



Journal of
**African Studies and
Development**

Volume 6 Number 7 September 2014

ISSN 2141 - 2189



*Academic
Journals*

ABOUT JASD

The Journal of African Studies and Development (JASD) will be published monthly (one volume per year) by Academic Journals.

Journal of African Studies and Development (JASD) is an open access journal that provides rapid publication (Monthly) of articles in all areas of the subject such as African literatures, sociolinguistic topics of cultural Interest, music, oral and written traditions etc.

The Journal welcomes the submission of manuscripts that meet the general criteria of significance and scientific Excellence. Papers will be published shortly after acceptance. All articles published in JASD are peer-reviewed.

Contact Us

Editorial Office: jasd@academicjournals.org

Help Desk: helpdesk@academicjournals.org

Website: <http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/JASD>

Submit manuscript online <http://ms.academicjournals.me/>.

Editors

Dr. Richard J. Mushi

*College of Arts and Sciences, Rural Public Policy Program,
Mississippi Valley State University, Itta Bena MS.
USA*

Prof Mary Khakoni Walingo

*Maseno University
Kenya
Ngoyi K Zacharie Bukonda*

*Wichita State University
1845 Fairmount Street, Wichita, KS 67260-0043,
USA*

Dr. Vusi Gumede

*University of Witwatersrand's Graduate
School of Public and Development Management,
Specialization: Economics
South Africa.*

Dr Charles k Ayo

*Director of Academic Planning,
Covenant University, Ota. Ogun State,
Nigeria*

Dr. Mary Ogechi Esere

*Department of Counsellor Education,
University of Ilorin,
Nigeria*

Dr. Prudence Kwenda

*University of Limerick,
Kemmy Business school Limerick,
Ireland*

Dr. Oliver Mtapuri

*Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership,
University of Limpopo
South Africa*

Editorial Board

Prof. David Owusu-Ansah
James Madison University
Address 58 Bluestone Dr, Harrisonburg, VA 22807
USA

Prof. Roger Tsafack Nanfosso
University of Yaounde II
Address P.O. BOX 6886 Yaounde
Cameroon

Prof. Ratno Lukito
Faculty of Syariah and Law, State Islamic University
Sunan
Kalijaga Yogyakarta
Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Yogyakarta
Indonesia

Mr. Fred Ssango
Agribusiness Management Associates (AMA) Uganda Ltd
Uganda

Dr Michael Yanou
University of Buea
Box 63, Buea
Cameroon

Muawya Ahmed Hussein
Dhofar University
Salalah 211, P.O.Box: 2509, CCBA
Oman

Ghoshal Tapas
Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics, Government of
West Bengal
Address 1, Kiron Sankar Roy Road, New Secretariat
Buildings, 'B' Block, 4th Floor, Kolkata-700 001, West
Bengal
India

Dr. Teresa Kwiatkowska
Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa
Av. San Rafael Atlixco No.186, Col.Vicentina C.P.09340
Iztapalapa, México D.F.
Mexico

Dr. Alfred Ndi
University of Yaounde I
University of Yaounde I, Ecole Normale Supérieur,
Bambili
Campus, Bambili, Bamenda, North West Region,
Republic of Cameroon

Dr. Godswill Amechi Nnaji
College Of Health Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Nnewi, Anambra State
Dept. of Family Medicine, Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Teaching Hospital, PMB 5025,
Nnewi, Anambra State
Nigeria

Dr. Alejandro Natal Martinez
El Colegio Mexiquense
Address Ex-Hda. Sta. Cruz de los Patos. Zinacantepec
Estado
de Mexico
Mexico

Dr. Samukele Hadebe
Government of Zimbabwe
Office 210 Munhumutapa Building, Samora Machel
Ave/Sam
Nujoma,
Harare
Zimbabwe

Dr. Oyedunni Arulogun
University of Ibadan
Department of Health Promotion & Education, Faculty of
Public Health, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan
Nigeria

Dennis Masaka
Great Zimbabwe University
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, P.O. Box
1235, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Dr. Waleed Ibraheem Mokhtar El-azab
EPRI (Egyptian Petroleum Research Institute)
1 , Ahmed El-Zomer St , 7the region , Nasr City , Cairo ,
post code 11727
Egypt

Neil McBeath
c/o The Language Centre
Sultan Qaboos University
P.O. Box 43
PC 123
Al Khod
Sultanate of Oman

Christopher Gadzirayi
Bindura University of Science Education
P.Bag 1020, Bindura
Zimbabwe

ARTICLES

Review

- The practice of Almajiri: Prospect and socio-medical challenges in Northern part of Nigeria** 128
Zakir, A., Abubakar, U., Lawal, U. S., Imrana, H., Habibu, I. T., Hassan, I. H. and Harande, M. M.

Full Length Research Paper

The practice of Almajiri: Prospect and socio-medical challenges in Northern part of Nigeria

Zakir, A.^{1*}, Abubakar, U.², Lawal, U. S.³, Imrana, H.¹, Habibu, I. T.², Hassan, I. H.⁴
and Harande, M. M.³

¹Department of General and Applied Sciences, Shehu Idris College of Health Sciences and Technology, Makarfi Nigeria.

²Department of Special, Adult and Non Formal Education, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Nigeria.

³Department of Social Development, Shehu Idris College of Health Sciences and Technology, Makarfi, Nigeria.

⁴Department of Physiotherapy, Shehu Idris College of health Sciences and Technology, Makarfi, Nigeria.

⁵Department of Community health, Shehu idris College of health Sciences and Technology, Makarfi Nigeria.

Received 21 January, 2014; Accepted 2 September, 2014

The main purpose of the study is to identify the practice of Almajiri: prospect and socio-medical challenges in Sabon Gari Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey method was adopted using a cluster and sampling method. Questionnaire was used to collect the data, from three hundred male Almajiri. The study revealed that most of the respondents were between the ages of 8-14 years while very few were 15 years and above. Also, majority of the respondents did not attend formal school. Parental belief, goals and poverty were found to be the major reasons for the practices of Almajiri. Most of the respondents spent their time begging for food to eat and money. Also, a majority of them defecate in the bush, which endangers the health of society by the spread of diseases. Hunger and tiredness were found to be a major complaint of the respondents, and sleeping in a congested room on a mat. Appropriate recommendations are finally offered in the areas of re-orientation programmes, general skill development, and modernization of teaching Qur'an.

Key words: Almajiri, Mallam/Alaramma, begging, Qur'nic school.

INTRODUCTION

Sabon Gari is one of the most recognized towns in the Northern part of Kaduna State, Nigeria that is committed to both western and Islamic education, with many higher institutions and tsangaya (place where Mallam/Alaramma teaches Qur'anic education). Today, Children are the future of the nation, without them the future of nation looks dim. The aim of the study is to evaluate the prospect and socio-medical challenges associated with the practice of Almajiri in Sabon Gari Local Government

Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria. According to United Nation Convention on Child Right, a child is any person below eighteen (18) years. The convention, which was held in 1989, set out various declarations that will improve the quality of life of children worldwide. Some states signed the declaration including Nigeria. Some of the rights set out at the declaration include the right to education, health care, love and care, adequate food and shelter and live in a clean environment (Babangida, 1993). Despite these

*Corresponding author. E-mail: zusalamm@yahoo.com

Author agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

rights, in almost every streets, corner, junctions (especially in the north), are young, homeless, poor, neglected and maltreated children seen roaming the streets begging for food and alms (Babangida, 1993). These young children are called the “Almajiri” (a student who leaves his parent for Qur’anic education). They come mostly from rural areas to urban centres for the purpose of acquiring Qur’anic education. They are sent to study Qur’an under the care of a Mallam (Teacher of the Qur’anic school) or Alamma (Teacher of the Qur’anic school who memorizes and writes all verses of the Quran) who mostly comes from other village (Garba, 1996). Today the word Almajiri in Hausa has gradually acquired a completely different meaning; it is more or less referred to as beggars roaming the streets in our towns and cities. They include young pupils who left the comfort and protection of their parents and relations at a very tender age for the purpose of Qur’anic education (Sa’id, 1992). The malam/Alamma is not responsible for feeding the Almajiris and therefore are forced to beg on the street. They depend on people for their food and other life needs (Ibrahim, 2008). In the course of begging on the streets, they are exposed to various forms of hazards and situations. They are victims of economic hardship, child neglect and abuse; all in the name of Qur’anic education (Salis, 1995). The practice of Almajiri is one of the major forms of child abuse in Northern Nigeria. The practice is denying our society from producing future professionals that will contribute to the development of our nation. The practice is common among polygamous, poor and uneducated families (Pervez, 2005). The Almajiris are under the care of their mallam even though he is not responsible for feeding them. The children move around from door to door, street to street begging for food and other necessities of life; they move either singly or in group. Some of them attach themselves to seller of food items like Massa (waina), beans cake (kosai) or groundnut cake (kuli), moving about looking for buyer who will share to them voluntarily (Babangida, 1993). The Almajiri school system is where Qur’anic religious knowledge is acquired. The school is usually situated either in the mosque premises or tsangaya. It could also be situated outside the mallam’s house either under shade with no definite classrooms built for shelter and no proper sitting and writing facilities available; they use slate as reading materials (Ya’u, 2001). Many Nigerians do not consider the practice of almajiri as a problem. This is because of economic hardship and people do not actually think about the future life of these children (Yuyasa, 2005). Mallams and Almajiris have the custom of traveling on tour during dry season; on reaching a town or city, they lodge for a period of time, they would go round the markets and houses with their rubber container begging for food to sustain themselves (Garba, 1996). The rise of street begging is because majority of Almajiris rely on begging for food and money at major streets and junctions where people gather for day to day activities. It has also been

observed that most of the beggars migrate to the city from rural areas for the purpose of life sustainability (Ibrahim 2008). Qur’anic schools lack sufficient opportunity or suitable environment for those who wish to learn Qur’an; Almajiris depend on begging to earn living (Garba, 1996). The environment under which the Almajiris learn is deplorably untidy. They learn while sitting on floor since most of the schools cannot even afford mats for them. They live mostly in a congested classroom. A school sometimes has an average population of 180 pupils under the control of one Mallam/Alamma; they use one local small class room which has normal capacity of 50 pupils or less for about 180 pupils (Sule, 1994).

The almajiris cannot even afford most health services; thus they receive no treatment for many ailments and injuries although some buy medicine to treat themselves. Even where there should be free hospitals and health services, because of their socially marginalized positions they cannot be treated (Pervez, 2005). The Almajiris in one way or other are endangering the health of the community by urinating and passing stools indiscriminately. This is because most of the almajiri schools do not have toilets and bathrooms (Kabir, 2002). Some Mallams/Alamma do not allow their children to mingle with the Almajiris to the extent that they allow their own children to attend formal school (Kabir, 2002; Report of Kano State committee on Almajiris, 2012). When such Almajiris return to their villages, they participate in the act of selling and taking drugs. The Almajiris are exploited by their mallams, which include going to farm, fetching water for his domestic use, collecting fire wood and sometimes bringing even part of what they get from begging (Sulaiman 1996). Also, the Almajiris hear all kinds of embarrassing words and the practice is damaging to both the psychological and physical development of a child (Report of Kano State Committee on Almajiris, 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

A descriptive survey design was adopted in evaluation of Almajiri practices: prospects and socio-medical challenges in Northern part of Nigeria in SabonGari local Government Area, Kaduna State.

Background of the study area

Sabon Gari is one of the local Government Area of Kaduna State. It is located in Northern part of the state. It has an estimated population of about 286,871 (Census, 2006). The inhabitants are mostly Hausa-Fulani with other mixed tribes; farming and transportation are their common occupations. Sabon Gari Local Government Area has about one hundred and fifty eight (105) Qur’anic schools, each school with an average of fifty (50) pupils (Almajiris).

Study population

The target populations are all male Almajiris in Sabon Gari Local

Government Area, Kaduna State.

Sample/sampling technique

Sabon Gari Local Government Area was clustered into the following districts: Main Sabon Gari, Jama'a, Hanwa, Muciya, Basawa and Bomo districts. From each district, two Qur'anic schools were selected, and from each school ten (50) Almajiris was selected using availability sampling technique.

Population size

A total of three hundred (300) Almajiris were interviewed using structured questionnaire.

Method of data collection

The method used for data collections is through interview read from questionnaire. This is because most of the Almajiris cannot read or write. Before interview, permission was obtained from Mallam/Alaramma of each tsangaya.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the research carried out, findings shows that majority of the respondents were between the ages of 8-14 years while a few of the respondents are 15 years and above. This shows that these pupils are exposed at very early tender stage of life to several hazards. They are denied of parental care and basic education. Majority of the respondents (72%) are Hausa/Fulani. This is because Almajiri practice is more common among Hausa/Fulani society. The surveys revealed that majority of the respondents (80%) do not have formal education, because their parents have sent them far away to study the Qur'anic education. Parental goals and poverty were found to be the reasons for sending them far away from home to study Qur'an. 58% of the respondents left home because of parental belief while 40% is due to poverty situation. The study also shows that 68% of the Almajiri interviewed, their parents have no formal system of education and they came from larger family with seven children and above, and most of the fathers are substantial farmers. This also makes the parents to send them far away from home so that the number of children to feed and cater for will reduce. Majority of the parents do not visit their children regularly so they do not know their children's condition. This could be due to poverty and the distance from where the parents are living to the place where the Tsangaya school is located.

99% of the respondents interviewed gets daily food from begging on the streets, (90%) eat food twice a day with carbohydrates as common type of food they consume. This predisposes them to malnutrition and several types of disease due to lack of nutrients required to build and repair their body system. This makes 50% of the respondents suffer from illnesses such as typhoid fever, malaria,

skin rashes, cholera and most of them are treated in a chemist, because they cannot afford hospital treatment. So they can only go to a chemist and receive treatment without an accurate diagnosis and wrong treatment may be given while some cannot even afford chemist due to insufficient resources. Hunger and tiredness were factors mostly complained by the respondents, in which 38% of the respondents complained of being tired all the time while 62% complained of hunger. This could be due to low energy derived from the little food consumed and dispensation of more energy in the course of begging up and down. 73% of the respondents lack access to water and bathroom in their schools; hence they take their bath once in a week. Sometimes, they bath in stagnant lake or rivers which could expose them to water born disease. The study also reveals that 95% of the respondents have no toilets facilities in their schools, and most of them defecate in the bush. The few toilets they have are only used by Alaramma. This exposes them to dangers and endangers the health of the public, because they pass stool in an open place which could lead to spread of diseases. 85% of the respondents get clothes from begging and most of them have only two clothes, one for normal day to day activities and the other for going to jum'at congregational prayers. These clothes are only washed when dirty. This is the reason why they are wearing very dirty clothes because they only wash them when they are dirty and the number of cloths is few. 74% of the respondents are living and sleeping in congested rooms, some on floor and mats; they have a population of more than fifteen Almajiri in a small rooms with a capacity of 4-7 individuals. This could lead to spread of communicable diseases like tuberculosis etc. In this study, it was observed that Almajiris are exploited by their Mallams/Alaramma as most (80%) of them fetch water and fire wood for their Mallam's domestic use. This is because Mallams are not given any salary or allowances by the government or parents, yet they are responsible for providing sleeping rooms for them. Therefore, Mallams/Alaramma use them to solve some of their needs. This makes the children complain of tiredness all the time and also predispose them to several diseases like common cold and accidents during the course of water conveyance to Mallam's/Alaramma's house. 88% of the respondents spend most of their time begging on streets. This exposes them to several hazards, as 30% of the respondents were once involved in one form of criminal offence like rape. Also 52% of the respondents confess that they abuse cigarette, glue and Indian hemp. This may affect their health status and may become nuisance to the society. The study reveals that 18% of the respondents miss their colleagues during the course of their begging activities. As much as 76% of the respondents are not visited by their parents; if they do at all, is once in a year. Some complain that they have not seen their parents for the past four to five years. This does not build a strong relationship between parents and their children, and

could make children to become a threat to the community.

Conclusion

The research was conducted on Almajiri practices: prospects and socio-medical challenges in in Sabon Gari local Government Area Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria. From the data, the studies revealed that most of the respondents were children between the ages of 8 – 14 years. They come from poor and large families. Amajiris are exposed and exploited at very early stages of life to several forms of hazards. In their schools, there are no toilets, bathrooms, reading facilities, good environmental condition, medical care, access to electricity, water and living rooms. They are denied of basic education, parental care, love and support; their parents send them away and end begging on streets, houses, markets, food centres, going round bush plucking fruits and later become nuisance to the society. And their Mallams/Alaramma are not paid by the government or parents despite their critical condition of poverty. Qur'anic schools or tsangaya are neglected from system of education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should make Qur'anic schools, tsangaya and design curriculum to adopt formal system of education i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary education so that the teaching and learning of Qur'an could be part of our educational system. Mallams/Alaramma should have financial support from government or to have a specific scale salary or allowance. Government should aid tsangayas by providing toilets, bathrooms, boreholes, medical care centre and foods. This could reduce defecating in the bush, exposure to various form of diseases, menace of street begging etc.

There should be proper orientation programmes to be done that will enlighten the public on the aims of Almajiri. Religious orientations, seminars, conferences should be organized to the people to clarify the misinterpretation of the word "Almajiri" and its practice. General skill acquisition and development programmes should be enforced for the Mallam/Alaramma and Almajiris in their respective centres.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

- Babangida I (1993). Comparative studies between Traditional Quranic schools and modern Quranic schools in Katsina state. Unpublished thesis submitted to Department of Islamic Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- Garba I (1996). Qur'anic Schools and their roles in U.P.E scheme in Gumel, Jigawa State. Unpublished thesis submitted to Department of Islamic Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Kabir G (2002). Almajiri school system, 4th edition. Ibadan, hills publication limited pp.74-89
- Kano State Government (2012) Report of Kano State Committee on Almajiris
- Sa'id I (1992). Menance of Almajiris in Kano municipal. A paper presented at Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Salis T (1995). Impact of Islamic Education in Kano Metropolitan Nursery school on Muslim Children. Unpublished thesis submitted to Department of Islamic Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Sulaiman J (1996). Health impact of street beggers. *J. Med. Food* 10(4):70-87.
- Sule M (1994). Situation of Almajiri in Nigeria. *Res. J. Educ.* 4(10):23-30.
- Ya'u K (2001). Almajiri school system in Northern Nigeria. Paper presented at Conference organized by Qur'anic Education Review committee Katsina.

CITATIONS

- Ibrahim S (2008). Menance of street begging in Kano State. Retrieved on 3rd July, 2008, from <http://www.nationaldailies.org>.
- Perverz T (2005). Situational analysis of street children in Pakistan. Retrieved on 8th July (2008). From <http://www.NCLPA.org>.
- Yuyasa T (2005). Street Children and Education in Indonesia. Retrieved on 8th July, 2008. From <http://www.NCLPA.org>.



Journal of African Studies and Development

Related Journals Published by Academic Journals

- African Journal of History and Culture
- Journal of Media and Communication Studies
- Journal of African Studies and Development
- Journal of Fine and Studio Art
- Journal of Languages and Culture
- Journal of Music and Dance

academicJournals



Journal of African Studies and Development

Related Journals Published by Academic Journals

- African Journal of History and Culture
- Journal of Media and Communication Studies
- Journal of African Studies and Development
- Journal of Fine and Studio Art
- Journal of Languages and Culture
- Journal of Music and Dance

academicJournals