



The *Almajiri* System of Learning in Northern Nigeria Current Trends Challenges and Solutions

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Abstract

The *almajirai* or Qur'anic school boarding students increasingly populate the urban centres of northern Nigeria; 'a development that has been accompanied by a steep decline in respect for the system' The *almajirai* are boys of primary and junior secondary school age mostly from rural families. This network of schools is common in northern parts of Nigeria and other parts of West Africa, notably Chad, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Niger. For most part of the day, the students are preoccupied with learning to read, write and memorize the Qur'an. In between lessons, they engage in a plethora of different activities to secure their livelihoods, notable among which is street begging. The paper is going to discuss Historical and Conceptual Issues about *Almajiri*, Socio-Economic Foundation of *Almajiranci*, *Almajiranci* as Safety Net and Coping Strategy, conclusion and recommendations.

Keywords: *Almajiri* System, Learning, Northern Nigeria, Socio-Economic Foundation of *Almajiranci*, Current Trends, Challenges and Solutions

INTRODUCTION

The term *Almajiri* is derived from its original root word in Arabic *Almuhajir* which literally means the immigrant. Due to close relationship between Hausa and Arabic Languages in many terms the Hausa assimilate it to *Almajiri* in tandem with words. Like Al-jaib – Aljiu Al-ka'ak to Alkaki, Al-khabar to labari etc. Technically *Almajiri* means a young person below the age of puberty who migrated from his ancestral abode to another place or environment with the intent or quest for Islamic knowledge in all ramifications.

In this paper, an analysis was made in order to bring to the line light the entire process of *Almajiri* system of learning right from pre-Colonial and post-colonial eras. The position of the system in sustaining Islamic train of knowledge, the challenges that bedeviled the system in our contemporary time, and the possible solutions.

From what is obtained from various symposia, public lecturer, as well as print and electronic media on the subject matter, people have mixed understandings concocting *Almajiri*, student and begging. We should understand that an *Almajiri* under the banner of search for Islamic knowledge is different from an adult beggar roaming in nooks and craning's begging to accumulate. Some people do beg in the name of religious. Political, Appeal funds, and so on. It is all forms of begging but in different camouflage.

The surprising thing is that, all these forms of begging did not attract the attention and the public outing of the society as that of *Almajiri*.

Let us face the reality, the *Almajiri* is a type of child who was deprived of the right to conventional system of learning due to lack of necessary facilities in his location, he lacked right to good health, access roads and other human basic necessities in his locality. But through *Almajiri* traditional system of learning, this type of child can endeavor to adopt to his situations and start learning at tender age which an Arabic Malam, who spiritually believed that he is discharging his duties of imparting the initial knowledge of the Glorious Qur'an for the sake of Allah alone. No salary, no allowances or any periodic remuneration. (Dashar, M and Kaltenthaler, 2019).

However, the community believed that this Mallam be given some sorts of honoring from the annual farm harvest of parents, to reciprocate his untiring efforts in giving their children the said knowledge of Islamic sciences beginning with the Qur'an. Thus, the *Almajiri* system continued to persist as a free system to these children up to our contemporary time. (Dashar, M and Kaltenthaler, 2019).

Interestingly, the *Almajiri* system of education was the dominant form of knowledge production in two leading Islamic states in the North namely Sokoto and Borno. The leaders of the two states promoted the system and supported it with state resources in terms of adequate funding and effective supervision. Sokoto Caliphate provided best example of state recognition and support for the system by establishing inspectorates of Qur'anic Education both at Caliphate and Emirate levels. Under this trend, each emirate had its own inspectorate. On every issue that related to school, the inspectors had to report directly to the emirs of their respective Emirates rather than to the Caliph. (Jackson, M 2018).

A part from state recognition and provision the system also enjoyed the support of the major stakeholders, such as the host communities, the private as well as the school pupils themselves. (Jackson, M 2018).

As a result of this partnership between the state and the society, the major cities of the northern became great centers of learning attracting scholars from different parts of the Muslim world. Consequent upon this, a great number of its intellectuals produced under the system, started to produce their own works. Scholars moved from one center to another either to acquire more knowledge or to communicate what they have learned to their pupils. (Kane, O. O, 2016).

In the past, the ability to read and speak Arabic language became the mark of distinction and education. The *Almajiri* system of education acquired the character of the vehicle for transmitting values and skills that shape the Islamicity of an individual and for developing and preparing that individual for purposeful and productive life. What is clear from the foregoing overview is that this *Almajiri* system of education was marked by future readiness which enhanced solid mobility. The expertise of its products was in high demand by both the state and the society. A part from occupying important offices of the state, they also performed important public functions required by the society, spiritually, economically and administratively. Here is what Kane (2016:43) said (9).

Although illiterates (referring to the Hausa Kings) most of these rules, surrounded themselves with Muslim Clerics on whose expertise they rely for various services including trade agreements chronicling history and providing protective talismans and charms. It was common for non-Muslim kings to solicit the services of Muslims Clerics as sacrifices including the the King of Medieval Ghana, the king of Asate in the present-day Ghana and the king of Oyo in western Nigeria in the fifteenth century.

This is a little X-ray of how the *Almajiri* system of education thrived and flourished in northern Nigeria and even parts of sub-Saharan Africa, before the occupation of the colonialist in the entire region.

The British Colonialist rule played a causal role in undermining the capacity of the *Almajiri* system of education. The colonialists imposed their own conception of education on Muslim society and privileged it over the Islamic conception of education. Muhammad, G. B, (2016).

More fundamentally they deliberately derived it of necessary state support and resources on the pretext it was a religious education, therefore it did not deserve such state support and funding. Where Islamic education was permitted, it was made a private affair devoid of public funds. If public funds were provided, a secular curriculum was imposed in the name of progress and enlightenment. (Moten 1996:10). Paradoxically, all the necessary state resources and support were provided to missionary schools. This marked the beginning of the danger signal of the process of development through which the system came to acquire undesirable features which cast doubts on its utility and relevance to the changing needs and circumstances of contemporary Muslim society, Muhammad, G. B, (2016).

As the pressure of modern time from many angles comes to undermine the capacity of the system to live up to its Islamic ideals, it becomes a grotesque caricature of itself. The system woefully fails to provide conducive and highly qualitative learning spaces to Muslim children, and therefore it becomes at odds with the changing requirements and circumstance, of contemporary Muslims society. It becomes a hallmark of human resources wastage, as it is reduced to dishing and unstilled, untrained and uneducated manpower which has no relevance to modern state and economy, as what it produces turns to be of doubtful employability, passing through the system assumes the character of counter – production exercise in futility (Jackson, 2018:7).

Historical and Conceptual Issues

The term *Almajiri* is a Hausa word for pupil or student. The word is derived from the Arabic term '*al-muhajir*', meaning the migrant. Historically, the term has its origin in the famous flight of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his compatriots from Mecca to Medina in the early days of Islam. Those who emigrated with the Prophet were known as *muhajirun* (sing. *Muhajir*), while their Medinese hosts were categorized as *ansar* (supporters). Since the Prophet was known to have admonished the Muslims to travel in search of knowledge and wisdom "even up to the great walls of

China” (Muslim, II: 29), those who respond to this precept are, to this day, referred to as *al-muhajirun* or emigrants. In this usage, therefore, the word means those who left their towns or villages, parents, friends and relations, in search of religious knowledge and scholarship. Not infrequently, it is loosely used in referring to beggars or destitute in general.

The migration of Muslim school teachers and their pupils from their villages to the urban centres is an ancient tradition, as old as the history of education in Islam. The origin of this practice is linked to the geographical spread of Islam. In order to verify whether a *hadith* was authentic, it was often necessary to travel long distances to question and learn from authorities. Muslims in Africa have been traveling in search of authorities for more than twelve centuries. The medieval Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) wrote that a scholar’s education was greatly improved by traveling in quest of knowledge because “habits acquired through contact with a teacher are more strongly and firmly rooted than those acquired through other study and lectures” (*The Muqaddimah*, 1967:427). The practice is further encouraged by the prophetic precept which guaranteed that: “whoever sets out seeking knowledge will be walking in the path of God until his return, and whoever dies while traveling for learning will be regarded as a martyr” (ibid.: 112). Acting on this command, Muslim scholars from the beginning behaved like nomads, wandering from one part of the Muslim world to the other in their insatiable quest for knowledge.

Thus, slowly, traveling came to be associated with knowledge and those who embarked on its search resorted to taking along with them disciples, abandoning all vocation, for complete devotion to their studies.

Seasonal migration of under-aged children from rural to urban centres was however never part of the features of Qur’anic education in the pre-colonial period. On the contrary, the dominant tradition was that pupils were sent out to rural areas where there was little or nothing to distract them from their studies. By the end of the nineteenth century, says Chamberlain (1975);

Students who wanted to pursue Qur’anic study seriously usually left Kano city for Eastern Kano Emirates They would spend their time in these rural areas, living frugally, often in corn stalk huts, concentrating all their energies on the Qur’an. The city, it was felt, was too full of distraction of friends, of entertainments, and the attraction of tradition ... (p.136)

Moreover, most of the students were not children. “They were advanced students completing a full reading of the Qur’an and moving on to memorization” (ibid). But as it will be demonstrated later it is possible to have Qur’anic schools without the attendant problem of *almajiranci*. According to Abba (1983), “a number of parents ... in Kano have never placed their children with itinerant *mallams* or forced them to beg for alms; and yet these children had grown up to become learned scholars” (p.197).

Socio-Economic Foundation of Almajiranci

Generally looking rough and dirty the *almajirai* who have to beg and, sometimes, work in order to feed themselves. Here too, distinction must be made between two types of pupils on the basis of duration of their migration. The first category in this rank is those whose mainly rural parents attach to selected urban-based *malam* and will not return until they ‘graduate’ which may take two or more years. It is this category of *Almajirai* that “keep the flag flying” throughout the year. Numerically, they are by far fewer than the seasonal migrants. The second category of migrant Qur’anic school pupils are those who come in the company of their *malam* from rural areas to settle temporarily in the city during the dry season and return along with their *malam* to their farms in the wet season.

Almajiranci as Safety Net and Coping Strategy

Almajiranci in northern Nigeria operates within the context of poverty. Nigeria is today considered as the poverty headquarters of the world. The United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP, 2008) ranks Nigeria 158th of the 177 poorest countries of the world. While the share of Nigeria’s population living below the poverty line has fallen from 70% in 1999 to 54% in 2005, over half the population lives on less than US \$1 per day (IMF, 2007). This translates into approximately 80 million Nigerians living in poverty, the largest concentration of poor people outside China and India. But poverty in Nigeria is not evenly distributed across the geo-political zones. The NBS (2017) report indicated that Nigeria’s poor are more likely to live in the North and are predominantly rural. The North-West and North-East had 77.7 percent and 76.3 percent poverty rates (NBS, 2017).

The dry-season Qur’anic school circulation in Northern Nigeria is characterized by the movement of school-age boys from generally smaller, mainly subsistence agricultural communities to larger, commercial and industrial communities. The pupils’ parents were mainly low-income farmers whose annual crop production was far below the requirement of their domestic consumption and expenditure.

It was understood that due to the near-total dependence of farmers on rain-fed agriculture and a corresponding absence of non-agricultural productive activities, most able-bodied men undertook dry-season circulation. Thus, the timing of *almajiranci* to coincide with the long dry-season makes economic sense. Not only do the children remain idle and unproductive during this period, but they also sponge on available and already insufficient resources.

During the long dry-season which characterized the Sudan Savanna, most Qur'anic schools in the rural areas remain closed because both the teachers and pupils have shifted their classrooms to the city. Those schools that remain in session have very few students attending them. This qualifies *almajiranci* as another dimension in rural-urban migration.

But previously, we mentioned how the system flourished before the advent of Colonial Masters, and they treacherously down played the system up to the present time. Who is to blame? Is that the government of the day? The society or the Mallams and the Pupils.

Before finding answer to these questions, let us know that, even our universally accepted conventional system of learning known as Ilimin Boko, in Northern Nigeria Governments past and present have failed to provide even the basic primary education in rural and remote areas across the country.

Some areas are still un-motorable without any modern access to basic necessities of life therefore Almajiris are mainly from those areas. It to say that, there is no prevailing *Almajiri* system of education, those children would have grown up with Jihal Al-Murakkab level i.e they can't write and read in any language. But with the system, virtually every Muslim village in the north are only illiterate in the conventional education, but they can read and write in an excellent manner of modern Arabic calligraphy let alone normal writing of communication. Thus, though some are viewing the system as an out dated, it really retained the literacy of the rural masses all over the north.

In one of my researches, I visited an area, comprising many villages with over 300 to 400 children who have no primary school for the past sixteen years. But if you go to these villages now, they know how to supplicate, pray, write and read through this system. So, whether to admit or not, the *Almajiri* system in reality has sustained the Islamic knowledge and is still producing patriotic citizens who are productive members of the society, I am one of them. I have gone through the system for sixteen years, I learned the Glorious Qur'an through the system, and I have been to many villages that cut across Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara for the purpose.

As I have mentioned, earlier this issue has attracted many accusations mostly from those that are ignorant of the system they don't even know what it means. How can a non-Muslim interpret the intrigues of *Almajiri* system? This is only evil machinations and out right with alliance the western world to down size the train of Islamic learning. This is because it is through this system of learning that many internationally recognized Islamic sages were produced such as:

- Sheikh Uthman bin Fodiyo
- Sheikh Abdullahi Gwandu (Black Arab)
- Sheikh Jibrilla (Teacher) of Sheikh ibn Fodio
- Umarul Futy
- Sheikh Abdurrahman Al-suyudy
- Sheikh Tahir Uthman Bauchi
- Sheikh Al-Atiq Sanke Kano
- Sheikh Muhammad Gibrima Ngunu
- Sheikh Muhammad Yahuza Zaria and host of others.

All these clerics have surpassed professorship in their respective field of either Qur'an, Hadith, jurisprudence or Arabic grammar and they are all Almajiris.

Before proffering solutions to the current challenges by this system particularly in Northern Nigeria, we are warning the stoning terms those ignorant Muslims who are blindly accusing the *Almajiri* system calling for its total abolishment without due preponderance to its implications.

The quest for food, clothing or shelter undergone by the children under *Almajiri* system was clearly mentioned in both Qur'anic and prophetic traditions. And Islam highly encourages is giving out to whoever falls in need, regardless of his race, status, lineage, child, man or women, whether rich or poor as per as he or she is in need. (Suva Al-Duha 9:10) (Al-Ma'un 2-3 – 8) (Yusuf 88).

And in the Sunnah, Abu Dawud narrates that “the prophet SAW used to ask his companions “Is there any one of you who fed a miskeen today” Alhadith.

And there was also a Hadith reported by Qatadah that, the prophet May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him said “One of you should not decline to give to the beggar if he asks, even if you see a bunch of gold in his hands?

All these precepts are a clear pointer as to how Islam views the act of instilling. Joy into the minds of the needies like that of Almajiri.

At this juncture, we want to reaffirm that the issue of *Almajiri* system of education is purely Islamic affairs and Muslims at their different social strata are in the best position to make pronouncements concerning the issue either positive or negative.

What have these people accusing *Almajiri* system, done to rectify its shortcoming? They are only shouting as in the saying “backing Dog seldom bite” after all, all these *Almajiris* are only roaming around the houses and residences of poor people to work and get food to sustain their study sessions morning and evening except on Thursday’s and Friday’s which are being observed as study free days. *Almajiris* have no access to scout for food to eat in fortified houses of big – big men in the countries such as president general Ministers, Senates and what have you.

Almajiris have no access to these residences and the land lord of those houses does not even care whether the *Almajiris* who runs into millions, have taken their food for the day or not. These people are just accusing the system without making any positive contribution to either standardize or to reshape it. But only scolding remarks are emanating from their saturated and mixed understanding of the entire phenomenon.

Recently, the Indonesian Ambassador to Nigeria Retired Air Vice marshal Husra Hendra paid an official visit to Sokoto State and demanded a visit to some of *Amajiri* school, in Sokoto metropolis. He was taken to the school of Malam Usman Gidan Ganau, with 550 students and that of Sheikh Ahmad Alfazazi with over 700 pupils. Believe me all these students are being fed by the common people around on daily basis and their teachers are doing the job for the sake of Allah, that means they are not waiting for any monthly remuneration or allowances neither from the government non from the parents, except the taken amount of weekly “SATURDAY MONEY). (Kudin Assbar)

They have no care of either the Federal, State or Local Governments. How can this system prevail and develop, in the situation like this? Please let our Muslim leaders at all levels go back to the drawing board, reanalyze it and come out with possible solutions to this centuries old system of Islamic learning.

The point I want raise by bringing here the visit of the Indonesian Ambassador to some *Almajiri* schools in Sokoto is that, after the visit and unknown to his host that is the Sokoto State Government, the Ambassador and his entourage instantly decided to go and procure bags of rice, cooking oil, Bread, Biscuits and cash and gave it to this over 500 *Almajiris* which would take them some days without going out begging for food to sustain their course of Islamic learning.

Now the question is that, of those entire pointing accusing finger to this system, what have they offered parallel to the gesture done by the Indonesian Ambassador?

The multiple increases in the number of *Almajiri* are increasing day-by day, and thus children would not be allowed diverged with nothing doing. Nigerian governments at their various levels have failed to accommodate all of these children into conventional schools and thus, poor people have no option than to patronize the system for the literacy of their children. I said this because, you cannot have a son of Mr. President, Vice President, a Governor a Minister, a Member of National or State Assemblies, Commissioners, Local Government Chairmen, Councilors or Business men across the country, within this system. You won’t see it that way. Even in the conventional system, the quality of education has been diverted to private schools. The children of poor are only roaming the streets in the name of going to public schools. Go to rural areas and meet primary six pupils, that cannot even write their names properly let alone construction of a simple sentence.

Our stand and Recommendations

Almajiri system of education is the only system that sustained the art of reading and writing in our villages and hamlets where up to now government is unable to establish conventional system of learning so abolishing the system is a capital threat to the development of Islamic education.

Also, a number of practical steps, logistics, and strategies need to be taken and provided for in order to solve the problems of *almajiranci* in northern parts of the River Niger. The following are hereby suggested:

- There is need for critical stakeholder consensus on operational definition of *almajirci*. This is very important as there is a general tendency to lump the migrant Qur’anic school pupils with resident counter parts in *Islamiyyah* schools, *Ma’ahad*, *Madrassa*, *Tsangaya* and *Makarantun Allo* as *almajirai*.
- There is need for recognition of the system as alternative educational system and to adequately remunerate the itinerant teachers of the *almajiranci* system to serve as incentive to remain in the village and to elicit their commitment to whatever ‘reform’ and ‘integration’ that may be introduced into the system. The fact that neither the Government nor the community bother to pay them adequate wages for their efforts is one of the core reasons why the itinerant teachers took their pupils to urban centres on seasonal circulation.
- Government to consult widely with all stakeholders of the system, especially the *malamai* and parents, and to massively sensitize and mobilize them and the society in general using all available means.
- The laws governing the registration of schools, including *Tsangaya* schools, should be enforced where they exist and enacted where none exist. Traditional rulers and the *Ulama* must be involved in this process to avoid any misunderstanding or misconception.

- A law banning begging by school-age children, including pupils of *Tsangaya* schools should be enacted after the Northern State Governments have taken effective measures to support the welfare of Malamai and their pupils.
- Even though the problems of *almajiranci* affected mostly northern states, the law should be adopted and enforced by all the States of the Federation. This is necessary because if it is left to individual states to enact the law, the migrant *malamai* could take their pupils to the states where the law has not been promulgated.
- State and non-state actors should desist from embarking upon interventions that could only result in institutionalization of *almajiranci*. Building boarding schools for *almajirai* in the urban areas does exactly that. Integrated schools need to be built in the rural areas and handed over to the major faith-based organizations around the community. Indeed, a child could acquire the best religious education in his own community, where he stays with his parents.
- State and non-state actors must also resist the temptation of ‘rehabilitating’ the *almajirai*. Rehabilitation is more appropriate with regard to the disabled and destitute beggars. The *almajirai* are neither disabled nor destitute. They are not internally displaced persons (IDPs) ravaged by wars, armed banditry, communal conflict, flood or other forms of natural disasters. They have parents and families. Everything possible should be done to keep them within their villages and restrict their movement to the urban centres so that they will study under the care and watchful eyes of their parents.
- Political will among major stake holders to solve the problems of *almajirai* is in short supply or out rightly absent. Political will is critical to solving the problems of *almajirai*. With enough political will and concerted action on the parts of the governments at federal, states and local government levels, the problems of *almajirai* can be solved once and for all and the *makarantun allo* system of education can properly be transformed to become closer to its true ideals.
- Part of the ₦500 billion the Federal Government use in social investment for the marginalized should be used to address the challenges of *almajiranci*.
- These schools should be built in the villages of origin of the affected *almajirai* so that every child learns within the watchful eyes of their parents.
- The first step is to apply what two former Northerners of blessed memory- late Mallam Aminu Kano and General Hassan Usman Katsina - have been hammering on our collective consciousness: *kowa ya koma gidan ubanshi* (everybody should go back to their father’s house). It is common knowledge that no father will send his children begging in his village, no matter how poor he may be. Thus, parents must be held responsible for the upbringing of their children and the states administrations must, as a duty, ensure the educational requirements are met.
- It is a fact that there is no village in Northern Nigeria where one will not find a Mallam to teach all the children of that village the necessary Qur’anic education while they are being properly guided at their parents’ home. Traditional leaders and more senior *malamai* should educate the parents of those roving *almajirai* that the era of sending young children to *gabas* (East) to learn the Qur’an is gone.
- Dearth of adequate, reliable and credible data, critical for any meaningful planning and intervention, need to be addressed. At the moment, nobody knows exactly the number of these *almajirai* and their location, their educational, health, nutritional, psychosocial, psycho-personal and social status. The frequently quoted estimate of approximately ten million children and youth is inaccurate, since no census or scientific survey on *almajirai* was ever conducted either by state or non-state actors in Nigeria. The Ministerial committee’s statistics did not disaggregate the essentially migrant (*almajirai*) from non-migrant categories of Qur’anic school pupils. These are institutional data and included pupils of Islamiyyah, Madrassah, Tahfiz schools as well day-students of traditional Qur’anic schools (*makarantun allo*). The figure is probably used uncritically to express the sense of crisis enfolding the system.
- National Population Commission (NPopC) should be mandated to include data on *almajirai* for planning purposes in the next national census exercise.
- Accordingly, the state and non-state party should set machinery in motion to
- Assess the magnitude, dimensions, trends and socio-economic impact of the phenomenon in the society.
- Conduct a census and/or survey of the migrant Qur’anic school pupils (*almajirai*) to determine their population and geographical distribution, the magnitude of their vulnerability with the view to tackling its social components.
- Document types and levels of unmet rights of the *almajiri* child
- Assess the situation in terms of levels and types of existing interventions, their appropriateness in resolving the problem.
- Propose strategic responses for combating the phenomenon and partner with and identify persons and institutions needed to bring about the actions necessary for positive change in the system.
- Evolve strategic and sustained consultation and engagements with the all the stakeholders – affected state and local governments, traditional and religious leaders, the Malamai, development partners, civil society organizations.

- Enforce existing laws which ban the movement of almajirai and ensure that children learn within their vicinities and with the states and LGAs to repatriate the almajirai back to their villages of origin.
- The extant laws should be reviewed to categorize almajiranci as child trafficking.
- Collaborate with all the stake-holders -the traditional and spiritual leaders, malamai, grass root civil society organization- to establish community-focus, self-sustaining *makarantun allo* schools in the villages of origin of the almajirai. The teachers who decided to participate in the pilot schools should be handsomely remunerated.
- Media engagement enlisting all the stakeholders via radio and television talks, sustained jingles on the need for change in a culturally appropriate fashion.
- *Almajiri* schools are not places for breeding extremist or fundamentalist with abnormal understanding of Islamic norms and values.
- The proponents of the abolishment of this system should think first the alternative to be provided to the existing *Almajiris* running into millions in various parts of the north and the nation in general.
- The project of constructing Tsangaya schools initiated by the Good Luck Jonathan's administration should be sustained and be complemented by the private sector participation and other meaningful individuals in the country.
- State government in the region should emulate the efforts of the Sokoto State government by establishing modern system of *Almajiri* schools integrated with conventional system.
- We opined that, Federal and State Governments should encourage individuals, groups and organizations to establish Pondok system of Indonesia. It is a system traditionally inherited practice to deepen the knowledge of the Qur'an through the study of Arabic, traditions of exegesis, prophetic traditions, law and logic.

This system is being ran in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. They emphasize core values of sincerity, simplicity, individual autonomy, Solidarity and self-control. Young men and women are spared from their families, which contributes to a sense of individual commitment to the faith and close bunding to a teacher. Most of the owners of these institutions called (PESANTREN) provide housing or dormitory living at low or no cost for the students, and the two types of education are being merged and taught together throughout the day.

In one of our study tours to such institutions, we visited a Ma'ahad Islamiyya school in the state of Bogor, ran by single individual a female, hosting 15,000 students' boys and girls with over 170 lecturers free of charge and it is a Qur'anic school. We have also visited similar Qur'anic schools in east Java Gontor, and Tazakka all these are Qur'anic schools similar to that of Nigeria but with a great deal of disparity. If Indonesian Government and its patriotic and influential citizens can go this length, why not in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Amajiri system of education was established in Northern Nigeria even before the coming of Colonial Masters into Nigeria. When they reached the Northern region, they discovered a complete administrative set up with the Caliph based in Sokoto as an administrative and spiritual leader for the entire Caliphate that spread in Nigeria and some other west African Countries.

It was a system that retained the Islamic teaching and learning of all its branches. It produced various Islamic sages and clerics whose contribution to Islam is still being felt. The hatred and enmity of Islam hidden in the objectives of the Colonial Masters is what down size the system and devastated it up to the level we are witnessing today. Though now the system has a lot of problems it can still be re-strategize and standardize to match the contemporary standard. Up to now this system is the only system that sustained teaching and learning of Islamic education in remote areas of the north. Its abolishment is a great danger to the development of Islamic education particularly in rural area.

We are not in support of the expulsion of *Almajiris* back to their respective towns and villages. If we do this we are going to create another social problem and it also attracts negative divine consequences as it is contrary to the provision of the Glorious Qur'an (93:8-9). Instead, let governments at various levels modernized the system and give it a state support and resources.

Alhamdulillah, Wassalatu Wassalamu Ala Rasulillah.

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