# Assessing Sources of Support and Adequacy of Facilities for *Almajiri* Schools in Katsina State, Nigeria

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Abstract- This study assessed sources of support and adequacy of facilities for the Almajiri system (Non-formal Arabic school system) in Katsina State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was employed by the researchers. Sixty-five (65) Mallams (Arabic teachers) were purposively selected from twelve (12) Almajiri schools in Katsina State. The data was collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled: "Source of Support for Almajiri Education System Questionnaire (SSAESQ)" and "Facilities Available for Almajiri Education System Questionnaire (FAAESQ)" with test-retest reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.83 respectively. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data collected. Findings revealed that vast majority of the respondents (96.9% to 100%) indicated that they do not have regular meetings with the local government officials, state government officials and religious leaders. Moreover, most Mallams rate support for Almajiri education from politicians, Almajiris' Parents/Relatives, Mosques and Muslim societies as poor. All the Mallams (100%) rate provision of furniture as poor. Most of them also rate feeding, toilets facilities, salaries of Mallams and Islamic materials in Almajiri schools as poor. Based on these findings, it is recommended that there should be regular meetings between the government and Mallams in order to monitor activities in these schools, also, government at all levels and stakeholders.

Keywords: Assessing, Sources of funds, Almajiris, Mallams, School Facilities

#### INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital instrument for meaningful development of any society and nation at large. The role of education in all ramifications of human life cannot be overestimated. According to Obanya[1], "Education is the development of the human person which can be said to be the care of the head, hands, and the heart of the human person". The origin of the word 'Almajiri' was from Arabic word AlMuhajirun, meaning to emigrate. Moreover, Almajiri system of Education can be describe as type of informal education where Mallam (Arabic teacher) teach Muslim children how to read, write, recite and memorize Holy Quran. The term 'Almajiris' is normally used to describe out-of-school children who are attending non-formal Arabic schools where they are handover to Mallams(Teachers) by their parents to teach them Quran. However, many of them are found on the streets begging for alms and also involve in some dirty work in order to get money to feed themselves [2], [3].

It is important to understand that, the name *Almajiri* typically connotes a pupil of an Almajiri Quranic School; a boy in search of knowledge in distant places. This concept of travelling to far places is linked to the Prophet Mohammed's migration from Mecca to Medina [4]. This name however, has over the time acquired negative connotations. For instance, in the Northern part of Nigeria where this practice is prevalent, the name *'Almajiri'* takes the following forms: a person irrespective of gender begging for alms from house to house as a result of some deformity and children between the ages of 5-15 who attend informal religious schools who roam about with the purpose of getting some assistance or a child who engages in some form of labour to earn a living [5].

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D6 noted that Qur'anic education ensure that children are able to read and recite the Qur'an and be vast in Islamic moral values which will also help them to have adequate knowledge of Arabic language and basic Islamic tents. S7 opined that the main goal of the *Almajiri* type of education is to assist one to become a good Muslim and possess useful skills for personal benefit and positive impact on the society.

Some challenges facing the Almajiri system of education include: inadequate facilities for skills programmes, acquisition volunteers and philanthropists helping Qur'anic schools with food, shelter and other needs are now becoming difficult to come by, leaving the Almajiris to roam about begging and engaging in all sorts of activities to enable them survive. Presently, Almajiris lack facilities for feeding, they are living and learning far away from their parental homes; most of these schools have acute shortage of classrooms and hostel facilities thereby making the learning environment generally congested and inappropriate for effective learning. Also, the curriculum is narrowly focused thereby not providing adequately for the overall needs of the Nigerian children [8], [9].

Prof. Idris asserted that in Almajiri system of education "begging was never involved and certainly the pupils were not reduced to doing menial jobs before they could eat" [5]. Compass Newspaper reported that the Almajiris system of education have become a problem to society and the nation as a whole because they contribute to security threat in the country (Nigeria). The Almajiris have become a danger to society and can be useful tools for antisocial conducts. Intelligence reports revealed that the present terrorist movements in the Northern part of the Nigeria. recruits from those who attended Almajirisystem of education [5],[10].

Yahaya [11] noted that colonial invasion of the northern part of Nigeria started the challenges of Quaranic education. According to him, this led to the gradual eroding of the Islamic educational system, because of this reason Curriculum contents, teaching methods, teachers' qualification, infrastructure and administration were compromised. Based on this, *Almajiri* system of education in the Northern part of Nigeria now contributes more social problems and fails to produce citizens useful to the society. *Almajiris* are vulnerable to being used as political thugs by benefactors who take advantage of their lack of formal education and they are then not useful for the nation.

Christian [12] also noted that *Almajiris* considered as serious security challenges as many of them have become miscreants who actively participate in ethnoreligious crisis, political violence and terrorism. Formal Education is now very important to the *Almajiris* because politicians, religious fanatics and terrorist groups have begun to exploit their vulnerability and used to achieve their destructive motive. Thus children, who ordinarily should be useful members of society, have become great security threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria [13]. In view of this, this study assessed the sources of support and facilities for the *Almajiri system* in Katsina State, Nigeria.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this study is to empirically assess the sources of support and adequacy of facilities for the *Almajiri* system in Katsina State, Nigeria in order to know how *Mallams* get financial support from and facilities for *Almajiri* education in Katsina State. Specifically, the study sought information on the sources of support for *Almajiri* education system in Katsina State; ranked order of sources of support for *Almajiri* education system in Katsina State, and facilities in place for *Almajiri* education system in Katsina State.

Four research questions were raised and answered in the study: (1) Do Almajiri school teachers (Mallams) hold regular meetings with Local government officials, state government officials and religious leaders?; (2) Where do Almajiri school teachers (Mallams) get financial support for Almajiri education system in Katsina State?; (3) How do Mallams rate sources of support for Almajiri education system in Katsina State?; (4) How do school teachers (Mallams) rate the facilities for Almajiri education system in Katsina State?

Figure 1 above shows the conceptual framework, which describes the variables of this study. The Mallams are Arabic Teachers who responsible for their upkeep of the Almajiris under their care while Almajiri are children taking Quranic lessons from Mallams (Arabic word for teachers), but people can see them begging for alms, wandering the streets and involves in dirty jobs in exchange for food or money [13], [14]. Quranic schools have serious influential aspect of the early childhood education in Northern Nigeria [15].

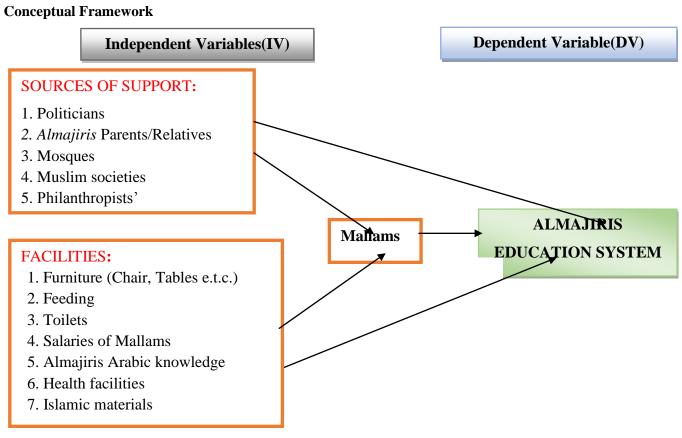


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Study

They are semi-formal centers of religious education in which male children (females are rarely sent out) aged as young as 3 years are sent to Mallams (Arabic Teachers) in a distance place from their parents to acquire Quranic knowledge and learn the Quran. The variables are independent variables which includes sources of support and facilities and dependent variable, which is Almajiris System of Education. It indicates how the independent variables influence the dependent variable.

# MATERIALS AND METHOD

Descriptive research design of survey type was employed for the study. All *Mallams* in Nigeria consisted the study population while the target population was made up of *Mallams* in Katsina State, Nigeria. Sampling technique called multi-stage was used to select appropriate samples. Firstly, all the Local Government Areas in Katsina State were divided into three using the existing geopolitical zones (Katsina Zone, Daura Zone & Funtua Zone). Secondly, purposive sampling technique was used to select two (2) Local Government Areas from each

zone, because the *Almajiri education* system is more pronounced in some Local Government Areas than the other. Thus, Local Government Areas that are severely affected were chosen. Thus, all the six-five (65) *Mallams* (Daura Zone 24, Katsina Zone 18 &Futua Zone 23) from twelve (12) *Almajiri* schools (Arabic schools) purposively selected participated in the study. A researcher designed questionnaire titled: "Sources of Support for Almajiri Education System Questionnaire (SSAESQ)" and "Facilities Available for Almajiri Education System Questionnaire (FAAESQ)" were developed by the researchers.

Both SSAESQ and FAAESQ were designed for the *Mallams* to collect relevant data for the study. SSAESQ consists of two sections. Section A consists of personal information of the *Mallams* such as name of LGA, Zone, gender, age and so on while Section B consists of five (5) items which were answered using a 2-point Likert scale format (Yes & No).FAAESQ consists of seven (7) items which were answered using a 4-point Likert scale format (Very good, Good, Fair & Poor). Two experts in educational measurement and evaluation ascertained the face and

content validities of the instruments (SSAESQ & FAAESQ). Reliability was established through test-retest reliability. Reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.83 were obtained for the instruments respectively. This shows that the instruments are reliable for the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Answers to Research Questions**

In this study, four (4) research questions were asked and answered using frequency and percentage based on the respondents answers to each research question.

#### **Research Question One**

Do *Almajiri* school teachers (*Mallams*) hold regular meetings with Local government officials, state government officials and religious leaders?

Table 1: Percentages showing how regularly *Mallams* have meetings with local government officials, state government officials and religious leaders?

Item		Yes	No	
1.	Local government officials	0 (0%)	65 (100%)	
2.	State government officials	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	
3.	Religious leaders	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	

Table 1, show that, all the Mallams 65 (100%) responded that they do not have regular meetings with the local government officials; while 64 (98.5%) responded that they are not having regular meetings with the state government officials and religious leaders. From the findings, the researchers discovered that nobody including government is supervising or monitoring the activities of *Mallams* in *Almajiri* education system (Non-formal Arabic Schools) in Katsina State, Nigeria. This calls for serious attention because of the well-being of the *Almajiris* which must be the interest of everybody in the society. This may be the reason while there is no proper care for them and their well-being is neglected and they at serious risk

Figures 1 supported the table 1, it reveals that majority of the participants responded that there is no regular meeting between them and others officials such as local government officials, State government officials and religious leaders.

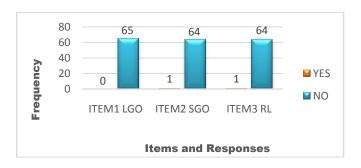


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the frequency on how regularly *Mallams* have meetings state government officials and religious leaders

**Key**: LGO:Local government officials; SGO:State government officials; RL:Religious leaders

Table 2: Percentage showing where *Mallams* get financial support from for Almajiri education system in Katsina State

S/N	Item	Yes	No
1.	Politicians	0 (0%)	65 (100%)
2.	AlmajirisParents	20 (30.8)	45 (69.2%)
3.	Mosques	2 (3.1%)	63 (96.9%)
4.	Muslim societies	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)
5.	Philanthropists	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)

Table 2 above reveals that, all the 65 *Mallams* (100%) responded that they did not get financial support from politicians, 20 (31%) responded that they get financial support from *Almajiris* Parents while 45(69%) says they do not. In addition, 2 (3.1%) responded that they get financial support from Mosques while 63 (96.9%) say they do not; 1 (1.5%) respondent says No to items 4 and 5 while 64 (98.5%) respondents say Yes to the same items. This means that majority of the responded indicated that they did not get financial support from Muslim societies and Philanthropists.

From the bar chart in Figure 2 supported the table 2, the majority of the participants indicated No, which means that they did not get financial support from politicians and no adequate financial support from *Almajiris* Parents, Mosques, Muslim societies and Philanthropists. This makes the Almajiri education system in Katsina State not effective and the children in these schools are greatly disadvantaged educationally especially in formal education.

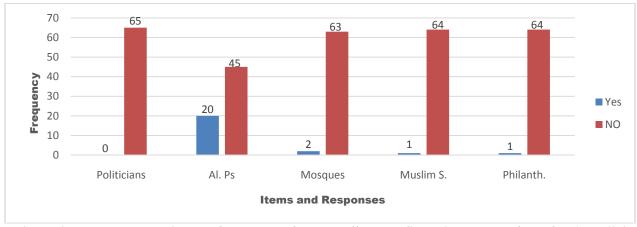


Figure 2: Bar chart showing the frequency of how *Mallams* get financial support from for Almajiri education system in Katsina State

**Key**: Al.Ps = *Almajiris* Parents, Muslim S = Muslim Societies, Philanth. = Philanthropists.

Table 3 show that, all the Mallams 65(100%) rate the sources of support for Almajiri education from politicians as poor; 7 (10.8%), 24 (36. 9%) and 34 (52.3%) rate the sources of support for Almajiri education from Almajiris Parents/Relatives as good, fair and poor respectively. In addition, 2 (3.1%) and 63 (96.9%) %) rate the sources of support for Almajiri education from Mosques as fair and poor respectively while 1 (1.5%) and 64 (98.5%) rate the sources of support for Almajiri education from Muslim societies as fair and poor respectively. Moreover, 16 (24.6%), 24 (36. 9%) and 25 (38.5%) rate the sources of support for Almajiri education in Katsina State from Philanthropists as good, fair and poor respectively. It is important to note that, the sources of support for Almajiri education in Katsina State is very poor and

the results shows that urgent support is needed for *Almajiri* education in Katsina State, so that the children going to these schools can learn comfortably and become successful in future. Without the proper sources of support by government and other stakeholders in education, quality education will be difficult to achieve. Since, education is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings in respect of their position or socio-economic background. Quality education to all citizen is of utmost importance to any nation to advance. Kalusi [16], argued favorably to this view that a nation which cannot provide good and relevant education for its citizen has no right to expect rapid economic and social development.

Table 3. Percentage showing how Mallamsrate the sources of support for Almajiri education system in Katsina State

S/N	Item	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1.	Politicians	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	65 (100%)
2.	AlmajirisParents/Relatives	0 (0%)	7 (10.8%)	24 (36.9%)	34 (52.3%)
3.	Mosques	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.1%)	63 (96.9%)
4.	Muslim societies	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)
5.	Philanthropists'	0 (0%)	16 (24.6%)	24 (36.9%)	25 (38.5%)

Table 4. Percentages showing how Mallamsrate the facilities for Almajiri education system in Katsina State

S/N	Facilities	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	
1.	Furniture (Chair, Tables e.t.c.)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	65 (100%)	
2.	Feeding	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (23.1%)	50 (76.9%)	
3.	Toilets	1 (1.5%)	10 (15.4%)	14 (21.5%)	40 (61.5%)	
4.	Salaries of Mallams	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	
5.	Almajiri Arabic knowledge	36 (55.4%)	27 (4.1%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	
6.	Health facilities	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	41 (63.1%)	23 (35.4%)	
7.	Islamic materials	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (20.0%)	52 (80.0%)	

Table 4 shows that, all the *Mallams* 65(100%) rate the furniture (Chair, Tables e.t.c.) in Almajiri schools as poor, while 15 (23.1%) and 50 (76.9%) rate the feeding in Almajiri schools as fair and poor respectively. In addition, 1 (1.5%), 10 (15.4%), 14 (21.5%) and 40 (61.5%) rate the toilets facilities in Almajiri schools as very good, good, fair and poor respectively while 1 (1.5%) and 64 (98.5%) rate the salaries of Mallams in Almajiri schools as fair and poor respectively. Moreover, 36 (55.4%), 27 (4.1%), 1 (1.5%) and 1 (1.5%) rate the Almajiri Arabic knowledge as very good, good, fair and poor respectively while 1 (1.5%), 41 (63.1%) and 23 (35.4%) rate the health facilities in Almajiri schools as good, fair and poor. Also, 13 (20.0%) and 52 (80.0%) %) rate the Islamic materials in Almajiri schools as fair and poor.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

Table 1shows that, vast majority of the respondents indicated that they are not having regular meetings with the local government officials; state government officials and religious leaders. This means that is no adequate supervision and inspection of *Almajiris* teachers by government and other stakeholders in education which may be the reason while they are not ready for integration into formal education system.

The improvement of teaching and learning in schools is the general purpose of supervision. Ebele [17]opined that supervision is a combination or integration of a number of processes, procedures and conditions that are consciously designed with the sole aim of advancing the work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel involved in the schooling process. This will enhance quality education in Almajiris schools and make integration of Almajiris into formal education easier for the government of Katsina State and Nigeria in Nigeria. According to Boissiere [18] the concern for quality has been at the core of the motivating forces for reforms in education. Achieving quality in education has increasingly become crucial in strategic improvement plans of developing countries. Kochhar [19] opined that supervision includes those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of Without the regular supervision of government at all levels to Almajiris schools, it will be difficult for the government to integrate them into the formal education system in Katsina state and Nigeria in general.

Table 2 also shows that, majority of the do not get financial support from politicians, Almajiris Mosques. Parents. Muslim societies Philanthropists. In addition, Table 3 shows that, majority of the Mallams 65(100%), 34 (52.3%), and 63 (96.9%) and 64 (98.5%) rate the sources of support for Almajiri education from politicians, Almajiris Parents, Mosques and Muslim societies respectively as poor. This is a serious matter because the roles of the federal, state, local government as well as private sectors in Almajiris schools cannot overemphasized. This crucial supports are lacking in Almajiris schools in Katsina State. The NPE [20]says "The government's ultimate goal is to make education free at all levels", as such the financing of education is a joint responsibility of the federal, state and local government as well as private sectors. In this regards, government welcomes and encourages participation of local communities, individual philanthropist and non-governmental organization. This point out the unique role played by finance, in an individual, notwithstanding the educating environmental factors and individual intelligence quotient which influences and determine the level of academic performance of an individual. This is because funding serves as the life-wire for the management and administration of most sectors of the economy including the educational sector. Based on this, UNESCO recommended that 26% of the annual budget of any nation should be set aside for the administration and management of the educational sector (21). This funding strategy will help in providing the basic resources needed for teaching and learning both in terms of quality and quantity. Durosaro [22] asserted that funding of education constitutes an important aspect of public finance due to the fact that the federal, state and local governments are involved in its provision and management. It also constitutes a vital aspect of private investment because voluntary organizations and individuals are involved in it.

Olowoye [23] emphasized that fund is a crucial prerequisite which enables an organization to maintain itself effectively and meet its commitment to individuals and groups who consume its output of goods and services. He further stated that absolutely nothing can be done in the whole world without the availability of adequate funds. Funds are financial

resources which are the monetary input available for and expended on the education system. Oyesiku [24] opined that all forms of educational planning involve some expenditure analysis and that the trends of the entire education system can be projected through funding.

Table 4 shows that, majority of the *Mallams* 65(100%), 50 (76.9%), 40 (61.5%), 64 (98.5%) and52 (80.0%) rate the furniture (Chair, Tables e.t.c.) feeding, toilets facilities, salaries of Mallams and Islamic materials in *Almajiri schools* respectively as poor. These findings reveal that essential facilities in *Almajiri schools* in Katsina State are poor. This may the reason why *Almajiris* are not comfortable to stay in their schools and learn. The findings of this study support the findings of [2] who noted that the *Almajiri* system of education is faced by: inadequate facilities, funding, insufficient training for Mallam's, policies not properly implemented, and no vast curriculum. School facilities are the material resources that enhance effective teaching and learning in schools.

The findings of this study is supported by Ahmend [26] which revealed that in most of the nation's secondary schools, teaching and learning takes place under a most unconducive environment, lacking the basic materials and thus hindered the fulfilment of educational objectives. In addition, Castaldi [27] stated that learning facilities is a crucial component of the entire classroom control and management; this is because the excitement usually generated by the provision, utilization and utilization of learning facilities can generate a lot of noise, undue movement of pupils, chairs and tables but make the student participate. The learning facilities are used to supplement and complement the teacher verbal effort. Some of the learning facilities include library, white board, chalk board, classroom furniture, computers, laboratories, workshop among others. Almajiris schools lack almost all these facilities which affect education of Almajiris in these schools. Babagana (28) who also supported the findings of this study, says that efforts should be made to support Ouranic and Islamiyahh schools and facilities should be adequately supply to these centres and both Mallams and Almajiris welfare should improve upon.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study assessed the sources of support and facilities for the *Almajiri system* in Katsina State, Nigeria. From the findings of the study, the researchers discovered that there are no regular

meetings between *Mallams* and other stakeholders in education which implies that the activities of *Mallams* in *Almajiri schools* in Katsina State are neither supervised nor supported. Generally, the findings of this study show that there are no sufficient facilities in *Almajiri schools* in Katsina State. All stakeholders in education should take the findings of this study very serious in other to eliminate or improve the *Almajiri system* in Katsina State.

The researchers recommend that there should be regular meeting between the government and *Mallams* in order to monitor their activities and how they are handling the *Almajiris*. Government should take over the welfare of *Mallams* and *Almajiris* to reduce out-of-school children in Katsina State and Nigeria as a whole. Government should provide adequate funding for *Almajiri* education system in Katsina state and Nigeria in general. Government at all levels and stakeholders in education should provide adequate infrastructural facilities to *Almajiri* schools.

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