

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENHANCED ALMAJIRI SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

TIJJANI IBRAHIM Ph.D

Department of Islamic Studies

Yusuf Maitama Sule Federal University of Education, Kano

08039246149

Abstract

The Almajiri system of Islamic education has remained an important aspect of educational and religious development in Northern Nigeria. However, the deterioration of the system over time has contributed to the increasing incidence of begging, destitution, dependency and other socio-economic challenges among many Almajiri pupils. This paper examines the significance of an enhanced Almajiri system of Islamic education to poverty alleviation in Northern Nigeria. The study adopts a qualitative and historical research approach based on documentary sources, including relevant books, journal articles, government documents and other available literature on Almajiri education and poverty alleviation. The paper finds that, in the pre-colonial period, the Almajiri system was supported by the state, communities, parents, zakat and endowment institutions, while pupils also acquired productive and vocational skills such as farming, trade, tailoring, weaving and other occupations. The decline in institutional support and the increasing inability of teachers and parents to cater adequately for pupils contributed to the present condition in which many Almajirai are associated with poverty, begging and dependency. The study further finds that enhancing the Almajiri system through the integration of Islamic education with conventional education, vocational training and skills acquisition can improve the productive capacity and socio-economic opportunities of Almajiri pupils. The paper concludes that a properly enhanced and sustained

Almajiri education system can contribute significantly to poverty alleviation in Northern Nigeria by equipping pupils with relevant knowledge and productive skills for self-reliance. It therefore recommends sustained government support, effective stakeholder participation and the provision of educational, welfare, vocational and skills-development opportunities for Almajiri pupils and their teachers.

Keywords: Almajiri, Islamic Education, Poverty Alleviation, Skills Acquisition, Northern Nigeria.

Introduction

The Almajiri system of Islamic education has long been an important part of the religious, educational and social history of Northern Nigeria. Traditionally centred on the teaching of the Qur'an and other aspects of Islamic knowledge under the guidance of a *Mallam*, the system historically contributed to Islamic scholarship, literacy, moral development and the acquisition of productive skills. Almajiri pupils and their teachers were also involved in activities such as farming, trading, weaving and tailoring, which contributed to their livelihoods and the wider economy (Abdulqadir, 2013; Ibrahim, 2013). The term *Almajiri* is derived from the Arabic word *Al-Muhajir*, meaning a person who leaves his place of residence in search of knowledge. In Northern Nigeria, it generally refers to a child who leaves home to pursue Qur'anic and Islamic education under the supervision of a Mallam. Historically, the system was supported by the state, communities, parents, zakat and endowment institutions (Abdulqadir, 2013; Ibrahim, 2013).

Over time, however, the system has experienced significant deterioration. Although colonial rule contributed to the weakening of its traditional support structures, the present challenges cannot be attributed solely to colonialism. Inadequate government support, poverty among families and

the inability of some parents and teachers to adequately cater for pupils have also contributed to the system's decline. Consequently, many Almajiri pupils have become vulnerable to begging, destitution, dependency and other forms of survival activities.

The contemporary condition of the Almajiri system has therefore become a major educational and social concern in Northern Nigeria. While it continues to provide Qur'anic and moral education, many pupils have limited access to literacy, conventional education, vocational training and adequate welfare support. This limits their opportunities for personal development and productive participation in society and raises the need to strengthen the system without undermining its religious and moral foundations. Poverty remains a major social and developmental challenge across the world, particularly in developing countries. It is associated with inadequate access to resources and basic needs and exposes individuals and societies to deprivation, inequality and insecurity (Muhammad, 2011). In Nigeria, poverty affects a significant proportion of the population and remains a major obstacle to socio-economic development (Mago, 2006). The relationship between poverty and the challenges confronting the Almajiri system is particularly important in Northern Nigeria. Poverty may limit the ability of parents and guardians to provide adequate care and educational opportunities for their children, while limited access to literacy, vocational training and productive skills can restrict the future economic opportunities of Almajiri pupils and increase dependency.

Enhancing the Almajiri system through the integration of Qur'anic and Islamic education with relevant conventional education, literacy, vocational training and skills acquisition offers a possible response to these challenges. Such enhancement seeks not to replace the Islamic foundation of the system but to strengthen it by expanding the educational and economic opportunities available to its pupils. By combining

religious education with relevant knowledge and practical skills, the system can better prepare learners for productive and self-reliant lives. It is against this background that this paper examines the significance of an enhanced Almajiri system of Islamic education to poverty alleviation in Northern Nigeria. The paper argues that strengthening the system through relevant education and skills acquisition can reduce dependency, improve productive capacity and expand the socio-economic opportunities available to Almajiri pupils.

The Significance of an Enhanced Almajiri System of Islamic Education to Poverty Alleviation

The enhancement of the Almajiri system of Islamic education is significant because the system remains an important means through which many children in Northern Nigeria receive Islamic and Qur'anic education. However, the deterioration of the traditional system has created serious challenges for many pupils, particularly in the areas of begging, destitution, dependency and limited access to productive skills. Therefore, enhancing the system does not necessarily mean abandoning its Islamic foundation; rather, it involves improving the existing system in a manner that preserves its religious and moral objectives while incorporating relevant knowledge, skills and opportunities necessary for productive living.

Historically, the Almajiri system was not entirely disconnected from economic and productive activities. The paper shows that pupils and teachers were involved in farming, trade, weaving, tailoring, gardening, cobbling and other community services. These activities contributed to the well-being of the learners and their communities. Almajiri pupils also had opportunities to acquire vocational and occupational skills alongside their Islamic education. The enhancement of the present system can therefore build upon these historical features by systematically integrating vocational education and skills acquisition into the curriculum.

An enhanced Almajiri system is significant to poverty alleviation because education and skills development can improve the capacity of individuals to participate in productive economic activities. When Almajiri pupils acquire literacy, numeracy, vocational and occupational skills in addition to Qur'anic and Islamic knowledge, they may have greater opportunities for self-employment and other forms of productive work. This can reduce dependence on begging and other menial activities for survival. Furthermore, the integration of conventional education with Islamic education can expand the opportunities available to Almajiri pupils. The acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills can enable them to participate more effectively in modern economic and social life while maintaining the moral and religious foundation provided by Islamic education. In this way, enhancement can create a connection between education and livelihood by preparing pupils for productive participation in society.

The enhancement of the Almajiri system is also significant because it can improve the welfare and human development of the pupils. Adequate educational opportunities, nutrition, clothing, housing, health care and skills training can contribute to the proper development of Almajiri pupils and reduce the conditions of deprivation associated with poverty. Such support can also improve the learning environment and reduce the pressure on pupils and teachers to depend on begging for survival.

Therefore, the significance of enhancing the Almajiri system lies in its potential to transform the system from one increasingly associated with poverty, begging and dependency into one that combines Islamic and moral education with literacy, vocational skills and productive opportunities. If properly implemented and sustained, such an enhanced system can contribute to poverty alleviation by promoting self-

reliance, improving employable and vocational skills, reducing dependency and enabling Almajiri pupils to participate more meaningfully in the socio-economic development of Northern Nigeria.

The Concept of Poverty

There are various definitions of poverty presented by different scholars. This paper will consider a few of them. Muhammad (2011) considers poverty as the condition or quality of being poor and the condition of having little or no wealth. It is the deficiency or inadequate supply, meaning that there exists lack in the face of need. According to Oladunni (1999), poverty is viewed in terms of insufficient income for securing the basic necessities of life such as food, potable water, clothing and shelter. Haralambus and Herald (1980) defined poverty as absolute issues which involve human needs and are measured in terms of resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. Poverty also implies not having good food, poor drinking water, poor sanitation, poor environmental condition, low rate of energy consumption, inadequate educational opportunities, poor health status due to inadequate health care services, lack of productive assets, general lack of economic infrastructure and lack of active participation in the decision making process either as it affects the individuals or in national arena be it managerial or political (Oladunmi, 1999). From an Islamic perspective, poverty is not understood merely as the absence of income or material wealth. Peerzade (1997) explains that Islamic teachings give considerable attention to the condition of the poor, indigent and destitute, while the Qur'an, Sunnah and writings of Muslim scholars provide guidance on identifying and supporting those in need. This perspective shows that poverty involves a condition in which individuals lack sufficient means to meet their essential needs and require social and institutional support.

Similarly, Salleh (2017) argues that poverty should be understood from a broader Islamic perspective that goes beyond material deprivation. According to him, poverty has both material and spiritual dimensions and should be considered within the wider context of human wellbeing and development. This understanding suggests that poverty affects not only the economic condition of individuals but also their capacity to live meaningful and productive lives.

Furthermore, Maikabara and Zakariyah (2020), drawing from the Qur'an, Sunnah and the objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*), emphasise that poverty alleviation is closely connected with the promotion of human welfare and dignity. Their perspective suggests that addressing poverty requires attention to livelihood, socio-economic wellbeing and the creation of opportunities that enable individuals to become productive and self-reliant members of society.

Poverty Level in Nigeria

Nigeria's official document (NEEDS 2004) acknowledges that poverty exists in Nigeria. Two-thirds of the Nigerian people are poor, despite living in a country with vast potential wealth. According to National Planning Commission (2004), in 1980, an estimated 27 Percent of Nigerians lived in poverty. By 1999, about 70 percent of the population had income of less than \$1 (one dollar) a day - and the figures have raised since then. (N.P.C 2004). Statistics indicate variation of poverty level across the country, the highest proportion of the poor people live in the North West Nigeria, and the lowest live in the South East Nigeria.

The minimizing or removal of the factors which contribute to poverty is poverty alleviation which is providing citizens with those congenial means of achieving socio-economic independence. Poverty alleviation describes strategies to eradicate poverty. Poverty alleviation is any process which

seeks to reduce the level of poverty in a community, or amongst a group of people or country. Some of the popular methods used in eradicating poverty are education, economic development and income distribution.

It must be noted that statistics have shown that right from time, majority of Nigerians lived and still live in abject poverty leading to serial efforts by successive governments to alleviate poverty in the country. However, the efforts made towards poverty alleviation have not been enforced constitutionally, as the programme efforts lack continuity, transparency and government political will. Therefore, the ad-hoc base poverty alleviation in the country raises doubts on the genuine nature of these efforts. Abayomi (2006:26), agrees with this when he asserts that, "we have had several poverty alleviation programmes but the military have always made the programme elitist in nature and outlook. Actually, they are not only programmes initiated during military administrations that have failed other civilian programmes have also failed".

Poverty alleviation programmes such as the Green Revolution, Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programme, Family Economic Advancement Programme and the National Poverty Eradication Programme have experienced varying degrees of failure or limited success due to problems associated with policy formulation, implementation and sustainability. Studies have identified factors such as poor programme design, corruption, inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, ineffective targeting and the limited involvement of beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders as major constraints to the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria (Adzu & Babanyaya, 2022; Gidigbi, 2023).

The limited participation of beneficiaries in the formulation, planning and implementation of poverty alleviation

programmes has particularly been identified as a major weakness of some interventions. When the people who are expected to benefit from such programmes are excluded from decision-making and implementation processes, they may have little sense of ownership and commitment to the programmes. Effective poverty alleviation therefore requires a participatory and people-oriented approach that involves beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders in the planning, implementation and evaluation of interventions (Adzu & Babanyaya, 2022).

An Overview on Almajiri Islamic Education System

The word Almajiri is derived from the Arabic word Al-Muhajir, which literally means an emigrant or a person who leaves his place of residence in search of knowledge. In Northern Nigeria, the term traditionally refers to a child who leaves home to pursue Qur'anic and Islamic education under the guidance of a Mallam. Historically, the Almajiri system was an important institution of Islamic education and was supported through contributions from the state, communities, parents, zakat and endowment institutions. The system was therefore not originally established as a system of begging or destitution (Abdulqadir, 2013).

The British colonial occupation, however, contributed significantly to the deterioration of the institutional structures that had supported the Almajiri system. With the establishment of colonial rule in Northern Nigeria, the political authority of the emirs was substantially weakened and control over state resources was transferred to the colonial administration. According to Abdulqadir (2013), the withdrawal of state support from Qur'anic schools deprived many traditional Almajiri institutions of an important source of financial and institutional assistance. Consequently, many Mallams found it increasingly difficult to cater adequately for the growing number of pupils under their care.

It is important, however, not to conclude that the British directly turned Almajiri pupils into beggars. Rather, colonial policies and administrative changes weakened the political, economic and institutional arrangements that had previously sustained the system. The loss of institutional support created conditions under which some Mallams and pupils increasingly depended on begging, charity and menial work for survival. Thus, colonialism can be understood as an important historical factor in the deterioration of the system, rather than the sole or direct cause of begging among Almajiri pupils.

The present challenges of the Almajiri system must also be understood within the context of developments after colonial rule. The continued neglect of many Qur'anic schools by successive governments, inadequate funding, increasing poverty among families, rapid population growth and the inability of some parents and Mallams to adequately provide for the welfare and education of pupils have further contributed to the persistence of begging, destitution and dependency among some Almajiri children. Therefore, while British colonial policies contributed to the weakening of the traditional Almajiri system, the contemporary condition of the system is the result of a combination of historical and post-colonial factors.

The Almajiri Islamic Education System in the Pre-Colonial Era

The spread of Islam and Quranic education are culturally united in sub-saharan Africa. Islam reached this region over a millennium ago, especially the old Ghana and Borno empires. According to Djao (2006) trade and commerce were obviously the most important tools in this endeavour, with the spread of Islam, intellectual development and literacy was introduced to many parts of West Africa. It is a well-known fact that Islamic education especially Quranic education enjoyed remarkable

development after the jihad of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and this led to the emergence of Islamic scholars in northern Nigeria. Ozigin and Odu (1991) state that:

“There were many Islamic scholars at Kano, Katsina and Zaria, all of which flourished as centres of learning. He said that Lugard estimated that at the beginning of this century (1914) there were over 25,000 Islamic primary (Quranic) schools in the north attended by about 250,000 pupils (Almajiris)”.

Abdulqadir (2013) opined that the Dan-Fodio revolution brought with it some modifications; the establishment of an inspectorate of Quranic literacy. The inspectors reported directly to the emir of the province, concerning all matters relating to the school. It was argued that, this period was the height of Quranic education in the northern Nigeria.

The schools in those days were funded and maintained by the Islamic state, the communities, the parents, the zakkah fund, the waqaf (endowment fund) and the contributions of the teachers and the pupils through farming and other community services such as laundry, cobbling, gardening, weaving, sewing and so on as charity to the community that supplemented the well-being of the society. K/Nassarawa (2006) observed that in the commercial city of Kano the products of Almajiri schools contributed immensely, then and now to the economic development of the great city. He said that majority of the businessmen in Kano markets are once pupils and teachers of Almajiri schools.

These contributions of Almajiri education is not limited to Kano only but extend to all states in the northern Nigeria. Alabos (2003) said that the system, though funded was not over dependent on the state. The students were at liberty to acquire a vocational and occupational skills in between their

Islamic lessons and so were involved in farming, fishing, well construction, masonry, production, trade, tailoring, small businesses etc. He explained that, many of them were the farmers of the northern Nigerian cotton and groundnut pyramids. They formed the majority of the traders in the commercial city of Kano. They were the leather tanners and leather shoe and bag makers in the old Sokoto empire. The cap weavers and tailors in Zaria city were said to be Almajiris. They were recruited by the British as columbite and tin miners in Jos city which was then under Bauchi.

This system of education according to Shaaba (2007) has in the past produced scholars, architects, historians, philosophers, geographers, mathematicians and scientists. It has also laid the foundation stone of the system of administration in Northern Nigeria.

The Almajiri Islamic Education in the Colonial Era

With the invasion and colonization of northern Nigeria by the British, the emirs lost control of their territories and the colonial masters took over the state treasury. Some of the emirs were killed and some were sent into exile. Those who were subjugated lost control of their territories and accepted their new roles as mere traditional rulers used only for the indirect rule. The British deliberately abolished state funding in respect of Almajiri education system arguing that, they were religious schools. With loss of support from the government its immediate community and the helpless emirs, the Almajiri system collapsed like a pile of cards. Having no financial supports, the Almajiris and their teachers resorted to begging and other menial jobs for survival. This is certainly the genesis of the predicament of the Almajiri system of education today (Abdulqadir, 2013).

The Post – Independence Period

The Almajiri system in this period witnesses another mass destruction. The government neglected the Almajiri schools and the mallams could no more cater for the increasing number of the Almajiris, as a result these little boys were sent into the street to beg from the good will of the general public. Many eventually became traders, drivers, and so on. Those who could make it resort to menial jobs, since they have no skills at hand. They engage in wheelbarrow pushing, touting and so on. The nomadic search for livelihood and the struggle to support the Mallam take much of their time rather than engage in learning (Alabos, 2013). Therefore, the post-independence of the country from the British, there has hardly been any serious effort to support Quranic education as a matter of state policy. The government of the defunct northern region made effort to solve the problem with a view to assist the schools professionally and financially in 1964. However, just five years after the implementation of the policy, the subsequent administration stopped the assistance. Quranic schools were once again left under the sole control of their individual proprietors (the mallams) (Khalid, 1979).

Almajiri Islamic Education and Poverty Alleviation

Generally speaking, Quranic education system places emphasis on the production of teachers (or clerics). And for those who become teachers, Quranic instruction is the first stage in the system of education that offers satisfaction does not measure only in religious terms but also in socio-economic terms.

In Hausaland, prior to the advent of colonialism, an individual's social status and opportunities were largely influenced by birth. Those born as *talakawa* (commoners) were generally expected to earn their livelihood as peasants, artisans or *bara* (clients of influential persons), whereas those born into the *basarake* (aristocratic or ruling class) enjoyed privileged social and economic positions and derived benefits

from the labour and resources of peasants, artisans, traders and slaves. However, other factors operated alongside decency-is the determination of social differentiation and mobility. One of these factors was Islamic education. The Hausa title for scholar is malam (pl. Malamai). The word is a Hausa corruption of the Arabic malam (a learned man) and is used by the Hausas as a courtesy title, similar to Mr. in English (Hiskett, 1975).

Islamic learning offered to a peasant one of the few routes for achieving upward mobility as a malam, a scribe, or a minor official in the state's patrimonial bureaucracy. Though people were indeed born into scholarly families, or traditions, either becoming scholars -in other words their pursuit of education was largely a matter of choice and conscious effort. (Abdullahi and Haruna, 2016).

The British occupation of the defunct Sokoto caliphate has divested, the Muslim scholars of nearly all their roles and influence in government and administration of their society, a completely new system of education was imposed on the society. The Arabic scripts which were used in courts and administration were replaced with Roman scripts thereby making graduates of Quranic school system of education irrelevant to the colonial administration. However, some of them who benefitted from the integration of Quranic with western education managed to hold positions in the society as area court judges, teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in government educational institutions, etc. But for the majority of the malams traditional Quranic school teaching remained their principal vocation (Talbani, 1996).

Intervention of the Nigerian Government

One of the major interventions of the Federal Government of Nigeria with regard to traditional Qur'anic schools was the inclusion of the Almajiri issue in the Compulsory, Free

Universal Basic Education Act of 2004. The Act recognised the education of special groups, including Almajiri children, as part of the broader framework of universal basic education. It states that:

Universal Basic Education means early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as nomads and immigrants, girl-child and women, Almajiri, street children and disabled groups.

The inclusion of Almajiri children in the Universal Basic Education framework represented an important policy step towards improving their access to basic education and integrating relevant aspects of conventional education with traditional Islamic education. Northern state governments and federal educational institutions such as the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Education Trust Fund (ETF), Northern Education Research Project (NERP) and the National Commission for Mass Literacy were also involved in efforts aimed at improving and integrating the Almajiri education system (Ibrahim, 2013).

A more significant reform was introduced during the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan. The Jonathan administration launched the Almajiri Model Schools Programme as part of efforts to reform and modernise the traditional Almajiri system of education. In April 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurated a repackaged and rebranded Almajiri Model School in Gagi, Sokoto State. The school was constructed with funds provided through the Education Trust Fund, now known as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Alechenu, 2012).

The central objective of the reform was not to abolish traditional Islamic education but to build upon its moral and religious foundation by integrating it with conventional education and relevant skills. According to President Jonathan, the reform was intended to provide Almajiri pupils with conventional knowledge and skills that would enable them to develop their creative and productive potentials (Alechenu, 2012).

Under the programme, the Federal Government planned to construct and equip Almajiri Model Schools and subsequently hand them over to state governments for maintenance and sustainability. The intervention involved the provision of school infrastructure, accommodation, equipment, furnishings and textbooks, as well as the development of an appropriate curriculum and capacity-building programmes for teachers. The programme was designed to expand educational opportunities for Almajiri children and reduce their vulnerability to begging, destitution and social exclusion.

The Jonathan administration also approved the construction of a number of Almajiri Model Schools across the country. According to the programme's implementation plan, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) were assigned responsibilities for constructing the schools, particularly during the initial phases of the programme (Alechenu, 2012). This intervention represented one of the most comprehensive attempts by the Federal Government to address the educational and socio-economic challenges associated with the Almajiri system.

Despite the significance of the intervention, challenges relating to policy continuity, maintenance, funding and sustainability remained. The experience of the Almajiri Model Schools therefore demonstrates that meaningful reform

requires not only the establishment of educational facilities but also sustained funding, effective implementation and continued collaboration among the Federal Government, state governments, communities, parents and Islamic scholars.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Integration Programmes

Another great landmark according to Ibrahim (2013) in the development of Quranic education is the recognition of the integration initiatives by the local and international NGOS. One of the international donor organizations that has been advocating funding as well as conducting research on the integration scheme is the COMPASS (Nigeria) with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and works in partnership with the government of Nigeria in FCT, Bauchi, Kano, Lagos and Nassarawa States (FGN, 2005), other international organizations include UNICEF and UNESCO.

Early in April 2012, former President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurated a repackaged and rebranded Almajiri school in the Gagi area of Sokoto. The school was built with ₦240 Million drawn from the defunct Education Trust Fund (now the Tertiary Education Trust Fund) (Alechenu 2012). The president stated that:

Our administration believes that the time has come for the nation to build on the moral foundation of the traditional system by providing the Almajirai with conventional knowledge and skills that will enable them to fully realize their creative and productive potentials (Alechenu 2012:59).

The president has, in the above statement, recognized the need for the reform of the more than century old system so that it

can enable the moral training and modern skill acquisition of the Almajirai and that they in turn can contribute meaningfully to society.

The then Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Professor Mahmoud Yakubu, explained that the school in Sokoto was one of many to come adding that the federal government would build and equip similar schools to be handed over to the state government for maintenance and sustenance (Alechenu 2012). The model boarding school, which is in phases, entrusts four responsibilities to the federal government: provision of funding for construction of the schools, accommodations, equipment and furnishings; provision of textbooks; designing of curriculum for use in the schools; provision of capacity building training for teachers.

Former Vice-president Namadi Sambo, speaking at the opening of a review meeting of the Almajiri education programme at the state house, remarked that the Almajiri education programme would be spread across the 36 states of the federation in order to accommodate indigent children who cannot afford basic formal education in Nigeria. In furtherance of the above assertion, a former Minister of Education, Professor Rugayyatu Rufai, said that of a total of 102 schools approved for construction for the year, 66 were handled by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) while the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) constructed 36, the first batch of which covered the 19 northern states and Edo. Rufai contended that the second phase of the programme would cover every part of the country as directed by the Vice President.

Notwithstanding the laudable nature of this new policy, however, certain issues have emerged in terms of meeting the philosophical tents of coherency, consistency, rationality, and the elimination of ambiguities. (Alechenu 2012). At this juncture, it is necessary to pause and reflect on the

philosophical implications of the remodelling of the Almajiri system of education in Nigeria. The remodelling can be classified as educational reform, which as noted by Shaaba (2007), is a planned movement that attempts to bring about a systematic change in educational theory and practice across a community or society. In other words, education reform and in this case interventionist approaches must be systematic in nature to qualify as reform. The intervention should follow a particular plan so that things are done in an orderly manner and one part relates to the other in such a way that the whole project in its entirety forms a definite holistic picture.

Conclusion

In this study attempt has been made to present the significance or otherwise of reforms and integration of Almajiri education in improving the life of the pupils of Almajiri schools that it is important to execute relevant projects all over northern Nigeria that will improve the welfare of Almajiri and improve their quality of education. The paper also draws the attention of the government and NGOs to the fact that challenges facing the reforms and development of the Almajiri schools are numerous, but the most tenable ones are; the need for a safe procedure to be followed by these governments in tackling the problems faced by the system, such as; possibility of interplay between western and Almajiri education, the eradication of begging and destitution by determining the means through which the pupils and their teachers can be channelled into work force. All this depends on the sustenance and continuity of the progress made so far.

Recommendations

The following measures are suggested as possible ways to improve Almajiri education and reduce poverty among the Almajiris and their teachers:

- i. The poverty alleviation programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria, if properly implemented can

- greatly help to curtail the menace of neglected Almajiris.
- ii. Nigerian governments at all levels, NGOs, CBOs and the press should sustain the current public and media campaign on Almajiris through enhancing more public enlightenment programme based on research, conferences, workshops, symposiums and integration strategies.
 - iii. Parents who send their children to traditional Almajiri schools should be educated so as to raise their awareness of the challenges faced by the helpless Almajiri as well as the opportunities for their development, if they are enrolled into modern Almajiri schools.
 - iv. Almajiri pupils and their teachers should be provided with adequate nutrition, clothing, housing, health care and educational opportunities, including vocational and skills training, in order to support their full development.
 - v. To ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the integration initiative, there is need to extend the enhancement of Almajiri education system to the rural areas to avoid mass migration of Almajiris from rural to urban areas.

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