
- iii. Federal Ministry of Education should make provisions for vocational and technical education that are instrumental in making students self-reliant, functional, productive in his society.
- iv. State and local government should provide a room to improve the participation of other education stakeholders' particularly non-governmental organizations and individuals in running the affairs of the school.
- v. Teachers and school management should endeavor to teach their students relevant security tips for their safety in the event of an attack against the school.

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