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THE IMPLICATION OF ALMAJIRI STREET BEGGING TOWARDS INSECURITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA (A CASE STUDY OF BAUCHI STATE)

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Abstract

Street begging is a systematic efforts and activities which involve soliciting for food, money, clothing and other materials objects to promote the sustenance and welfare of the beggars. It is "a method of earning one's living from the income obtained by others using age, health and economic condition as a means for gaining sympathy. This study wants to examine the implication of Almajiri Street begging towards insecurity in Northern Nigeria using Bauchi State as a case study. The objectives of the study are to examine the factors responsible for Almajiri Street begging in Bauchi state. The study also wants to investigate how Almajiri Street Begging influenced insecurity and lastly the study want suggest a proffer solutions on how to address the menace of Almajiri Street begging toward insecurity in the study area. The study employed a qualitative method of data collection through purposive sampling of non-probability. Specifically, the instrument of data collection will be interview guide in which thirty four (34) informants were interviewed. The data was analyzed using discourse analysis according to research questions. The Frustration-Aggression theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of analysis of the study. The result of the research found that Almajiri Street begging toward insecurity in Bauchi state is associated with several causal factors as homelessness, poverty, unemployment and family rejection of Almajiri beggars. The study also found that Almajiri street begging influenced insecurity in Bauchi State, as a result of poverty, lack of parental care and lack of access to proper education exposes them to many criminal activities such as exploitation, stealing, burglary, abuse, crime, drug addiction, rubbery, and other negative influences and potential recruitment by extremist groups like Boko Haram. And lastly, the solution to this problem does not lie with the Government alone; family should play a vital role in taking care of their children. Then government must ensure that it provide all basic necessities to its own citizens. Therefore, the study suggested recommendations which would be followed by the Federal, State and Local government in order to tackle the problem.

Keywords: Almajiri, Beggars, Security, Insecurity, Street Begging

1. Introduction

Almajiri Street begging is a socio-economic and educational phenomenon prevalent in Northern Nigeria. Almajirai are young boys who are sent away from their homes to study Islamic education under the guidance of Islamic scholars known as Mallams. However, due to various socioeconomic factors, many Almajirai end up living in destitution and resort to street begging as a means of survival. The implications of this practice are far-reaching and contribute significantly to the insecurity challenges faced in Northern Nigeria. Almajiri Street begging perpetuates a cycle of economic desperation among the affected children. The absence of proper education and skills limits their opportunities for gainful

employment in the future. Consequently, they become vulnerable to exploitation by criminal elements who recruit them for various illicit activities, including theft, drug trafficking, and even terrorism (Mustapha, 2019).

Street Begging is a universal social phenomenon, and a global urban problem, which is not only peculiar to developing countries but also, developed nations (Kongoley, 2017). This is because there are considerable numbers of cities in the US and Mexico as having a significant level of begging activity, in cities of Britain in the recent years, begging has become highly visible, likewise, in cities of China, especially Shanghai, has been described as homes of different categories of beggars (Onifade, 2019). Beggars constitute security

threat to the world. Beggars often have criminal records, but they are nearly as likely to have been crime victims as offenders (Smith, 2016). Thus, the increasing number of terrorist organizations across the globe such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Qaeda in the Maghreb, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Al-Shabab in Somalia and Kenya, Taliban in South Asia, and the recent Islamic State Militants (ISIS) in Iraq, Syria and Libya are not unconnected with the rising number of street beggars and unemployed youth, which has become one of the major impediments to global peace and security (Chima, 2015). In African societies, begging in the streets of urban centres is one of the age-long activities and perhaps occupations of the highly vulnerable, poverty-ridden individuals in the society; accordingly begging has become one of the most problematic security issues in Africa (Onifade, 2019). Beggars are the poorest of the poor's and the most disadvantageous section of the society, living in such a deprived condition that they are even unable to fulfill their basic needs of life (food, shelter, health and protection) making them vulnerable to criminal activities in order to meet their ends.(Olagunju, 2015). There are about 1 billion street children "*almajirai*" mostly in West African countries such as Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, and Burkina Faso (United Nation Report, 2016).

In Nigeria, the phenomenon of Almajiri (or Street begging) is a popular old practice whereby children are sent to live and study under renowned Islamic teachers in some cities in northern Nigeria. These Almajiris live and study in very appalling conditions, thereby making them vulnerable to recruitment into extremist sects like the Boko Haram, Maitatsine and Kala Kato, largely through indoctrination (Onifade, 2019). As of 2015, Nigeria hosts about 9.5 million Almajiri's, with over 80 per cent concentrated in northern Nigeria (United Nation Report, 2016). Northern Nigeria has experienced significant security challenges in recent years, including insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts. This study focuses on the implication on Almajiri street begging towards insecurity in Northern Nigeria with particular reference to Bauchi State. By understanding the implications of this practice, policymakers and stakeholders can develop effective strategies to mitigate the security risks

associated with Almajiri Street begging.

In North-Eastern part of Nigeria, *almajirai* are exploited and used by the politicians as thugs and hoodlums to foment trouble, cause a riot, disrupt peace and achieve selfish political interest. In fact, it has been alleged that most of the terrorist attacks involving suicide bombings, setting places of worship ablaze, killing innocent souls and destroying property were masterminded by jobless pupils of the almajiri schools (Oladosu, 2012).

The instrumentalization of affected youth for violence is, however, not new in the region. Militia groups such as Yan Kalare in Gombe, Yan Sara Suka in Bauchi, Yan Ecomog in Borno/Yobe and Yan Daba in Kano were, for instance, used by politicians in their struggle for power in the run up to the 2007 and 2011 elections and thereafter. In addition to these groups and the more notorious Hisba, there are a plethora of local gangs such as Yan Farauta (gangs of hunters), Yan Tauri (persons who make and use ritual herbal medicine to prevent injuries from weapons), and Yan Daba (young marginal thugs) who lead violent lives on the edges of urban society in northern Nigeria (Alkali, 2015). Therefore, it is against this background that this study is seeks to examine the implication of Almajiri street begging towards insecurity in Northern Nigeria using Bauchi State as a case study.

The scope of this research centred essentially on the Implication of Almajiri Street begging in Northern Nigeria; Using Bauchi State as case study. Looking at the rampant insecurity challenges that are bedeviling the state such as violent crimes, property crimes and drugs crimes caused by street beggars became necessary for engaging into academic research in order to proffer a possible solution to the menace. The study will attempt to examine the factors responsible for Almajiri street begging in Bauchi state; examine how street begging influenced insecurity in Bauchi state; and lastly proffer a solutions on how tackle the menace of street begging and insecurity in Bauchi state. These objectives will be achieved through the collection of empirical data from oral interview.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Issues

2.1.1 Concept of Street Begging

Street Begging has been variously conceptualized by scholars to reflect different ways reasons for begging. In the words of Jelili (2006) “to beg” is to simply ask people for money, food, clothes etc., as a gift or charity. According to Daczuk, (2000) street begging is often regarded as an anti-social behaviour issue in which an individual or group an individual in the street, house, road junction, worshipping places, and restaurant, beg for alms either in cash or kind in order to sustain their living. According to Fatai Et al, (2020) Street begging is any systematic efforts and activities which involve soliciting for food, money, clothing and other materials objects to promote the sustenance and welfare of the beggars.

2.1.2 The Concept of Security

Security experts argue that the concept of security has always been associated with the safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats (Mitra, 2018). Daczuk, (2000) opines that security can be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one’s community or neighbourhood and by people around.

2.1.3 The Concept of Insecurity

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Chukwulobe, (2011) the word “insecurity” has myriads of connotations; it signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Kongoley, (2017) defines insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This

implies that insecurity is an absence of peace, order and security.

2.1.4 The Concept of Almajiri

The almajiri practice is an old tradition that remains attractive to certain segments of the population. The word “almajiri” is an adulterated spelling of the Arabic word “almuhajir,” which refers to a person who migrates for the purpose of learning or for the sake of propagating Islamic knowledge. Every year, usually after harvest, people inhabiting a particular neighborhood would gather their children, mostly school-age males (from age six upward), and hand them to an Islamic scholar (mallam). The mallam’s purpose was to teach the children the basics of Islam and how to write and recite the Arabic alphabet (Oladosu, 2012).

2.2 Empirical Review

The Almajiri system, which involves young boys leaving their homes to study the Qur’an under Islamic scholars (Malams), has been a longstanding tradition in northern Nigeria. However, over time, this practice has evolved into a complex social issue, with many of these children ending up on the streets, begging for survival (Abdulkadir, 2013). The prevalence of Almajiri Street begging has been linked to various security challenges in the region. Several studies have highlighted the connection between the Almajiri phenomenon and the rise of insecurity in northern Nigeria. Aluaigba (2009) argues that the lack of proper education and vocational training for Almajiri children has created a pool of unskilled and marginalized youth, who are susceptible to recruitment by criminal and extremist groups like Boko Haram. Okoh (2021) further emphasizes that the poor living conditions and lack of opportunities have made these children vulnerable targets for indoctrination into extremist ideologies and exploitation as foot soldiers in campaigns of violence and terror.

Abdulqadir (2011) highlights the direct implications of Almajiri street begging on insecurity, stating that these children often engage in petty crimes, such as theft and robbery, as a means of survival. He also notes that the lack of adequate policies and

interventions to address the Almajiri issue has created a breeding ground for insecurity and instability in the region. Furthermore, several studies have explored the socio-economic factors that perpetuate the Almajiri system and its associated problems. Aluaigba (2009) attributes the persistence of the Almajiri phenomenon to poverty, lack of proper funding, and inadequate infrastructure to support the education and well-being of these children.

Scholars have also examined the psychological and social impacts of street begging on Almajiri children. Abdulqadir (2011) and Okoh (2021) noted that these children are exposed to various forms of exploitation, abuse, and health risks, which can have long-lasting effects on their physical and mental well-being. They further emphasize that the lack of access to proper education and opportunities for personal development can lead to a sense of marginalization and frustration, making them vulnerable to negative influences. Despite the efforts of various stakeholders, the literature suggests that existing policies and interventions have been largely ineffective in addressing the Almajiri issue and its implications for insecurity in northern Nigeria. The lack of access to quality education and social support systems for Almajirai creates an environment conducive to the recruitment of vulnerable children into extremist groups. These groups exploit the frustration, poverty, and sense of marginalization experienced by the Almajirai, indoctrinating them with radical ideologies and involving them in violent activities which perpetuates the cycle of insecurity in Northern Nigeria (Jelili, 2007; Uzodike, 2017; Ibrahim, 2016 & Salisu and Adamu, 2020).

Uzodike, (2017) also argues that the large presence of Almajirai engaged in street begging poses social challenges and contributes to the breakdown of social cohesion in affected communities. The influx of Almajirai from different regions strains existing resources, exacerbating competition and tensions between host communities and the Almajiri's. This can lead to inter-communal conflicts, social unrest, and an overall sense of insecurity.

Smith, (2015); Akinnubi, (2017) posited that due to lack of resources, many Almajirai end up begging on the streets, exposing them to exploitation, crime, and

potential recruitment by extremist groups like Boko Haram. In his study which employed mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from a survey of 300 respondents (Almajirai, parents, residents) and qualitative data from interviews with key stakeholders like Malams, security personnel, and government officials. He found out that Poverty, lack of access to education, and socio-cultural beliefs perpetuate the Almajiri system. He further noted that street begging exposes Almajirai to abuse, crime, drug addiction, and other negative influences. Their presence on the streets is seen as a security threat by residents and authorities. And he noted that the existing government interventions have been ineffective due to lack of resources and coordination. Almajiri street begging has implications beyond socio-economic concerns and can contribute to insecurity globally. The vulnerability of beggars to exploitation, involvement in criminal activities, social disruption, and public perceptions of insecurity are among the key consequences. Addressing the issue of street begging requires comprehensive approaches that include social support systems, targeted interventions, and policies aimed at providing alternative livelihood opportunities and ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations.

Scholars across the globe have established that begging is not only practice in developing countries, but a universal phenomenon and a global urban problem in developed countries (Gupta, 2017; Oladosu, 2012; Olagunju, 2015; Mitra, 2018; and Onifade, 2019). Globally, street begging has been practiced with similar spatial pattern in the distribution of beggars and varied socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of beggars. According to Smith (2015), beggars were found in major public space in the United State of America, Britain, and other developed countries soliciting for alms (Smith, 2015; Balarabe, & Mahmud, 2021.). In the same vein, different categories of beggars including the poor, people with disabilities beggars, the homeless and professional beggars have been found in major areas, central business districts and commercial centres in Shanghai, China.

While the phenomenon of street begging exists globally, its prevalence and implications can vary across

different contexts. These are the few examples of regions and countries where street begging is known to be more prevalent and can have notable implications on insecurity: In the Asian continent India is one the country that has prevalent street begging issue in many cities and towns. Large urban centers, such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata, often witness a significant number of beggars (Bukoy, 2015). The presence of beggars in public spaces can lead to social disruption and contribute to a sense of insecurity. The implication of street begging in India manifest itself in the form of many security challenges such as; social disruption as a result of large number of beggars in public spaces which can lead to social disruption, including conflicts over territory and resources, which can contribute to a sense of insecurity. There are also issue of exploitation and trafficking; beggars, especially children, are vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking networks, leading to increased insecurity for these individuals. Moreover, there is perception of insecurity; the visibility of beggars in public spaces can create a perception of insecurity among the general public, impacting the sense of safety and well-being.

Namwata, (2012) have also categorized street beggars in Central Tanzania to include the beggars on the street, the beggars of the street, the beggars in the street and the beggars of street families. The beggars on the street spend most of the day on the streets begging for alms, they have permanent homes, usually maintain family ties or contacts, and do often return home in the evening to sleep. The beggars of the streets live and sleep on the streets and have loose family contacts and do occasionally go back home. The beggars in the streets are completely detached from, have abandoned or have been abandoned by their families and their immediate communities and have drifted into the begging life. The beggars of street families are beggars born and raised on the streets; most of them have parents who are beggars. Fatai, (2017) found out that in Pakistan, beggars have taken on the advantages of soliciting for alms to achieve other hidden and mischievous acts of drug and human trafficking, drug use, organ selling, child abuse, prostitution and terrorism. There is a clear distinction between begging and the age-long tradition of Almajiri in the Northern Nigeria. There is general consensus

among scholars on the definition of street begging. Begging is a testimony of perverted poverty and impoverishment and has always been a major way out for the helpless poor. Economic disparities, poverty, and urbanization are factors that contribute to the prevalence of street begging, which can impact security dynamics in these regions. The implication in the South Asian continent is also so devastated in the form of criminal exploitation; beggars, particularly children, may be coerced or forced into criminal activities, such as pick-pocketing or drug peddling, contributing to insecurity within communities.

Abdullahi, (2017) posit that in the Latin America region street begging is observed in various countries including Brazil, Mexico, and Peru. In urban areas with high poverty rates and social inequality, street begging can be a visible manifestation of socio-economic challenges, potentially affecting security perceptions and community dynamics. It is very significant to note that the prevalence and impact of street begging on insecurity can vary within these regions and across different cities and communities. Factors such as local socio-economic conditions, government policies, and cultural contexts can influence the extent and implications of street begging in each specific location. The implication of street begging the region of Latin America has negative consequences towards insecurity. The presence of beggars in public spaces can create a perception of insecurity among the general population, impacting community safety and affecting tourism and economic activities. It can also serves as an avenue for exploitation and human rights violations; beggars, especially vulnerable groups such as children and women, are at risk of exploitation, abuse, and human rights violations, contributing to overall insecurity. Moreover, the implication of this menace can be seen in the form of social inequality and marginalization; street begging is linked to social inequality and marginalization. The persistence of these issues can generate social discontent and potentially contribute to insecurity and social tensions.

In the Sub-Saharan Africa: Several countries in including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan, face challenges related to street begging. In these regions, socio-economic factors, armed conflicts, and

displacement can contribute to the prevalence of street begging, with implications for insecurity and social cohesion. The implication of street begging can be seen in various form in the Sub-Saharan Africa. These includes recruitment into criminal activities; street begging can make children and marginalized individuals susceptible to recruitment by criminal elements, leading to their involvement in illicit activities, including theft, drug trafficking, or even recruitment into armed groups. Furthermore, it can contribute to social unrest and conflict; the presence of a large number of beggars, especially in urban areas, can strain resources and create tensions among different groups, potentially leading to social unrest and inter-communal conflicts (Mustapha, 2019; Uzodike, 2017; Ibrahim, 2016).

Ali, (2019) examined the sociological perspectives of street begging in Nigerian cities. The study established the relationship between begging and urban land use activities in influencing the spatial distribution of street beggars in Nigerian cities with favourable land use such as commercial, transport and public use. Olagunju (2015) investigated the pattern of street begging in Enugu Metropolis. The study found out that group of beggars prefer market places; while those that beg alone prefer worship centres; while the physically-challenged beggars often led by other person prefer traffic intercessions. The study also established that nature of begging influences the preferred location of begging. There are several security implications of Almajiri street begging in Northern Nigeria which includes exposing the Almajiri's to abuse, exploitation, and negative influences that can lead them into criminal activities like theft, drug abuse, and violence. There is also lack of formal education and a vocational skill makes the Almajiri vulnerable to being recruited by extremist groups like Boko Haram. Moreover Street disturbances, harassments and criminal acts by some Almajiri's breed tension and insecurity in urban areas.

In addition, these implications can be seen in form of exploitation and abuse; beggars, particularly children, are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking, which contribute to insecurity and violations of human rights. The implications of Almajiri Street begging on insecurity in Northern Nigeria are

multifaceted. Economic desperation, vulnerability to recruitment by extremist groups, and social disintegration are among the key consequences. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive strategies that can focus on providing quality education, skills training, and socio-economic support for the Almajirai, while also promoting community integration and fostering dialogue between religious and government institutions (Mustapha, 2019). Numerous studies have been carried out by scholars in examining the socio-economic and cultural factors responsible for street begging in Nigerian cities. However, there are limited studies on understanding the security consequences of street begging. (Jelili, 2009; Fawole et al., 2011; Fatai, 2017; Onifade, 2019) revealed that there is significant spatial variation in the distribution of street beggars by sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, religion, and ethnicity respectively in Ibadan Metropolis. Olagunju, (2015) examined the socio-demographic profile of transnational street beggars in Lagos and Ibadan. The study found out transnational street beggars contributed to the nation's insecurity and other environmental and health problems. As discussed, previous research emphasized on the Almajiri issue focused on curbing the neglect of street children begging on the street in northern Nigeria with little attention to the implication of Almajiri Street begging towards insecurity in the country. The current study intends to fill the gap by examine the implication of Almajiri street begging towards insecurity in Northern Nigeria using Bauchi State as case study.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Frustration aggression theory adopted in order to guide the study. The proponents of the theory Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1941) asserted that "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrary wise, which the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". Frustration refers to the situation or event that blocks the individual goal. It also means a sense of disappointment that is the result of being blocked. The cost of life is not always smooth. In our daily life we encounter barrier between our goals and our selves. The process of blocking needs, causes, frustration in human

beings. Frustration has important part of our development to death. We have number of desire, which are not fulfilled due to certain obstacles.

The occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration suggests that aggression does not occur without any form of prior frustration, and the assertion that frustration “always leads to some form of aggression” implies that aggression is a certain outcome of any frustration. Frustration is a common emotional response to opposition. Related to anger and disappointment, it arises from the perceived resistance to the fulfillment of individual will. The greater the obstruction, and the greater the will, the more the frustration is likely to be. Cause of frustration may be internal or external. In people, internal frustration may arise from challengers in fulfilling personal goals and desires, instinctual drives and needs, or dealing with perceived deficiencies, such as a lack of confidence or fear of social situations.

Frustration is negative feeling when one is prevented from reaching a goal. Motivation is an internal urge to act towards a particular goal. When motives are hindered or blocked. Frustration occurs for people who cannot achieve their important goals feel depressed, anxious, fearful, guilty or angry. There may be several other reasons of frustration like criticism, fault finding, scolding, scorn, ridicule behavior, restriction imposed by social laws and standards. Human beings are constantly striving to establish a satisfactory relationship with the environment. In other words, we are trying to fulfill our needs in order to live happily and function effectively. But the process of adjustment or attaining and enjoying mental health is not always smooth. Our needs cannot always be adequately satisfied in all situations. We have to face many problems. All these factors may turn the individual into a frustrated one. Thus, frustration of our basic needs may lead to serious maladjustment that can lead to deviance behaviour.

The present society is termed as anxious tension ridden, stressful and frustration one each individual which of course an intrinsic part of society, is lost in a world of confusion due to heavy stress and frustration. The problem of stress and frustration increases due to increase in our needs. One of the major causes of frustration and aggression among Almajiri beggars are

lack of basic necessities for life such as food, shelter, medication, cloths, and lack of any income that can support their lives. Thus, in a situation whereby these basic needs were not fulfilled it may lead to frustration and aggression and consequently violent behaviour. Therefore, the frustration aggression theory has also been included in other theoretical models that attempt to explain the causes of violent behaviour that is related to anger and disappointment; it arises from the perceived resistance to the fulfillment of individual desire goals.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method of data collection and obtained the relevant information from the selected informants. This study utilized purposive sampling method to select the sample according to convenience of access, categories and nominated cases inside the identified samples. The research interviewed the major stakeholders within the community as the core informants. These people include security men (Police), Traditional rulers and Almajirai teachers across the six (6) local government areas of Bauchi and Dass in Bauchi South Senatorial district, Darazo and Ganjuwa from Bauchi Central Senatorial district and Katagum and Itas Gadau from Bauchi North Senatorial district respectively. Thus, Thirty four (34) informants were interviewed. Literatures indicated that previous studies had used purposive sampling technique with 30, 20, 10 or less to serve as sampling size. Data collected through interview were analyzed using thematic content analysis (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014).

4. Results and Discussions

The result analysis of the key informant interviews followed the common process of organizing the interview data by case, itemization of coding, and organizing coding into overall themes. The resulting themes from the qualitative analysis are described. Quotes from informants are used to further illustrate the thematic areas.

Factors that Contributed to Almajiri Street Begging in Bauchi State

Based on the interview conducted the researcher found that there are many factors that contributed to Almajiri

Street begging in Bauchi state. These factors include poverty and lack of economic opportunities, cultural and religious beliefs, lack of access to quality education, rural-urban migration, corruption and mismanagement of resources and weak enforcement of law and government policies.

Majority of the informant maintained that:

Economic conditions and poverty rates, availability of formal education of laws and policies related to child labor and street begging. In some major urban centers like Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi, there have been reports of thousands of Almajiri children begging on the streets. However, the phenomenon is also present in many rural areas where access to education is limited. Poverty and lack of economic opportunities: opportunities; Strength of local traditional/religious institutions; Enforcement Many families living in poverty send their children to Almajiri boarding schools (Tsangaya) as a way to access basic education and support, as they cannot afford the costs associated with formal schooling (**I, II, VI, IX XIII and XXIV**).

In addition to that:

Lack of access to quality education: Many communities lack access to quality formal education, either due to a shortage of schools, inadequate infrastructure, or the high costs associated with attending schools. This leaves Tsangaya as the only available option for basic education for many families. Weak enforcement of laws and policies: While some states in Nigeria have enacted laws to prohibit street begging, including by Almajiri children, the enforcement of these laws is often weak or inconsistent, allowing the practice to persist (**Informants I, II, IX and XXIII**).

Rural-urban migration: The influx of families from rural areas to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities can contribute to the increase in Almajiri street begging in cities, as these families may lack access to formal education and employment opportunities. Corruption and mismanagement of resources: In some cases, the resources allocated for the development and improvement of Tsangaya and other educational facilities may be mismanaged or misappropriated,

perpetuating the cycle of poverty and lack of access to quality education (**Informants I, II, VI and XXIV**).

In elaborating the factors that contribute to Almajiri street begging as stated by the informants corroborated with the work of Abdulqadir (2011); Okoh (2021) who emphasize that the lack of access to proper education and opportunities for personal development can lead to a sense of marginalization and frustration, making the Almajiri vulnerable to negative influences. Despite the efforts of various stakeholders, the literature suggests that existing policies and interventions have been largely ineffective in addressing the Almajiri issue and its implications for insecurity in northern Nigeria. They further argued that the lack of political will and resources has hindered the implementation of sustainable solutions, while Abdulkadir (2013) highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to addresses the underlying socio-economic and cultural factors driving the Almajiri phenomenon. He further emphasizes that the poor living conditions and lack of opportunities have made these children vulnerable targets for indoctrination into extremist ideologies and exploitation as foot soldiers in campaigns of violence and terror.

Thus, Almajiri street begging have a negative socio-economic impact to the society. Street begging has significant economic implications on the affected communities in northern Nigeria. Bauchi State in particular. Some of the key economic impacts include: Perpetuation of poverty cycle: Almajiri street begging perpetuates the cycle of poverty in the state. Children who beg on the streets often miss out on formal education and the opportunity to acquire skills that could lead to better employment prospects and economic mobility in the future. Street begging also lead to loss of productivity, time spent by Almajiri begging on the streets instead of receiving an education or acquiring productive skills represents a loss of potential human capital and productivity for the community and the broader economy. Moreover, there is issue of dependence on charitable donations with limited access to education and employment opportunities, many Almajiri families become dependent on charitable donations and handouts, which is an unsustainable

economic model and can disincentivise self-reliance and productive economic activities.

Security implications of Almajiri Street begging in Bauchi state

Based on the interview conducted the informants attested that there are so many security implication of Almajiri Street begging in Bauchi state. The security implications of Almajiri Street begging can be seen in various ways such as: Involvement into criminal activities, such as high risk of Almajiri involvement in petty crimes like pick pocketing, as well as more serious criminal activities, which can contribute to urban crime rate.

Majority of the informant maintained that:

Almajiri Street begging can have significant security implications for the affected communities in Bauchi State. Some of the following security concerns include: Increased risk of social unrest and violence; lack of economic opportunities and the marginalization of Almajirai which can breed resentment and frustration, potentially leading to social unrest, riots, and violence. This can further destabilize communities that are already struggling with security challenges. They may be attracted into activities such as petty crime, drug peddling, or even recruited as child soldiers or suicide bombers by terrorist organizations like Boko Haram (**I, III, IV, VI, VIII, IX, X, XII XIII and XVII**).

Additionally, other informants opined that:

There is high potentiality risk for radicalization; the harsh living conditions, lack of education, and sense of disenfranchisement experienced by Almajirai can make them more susceptible to radicalization by extremist groups that offer a sense of purpose, belonging, and false promises of a better life. The presence of large numbers of Almajiri's on the streets can strain law enforcement resources, as they may be involved in petty crimes, begging, or other illegal activities that require police intervention, diverting resources from other security priorities. The presence of Almajiri begging on the streets and intersections can create public safety hazards, increasing the risk of accidents and creating an environment that may be conducive to criminal activities

such as pick pocketing or theft (**Informants I, III, IV and VI**).

In some cases, tensions may arise between local residents and Almajiri's particularly if they are perceived as a nuisance or a threat to public safety and security. This can lead to conflicts and further social instability. There have been several reported instances of extremist groups like Boko Haram infiltrating and recruitments. he infamous terrorist group operating in northeastern Nigeria, has been known to actively target and recruit Almajiri's especially those living on the streets or in impoverished conditions. These children, who lack proper education, care, and opportunities, are seen as easy targets for indoctrination and radicalization by the group. Use of Almajiri's as suicide bombers: In many instances, Boko Haram has reportedly used brainwashed Almajiri's as suicide bombers, taking advantage of their vulnerability and desperation. These children are targeted with promises of food, shelter, and a better life before being coerced into carrying out devastating attacks (**Informants IX, X, XII XIII and XIX**).

The interview result was complimented with the many literatures which highlighted the connection between the Almajiri phenomenon and the rise of insecurity in northern Nigeria. Aluaigba (2009) argues that the lack of proper education and vocational training for Almajiri children has created a pool of unskilled and marginalized youth, who are susceptible to recruitment by criminal and extremist groups like Boko Haram. Okoh (2021) further emphasizes that the poor living conditions and lack of opportunities have made these children vulnerable targets for indoctrination into extremist ideologies and exploitation as foot soldiers in campaigns of violence and terror. Abdulqadir (2011) highlights the direct implications of Almajiri street begging on insecurity, stating that these children often engage in petty crimes, such as theft and robbery, as a means of survival. He also notes that the lack of adequate policies and interventions to address the Almajiri issue has created a breeding ground for insecurity and instability in the region.

Scholars have also examined the psychological and social impacts of street begging on Almajiri children. Okoh (2021) notes that these children are often

exposed to various forms of exploitation, abuse, and health risks, which can have long-lasting effects on their physical and mental well-being. Lack of access to quality education and social support systems for Almajirai creates an environment conducive to the recruitment of vulnerable children into extremist groups. These groups exploit the frustration, poverty, and sense of marginalization experienced by the Almajirai, indoctrinating them with radical ideologies and involving them in violent activities which perpetuates the cycle of insecurity in Northern Nigeria (Uzodike, 2017; Ibrahim, 2016 & Salisu and Adamu, 2020). They further argues that the large presence of Almajirai engaged in street begging poses social challenges and contributes to the breakdown of social cohesion in affected communities. The influx of Almajirai from different regions strains existing resources, exacerbating competition and tensions between host communities and the Almajirai. This can lead to inter-communal conflicts, social unrest, and an overall sense of insecurity.

Akinnubi, (2017) posit that due to lack of resources, many Almajirai end up begging on the streets, exposing them to exploitation, crime, and potential recruitment by extremist groups like Boko Haram. In his study which employed mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from a survey of 300 respondents (Almajirai, parents, residents) and qualitative data from interviews with key stakeholders like Malams, security personnel, and government officials. He found out that Poverty, lack of access to education, and socio-cultural beliefs perpetuate the Almajiri system. He further noted that street begging exposes Almajirai to abuse, crime, drug addiction, and other negative influences. Their presence on the streets is seen as a security threat by residents and authorities. And he noted that the existing government interventions have been ineffective due to lack of resources and coordination. Almajiri street begging has implications beyond socio-economic concerns and can contribute to insecurity globally. The vulnerability of beggars to exploitation, involvement in criminal activities, social disruption, and public perceptions of insecurity are among the key consequences. Addressing the issue of street begging requires comprehensive approaches that include social support systems, targeted interventions,

and policies aimed at providing alternative livelihood opportunities and ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations.

Solutions of Almajiri Street Begging in Bauchi State

Majority of the informants suggested many ways which can be followed or adopted to solve the Almajiri Street begging and insecurity in Bauchi state. They have suggested that Almajiri streets begging can be resolve through following measures as follows: Legislation and policies; Establishment of Almajiri model schools; Repatriation and resettlement programs; Rehabilitation centers and vocational training programs; Engagement with traditional and religious leaders among others.

Several measures have been taken by the government and local authorities to address the issue of Almajiri street begging, although the effectiveness and implementation of these measures have varied across different states and communities. Some of the key initiatives include: "Legislation and policies: Several northern states, such as Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi, have enacted laws and policies aimed at prohibiting street begging, including by Almajiri children. However, the enforcement of these laws has often been inconsistent and challenged by socio-cultural factors. Establishment of model Almajiri schools: The federal government and some state governments have initiated programs to establish modern Almajiri schools (Tsangaya) with improved infrastructure, curriculum, and resources (**Informants I, II, IX and XXIII**).

In addition;

Rehabilitation centers and vocational training programs have been established in some areas to provide shelter, basic education, and skill acquisition opportunities for Almajiri rescued from the streets. Engagement with traditional and religious leaders: Recognizing the cultural and religious dimensions of the Almajiri system, authorities have engaged with traditional and religious leaders to sensitize them on the importance of formal education and discourage the practice of street begging. Public awareness and advocacy campaigns: Various government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners have launched public awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts to highlight the risks

associated with Almajiri street begging and promote alternative educational and economic opportunities (*Informant I, II, III, IV, V, XIV, XV, XVII and XX*).

The interview result was corroborated with the work of Salisu and Adamu, (2020) where they opine that Almajiri Street begging is one the disturbing issues that need collaboration of government and other stakeholders in order to deal with. The general population and NGOs has to give their own quota towards fighting poverty and illiteracy among the society. Moreover, the civil society organization, media houses should provide a means of enlightens the populace and advocacy in fighting these cankerworms. They further suggested that Almajiri Street begging is a national menace which requires the support and co-operation of all and sundry to checkmate it through different approaches. Government and traditional institutions at all levels should make attempts to identify the Qur'anic mallams involved and equally identify the higher teachers from which those directly involved derive their inspiration and the higher teachers be invited for a discussion on the problem of street begging and to carry them along in such suggestions and implement possible solutions.

In addition, the possible solution to the problem of Almajiri Street begging can be seen through the provisions of sound legislative policy, establishment of Almajiri model schools, repatriation and resettlement of Almajiri program, establishment of rehabilitation and skill acquisition centers, constant engagement with traditional and religious leaders, public awareness and government advocacy campaigns, sensitization by traditional leaders, establishment of community-based Almajiri schools, moral influence and enforcement of community bylaws, collaboration with religious leaders and scholars, mobilization of community resources and support and promotion of community-based child protection organization. The western type of education i.e. primary and secondary schools operating in rural areas should be integrated with the Qur'anic and Islamic knowledge is taught. Government should endeavour to identify all Qur'anic teachers in rural areas who have pupils under their tutelage whether migrant or not and build blocks of classes and possibly dormitories around their houses and make some provision of a skill

acquisition programme around that school so that pupils can partake in after lessons and some financial benefit be attached to it. Moreover, religious preachers both in urban and rural areas should be encouraged to preach the ills of street begging. A committee of the Qur'anic teachers be mandated to arrange a conference to brainstorm on their own on the advantages and disadvantages of street begging and should be asked to proffer a solutions to this problem. The same committee should be mandated to implement the discussions of the conference.

Moreover, well known respected religious leaders across all Muslim sects should be directly involved on the issues of proffering solutions to Almajiri Street begging. The other category of street beggars, that is the physically challenged and others should be off from the streets or be arrested. Government should establish rehabilitation centers and take anybody who does not want to be part of it. Government should identify the needy persons through its welfare scheme through traditional institutions in each ward and make available to them the basic necessities of life which would curtail them from going to streets, public places, houses of influential people, etc. to beg.

According to Alkali, (2015) Almajiri teachers are the principal stakeholders in most of the Almajiri schools they should constitute the most important group of people to be educated about not only the intention of government to intervene but also to reform the system. The inclusion of the Almajiri teachers in the scheme of things is a step in the right direction, for these are part of the gate keepers. Therefore there cannot be a successful intervention when they are not carried along in the process. Seminars should be organized for Almajiri teachers and their senior pupils for the purpose of educating, enlighten and sensitizing them. Some of the issues expected to be covered in the seminars include the need for change in the system; what ways should the reforms take; what should be the roles of stakeholders such as government, parents and the Muslim community in supporting and improving the Almajiri educational system.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The implication of Almajiri Street begging towards insecurity in Bauchi state is associated with several causal factors as homelessness, poverty, unemployment and family rejection of Almajiri beggars. The study found that researchers are seeking lasting ways of reducing the incidence of Street begging with little attention towards the security implication of the phenomenon. Several measures have been taking by the government in order to deal with the problem but not avail. Most of the people who beg were children and young people, it implies that the nation is losing the economic contributions of such people, in Nigeria as well as jeopardizing the lives of children. The solution does not lie with Government alone. Counseling should focus on the family first, whose main tasks of care, love and provision of basic necessities of life have been relegated as a result of urbanization, separation and divorces. Hence, it became necessary for the parent to change their attitude and realize the dangers inherent in the street begging which includes accident risk, sexual, exploitation and crime.

The recommendations suggested that there is need to for the government to provide free and compulsory primary and secondary education to all Almajiri pupils and not in separate schools as it is currently being implemented but integrated with the secular ones. It became necessary for state-run schools to involve and accommodate children of all groups, and to provide all sort of knowledge secular and religious to guarantee fairness in access and quality.

Moreover, in order to promote inclusive

environment, there is a need for the government to change and redesign the Almajiri educational system in which instead of allowing some schools to individuals and religious bodies that will impact the precepts of any specific religion, governments has to establish schools that can instill the of spirit of scientific humanism of peace and unity, also there must be an overriding philosophy which seeks to promote excellence and goodness, social value and equity, working for national solidarity and a global cognizance.

Government should provide a strong linkage between social inclusion, education and sustainable peace in order to promote national prosperity. Thus, this study has succeeded in reconstructing the narratives surrounding the Almajiri street begging issue with the view of putting the phenomenon into a proper way, which would provide a blue-print for policy makers on how to tackle the problem of radicalization of Almajiri's and other insecurities in Bauchi state and Northern Nigeria at large. This is because without proper understanding of the Almajiri situation it is very difficult to come up with a result oriented and workable policy framework that can provide a lasting solution to the problems of Almajiri's which has particularly affected the Northern Nigeria for more than three decades. The research concludes that the problem of Almajiri street begging and insecurity is a vital issue that is threatening the peace and stability of the state.

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