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The Amajiri Schools and National Security: A Critical Analysis and Social Development Implication

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Concept of Amajiri School - The word Amajiri was derived from Arabic "Almuhajiri" meaning an emigrant. It usually refers to a person who migrates from luxury of his home to other place or to a popular teacher in the quest for Islamic knowledge. It is hinged on the Islamic concept of migration which is widely practiced especially when acquisition of knowledge at home is either inconvenient or insufficient. During the pre-colonial era, the Almajiri education systems originally called the Tsangaya was established under the Kanem-Borno Empire, one of the oldest ruling empire in the world extending from the frontier of northern Libya. It was established as an organized and comprehensive system of education for learning Islamic principles, values, jurisprudence and theology. This depicts the replica of Islamic learning centers in many Muslim countries such as: Madrasah in Pakistan, Malaysia Egypt and Indonesia etc.

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THEAMAJIRISCHOOLSANDNATIONALSECURITYACRITICALANALYSISANDSOCIALDEVELOPMENTIMPLICATION

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The Amajiri Schools and National Security: A Critical Analysis and Social Development Implication

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I. CONCEPT OF AMAJIRI SCHOOL

The word Amajiri was derived from Arabic "Almuhajiri" meaning an emigrant. It usually refers to a person who migrates from luxury of his home to other place or to a popular teacher in the quest for Islamic knowledge. It is hinged on the Islamic concept of migration which is widely practiced especially when acquisition of knowledge at home is either inconvenient or insufficient. During the pre-colonial era, the Almajiri education systems originally called the Tsangaya was established under the Kanem-Borno Empire, one of the oldest ruling empire in the world extending from the frontier of northern Libya. It was established as an organized and comprehensive system of education for learning Islamic principles, values, jurisprudence and theology. This depicts the replica of Islamic learning centers in many Muslim countries such as: Madrasah in Pakistan, Malaysia Egypt and Indonesia etc.

II. AMAJIRI SCHOOL AND NIGERIA: ORIGIN TRACES

In 1904, the British invaded and colonized the northern Nigeria territories and took control of the state treasury. They killed and disposed those emirs who resisted the foreign rule, while those who were subjugated lost control of their territories and accepted their new roles as mere traditional ruler used only for the indirect rule. Although, the British refused to recognized the Almajiri school and leading to the abolishing its state funding. They argued that Almajiri were mere religion schools. Then, Boko meaning western education was introduced and funded instead. At the loss of support system thus collapsed like a pile card. The responsibility of the Almajiri was then taken over by the local scholars who deemed it a moral and religious duty to educate these pupils for the sake of Allah.

Abdulaodir (2003) quoted saying "The Almajiri system of education as practiced today in the northern Nigeria is a completely bastardized system compared to the form and condition under the system it was

operating and its output during the pre-colonial period. It has been argued that Almajiri system was imported into Northern Nigeria from northern Africa. In Nigeria today, the Hausa use the word to refer to both a student and a beggar. The Almajiri system involved entrusting children into the care of "learned" person, a Mallam with whom or to whom they migrate to different settlements where it is assumed that a conducive learning environment for the study of the Holy Quran exists. Some of these Almajiri students were at liberty to acquire vocations and occupational skills in between their Islamic lesson and so were involved in farming, fishing, well constructive masonry, production, trade, tailoring, small business etc (Okonkwo & Alhaji, 2014).

The efforts of the last president of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan in an attempt to better the lot of the Almajiri(s) established almajiri schools where they will obtain western as well as Quranic education so that they will be removed from the street. The inaugurated repackaged and rebranded almajiri schools in Gaji area of Sokoto state embraced the president commitment by his inauguration speech:-

"Come for the nation to build on the moral foundation of the traditional system by providing the almajiri with conventional knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfill their creative and productive potential (Ellechiagu, 2012) (Hilda & Ibrahim 2014).

III. CNIGERIA NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW

Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999 has been battling with series of violent, crisis and agitations from various geo-political zones in the country (Ammadu et al 2015). These agitations pose serious threat to the National security. Nigeria is a rich nation but Nigerians are poor, many extremely so. Nigeria has suffered growing security, capacity and legitimacy gaps, demonstrated in the declining capacity of its institutions to deliver public goods, including security, transportation, water, medical care, power and education. The growing threats to national security could be attributable to bad governance, sustained economic hardship; rising inequality and social frustration are fostering the growth of radical extremist groups. Some of these groups could be regionally based as could be seen in Nigeria. Book Haram group

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(North), Biafran (South (East) Niger-Delta militant (south-south) etc. Although, these groups agitation could be analyzed in different ways of reasonability and goals but, the truth is that their actions poses threat to the National Security and regionally also, African and the world.

Just as stated by Anumudu et al (2015), concerning the National security today, what we thought was a joke, has today become a monster sending many innocent men and women into unpremeditated grave and that is the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria. This has created fear and loss of security sense in the polity.

The rise of National Insecurity cannot go without blame or source. The fall of Almajiri school could be one of the sources of violent actors in the north. There may be other sources or blames especially in other regions of Nigeria but for the sake of this paper, focus will be concentrated on the links of Almajiri school/system failure on National security.

IV. THE FALL OF ALMAJIRI SCHOOL AND THE RISE OF NATIONAL INSECURITY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS WITH DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

The invading of the British into the region and the killing of most Emirs and others disposed could be a history but the effect may still with the current generation. The Emirs lost control of their territories and accepted their new roles, as mere traditional ruler. They also lost fundamental control of Almajiri school arguing that, they were religious schools. The British introduce "Karatun Boko" meaning western education.

Ekpo & Bello (2014), there is no doubt that education is the foundation of any development in every society. It is important to every individual and the society at large, as roasts are important to the growth and development of a tree. But the argument now is 'whether education thrive better when incorporated with the intrinsic of the people's culture of if when the people's culture is neglected?.'

Almajiri education in Nigeria started in the olden days when the quest to acquire knowledge was prevalent, especially the Quaranic knowledge by the Muslims. Although, there were no laid down procedure or channels adopted in obtaining such, except the unconventional way of handing over wards to a supposedly teachers, known as (Mallam Yusha et al 2013). The Mallam now enlist the child and the teaching of religious scripture and way of life are indoctrinated into the young pupils. The feeding and accommodation of the pupils were also part of the teacher's responsibilities. And a single, Mallan could recruit, feed and accommodate hundreds of pupils.

Unlike in the days when Almajiri schools enjoy the support and funding of the states, to even keep and feed one hundred months is not easy and it seem impossible. The coming of the civilized life styles of the

west started encroaching into the big-cities of the north, some of these mallams became allured to the greed for money and started migrating to other cities and towns with their pupils and subject them to the vagaries of the streets. The motive of Almajuri at formulation which are:-

- i. To ensure that children read and recite the Quaran
- ii. Children become fully inducted into Islamic moral values in all behavior.
- iii. Children become as knowledgeable in Arabic language and basic Islamic sciences as a foundation for further studies.

All these motives and more were bastardized by the process and greed of the mallam.

The Mallams having no financial support resorted the pupils to begging and other menial jobs for survival. This puts the current population of the Almajiri at about 7 million as reported by National Council for the Welfare of Destitute (NCWD)

The predicaments of the Almajiri system, now made available manpower that could pose threat to the national security. It was easy for the mallam who take charge of feeding and accommodation to redirect the pupils for some insecurity acts. The abolishment of Almajiri system by the British in turn receive a revolt by the northern Islamic group now Boko Haram. Meaning western education is evil. This became the genesis of the insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria as a multi ethnic country and with the fate of the helpless Almajiri situation in the hands of their mallams become easy for manipulation for political reasons, economic reasons etc.

Book Haram as described is a militant group in North Eastern Nigeria which means Sunni Group for preaching and Jihad. The group was founded in 2012, largely to preach an Islamist ideology asked on the doctrine of the Taliban as well as groups such as al-Qaeda. The aim of the group basically is to create an Islamic state and to achieve its anti-western education target by stopping all regular schools. However, in Nigeria, cases of domestic terrorism are on the increase result to general insecurity and fear with Nigerian seemingly helpless in tackling the manual headstrong. There are indication that Nigeria could be attributed to a weak and failed state thereby joining states like Somalia Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan and Iraq in this category and thus seen as states providing heavens for terrorist operations.

V. THE INFLUENCE OF ALMAJIRI SCHOOL ON NATIONAL SECURITY FACTOR

Almajiri school could be a labour or manpower mobilization center for some National security threat factors. These threats to national security also militate against some social developmental factors such as:-

poverty rate, literacy rate and population explosion Almajiri school failure mounts pressure on the factors that could lead to national security threats with social development implications.

a) Almajiri and Population Explosion

The existence of Almajiri school could be a factor that led to the misconception of the illiterate northern leading to indiscriminate marrying and fertility growth. The Almajiri school now serve as a place to dump young people as a relief to the burden in training the child.

b) Poverty rate and Almajiri school

The Almajiri falls among the categories of destitute children in Nigeria. The constituted seven million street begging, maladjusted, aggrieved and violent-ridden socio-neglects of Northern Nigeria (AHMED 2007).

According to Obioha and Adeforo (2009; nd), Almajiri school is predominantly in the Northern states of Nigeria. Likewise poverty rate in the Northern as stated is 71.4%, Northeast poverty rate is 69.1% and North central is 60.7%. These respective poverty rates are higher than the other poverty rate of the other region.

Poverty report state that zonal precedence of poverty by different poverty measure as :- Table 1

Zone	Food poor	Absolute	Relatively poor	Dollar per day	States
North central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7	Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau FCT
North east	51.5	69.0	76.3	69/1	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Bomber Taraba, Yobe
North west	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4	Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto Zamfara
South east	41.0	58.7	67.8	58.7	Enugu, Anamabra, Imo, Ebonyi, Abia
South west	25.4	49.8	59.1	50	Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo
South-south	25.5	55.9	63.8	56.1	Rivers, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa

NBS 2012: Nigeria poverty Profile 2010.

From the statistics above, it can be observed that poverty incidence is high in the region/region that are predominated by Almajiri school target.

c) Literacy rate

Almajiri system of education is associated with Quranic education. In Northern Nigeria, Qur'anic school system predates western education in fact, in most parts of the Northern Nigeria, Qur'anic system predates even the Usman Danfodio Jihad (Sule, 2002).

Jaafar (2008) stated that the Almajiri system of education is the intellectual and moral training of pupils and students. The literacy outreach of Almajiri system is limited to ability to read and write Qur'anic only. Almajiri system as an alternative to westerner education increase a half educated human forces. This could be explained more with the literacy rate of Northern states that showed to be poor relative to other region.

Table 2 : Adult literacy Rate in English by zones

Zones	Lit in English	Lit in any language
North central	56.4	61.9
North East	42.0	62.8
North West	31.7	70.1
South East	73.3	75.1
South-south	74.0	75.4
South west	69.1	77.9
National	57.9	71.6

VI. INSURGENCE AND REGION DOMINATED BY ALMAJIRI SYSTEM

Book Haram as a militant group in North-eastern Nigeria aimed to create an Islamic state in Nigeria and achieve its anti-western education target by stopping all regular schools. The strength of Boko Haram group has grown as it is seen as providing jobs

for the unemployment youth in the area of influence. Almajiri system failure and abuse by the Mallam could foster crime and violence by the Alajiri popular in cities like Kano and Kaduna. Almajiri has graduated into Yandaba, adolescent group. Also, in 2005, the national council for the welfare of the Destitute estimated there were seven million Almajiri children in Northern Nigeria.

VII. THE PARADOX OF ALMAJIRI SYSTEM , IN ENHANCING THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND SOCIO DEVELOPMENT

Almajiri system in the Islamic religion has become a matter of sad concern for the North and the Nigeria nation. These children of almajiri school age and above roam about the street in tattered clothes begging, scavenging and doing all sort of odd jobs including clinica (Taiwo, 2013). A reformed almajiri system could lead to economics growth, attitudinal charge(morals) and education. In order to transform the Almajiri school program there are some steps to be taken.

VIII. INTEGRATION OF ALMAJIRI SCHOOL INTO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

A call for abolishment of Almajiri school will be assumed as an encroachment into the culture and belief of the North. Therefore, Almajiri school could be reshaped to suit the social development goals of Nigeria. Such will also include the modeling of mode of enrollment and identifying indicators for assessment by the government agents or ministry.

Poverty targeting: Poverty should be targeted in the northern area using some empowerment programme. Agriculture could be an alternative to the empowerment since almajiri pupils could lead to increase in labour supply. A skilled acquisition could re channel the waste of labour to useful activities in the country.

Parental Enlightenment: The parents in the north should be enlightened to abide with the ideal of controlled fertility The ungodly increase in the fertility rate in the north should be campaigned against.

IX. CONCLUSION

Almajiri system should be transformed to suit socio development progress. This will help to reduce the possibility it serving as a mobilization center for security threat agents. The core value and objection of Almajiri School should be resuscitated. The spiritual and moral growth attain in almajiri school is well and capable of ensuring security in the nation. Therefore, in as much as, almajiri system could represent northern belief or culture; it should be transformed to avoid abuse of the vulnerable almajiri pupils to perpetuate violence in the nation.

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