

A Pilot Study of the Challenges of Infusing Almajiri Educational System into the Universal Basic Educational Programme in Sokoto, Nigeria

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Abstract

The Almajiri falls among the category of extremely poor children in Nigeria. These children constitute about seven and half million street-begging, maladjusted, aggressive and out of schools. The menace of the Almajiri has recently attracted the attention of federal and state Governments which led to the establishment of special schools geared towards providing these children with knowledge and skills that will enable live meaningful life and contribute to national development. Therefore, this present study examines the challenges of infusing Almajiri educational system into Universal Basic educational programme in Sokoto State Nigeria. The target population of the study comprised of all the teachers in all the Almajiri Model schools in Sokoto. The sample involved sixty (60) teachers who were randomly selected from different Almajiri Model schools. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. Data were analysed with frequency count and percentages. The results of the findings revealed that the programme is being adversely affected by some problems such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor planning and supervision and poor public enlightenment programme. The study also made recommendation for solving these challenges.

Introduction

Education as a source of knowledge all over the world is the only key to unlock the door of development and progress of any nation. Knowledge serves as fundamental sources of socio-economic status where development depend on. No nation in the world today can achieve greatness if the youth therein, its greatest asset and successor generation can't access quality education. This is more understandable in today's knowledge-driven world. Despite this acknowledgement, seven and half million children are reported to be roaming about aimlessly on the street of Nigeria, without access to quality education particularly in Northern part of the country as a result of learning Islamic injunction known as "Almajiri" (Adetoro, 2010)

The word "Almajiri emanated from Arabic word "Al-muhajirun" which came from prophet Muhammed to indicate those of his companions (Muhajirun) who migrate with him for sake of Islam from Mecca to Medina. However, the name muhajirun later came to refer to those knowledge seekers who move from one place to another in quest for knowledge like Qur'an school teacher and his pupils. In a Hadith (saying) of the Prophet in the collection Al-tirmidhi (1980), the Prophet is quoted to said "the search for knowledge is obligatory upon every muslim". The Hadith did not discriminate against age or status. In other Hadith collection by Wali'al-din (1977) (Mishkat al-masabih) the prophet said " go in search of knowledge even to china" (Ifijeh & James 2012). The above quoted Hadith shows that, the quest for knowledge known no geographical, social or religion boundary. These and many others similar Hadith propelled Muslim in the whole world to go in search of knowledge. In the northern part of Nigeria Almajiri refers to a traditional method of acquiring and memorizing the glorious Qur'an where boys at their tender age are sent out by their parent or guardians to other villages, town or cities for acquiring Qur'anic Education under a knowledgeable Islamic scholar called Mallam (teacher) (Yusha'u, Tsafe, Babangida & Lawal, 2013)

In Nigeria, Almajiri system started in the 11th century, as a result of the involvement of Borno ruler in Qur'an literacy. Seven hundred years later, the Sokoto Caliphate was founded principally through an Islamic revolution based on the teaching of the Holy Qur'an. These two empires run similar Qur'anic learning which over time came to be known as the Almajiri system of education (Ifijeh & James 2012). The Almajiri educational system was made under Mallam (teacher) and Almajiri (pupils) where teaching and learning process are taking place. The mallam have privilege of taken children that brought from the nooks and corners of state by parents for Islamic education with a little stipend for accommodate and feeding of the child (Almajiri), with increase in the number of Almajiri it became a burden in the neck of mallam who have taken more than what they can cater for; consequently, made him impose the Almajiri(s) were made to beg for alms for their sustenance. That is why Almajiri are being found everywhere in the society market, car park, restaurant, University street to street and among other singing, begging and praying, appealing to the mercy for alms (money) (Sule, 2002).

Adetoro (2012) classified Almajiri into three different categories are follows:

Kolo (infants - age 5 - 15 years) who engage in street begging

The Titibiri (Adolescent - age 16 - 21 years) who always lead the kolo in street begging

The Gardi (Adults – age 22years and above) who engage in intensive and laborious service such as struck-pushing forewords as means of live hood

He further explains that kolo and titibiri always form bulk of the Almajiri that are sent out away from home mostly from neighboring country like Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Mali and among others are entrusted into the care of unpaid and untrained Islamic Qur'anic teacher (mallam). Under each Islamic teacher there could be about 30-150 of Almajiri who are always sent out for alms begging as means of survival and feeding their master. Based on this system, which is found upon the teaching of Qur'an and hadith, what was then northern part of Nigeria was educated in a complete way of life, including governance, traditional, crafts, trades and even modes of dressing (Abdulqadir, 2003).

In the recent time federal Government of Nigeria made attempts to integrate western education with Islamic education so as to transcend the Almajiri to functional member of noble society. Merging the two system of education together to curtail the plight of street begging by children and youth pursuing Qur'anic education is a welcome development. The system is to accommodate the Almajiri who are coming to the city from far and near village for Qur'anic knowledge. The purpose of integrating the two system of education is to provide education opportunities for this category of children to acquire Qur'an education as well as basic western education so as to improve their living condition. By doing these, it will enable each state of the federation to achieve Educational for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Integration means merging two things or two systems together to form a whole. In this case, it is the combination of the western system of education with Qur'anic system of education. The concept of integration as clearly understood is the introduction of the elements of basic education i.e. the literacy, numeracy and life skills of the western type of education into the traditional Qur'anic school system (Mahuta, 2009). In other words, it connotes injecting the essential components of public schools into Qur'anic schools. The concept of integration means to join elements of basis education that is, western type of education together with traditional Qur'anic school systems without interfering with the goals of the Qur'anic school system.

The purpose of the integration is to strengthen the ability of the learners to read, write and memorize the Qur'an in a conducive learning atmosphere and to introduce secular subjects of western education into Qur'anic school system thereby making the products literate, numerate and equipped them with manipulative and survival skills in the modern system to meet the goals of Education For All (EFA) and to eradicate Almajiri method of involving teenage children into street begging, hard labour, unhygienic condition, social vices and also to provide adequate and qualitative instructional materials in both Islamic and secular subjects (Yusha'u, Tsafe, Babangida & Lawal, 2013). The integrated Almajiri schools are to offer the following core subjects, English, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies together with Hausa, Computer, PHE and Handwriting under formal system of education with Agriculture, Trade, Commerce, Handcraft, Mechanic, Vulcanizing and Islamic Calligraphy among others as vocational skills of their curriculum. While the component to the curriculum of non-formal education is Qur'anic education which involve strong foundation in recitation of the Glorious Qur'an and Islamic studying include Qira'atul Qur'an, Tahfeez, Tajweed, Arabic, Islamic Studies, Tauhid, Hadith, Fiqh and Sira (Yusha'u, Tsafe, Babangida & Lawal, 2013).

Consequently, national guidelines for the development and integration of the Almajiri education into basic education were developed and printed to guide the states, local governments and nongovernmental organizations, which may collaborate with the federal government on the project to meet its objectives and sustainability. The guidelines have three models. Model One focuses on the integration of traditional Tsangaya-Qur'anic School into the formal education system within its original location. In Model two, model boarding Almajiri schools involving the establishment of model boarding schools to serve a group of Tsangaya/Qur'anic schools within a given location. Model Three is the integration of basic education in established Islamiyyah and Ma'ahad schools (Media trust, 2013). A total of 125 Almajiri model schools are being constructed in 27 states of the Federation, out of which over 80 have been completed and the remaining ones are in their final stages of completion. The completed schools are being handed over to the state governments to facilitate enrolment and employment of teachers to man them. The responsibility of constructing the schools was shared among the funding agencies of both basic and tertiary education. The Universal Basic Education, UBEC, is constructing 89 of these schools, out of which 64 have been fully completed and furnished with learning taking place, while the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, TETFund, constructed 35 of these schools, which were already commissioned last year. On the November 2, 2013, President Jonathan performed a symbolic launching of the 64 newly completed and furnished Almajiri schools in Sokoto state, signifying a laudable achievement in the development of the basic education subsector in that part of the country. The 64 schools commissioned are located in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Bauchi, Yobe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Oyo, Osun, Lagos, Ondo, Ekiti, Edo, Rivers, Kogi, Niger, Katsina, Taraba and Nasarawa States (Media trust, 2013).

The Model Almajiri educational has been implemented for more than one year since inception in 2013. Like any other innovations in education, there has been verbal report on some issues revolving around non availability of relevant curriculum in school, inadequacy of well trained and qualified teachers, poor funding, inadequacy infrastructural for learning, poor sanitation, lack of adequate sensitization and mobilization, and among others. Thus, this study tends to investigate on the challenges facing infusing Almajiri educational system in Sokoto State.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether integrating Almajiri educational system into Universal Basic Educational programme system successfully. Specifically, the study to:

1. Determine how sufficient is the available funding for effective implementation of the model Almajiri schools
2. Examine the adequacy of the infrastructure facilities for proper implementation of the model Almajiri educational system
3. Examine the adequacy of the existing public enlightenment and social mobilization for the model Almajiri educational system
4. Assess the level of planning and supervision of the model Almajiri education system

Research questions

The following are the research question raised to guide the conduct of this study.

1. Is there sufficient funding to ensure effective implementation of the model Almajiri educational system?
2. Are there adequate infrastructural to facilitate proper implement of the model Almajiri educational system?
3. Has there been adequate public enlightenment and social mobilization for the model Almajiri educational system?
4. Has there been proper monitoring and supervision of the model Almajiri educational system?

Method

Descriptive survey research design was employed in carrying out this study. The descriptive survey assesses the situation inferences and generalized. Thus, in this study respondent responses on infusing Almajiri educational system into universal basic educational programme were surveyed and data collected were subjected to statistical analysis. The target populations for this study was defined as all teachers in the model Almajiri schools in Sokoto State of Nigeria. The sample consisted of sixty (60) teachers that were randomly selected across the five (5) Model Almajiri schools in Sokoto State. The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was validated by three experts in the area of measurement and evaluation for fact and content validation. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part one consisted of personal data of the respondent. Part two sought information on funding, infrastructural facilities, public enlightenment and social mobilization and planning/supervision of implementation of Model Almajiri educational system. The researcher personally administered 60 (sixty) questionnaire on the respondents who formed the sample used for the study. The data collection exercise took three weeks to complete. The data obtained from this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages.

Results

1. **Research question 1:** Is there sufficient funding to ensure effective implementation of the model Almajiri educational system?

Table 1: Analysis of respondents' opinions on sufficient funding

S/N	Items	Number of positive response	%	Number of negative response	%	Total
1	Are most of the Almajiri Model schools adequately funded in terms of food?	13	21.7	47	78.3	60
2	Are fund available to the model Almajiri schools judiciously utilized?	26	43.3	34	56.7	60
3	Are teacher in Model Almajiri schools adequately remunerated?	16	26.7	44	73.3	60
4	Are most of the Model Almajiri schools adequately funded in terms of school uniform?	22	36.7	38	63.3	60
5	Are instructional materials provided for model Almajiri school	19	31.7	41	68.3	60
	Average	19.2	32.0	40.8	68.0	60

In table 1, the response to item 1 indicate that 13(21.7%) respondents agreed that most of the schools are adequately funded for effective implementation of the Almajiri education programme while 47(78.3%) of the respondent disagree. In item 2, 28 (46.7%) respondents responded positively to the statements while 26(43.3%) responded negatively that fund available the Almajiri educational programme are not judiciously utilized to ensure the success of the programme. Responses to item 3, indicated that 16(26.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while the remaining 44 (73.3%) respondents disagreed with the statement. In item 4, 22(36.7%) respondents agreed with the statement while 38 (63.3) respondents disagreed that not adequately fund to provide foods for the pupils. Respondents agreed with item 5, 19(31.7%) while 41(68.3%) responded negatively that teaching and learning are not fully provided for effective and efficiency due to inadequate of funding for the programme

The overall analysis of the table shows that 19.2 (32.0%) of the respondents agreed that funding is available for effective implementation of the programme is sufficient while the remaining 40.8 (68.0%) reacted negatively. Therefore, the analysis shows that there is insufficient funding for the Almajiri education programme which leads to ineffective implementation of the scheme.

Research Question 2: Are there adequate infrastructural facilities to facilitate proper implement of the model Almajiri educational system?

Table 2: Analysis of respondents' opinion on adequate infrastructural facilities

S/N	Items	Number of positive response	%	Number of negative response	%	Total
6	Do schools in model Almajiri school have adequate classroom?	39	65	21	35	60
7	Are furniture adequately provided for Model Almajiri school?	34	56.7	26	43.3	60
8	Are facilities adequately and properly maintained?	19	31.7	41	68.3	60
9	Are social amenities like water and electricity provided in the model Almajiri school?	42	70	18	30	60
10	Are water provided enough in Model Almajiri school	27	45	33	55	60
	Average	32.2	53.7	27.8	46.3	60

With regards to item 6, 39 (65%) respondents agreed that Almajiri model school have adequate classroom for effective implementation of the programme while 21 (35%) respondents disagreed with the statements. In item 7, 34 (56.7%) respondents agreed while 26 (43.3%) respondents responded negatively. Response to item 8, shows that 19(31.7%) respondents agreed with the statement while 41(68.3%) disagreed with it. Respondents responded positively 42(70%) to item 9, while 18 (30%) negatively to the statement. In item 10, 27(45%) respondents agreed with the statement while 33(55%) disagreed with it.

In the analysis shown in table 2, 32.2 (53.7%) of the respondents agreed that adequate infrastructural facilities are available for proper implementation of the programme while the remaining 27.8 (46.3%) disagreed

with it. The analysis also shows that the infrastructural facilities available to the Almajiri educational programme are adequate to facilitate proper implementation of the programme.

Research Question 3: Has there been adequate public enlightenment and social mobilization for the model Almajiri educational system?

Table 3: Analysis of respondents' opinions on adequate public enlightenment and social mobilization

S/N	Items	Number of positive response	%	Number of negative response	%	Total
11	public enlightenment has not led to increased enrolment into model Almajiri schools	23	38.3	37	61.7	60
12	Has social mobilization enhanced community participation in Model Almajiri schools?	19	31.7	41	68.3	60
13	Are the three major language employed (Hausa, Yoruba & Igbo) in enlightening the public on Almajiri Model school?	25	41.7	35	58.3	60
14	Have Almajiri pupils reduced roaming about due to public enlightenment?	35	58.3	25	41.7	60
15	Is the public aware of Model Almajiri schools?	14	23.3	46	76.7	60
	Average	23.2	36.7	36.8	61.3	60

From item 11, the data show that 23(38.3%) respondents agreed with the statement while 37(61.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, item 12, revealed 19(31.7%) of the respondents reacted positively to the statement while the remaining 41(68.3%) disagreed with the statement. Responses to items 13, shows that 25 (41.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 35(58.3%) reacted negatively to the statement. In item 14, show that 35(58.3%) respondents responded positively with the statements while 25(41.7%) disagreed with it. Respondents agreed 14(23.3%) with item 15, while 46(76.7%) disagreed with the statements.

From the analysis of the table 3, reveals that 23.2(36.7%) respondents agreed that adequate public enlightenment and mobilization for the programme while the remaining 36.8 (61.3%) disagreed with it. This indicates that there has not been adequate public enlightenment and social mobilization for the programme.

Research Question 4: Has there been proper planning and supervision of the model Almajiri educational system?

Table 4: Analysis of respondent opinions on proper monitoring and supervision

S/N	Items	Number of positive response	%	Number of negative response	%	Total
16	Planning and supervision are not necessary for the Model Almajiri schools	42	70	18	30	60
17	Is monitoring and supervision promoting effectiveness of Model Almajiri school?	38	63.3	22	36.7	60
18	Are there regular inspection and supervision of programme in the model Almajiri schools?	14	23.3	46	76.7	60
19	Is monitoring and supervision the major determinant for effectiveness in Model Almajiri schools?	34	56.7	26	43.3	60
20	There is adequate monitoring and supervision of activities in the Model Almajiri schools	11	18.3	49	81.7	60
	Average	27.8	46.3	32.2	53.7	60

With responses to item 16, 42(70%) respondents reacted positively to the statement while 18(30%) disagreed with the statement. Item 17 shows that 38(63.3%) agreed with the statement while 22(36.7%) reacted negatively to the statement. Response to items 18, indicate that 14(23.3%) of the respondent agreed while 46(76.7%) respondent disagreed with the statement that there is no regular inspection and supervision of the programme. In item 19, 34 (56.7%) respondents positively with statement while 26(43.3%) disagreed. Responses to item 20, 11 (18.3%) agreed with the statement while 49 (81.7%) reacted negatively to the statement there is no adequate monitoring and supervision for activities in the Model Almajiri schools

The overall analysis of the table shows that 27.8(46.3%) respondents agreed while the remaining 32.2(53.7%) respondents disagreed with the research. This indicates that there has not been proper monitoring and supervision of the programme. This shows that monitoring and supervision are not adequate to protect the programme from laziness, truancy, lateness, dishonestly and also safeguard of all activities in the Model Almajiri schools.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the Almajiri educational programme is inadequately funded thus hindering the success of the programme. This finding is corroborates by Maiyashi (2003); Pete and Isaac (2013), reported that percentage of the budget allocated to education is very low and also government has not performed up to expectation in terms of funding has never allocated up to 26% as recommendation by UNESCO of its annual budget to education in any given years in order to achieve the objectives of peace, citizenship, and security (Education for All EFA-Global Monitoring Report, 2005). This has adverse effect on the effective implementation of the programme (Ja'far, 2009). However, the study revealed that infrastructural facilities are adequately provided to facilitate proper implementation of Model Almajiri educational programme. Furniture's such as chairs and desks are adequately provided. It should be noted that facilities available are not properly maintained and the school have adequate classroom for the implementation of Model Almajiri educational programme.

However, monitoring and supervision are crucial determinant for effective implementation of the Almajiri educational programme has it revealed from findings that it protects the programme from laziness, truancy dirtiness, lateness, dishonesty and among others for the pupils and teachers in the school. Although the system need more attentions on adequate monitoring and supervision for all activities in programme for the effective and efficiency of the programme to strive. This practice is a quality control measure and also serves as a check and balances towards ensuring that there is efficiency and effective at this level of education.

On the issue of the public enlightenment and social mobilization for the programme, the study revealed that these practice are inadequate and defective. The public enlightenment was not properly carried out using all the three major indigenous language to ensure that everyone in the society understand the need for the integrated Almajiri education system. This creates a communication gap and make understanding difficult as a greater percentage of the enlightenment was done only with Hausa language. To compound this problem, the enlightenment programme has not really spread across the metropolis. The rural populace is not fully aware of the Almajiri integration programme. This makes difficult as a most of the people especially those in the rural unwilling to participate in the implementation of the programme.

Conclusion

From the aforementioned findings, it is obvious that the integrated Almajiri educational system is a laudable programme which was designed to provide quality education for all Nigeria school age. It has been adversely affected by problems such as sufficient funding and poor public enlightenment programme these are factors hinge full implementation and higher turnover of Almajiri pupils into the system.

The implication of these finding is that the implementation of the integrated Almajiri educational programme would be adversely affected and thus also lead to poor achievement of the goals and objective for which the scheme was set for.

Recommendations

Having identified the problems of implementation of integration of Almajiri education programme in Sokoto State, The following are the recommendations for ameliorating the situation in order to achieve effective implementation of the programme.

1. Government at all level should carry out proper planning for this level of education .This can only be achieved when there is an accurate data on the pupils/students expected to be benefit from the programme, number of facilities such as building and equipment needed for the programme. This would enable the government determine what to do, how to do it, when to do it and for whom to do it.
2. The Federal and State Government through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should provide improved funding for this level of education to ensure an enhanced implementation of the programme. Every other component or factor in education is directly or indirectly hinge on funding.

3. The governments through the National Commission for Mass literacy, Adult and non formal education (NMEC) should provide adequate enlightenment for the members of the society .Through this, the public would be educated on the need to participate fully in the programme.
4. Educational experts such as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should carry out research to inform government on the number of school age who are still roaming about the street, for proper planning and implementations

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