

**A STUDY OF THE STUDENTS OF *ALMAJIRI* SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN
GOMBE METROPOLIS**

BY

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**BEING AN M.SC. DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST-
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Certification

This is to certify that this study was carried out under my supervision and the subsequent preparation of this dissertation by Misbahu Ibrahim Zamfara SPS/10/MSO/00008 was carried out under my supervision.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this study is the product of my research effort carried out under the supervision of Dr. Haruna M. Awaisu, and has never been presented and will not be presented elsewhere for the award of a Degree or Certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Mallam Ibrahim Zamfara, Hajiya Asma'u Muhammad, Hajiya Zuwaira Musa Abubakar and also to the affectionate memory of my late uncle, Alhaji Tasiu Muhammad Boyi (Uncle T). May Allah (SWT) grant him eternal rest in his grave, ameen.

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Abstract

This study investigates the students of *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis by targeting three wards that have high presence of *Almajiri* pupils namely; Unguwa Uku, Kagarawal and Kwanan Alheri. It investigates the social background of students of the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis, analyzes the economic background of parents of *Almajiri* students in Gombe Metropolis and examines the role of Ulama (teachers) in running the *Almajiri* system in Gombe Metropolis. It also examines the role of government in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis. The study was conducted using both qualitative (In-depth-Interview and Focus Group Discussion) and quantitative (Questionnaire) methods of data collection. After the data were collected, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), cross tabulation and chi-square were further used to analyze and interpret the data. The respondents are categorized into sub-groups including the *Almajiri* pupils, Gardawa, Ulama, Desk officer and ward heads. The Study discovers the reasons why the *Almajiri* school system still exists. It finds out that most of the *Almajiri* pupils are neither contented nor satisfied with being in the *Almajiri* system, and that most of the *Almajiri* parents are without any qualification in western education. The study reviewed existing literature on the area of study with a view to filling the gap. The theoretical frameworks adopted for this work are; Institutional theory and Marxist theory in an integrated approach to explain the phenomenon of *Almajiri* school system backed up with scholarly views. The study proffers solutions on the need for integrating the *Almajiri* school system and it also recommends that the Government should provide free Primary and Secondary Education in order to avoid the coming up of other radical groups like the Maitatsine and the Boko Haram menaces.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The word '*Almajiri*' is derived from the Arabic word '*Almuhajirun*' meaning an emigrant. It refers to a person who migrates from the luxury of his home to other places 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 (Fafunwa, 1975). The *Almajiri* system of education practiced in Northern Nigeria has its origin in the migration of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from Mecca to Medina. Those who migrated with the prophet to Medina were called "*Almuhajirun*", meaning emigrants, while those they met there were referred to "*Ansar*", meaning helpers. "These emigrants (*Almuhajirun*), because of the circumstances of their migration had no means of livelihood on getting to Medina, but based on the fraternity established by the prophet between the two groups, they did not engage in begging but rather were co-opted by the "*Ansar*" in their various trades and vocations as apprentices who were paid for their services" (www.islamonline.com).

Imam Shafi'i is the greatest proponent of migration for seeking knowledge which he also extended even to business and a number of things. He likened it to a precious stone which he said is nothing unless it is mined and transported away from its soil. He summarized everything into two verses: "Emigrate from your home in quest of five benefits: relief from sorrow and earning a livelihood, then knowledge, good manners and friendship."

Imam Shafii travelled almost the entire Middle East seeking for knowledge until he finally settled in Egypt (Danbuzu, 2012).

When Islam came to Nigeria in the 11th century A.D in Kanem Borno, the rulers at that time were known to have encouraged learning by building Islamic schools. Islamic scholars from Egypt were employed to teach both the young and the old. Doi (1981) further stated that by the 14th century A.D, Islam had spread in Northern Nigeria and cities like Kano, Katsina and Borno had become centers for Islamic learning. During this period, Muslim scholars were attracted from Timbuktu (Mali), to teach and spread Islam. At that time, two types of schools developed: the *Makarantar Allo*, which is for beginners, and the Islamiyya School, which embraces all aspects of Islamic studies.

Today, Islamic education is obtained through either the *Islamiyya* school system or the Qur'anic or the *Allo* (slate) school system. The *Islamiyya* model school combines in its curricula, both the Qur'anic and Western education, but with greater emphasis on Islamic education. In addition to the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, and Arabic, other subjects like English, Arithmetic and Sciences are taught. The pupils wear uniforms and pay school fees. Examinations are held at the end of each term for all students. This model has a developed curriculum to meet the challenges of contemporary times.

The *Makarantar Allo* or Qur'anic school differs from the *Islamiyya* type in some notable ways. Although memory learning is the main method of learning in the former, there is the teaching of reading and writing in the latter. In the *makarantar Allo*, there are no classrooms. The children are mixed up in one place with no modern teaching facilities like desks, chairs, blackboards, etc. Generally, the schools are found in residential houses

near mosques or in open spaces. The *Ulama* charge no specific fees for tuition, though parents give the *Ulama* token amounts of money and gifts of foodstuff, clothing, etc especially during religious festivals. The Qur'anic or *Allo* system can be grouped into two categories, the Qur'anic Day School System and the *Almajiri* System.

This research is specifically interested in a study of the students of *Almajiri* System of Education in Gombe Metropolis as it is today in terms of stagnation, suffering, negligence and vulnerability of the *Almajiri* pupils to diseases, crimes and other social vices. This is in spite of the presence of Modern Schools for both Western and *Islamiyyah* Schools with more coherent and better structures and with a suitable environment convenient for learning. This is also in consideration of the way the Government is making efforts in integrating the *Almajiri* educational system with modernity to which the parents and the *Ulama* are opposed.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Among the Muslims in the Northern States of Nigeria, the *Almajiri* system of education is accepted by many as a means of acquiring Islamic knowledge but it is marred with various challenges. For example, the current living conditions of *Almajirai* leave much to be desired. The schools they attend are run by individuals and not regulated by any government agency except of recent with President Jonathan's administration's involvement in the affairs of some of the schools. Yet, millions of pupils attend these *Almajiri* schools in Northern Nigeria. The schools and pupils depend on charity and the schools are poorly managed. The current economic crisis facing the country has affected

a very large number of Nigerians. The pupils have to wander around places begging for food and cloth among others.

The *Almajiri* system of education is currently a social problem in Northern Nigeria and also a religious one. It was established in order to enable absolute rigor of studying and memorizing the holy Quran and the search for Islamic knowledge. But the system is rotten and the main objective for the establishment of *Almajiri* system of education has been ignored. Available data (Sule-Kano, 2000; Galadanchi, 1997 and Iguda, 2006) indicate that, most of the social uprisings in Northern Nigeria emanated from the *Almajiri* schools, especially Maitatsine and other extremist groups. This has been more vibrant in the case of *Boko Haram* from 2002 to date where *Almajiri* pupils are recruited for insurgency and other criminal activities.

The *Almajiri* system of education derailed from the initial target of Quranic memorization and search for Islamic knowledge towards finding relief for socio-economic tension by the parents of the *Almajiri* pupils. Most of the *Almajiri* parents send their children to *Almajiri* schools because they could not cater for them adequately. Thus, the whole system of education is abused and that has led to social vices such as stealing, insurgency and rituals, etc (Iguda, 2006).

Almajiri system of education in Gombe is creating socio-economic problems leading to overburdening of the populace and the policy makers in handling them. It is estimated that, there are about 218 *Almajiri* Schools controlled by more 500 *Mallams* with an estimated number of 10853 *Almajiri* Pupils (Ministry of Economic Planning, Gombe State, 2015). These *Almajiri* pupils are from far away villages and also from poor

families who could not sustain them properly. They (*Almajiri* Pupils) rely on begging and other menial jobs to survive. They have little or no economic contribution to the GDP of Gombe State except, being nuisance to the general public and perpetuating criminal activities by being an easy prey for recruitment in radical movements such as *Maitatsine* and *Boko Haram*.

Nigerian children like their parents were confronted with rapid changes that negatively affected all facets of their lives within the context of the existing socio-economic, political and cultural transformation. In Northern Nigeria, these problems were manifested in various forms such as social explosions like the *Maitatsine* crisis and the *Yandaba* phenomenon. These were some of the consequences of the condition of poverty in which the majority of these children have been placed, and the *Almajiranci* phenomenon encouraged anti-social activities in society. Most often some of the *Almajiri* pupils during their school days were turned into beggars, hawkers and wanderers. They live in a terribly sorry state of learning, with little chances of learning anything serious. Most of them live in condition of poor health, malnutrition and squalor (Sule-Kano, 2008).

The *Almajiri* pupils who are living in deprivation can be vulnerable to deviant acts such as stealing, fighting, thuggery, etc. For instance, many *Almajiri* pupils were recruited by *Boko Haram* fighters in Borno and Yobe States for insurgency activities according to a Report by Daily Trust Newspaper on the 26th of October, 2014 for a token amount of money. They are also recruited for political thuggery and other crime-related offences.

Every serious society must have a concern for the social welfare of individuals living in it. This is why there is need for a sound Social policy for the Almajiri System. The study of social welfare focuses on the way in which social welfare is organized to meet the needs of individuals and groups for healthcare, shelter, food, clothing and so on. It is also concerned with the way in which social problems are recognized and dealt with (Alcock, May and Rowlingson, 2010). There is no doubt that, *Almajiranci* is a social problem in Gombe and there is every need to provide a study that will proffer remedies to such problem.

The Government contributes to the problem of the decay of *Almajiri* system of education by neglecting the schools and making of policies that are favorable only to the development of western system of education. For instance, Gombe State Government budgeted 11% of the total budget towards western education while none is officially allocated to *Almajiri* Schools (Ministry of Economic Planning, Gombe State, 2015). Although, there was an attempt recently to integrate the *Almajiri* System of education with modern system, the impact is yet to be felt as the stagnation in the system is still visible.

The role of Government in the provision of education determines the nature and pattern of educational system in the country. Quality and functional education provided by the Government determines the way in which educational system impacted on children in any society according to Alcock, Payne and Sullivan (2000:174). In Nigerian context, the quality of education provided at elementary level particularly is not encouraging enough to attract *Almajiri* parents to enroll their children considering the way the system is

collapsing continuously. Therefore, this study will find answers to the under listed questions.

1.3 Research Questions

In line with the problems of the research identified above, this study will be guided by the following questions:

1. What is the social background of students of the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis?
2. What is the economic background of parents of *Almajiri* students in Gombe Metropolis?
3. What is the role of *Ulamaa* (teachers) in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis?
4. What is the role of government in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis?
5. What is the economic contribution of the students of *Almajiri* schools in Gombe Metropolis?

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The major aim of the study is to investigate the social background of the students of *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Discover the social background of students of the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis.
2. Analyze the economic background of parents of *Almajiri* students in Gombe Metropolis.

3. Examine the role of *Ulamaa* (teachers) in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis.
4. Find out the role of Government in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis.
5. Discover the economic contributions of the students of the *Almajiri* schools in Gombe metropolis.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are formulated for the purpose of this study:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and parents level of income;
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and father's numbers of wives; and
- H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between those whose mothers are present in the house and those who are not in terms of the level of contentment of being an *Almajiri*.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Gombe Local Government Area was chosen particularly because it is one of the dominant and recipient centers of *Almajiri* from the North Western states of Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Jigawa and Kano. The concentration of a large number of *Almajiri* in Gombe Local Government made the town feasible for a study of this nature. Also, shortage of resources in terms of research assistants and logistics made the researcher to limit the research to Gombe only since the problem of *Almajiri* is universal in Northern Nigeria.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The need and significance to conduct a research of this nature is very crucial, as it will bring to light a study of the students of *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis. This study will prompt the government and the general public to initiate actions that will provide a practicable solution to the problems associated with the *Almajiri* system of education. Many researches were conducted on this area of knowledge but, they focus mostly on the problems associated with *Almajiri* school system and its effect on the society. This research will be different in the sense that, it will focus mainly on a study of the students of *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis and whether the *Almajiri* pupils have economic impact on the society or not.

It is also the significance of this research to add to the existing body of knowledge that will increase awareness in the future of issues pertaining to the *Almajiri* phenomenon. It will also help policy makers in designing policies related to the *Almajiri* system of education.

1.8 Operational Definition of Key Concepts

Alaramma: A Quranic teacher who has committed the entire Quran into memory and can write same.

Almajiranci: This is the act of enrolling in a traditional Islamic school to learn the knowledge of the Holy Quran.

Almajiri: The word “*Almajiri*” is an Arabic word meaning “*Almuhajirun*” literally, means the immigrants. In the real sense of it, it means he who migrated from his

hometown to another place for a specific purpose. For the sake of this study, *Almajiri* means those who leave their homes to other places in search of Qur'anic knowledge. An *Almajiri* is a traditional Quranic education pupil.

Community: Refers to a usually small social unit of any size that shares common values. It also refers to a group of people who live together in the same territory or area. It is also a social group of any size whose members resides in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.

Gardawa: This refers to adult *Almajirai* who migrated from their hometowns or villages to other places in the search for Qur'anic knowledge.

Government: Is an agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and attained. It can also be defined as a body vested with the power and authority for maintaining security, peace and stability by making and enforcing conventional and fundamental laws in a given state or society.

System of Education: This simply means the process in which knowledge is transferred and inculcated using a specific designed method. It can be formal or informal. For this study, the system of education is informal where no structured stages are provided and no certificate is awarded specifying a given level of study.

Ulama: An Islamic knowledgeable person who teaches the *Almajiri* how to read, write and memorize the Holy Qur'an.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses literature related on the topic under study: a study of the students of *Almajiri* System of Education in Gombe Metropolis. This section will broaden our own knowledge, lead to a better understanding of the *Almajiri* phenomenon and provide a clear focus for the study.

2.2 Literature Review

The *Almajiri* type of education is a system in which children are sent to a settlement other than their own to study under *Ulama*. As Galadanci (1997:6) noted, “the children are let loose and engage in begging on the streets.” Adamu (2000:12) also observed that in desperation to meet their basic needs, the *Almajiri* look up to those who will give to enable them feed and take care of their necessities like clothing.

The *Almajiri* school system is organized by individuals who have either been requested by a community to teach the pupils or have voluntarily decided to establish the schools on their own. This is in line with the Hadith of the Prophet which says that “the best amongst you is one who learns the Qur’an and cares to teach it”. It follows then that individuals who organize Qur’anic schools do so as a service to Islam. Such individuals teach for charity, and live on occasional donations, in cash or kind, from the pupils’ parents and other sympathizers. As one establishes such a school, the tendency is to solicit for and admit young children from far and near for the purpose of teaching them

Islamic education. As there are no formalized conditions for joining this type of schools, the children are simply handed over to the *Ulama* by parents.

The students endure utter deprivation, and their appearances leave much to be desired. With their unkempt hair, dirty faces, blistered lips, tainted teeth, crusty skin, stinking clothes and bare foot; they are distinctive. Armed with plastic bowls, decorated with shabby attires, and congregated in small groups, they accost members of the public with alluring songs while soliciting for alms. The begging proceeds are used to sustain themselves and their teachers. The phase in Islamic history inspired the *Almajiri* in Northern Nigeria over a century ago. Parents entrusted their kids into the custody of “*Ulama*” to memorize the Qur’an, while retaining the responsibility of providing food and other basic needs of the child. Parents also maintained close contacts with the teachers habitually. Altruistic members from the public offered their support by means of gifts and *Zakkat* donations (a trend that has the impact of helping to sustain the system, and contributing to its growth and popularity).

The National Council for the Welfare of Destitute (NCWD) puts the current population of the *almajiri* at about 7 million. One can imagine 7 million potential judges, accountants, engineers, etc being wasted away. The system as it is presently being practiced has outlived its usefulness. The system lack good teachers and a fairly healthy environment. The standards are very low because of the emergence of half-baked semi-illiterate Quranic *Ulama* who use the system as a means of living rather than a way of life itself. The pupils struggle to cater for themselves and to support the *Ulama*, which take much of the time rather than engage in learning. The society and the parents have abdicated their obligations of properly caring for and educating their children. These

bowl-carrying children have now become so ubiquitous in almost all nooks and corners of the Northern states such that we would almost be made to believe that, that is where Almighty Allah (SWT) wants them to be (Abdulqadir, 2003).

Baffa (2003) asserts that Islamic education predates the coming of modern European education to the people of northern Nigeria. According to Lord Lugard's estimates, there were about 20,000 Islamic (primary) Quranic schools and 250,000 pupils in the former Northern provinces by the turn of 19th century. By 1961, there were 27,600 Quranic schools with 423,000 pupils. These schools provided the Muslims with the bases for spiritual, educational, social, economic and cultural reorientations of the young ones. Many Islamic centers of learning abound in Kano, Zaria, Borno, etc in response to the rich intellectual scholarship and tradition of Quranic studies operative for over a century (Baffa, 2003).

They (*Almajiri*) are a common sight in the northern states including Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Gombe, Kaduna, Jos and Sokoto, etc. According to the statistics released by the Ministry of Education in 2009, Kano state alone harbors 1.6 million *Almajiri* pupils in some 26,000 schools. They also have a large presence in neighboring West African countries like Mali, Togo, Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon (www.islamonline.com).

In Northern Nigeria, the Traditional Qur'anic Schools (TQS) system predates the modern western education system. In fact, in most parts of northern Nigeria, TQS system predates even the Usmanu Danfodiyo Jihad. In practice, the TQS system was an integrated educational setup. It provided training for children from kindergarten, through the basic

to post-graduate levels. The school system has for centuries provided training and produced scholars, teachers, khadis, imams, preachers and even warriors like Usmanu Danfodiyo, the leader of jihad in this part of Africa (Sule-Kano, 2008). It is an historical fact that the socio-economic and political base of the traditional Qur'anic School system has collapsed. This was irrespective of the powerful cultural and religious influence of the system on Muslim communities in Nigeria. The challenge is to comprehend what is happening to the affected children through the development of an appropriate policy relevant to knowledge that can lead to the resolution of the problems associated with the practice.

In the wave of the rapid degenerating condition of the Nigerian youth within the context of the deepening characters of the Nigerian economic crisis, the plights of the *Almajiri* have been attracting an intense debate between academics and some policy makers. This is very significant, because it is increasingly becoming clear that the problems of *Almajiri* can no longer be understood as the outcome of short term episodic events such as seasonal migrations of *Ulama* and pupils into urban centers, or street loitering by the *Almajiri*. Instead the situation must be analyzed as the consequence of fundamentally historic, dialectical, and structural relationship of social forces and inappropriate social and general economic policies of the Nigerian state.

The traditional Qur'anic School system in Northern Nigeria, over the past decades, has experienced a massive and unprecedented transformation. This situation, which has direct bearing with the deepening national economic crisis, has not only led to the general collapse of living standard in the majority of the traditional Qur'anic schools but also led to the deteriorating condition of life of the *Almajiri*. With majority of the *Almajiri* coming

from poverty stricken large households some of these pupils and students were exposed at the very early stage of their lives, to the hazard and problems of the under privilege population of the Nigerian urban centers.

The rapid degeneration of socio-cultural and economic support from the communities, couple with impact of Structural Adjustment Programme, (SAP), Economic Reform Policies, brought along the withdrawal of government subsidies from social sectors, a situation that has compounded the problems of the traditional Qur'anic schools. Demographic issues such as family care, health care, primary education and traditional processes of human resources development were swamped with difficulties. The explosion in the number of pupils that were taken into the traditional Qur'anic schools was due to the condition of a rapid population growth and lack of capacity of some parents to take care of their offsprings. Instead of the average of thirty to forty pupils per TQS, as it used to be the 1940s and 1950s in Northern Nigeria, nowadays they average more than 180 pupils per school. The worst victims of this phenomenal transformation were the children. Some of them were taken to these schools at the age of three years, with considerable number taken far away from their parents at such a very tender age.

In most traditional Qur'anic schools (TQS) these children seat on bare floors, since most of the schools cannot afford even mats for their pupils and students. Most of them are in a terribly poor health condition with very little or no parental care at a very crucial stage of ill health. With the poor attitude of some peasant adults towards adolescent welfare, sexuality, as well as the lack of information and services health risks the *Almajiri* were exposed to (Sule-Kano, 2008).

There is no sufficient information that provides the exact current figures of these children and their schools. A rough estimate of over ten thousand schools for the whole of northern Nigeria was given by Sa'adu Zungur in 1948 (Danbuzu, 2012). Alao (2000) reported that in 1999, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) did a survey of Qur'anic schools in eight Northern States and Abuja. It recorded over 100,000 such schools with an enrolment of over two million pupils. Ibrahim (1998), in an article on destitution, estimated the *Almajiri* to be about three million children for the whole country. Even the most serious attempt in recent times to study the phenomenon by the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) in 1994, through the NTI/UNICEF National Conference on Basic Education for all Qur'anic Schools failed to provide exact and accurate figures. All that the conference reported was that the schools were considerable and the *Almajiri* were many. What is known for certain is that the number of these young beggars keeps increasing by the day. Perhaps, the most disturbing aspect of the life of the *Almajiri* is the way they live in terms of feeding, clothing and shelter. At their tender ages of between four and twelve years, they are left on their own to cater for themselves. Generally, the *Almajiri* live in harsh conditions under which learning becomes extremely difficult. This phenomenon of *Almajiranci* (the process of being an *Almajiri*) constitutes a major social problem in Nigeria.

2.3 Origin of the *Almajiri* School System in Northern Nigeria

The *Almajiri* School System, which started in the 11th century under the Kanem Borno Emir's leadership principally, was aimed at training future scholars for the propagation of Islam. However, over the centuries, the followers of the system have deviated from its original idea. Unfortunately, it has become a platform for breeding vulnerable male

children, who live under some Islamic scholars whose agenda are basically to exploit them financially, even as they also fend for themselves through begging. Worse still, it has become a ground for radicalizing children for misguided missions in recent times.

According to Doi (1981), the very first Qur'anic school system to be established was at Medina, in the life-time of Prophet Muhammad immediately after his migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. This was when the early Islamic scholars sat and learnt the Qur'an from the prophet himself. The companions of the prophet learnt and understood the Qur'an and then taught others, hence the establishment of more schools. Since then it became the tradition of all Muslims all over the world to establish Islamic schools in their communities.

The *Almajiri* system of education had been in operation in most Muslim communities of Northern Nigeria before the coming of western education. The children were either sent to settlements other than their own to study under *Ulama*, or the *Ulama*, together with their pupils, migrated and settled in places other than their homes of origin. The parents believed that doing so would make the pupils concentrate better on their studies. Sule-Kano (2000) is of the opinion that this system had been successful during the time of the Sokoto Caliphate from 1804 to 1903, an Islamic theocracy in which the control of the state was in the hands of the *Ulama*. The schools were maintained from the proceeds of *Zakat* collected and redistributed by the state. In addition to the state support system to the schools, community support was also established. On the conquest of the caliphate and colonization in 1930, the British ignored the *Almajiri* system of education and in fact introduced a rival school system- the modern western system of education. Although the Islamic system of education continued, the state support hitherto provided by the Sokoto

caliphate ceased to exist, furthermore, the economic crisis which beset Nigeria since the early 1980s as a result of government's removal of subsidies in most public utilities pauperized a very large number of people, this making it impossible for the *Almajiri* system of education to continue existing. Yet, instead of keeping their children close to them in the time of economic hardship, more and more parents sent their children away to *Ulama* with little or no financial support.

The fact that the *Almajiri* pupils are left on their own exposes them to all kinds of dangers. For instance, Ibrahim (1998) noted that such children are easily prone to becoming thieves, robbers, pimps and lay- about. They become tools for manipulation and exploitation in the hands of big-time robbers, religious bigots and ambitious rich men and politicians. Indeed, observers like Adamu (2000) and Sule-Kano (2000), are of the view that all the fanatics who fought in the *Maitatsine* uprising in Kano in 1980, Borno in 1981, Kaduna in 1982 and Gombe in 1985 were either *Almajiri* or graduates of the *Almajiri* system of education.

Almajiri teachers and their pupils also freely provided their community with Islamic education in addition to the development of *Ajami* i.e reading and writing in Arabic alphabets. Fafunwa (1975) mentions that there were 6,000 *Almajiri* schools in northern Nigeria through which writing came to the Northern Nigeria first before any other region. Based on this system, which is found upon the teachings of Qur'an and Hadith, the then Northern Nigeria was largely educated with a complete way of life, governance, customs, traditional craft, trade and even the mode of dressing. The chronicles of the travelers said that the Northern part of the territory was well organized, people were in walled cities, were literate and devout.

The current poor condition of the *Almajiri* has become so glaring that the elite either bring in *Mallams* to teach their children, or their children attend Quranic schools from home. Sule-Kano (2000), in a study of Quranic schools in Sokoto and Talata Mafara found that 82% of the pupils in the schools studied were from poor peasant families.

The African Network on the Presentation and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) cited in Yunusa (1997), also carried out a study on *Almajiri* in Zaria, Kaduna state and Funtua, Katsina state, found that most respondents agreed that poverty and deprivation play important roles in the decision of many parents to send their children hundreds of kilometers to study and live as *Almajiri*. From these observations, it is clear that majority of the *Almajiri* are often from poor family backgrounds.

Abdulqadir (2003:2) during the 21st convocation lecture of Bayero University, Kano, said:

the *Almajiri* system of education as practiced today in Northern Nigeria is a completely bastardized system compared to the form and conditions under which the system was operating and has output during the pre-colonial period. The system has been forced, especially with the coming of the British, to its present pitiful state. During the pre-colonial era, begging was never involved and certainly the pupils were not reduced to doing menial jobs before they could eat. As the system is currently being practiced today, lots of the children never make it. Some are lost through violence in the streets, some through child stealing, while others are lost through diseases and hunger. Those who make it usually complete the reading of the Holy Quran and eventually become traders, drivers and so on. They remained as untrained armies available to anybody poised to ferment trouble. They have their own axes to grind against their parents, authorities and the society at large. However, it appears as if the Northern states of Nigeria have a monopoly of '*Bara*'. Young and old, able and disabled have taken to streets, on a permanent basis legitimizing begging on socio-economic and religious basis. This phenomenon represents a scar on the face of Northern Nigeria.

Islam enjoins man to work, to use his brain and hands in order to eke out a living for himself. It is when all this fail, that, one could resort to begging. For any person who is healthy, it is forbidden (*Haram*) to beg. Several attempts have been made to provide solutions to the problems of *Almajiranci*. One of such attempts reported by Ibrahim (1998) was the effort made by late General Hassan Usman Katsina (rtd). He launched a vigorous campaign and kept on appealing to wealthy individuals, private organizations and government to assist in abolishing the *Almajiri* system of education. The Federal Government on its own part in collaboration with UNICEF holds an International Conference in 1994 at the National Teachers' Institute Kaduna, to discuss basic education and the Qur'anic school system suggestions pertaining to strategies to be adopted for the improvement of Qur'anic schools were discussed. These include financial assistance by Government, parents and other donor agencies and the provision of adequate facilities to the schools.

Another major attempt to tackle the problems of the *Almajiri* system of education was through a National Seminar on Begging and Destitution, which was held at Arewa House, Kaduna in 1997. Discussions of the seminar proceedings also highlighted experiences of other Countries of the world on Qur'anic educational system. For instance, Ado (1997) analyzed the experience of the Sudanese Qur'anic educational system. According to him, *Almajiri* schools in Sudan and Nigeria have similar curricula and the teaching methods are also the same. However, unlike in Nigeria where the schools are left on their own without much financial and other assistance, the schools in Sudan enjoy tremendous support and assistance from parents, the Muslim community and the Government. The *Almajiri* pupils in Sudan do not go begging and they are employed by

the government. Niger state governor and former Chairman of the Northern Governors' Forum, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu had at a recent forum, admitted that, "the system of *Almajiri* served a good purpose in the past.... But we have passed that stage now. We have now reached a situation with respect to *Almajiri* where we have to be wicked in order to be good to ourselves. We must say, 'No', to this system and then work out to integrate them (*Almajiri*) properly".

Several efforts were made in the past to solve the problem posed by *Almajiri*, by integrating Qur'anic education into western styled education. These efforts include the Universal Primary Education, nomadic education, the education of the children of migrant fishermen, Universal Basic Education among others.

Similarly, the Nigerian Senate (in Abuja) had in 2008, made an attempt to end the *Almajiri* problem by proposing a bill for the enactment of the National Commission for the Eradication of Child Destitution in Nigeria. The bill popularly known as the *Almajiri* bill was sponsored by Umaru Argungu and 31 others. The Bill sought to punish any proprietor of an unregistered *Tsangaya* school with two years Jail term. But these efforts failed, while the number of *Almajiri* has been on the increase across the 19 Northern States of Nigeria.

As part of attempts to remove the growing and disturbing figure of children beggars from the streets of Nigeria, the then Government of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan had began the establishment of 400 *Almajiri* schools across the 19 northern states. President Jonathan Goodluck (2012), inaugurated the first ever Federal Government *Almajiri* model school

in Sokoto state which includes a language laboratory, recitation hall, dormitories, a clinic, vocational workshop, dining hall and *Ulama* (teachers') quarters.

2.4 Origin of the *Almajiri* School System in Gombe State

The *Almajiri* System of education and Schools came into being in Gombe area around 1836 after the conquest of Gombe, Muri and southern Bornu by Bubayero during the Sokoto jihad. Schools were established which specifically gave emphasis on Quranic memorization. Students were attracted internally (Gombe), Adamawa land, Southern Bornu, and neighboring Kwami, Bojude, Nafada and Dukku. Bubayero himself superintended over one school established in the palace. He also authorized his student, Abubakar Jibril to establish Quranic School in Dawaki ward. He (Bubayero) assigned other students to take care of other wards especially Bolari, Shamaki, Ajiya, Herwagana and Jekadafari (Low, 1956).

The nature of the early *Almajiri* Schools established was for Quranic memorization and learning of other fields of knowledge such as prophetic Hadith, Islamic Jurisprudence, creed, Arabic Grammar etc. Begging was never involved at that time because the host community (Gombe) was providing food, clothing and other utilities to the *Almajiri* pupils. The *Almajiri* pupils were highly regarded and respected and they co-existed peacefully with the host community (Low, 1956).

However, with the emergence of western education system during the colonial period, *Almajiri* schools were relegated to second class status where a huge colonial budget went to western schools in addition to missionaries who also supported western education. The

attention of the populace was carried away from *Almajiri* schools to western schools. This set the foundation for the negligence of the *Almajiri* schools. (Low, 1956).

The *Almajiri* schools were estimated to be around fifteen in 1918 with few *Mallams* and few assistants supervising the schools. The number of students was around 436 (Low, 1956). Currently, there are about 218 *Almajiri* schools controlled by more than 500 *Mallams* with an estimated number of 10853 *Almajiri* pupils in Gombe Metropolis (Ministry of Economic Planning, Gombe State, 2015).

2.4 The Classification of Quranic Schools

The Quranic Schools according to Baffa (2003) can be categorized into (a) Formal (b) Informal and (c) Non-formal;

The **Formal** Quranic Schools usually have government or institutional patronage and have a comprehensive curriculum, a building, formal administration, certified teachers and a centrally organized process of teaching and graduation.

The **Informal** Quranic schools comprise of both the *Islamiyya* and *Madrasah*, which are established by philanthropists, voluntary agencies and the communities with less rigid, formal structure as in the integrated Quranic Schools. However, in most cases there is little integration of modern subjects with Islamic Sciences.

The **Non-Formal** is the traditional Quranic School with a pool of pupils under the care of one teacher (with one or two assistants). The teacher settles in one community or moves about as an itinerant teacher with his pupils, usually males, from one location to another.

Each of the above Quranic Schools mentioned has its own specific conditions of management and practice. The integrated Quranic Schools offer subjects not only in Science of Quran, including *Tajweed*, memorization but also *fiqh*, *seerah*, Arabic, writing and others, albeit in a more formal structure with emphasis on passing examinations to get certificates.

Where there is emphasis on modern subjects, there is little attention to developing the *Tarbiyyah* (Morality) and *taqwah* (Fear of Allah) of pupils. There is thus little emphasis on ensuring that pupils assimilate and practicalize the Quranic *tarbiyyah*, especially after graduation. If the pupils graduate into formal secular schools, they lose touch of the Islamic heritage of the Quranic School. For the Quranic Schools System, the *madrasah* and *islamiyyah*, they are usually very good in teaching the Quranic Sciences and associated subjects, but weak in teaching modern subjects. These kinds of schools graduate a good number of *huffaz* (Masters of Quranic memorization) and have much potential. Where there is community support, their potential is high. One of the major problems is the lesser emphasis given to modern subjects like Mathematics, English, French, Integrated Science and Social Studies. As such, when the pupils graduate from these schools their opportunities and potentials are limited, because they cannot join formal modern schools where they can study Medicine, Politics, Engineering, Economics and Sociology at degree levels. Those pupils from Quranic Schools who join secular schools usually have problems coping with the demands of the schools, like expressing themselves in oral and written communication in the National Lingual Franca, English (Baffa, 2003).

2.5 Position of *Tsangaya* and *Ulama* in Hausa Land

After the introduction of Islam in Hausa land, Quranic knowledge gained support and succeeded because of the concern from traditional rulers. During that period, every Quranic school was taken care of by the Emir/Ruler of the village, with the help of his staff. This is so because rulers at the time were so powerful that their words were law. Moreover, it was with the support of this staff that the ruler effectively managed his people. The staff were mostly *Ulama* by profession, which was why they discharge such responsibilities as keeping of records, writing of letters between rulers, teaching religious knowledge to the people, leading of prayers and responding to questions pertaining to religion by the people. On the appearance of Islamic religion in Kano during the reign of Sarkin Kano Aliyu Yaji (1349-1385) a mosque was constructed, an *Adhan* and *Qadi* (judge) were appointed; all in an attempt to provide a solid foundation for the teaching of Islamic Religious Knowledge (Iguda, 2006).

The *Almajiranci* system had worked wonderfully in the past and had enabled rulers and governments to communicate effectively with one another, at both personal and diplomatic levels even before the advent of British rule. At the Religious level, people were able to perform their obligations with reasonable degree of satisfaction and perfection. Today, there are still numerous people whose education is dependent entirely or partially on the system, and the situation is likely to continue in this way for some time.

The system has been in practice since days preceding the emergence of colonialism in Nigeria, and it has its roots in the Timbuktu scholastic tradition. The modern form of

Tsangaya as it is practiced in Nigeria today is disordered and lacks the basic framework to sustain the system for effective learning of moral and spiritual lessons, and eventual productivity that would make its graduates contribute to the development of the society. Atypical mobile *tsangaya* is a situation where young boys at tender age live in the Islamic scholar's house, which serve as boarding school, until the child memorizes the whole Quran (Abdulkadir, 2008).

Iguda (2006) however, believes that *tsangaya* in Hausa denotes an institution or school where Quran is taught on a boarding basis to both children and adults. The *Tsangaya* institution is mainly for male students. With expansion in urbanization, another type of *tsangaya* emerged; this is widely known as *Makarantar Allo*, where children and adults are taught the Quran on a day-schooling basis. *Tsangaya* connotes an advanced institution of learning where a student reaches a cadre in academic pursuits while *Makarantar Allo* serves as a preparatory School where Muslim children acquire the basic knowledge of Quranic recitation. *Tsangaya* or *Makarantar Allo* does not include the branches of Islamic knowledge such as theology, jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) or history, whereas in Quranic institutions other branches of Islamic knowledge are taught. The syllabus is flexible which may be because of the rigidity of the *tsangaya* stakeholders. This outlook has placed a wide gap of communication between the two institutions. Many students from *tsangaya*, especially in the past, felt that memorizing the Holy Quran could never be complete while combining it with other branches of knowledge (Iguda, 2006).

The setting is plainly humble as no magnificent building is seen on its compound. Thatched huts and bonfire (*gargari*) are among the physical outlook of *tsangaya* in Hausa land. However, in Sudan, mighty buildings serve as *tsangaya* apartments, mosque and

courtyards. *Tsangaya* in Hausa land varies depending on its size, prominence and the number of its students. In a big *tsangaya*, the house of the principal (*Babban Alaramma*) is normally located on its compound. The houses of Assistants of *Babban Alaramma* are also situated near the students' hostels, which are rooms made of mud-clay bricks. *Kiskadi* is a temporary hut made of thatch usually outside the *tsangaya* compound where *Almajiri* spend their day after School hours (Iguda, 2006).

2.6 Link between *Almajiri* and *Boko Haram*

Bwala, (2012) had earlier warned that the *Almajiri* system of education (Quranic education combined with alms begging by boys of ages 7 to 15 in Northern Nigeria under half baked *Ulama*) could become a potential threat to Nigeria's National Security if it is not harmonized with the Universal Basic Education Programme in the Country. It could be recalled that many of the *Almajiris* were immigrants from neighboring countries of Niger and Chad Republics. The *Almajiris* are so numerous to the extent that as many as 4000 of such students could be in the command of one Muslim cleric, and when they march on the street, they look more like army of thugs. The preponderant influx of the *Almajiris* to Northern Nigeria was therefore supported by over 1500 un-policed Nigerian borders with Niger and Chad Republic. Consequently, the *Almajiris* can be seen as the neglected, rejected and schizophrenic maladjusted young people of Northern Nigeria that behave with violent aggression and are willing to become *Boko Haram* suicide bombers on a platter of frivolous promises. As a matter of fact, the Federal Government of Nigeria had to raise an alarm in the Vanguard Newspaper of 24th February, 2012 that the *Boko Haram* sect were already infiltrating some Northern Islamic Centers by indoctrinating and recruiting young pupils (the *Almajiri*) to expand its membership with a view to

distort their mindset against the state and constitutional values. Consequently, a 15 year old suicide bomber (An *Almajiri*) attacked the Maiduguri Central Mosque to detonate his bomb which killed ten people with the narrow escape of Shehu of Borno and the Borno State Deputy Speaker (Bwala, 2012).

2.7 Makarantar Allo: Its Features and Structures

At the centre of Islamic education is the Qur'an itself, and the Muslims ideal for learning the sacred text or some portions of it by heart. With the ascendancy of western type (*boko*) educational system, Qur'anic schooling in Hausa land is increasingly viewed by parents as an important religious component for their children. Often the children divided their time between western-type schools in the morning and Qur'anic schools in the afternoon. It is for this purpose that *Makarantun Allo* (Qur'anic schools)-institutions where young children learn to recite the Qur'anic by rote exist in all Muslims communities.

A typical Qur'anic school is located in a mosque which serves the dual purpose of a place of worship and a school. Most of the schools are however in other places, e.g. special building for the purpose, the verandah or porch of the *Ulama* (teacher), under trees, inside compounds, etc. The notion of an entrance examination, which an aspiring student must take before he can enter a given level of the educational system, is foreign to traditional Qur'anic school system. So, too, are the final examinations conferring qualification, in which western education so often culminates.

The pupils sit on the mats, bare floor or ground either in a semi-circle or straight line. Each child holds his written wooden slate (*Allo*) and recites the verses of the Holy

Qur'an. The method of instruction is as follows; the teacher recites to his pupils the verse to be learnt and they repeat it after him. He does this several times until he is satisfied, that they have mastered the correct pronunciations. Then the pupils are left on their own to continue repeating the verse until they have thoroughly memorized it. The verse is then linked with the previously memorized verse and in this way the pupils gradually learn by heart the whole Qur'an. At this level, hardly is any attempts made to enable the pupils understand the meaning of what they recite or write. The teacher only pays particular attention to the reading and writing skills of every pupil as well as keep tract of his attendance even though no formal registers are kept.

The relationship between teacher and pupils is generally intimate and personal. The teacher is always ready to pardon a late-comer if he is convinced that his lateness was caused by some engagement at home. Whenever he uses the cane, he does so with fatherly levity and caution. As for disciplinary measures, the long whip is always handy to deal with erring pupils and leg chains are sometimes used to confine truants to the schools premises for a number of days as a punishment (Suleiman, 1997).

The school schedule is extremely flexible and allows for each parent to send his child to school at the most convenient period for both the parent and child. This is one reason why it is possible for children to combine both formal primary educations with the Qur'anic school. Moreover, each child is allowed to progress at his own or her own pace and therefore the length of time takes a pupil to finish leaning how to read the whole Qur'an depends on his intelligence and commitment, and also encouragement and support he receives from his parents. Even though there is no sessional examination or test and that the *Ulama* treats each pupil according to his or her capabilities, intelligence

and individual problem; the spirit of competition is always there among age-mates and brothers.

Although there exists no water-tight division of pupil into classes, three categories of Qur'anic pupils are distinguishable; the *kolo* (nursery stage), the *Tittibiri* (elementary stage), and the *Gardi* (adolescent/adult stage). The *kolo* stage consists of children of four years or even less. They normally come to school in the company of their more elderly brothers. At this stage the children are grouped together and instructed orally. They learn to recite the shorter chapters of the Qur'an and are taught some Islamic rituals like ablution, daily prayers, etc. The *Tittibiri* stage is where the pupil of about five to fourteen years old starts to read the Arabic alphabets. He first learns the reading of vowel letters (*Babbaku*) of the same short chapters he memorized at *kolo* stage. This is followed by the reading of vowel letters as well as words (*Farfaru*), after which he starts writing the Qur'anic verses on his *allo* while he is guided either by the *malam* or by some senior pupils in the school. Straight reading is continued with switch-over from pupils *Allo* to some pages of the text of the Holy Qur'an up to the last chapter. By the time he reaches *Gardi* stage, the pupil has in most cases completed the reading of the Qur'an at least once (*Sauka*). He also knows some basic principles of Islam. The main task at this stage is to improve the art of reading the Qur'an with a view to committing it to memory (*Hadda*). This is usually the last stage of general Qur'anic education. While the step-by-step learning process seems to be universal to Hausa society, the categorization of pupils into *kolo*, *Tittibiri*, and *Gardi* is not.

From the forgoing, the main problems facing the *Almajiri* can be summarized as follows:

1. The *Almajiri pupils* are left to cater for themselves at very tender ages, thus exposing them to many kinds of dangers.
2. The *Almajiri* tends to engage in all kinds of social vices and therefore constitutes a social problem to the general public.
3. Generally, the *Almajiri* lives in harsh conditions under which learning becomes extremely difficult.

2.8 Enrolment and Teaching

Abdulqadir (2003) states that the system has been forced, especially with coming of the British, to its present pitiful state because during the pre-colonial era, begging was never involved and certainly, the pupils were not reduced to doing menial jobs before they could eat. According to him, “Under the *Almajiri* system, during the pre-colonial days, the pupils lived with their parents for moral upbringing. All the schools were located within the immediate environment from where the pupils came from. The Dan-Fodio revolution brought with it some modifications, the establishment of an inspectorate of Quranic literacy. The inspectors reported directly to the emir of the province, concerning all matters relating to the school. It was argued that this period was the light of Quranic education in Northern Nigeria (Ibid.2).”

The schools were maintained by the state, communities, the parents, *Zakat*, ‘*waqf*’ and supplemented by the teachers and students through farming. Begging (Bara) as it is known today was completely unheard of then. Teachers and their pupils, in return, provide the community with Islamic development of *Ajami* i.e writing and reading of Hausa language using Arabic alphabets.

Sadly, the British invaded the region and killed most of the emirs and deposed some. The emirs lost control of their territories and accepted their new roles, as mere traditional rulers. They also lost fundamental control of the *Almajiri* system. The British deliberately abolished state funding in respect of the system arguing that they were religious schools. With lack of support from the government, it's immediate community and the helpless emirs, the *Almajiri* system collapsed like a pack of cards. Western education (*Karatun Boko*) was introduced and funded instead. The pupils then turned into begging and other menial Jobs for survival. This is certainly the genesis of the predicament of the *Almajiri* system today (Abdulqadir, 2003). According to Sule-Kano (2000), the tradition of Northern Nigerian Muslim communities confers the supremacy of parents over their children. Because learning is compulsory in Islam, the tendency is for many parents to enroll their children into the *Almajiri* school system. They consider it best, because they have been made to believe that children learn faster when they are away from home. As a community supported educational system, owned and controlled by the *Ulama*, the *Almajiri* School is not a fee paying institution. Once enrolled into the schools, the *Ulama* become the custodians of the pupils.

Most of the older *Ulama* who are well established are sedentary, while most of the younger *Ulama* who themselves are still engaged in learning under the older *Ulama* are itinerant. However, there is a typical pattern of movement of the itinerant *Ulama* and their pupils as observed by Okoye and Ya'u (1999). During the dry seasons, they establish their schools either within or near cities. During the rainy season, they go back home and engage in farming and immediately after harvest they move out again. In both seasons and in different locations, the pattern of study is the same.

Studies by Dambo and Mubi (2000), have identified three sessions in a typical day. These are morning session, starting from 5:00am to about 10:00am after which the *almajiri* go for breakfast. After breakfast, they either go to the farm for those who are fed by their *Ulama* or go for begging. After lunch, the afternoon session commences usually from about 2:30pm to about 6:00pm. The night session takes place between 8:30pm to 10:00 pm for the younger ones, and extends to midnight for the older ones. Normally, Thursdays and Fridays are free days.

As further observed by Dambo and Mubi (2000), the school year is normally divided into two terms:

1. The long term starts from the first to the eighth month of the Islamic calendar. The children then close for about one month until after *Id-el-fitr* celebration
2. The short term is just after the *id-el-fitr* celebration. But Okoye and Ya'u (1999) show that there is no formal holiday between the sessions, although an *almajiri* may obtain permission from his *Mallam* to visit his home. While this is discouraged by both *Mallams* and the parents, the parents are also discouraged from visiting their children until after the end of their studies.

Instructions are on individual basis, with each pupil learning at his own pace. The *Ulama* usually attend to the matured students '*gardawa*' while they in turn assist the *Ulama* in conducting classes for the younger *Almajiri*. The course content in the *Almajiri* school system essentially deals with the Holy Qu'ran, its recitation, memorization and writing. A summary of the stages of learning identified by Ado (1997) are:

1. *Farfaru*-identifying Arabic alphabets used in writing the Qur'an.

2. *Babbaku*-vowelling
3. *Hadda*-memorization
4. *Zuku*-writing specified portions of the Qur'an
5. *Satu*-copying from the Qur'an
6. *Tilawa*-revision
7. *Sauka*-graduation

The condition for full graduation is the ability to memorize and recite the whole Qur'an. After graduation, a student may continue with further studies in subjects such as Quranic commentary (Tafseer), Hadith, etc. Materials used for study depend on the level of the student. Those who are at the most elementary level of *Babbaku* do not need anything. Nothing is written for them because they take verbal instructions and lessons. Thus, the pupils learn by repeating what the *Ulama* says and before being allowed to move to the next stage, a pupil must be able to memorize the previous lessons correctly. Those in the *Farfaru* level need the slate (*allo*) on which the alphabets are written for them. From this level on, the *allo* is required by all. Lessons are usually written by the *Ulama* or their assistants except for those at *Satu* and above who are allowed to copy their lessons directly from the Qur'an.

In places where there is no electricity, the night sessions are normally conducted under light provided by burning twigs. It is the responsibility of every pupil to go to the bush every Thursday and fetch firewood for use as fuel for lightening at night.

Both Ado (1997) and Okoye and Ya'u (1999) classified the *Almajiri* into the following categories:

- (a) *Kolawa* (singular: *Kolo*) – young children usually of about four (4) and eleven (11) years;
- (b) *Titibirai* (singular: *Titibiri*) – Adolescents, usually between the ages of twelve and sixteen years.
- (c) *Gardawa* (singular: *Gardi*) – Adults.

Kolawa and *Titibirai* could be grouped as those at the lower level of the Quranic system. After graduation, a *Titibiri* becomes a *Gardi* if he opts to continue his study (this is equivalent to post graduate studies). At this stage, he can assist the *Ulama* by teaching the younger ones.

Just as the *Almajiri* are grouped into different categories, the teachers are also in categories. Although every teacher is known as *Ulama*, they are grouped according to seniority. Three (3) classes of *Ulama* can be identified:

- (i) *Ulama* are actually the young graduates (i.e. post-*gardi* status) who have not been long in teaching. They usually have few *Almajiri* and in most cases, they receive lessons from senior teachers.
- (ii) *Alaramma* is a very experienced teacher and has a large number of *almajirai* and some *Ulama* under him.
- (iii) *Sheikh* is the most senior teacher in the system. When a teacher achieves the status of a Sheikh, he only attends to *Alarammomi* and *Ulama* who seeks deeper knowledge.

There is also an authority in Quranic memorization that is called *Gangaram*. *Gangaram* is a person with an authoritative retentive memory of the Holy Quran who is referred to for issues related to Quranic memorization (Iguda, 2006).

2.9 Accommodation

One of the features of any boarding school is the issue of accommodation with facilities such as well-ventilated hostels, beds, toilets, etc. However, the *almajiri* type of boarding school does not have any of these in the real sense of it. Okoye and Ya'u (1999) have identified three (3) types of accommodation which exist in the *Almajiri* system of education.

One is the use of *Zaure*, either belonging to the teacher or to a host who may also allow the use of his extra rooms by the *Almajiri*. The *Almajiri* may also seek accommodation in uncompleted or abandoned buildings in the neighborhoods of the school. Usually the owners of such buildings tell the *Ulama* to send their *almajiri* to sleep there. This arrangement also serves as a form of security for such locations. Finally, if there is a mosque attached to the school, it may be used for sleeping by the senior *Almajiri*.

2.10 Feeding

Okoye and Ya'u (1999) found that the bulk of the food the *Almajiri* eat is usually obtained through *Bara* (begging). However, some schools do not allow their *Almajiri* to beg for food. Such *Ulama* who prevent their pupils from begging feed their *Almajirai* and in return the *Almajiri* work on their farms. Such *Almajiri* also engage in certain petty jobs to help themselves like local manicure, pushing wheel barrows, etc.

It should be noted that in a situation where the schools allow the *almajiri* to beg, not all of them do so. For instance, the *Gardawa*, who are adults cannot go into houses to beg for food. This is because Islam restricts adult males' entry into other married men's house. They are also considered too big to beg on the streets. As such, their feeding is obtained in one of the two ways. One of such is that the younger *almajiri* are expected to bring back food from 'bara' for their senior colleagues (*gardawa*). The second means of getting food for this class of *almajiri* is that they engage in some income generating activities from which they get money to buy food.

Studies on *Almajiranci* show that the *Almajiri* do not always get enough to eat. For instance, Ado (1994) found that majority of the *Almajiri* eat two times a day. The number of meals is really difficult to quantify because it largely depends on the pupils luck on any given day. Breakfast is eaten only in the previous night and a part of it to be eaten in the morning. Due to this pattern of feeding, Sule-Kano (2000) found hunger to be the major problem of the *Almajiri*. Indeed Okoye and Ya'u (1999) also reported that lack of sufficient food was one of the reasons given by ex-*Almajiri* for abandoning their studies. For any food to be qualitative, it has to have all the necessary nutrients (in correct proportions needed by the body). What is usually given to the *Almajiri* is leftover which may be spoilt or contaminated in some cases. All these tend to make the food eaten by the *Almajiri* as deficient in vitamins, mineral and proteins.

2.11 The State of *Almajiri* Hygiene and Medical Care

According to Yunusa (1994), the *Almajiri's* first problem as soon as he arrives the Qur'anic school is the deprivation of parental care. The young *Almajiri* continues to

suffer separation from parents, which affects his development. These children as observed by Sule-Kano (1998) are taken to the schools at the tender age of four years.

Parental deprivation aside, the *Almajiri's* underfeeding and overcrowded condition put in a particularly vulnerable position of susceptibility to certain diseases. Overcrowding also favors the transmission of communicable diseases like cholera, tuberculosis and various types of skin diseases. Going barefooted results in many foot diseases and intestinal worms, which come next to Malaria and play significant roles in stomach disorder.

Just as their feeding and sleeping conditions are bad, their health system is worse and more hazardous. Okoye and ya'u (1999), found that more than 80% of The *Almajiri* had never been to any modern hospital. Most of them, having come from rural peasant backgrounds may be ignorant of modern medical services. A good reason that the *Almajiri* do not patronize modern hospitals may be due to the current commercialization of health care services in both government and private hospitals, which has put medical care beyond the reach of the *Almajiri*. It is for these and other reasons cited above that the *Almajiri* continued to patronize the services of the age-long traditional health care system.

In this regards, the three means of medication for the *Almajiri* are;

1. '*Rubutu*'; a portion of the Qur'an is written by *Ulama* on a slate (*allo*) and washed with water in a bowl. The dark liquid is then taken as the medicine.
2. Prayer: when an *Almajiri* is sick, his *Ulama* or the assistant to the *Ulama* could recite some prayers for the sick *Almajiri* pupil.
3. Roots and other traditional medicines: these are easily obtained as they are cheap.

These forms of medication are usually supplemented with charms (*laya*) for protection. It is only when the sickness gets worst that modern medical attention is needed or the *Ulama* sends the *Almajiri* to his parents or relatives.

2.12 Why Parents Still Send their Children to the *Almajiri* School System

In Islam, parents are at liberty to choose the system of Islamic education their children should attend. According to Sule-Kano (2000), since the *Almajiri* system of education predates all other forms of education in northern Nigeria, many Muslim parents still look up to it to provide the basic Islamic education for their children. Such parents also believe that the children learn faster when they are away from home. Poverty is said to play important roles in the decision of many parents to send their children hundreds of kilometers away to live as *Almajiri*. This was traced by Sule-Kano (2000) back to the economic transformation which was set in motion by the colonial state and which generated a trend that was sustained even after independence. This was the economic transformation of the country from pre-capitalist mode to a modern market economic system. The worse hit among the people were the low-income earners. Their problems were further compounded by the introduction of structural adjustment programme (SAP) in the 1980s. According to Englama and Bamidele (1997), measures introduced by SAP, such as the commercialization and privatization of public enterprises resulted in retrenchment, lay off of workers and embargoes on new employment in the public sectors. There was the removal of subsidies on public utilities such as hospitals, Schools, etc. All these meant a fall in income and untold hardship to the people. The economic hardship pauperized most Nigerians. Poverty was a perfect excuse for parents to continue sending their children to *Almajiri* schools. Such parents, as found by Okoye and Ya'u

(1999), Yunusa (1994) and Sule-Kano (2000) only contribute in cash or kind to the schools when they wish to. Some parents would prefer shedding off the burden of their children to the *Almajiri* schools when they pay nothing.

With the majority of the *Almajiri* coming from poor peasant and low-income working class families, the situation they found themselves can be attributed to the poverty of their parents. Thus, the circumstance that the majority of the *Almajiri* found themselves cannot be unconnected with the poor condition of their parents. Most poor families were faced with attendant decline in family income, which was translated into poor nutrition status of the children. The withdrawal of government support from the social sectors, has led to an increase cost of social and economic burden on parents, as it relates to the brining up of children.

Under this condition, the practice in which parents do give their children away to *Ulama* to learn how to read and write in the religion of Islam, and also find opportunities for learning trade and skills, became a perfect excuse to some parents to reduce the burden of rearing children. Sometimes, this involves taking the children far away from their homes and in most cases these children as the *Almajiri* were left to fend for them. They were exposed to various forms of child abuse; they are also being used as a source of cheap labour by some members of the host communities. A good number of these children were exposed to becoming delinquents and developed potentials of turning to crimes. Some were exposed to various forms of communicable and infectious diseases in the processes of their training. In very difficult times, these children were turned into refugees. They become squatters and live in terrible condition of penury, under which learning is extremely difficult (Sule-Kano, 2008).

2.13 The Impact of Colonial and Post-Colonial Government Policies on the *Almajiri* System of education

Prior to the colonization, traditional Qur'anic scholarship was an integral part of the socio-economic, political and cultural way of life of the Muslim communities of northern Nigeria. According to Sule-Kano (2000), there were well established Qur'anic schools from primary to higher levels, particularly in most commercial centers of Borno and some Hausa lands. Such institutions in pre-Jihad period like Al-maghili schools were famous in Kano and Katsina. The system was upgraded and was given full support by the authorities of the Sokoto caliphate. A vigorous campaign to eradicate illiteracy was launched. Hence, qualified teachers were sent by the caliph to urban and rural areas to teach both young and the old.

The control of the state then was in the hands of the *Ulama* (religious leaders) and the schools were maintained from the proceeds of *Zakat* collected and distributed by the state in addition to the state support given to the schools, a tradition of community support was also established. The accommodation and feeding of itinerant teachers and their respective students were adequately taken care of by their host communities. In fact, community support was provided in whatever form the school required to make life and learning conducive for the *Almajiri*. In this way, the system flourished and the pupils had no cause to go for begging.

The colonial conquest of Northern Nigeria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries affected the system adversely. For instance the colonial conquest destroyed the theocracy which hitherto provided support to the Qur'anic schools. The colonial education policy

introduced a rival school system (the Western Education System), where English language was the medium of instruction in the schools. The Qur'anic schools were left on their own without any state support. Although, as observed by Adamu (2000), some of the products of these schools were recruited in the early phase of the British administration as officials in the judicial, educational and administrative departments. This was done to encourage Muslim parents to send their children to western education. Qur'anic education was included in the English school curriculum. The Judiciary also needed people who were knowledgeable in the Quran to serve as judges and interpreters in Alkali Courts. But on the whole; graduates of Quranic schools who could not read and write in English language were officially considered by the colonial authorities as illiterates.

According to Adamu (2000), it was only in 1960 that the government of the former Northern region established a ministerial committee comprising four (4) ministers to look into the conditions and problems of the traditional Islamic educational development in the Muslim countries of the Middle-East and North Africa with a view to introducing reforms in the system. A delegation consisting of representatives from all the provinces were dispatched to the United Arab Emirate, Libya and the Sudan. The report of the delegation recommended the organization of Quranic schools into classes in accordance with age, year of study etc. Further recommendations were made to include subjects like arithmetic, reading and writing in the curriculum. The report also called for financial assistance from government for building classrooms and paying inspectors and organizers who would be responsible for supervision of the school. This was not, however, implemented. As time went on, the *Almajiri* school system continued to deteriorate. This

resulted in some Northern state governments like Kano, Borno and Kaduna intervening to improve the system. In the case of Kano, as was observed by ANPPCAN cited in Yunusa (1997), a programme to tackle the problems of *Almajiranci*, early marriage for girls and street hawking by children was set up by the then Governor Group Captain, Muhammad Ndatsu on June 2nd, 1987. This led to the creation of a committee, which studied the problems and submitted reports and recommendations. One of the measures adopted was the creation of model Quranic schools where facilities were provided for teachers' remuneration and pupils welfare. The pupils were saved the burden of earning their livelihood through begging and carrying loads for money. The government which initiated the programme left office in 1991. However the civilian administration of Kabiru Gaya which succeeded it, discontinued with the programme.

In what seemed to be a courageous move by the Federal Government, President Goodluck Jonathan commissioned the first model *Almajiri* boarding primary school in Sokoto. The event which took place on Thursday 10th April, 2012 at the premises of the school in Gagi, Sokoto South Local Government Area of Sokoto state, has shown how committed the president is towards ensuring the plight of all Nigerians irrespective of their religion, creed or social status as well as his desire to give Nigerians what was due to them.

One of the major developments of education in Nigeria during the past one and half decades has been the resurgence of interest in Quranic schools. Federal government agencies such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE), the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), the Education Tax Fund (ETF), the National Mass Education Commission (NMEC), the Northern Education Research Project (NERP), Arewa House, Ahmadu

Bello University as well as international agencies, notably UNICEF and UNESCO, have been at the forefront of research and programmes aimed at integrating *Tsangaya* modern primary school subjects. The impetus of these initiatives is no doubt the commitment of the federal and state governments and indeed international agencies and NGOs for the attainment of the target set by the Dakar Framework of Action (Iguda, 2006).

Another development is the concept of parallel system, in other words, modernity. This is surely a solution never discussed or even raised as an alternative in most conferences. Modernity in Quranic schools means the provision of a conducive environment and the medical care of the Almajirai as in western modern school. The educational system operates in an uninterrupted form with support the teachers (*Ulama*) and students (*Almajiri*) financially and medically as they come to live in the modern world (Iguda, 2006).

According to Islamonline.com, the Muslim North must fight over population because majority practice polygamy and produce scores of children they can't feed, clothe and shelter. People's mindset must also be changed against that institution. The belief that *Almajiri* must exist as a natural order is palpable and has made it thrive, as corruption does in the nation. While asking the government to cater for them, an appeal for a sustainable birth control system as taught by Islam must be simultaneous. We also require a politically sane society to dispel this infection.

2.14 Theoretical Framework

There are many sociological theories about man and society. However, this study adopts the Marxist and the institutional (Interventionist) theories.

Marxist Theory

Marxist theory was founded on the famous radical writings of Karl Marx, a German philosopher who in the opening sentence of communist manifesto asserts that “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” (Marx and Engels, 1965:1). Marx in his dialectics and historical exegesis of analyzing capitalism centered his social theory on contradictions. Marx clearly accepted the centrality of contradictions to historical change, such as the contradictions of capitalism and class contradictions which can be resolved only through radical or social revolution and not amicably. For example, one of the contradictions within capitalism is the relationship between the workers and the capitalists who own the factories and other means of production with which the work is done. The capitalist must exploit the workers in order to make the profit from the worker’s labour. The workers, in contradiction to capitalists, want to keep some of the profit for themselves (Ritzer, 2008: 44).

In *Capital*, Marx analyzed that, the central idea behind the mode of production and social relationship of production in the bourgeois economy is capital accumulation through surplus value. Historically, the owners of the means of production or the privileged class were not rich while the unprivileged or labourers were not initially poor. The historical vicissitudes and antecedents of capitalists greediness was the factor behind class formation. The communal stage was an equal condition where societal resources were allocated equally. It was the slavery stage or mode of production that set the foundation for the exploitation of man by man through free labour. The subsequent stages of feudalism and capitalism were the reminiscent of slavery which led to the exploitative nature of capitalism (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008:68).

It is the nature of this capitalist contradiction and exploitation that will compel the working class to revolt in a radical move that will enshrine a new system and ideology; socialism. This system will ensure a complete transfer of the economy to the hands of the government or collectively with people as controllers of their economy leading to egalitarian and equal distribution of resources free of exploitation (Miliband, 1987:234).

In relating the above Marxist theory to the Nigerian context and in a study of this nature, it is pertinent to note that, our ruling classes are the capitalists' class who are always interested in accumulation and exploitation. The *Almajiri's* parents were exploited, dominated, subjugated, suppressed and economically deprived by the unfavorable socio-economic policies of Government. They are the unprivileged class who suffered social deprivation and alienation. In their struggle to live and survive under harsh economic conditions, they detest the system which created and consolidated capitalism in the society they were deprived. The implication of the above condition is the unprivileged class, deprived of decent life and quality education; despise the whole system and are extremely against it to the extent that, they did not only prevent their children from joining the system through formal education but, at the same time, they sought for an alternative system and always seek to revolt against it.

The *Almajiri* school system is seen as an alternative to the western formal school which the deprived parents of *Almajiri*, perceived as anti-human way of breeding exploiters and oppressors. They resort to sending their children to *Almajiri* schools to rescue them from the evils of capitalists. This clearly shows why the *Almajiri* school system persists unabated.

The only option as related to this study is, the unprivileged or exploited class which are *Almajiri* parents and the *Almajiris* themselves attempted to change the social order through revolutionary movements such as *Maitatsine* and *Boko Haram*. Although, these two movements claimed pure religious affiliations, the economic and political factors cannot be divorced in the aggression of the aggrieved who spearheaded these movements. This goes in line with Marx's interpretation or analysis of working class or exploited rebellion resulting from harsh economic conditions and capitalist greediness.

Despite the contributions of Marxist Theory in shaping our understanding of our socio-economic and political conditions in the society, the theory has many shortcomings. One of the major criticisms this study can identify is Marx's overemphasis on the evil of capitalism. In as much as equality is pursued and exploitation is despised, there will never be equality in resource distribution in any society no matter how Communist it is. Also, the capitalist states were able to provide some adequate measures on welfare and compensation to the poor and the needy as against Marx's complete recognition of capitalism as an evil in its entirety.

2.14 Institutional (Interventionist) Theory

This theory derives its philosophical root from Fabian theorists in Britain. The most notable among them are; Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), Sidney (1859-1947), Annie Besant (1847-1933), H.G. Wells (1866-1946) and Ramsey McDonald (1866-1937). Its basic tenets consist of an attempt to strike a balance between unchecked capitalism and too much collectivism. The move towards unregulated capitalism in Nigeria today especially with the haphazard and hasty privatization and commercialization policy, is seen as a

chance for the neglect and lack of concern for the welfare of the needy groups. In this study, *Almajiri* system is a case study. While collectivism on the other hand will involve an attempt for social restructuring through a move that will seek for a utopian change based on the ideal thinking that the problems of the needy and disadvantaged groups would automatically disappear because of a radical transformation. In this study, social policy or social welfare is considered as a yardstick for social change. The expected outcome is what is termed structural social policy; the transformation to provide total change in the provision of welfare for the needy while the remaining economic and social activities should be allowed for market to take over or the capitalists (Alcock, et al, 2000).

The institutional theory has the following assumptions;

1. Welfare legislation is an instrument of ameliorating the sufferings of the victims of the working class against their social ills.
2. Government has a duty to intervene to reduce poverty and unemployment.
3. Public spending is an economic regulator.
4. Government intervention in the economy is necessary for the stability of the economy.

Institutional theory can best be seen as a plausible model which can identify the root cause of *Almajiranci*, its manifestation and permanent solution to the problem. The analysis shows that *Almajiri* belong to the socially neglected and disadvantaged group as a result of economic deprivation in the society resulting from Nigeria's inclination towards total capitalism as witnessed in the surrender of public corporations from 1999 to date. The socially disadvantaged groups especially *Almajiri* are finding it hard to survive

in an economically free competitive society. The parents of these *Almajiri pupils* with low income, higher illiteracy level, mostly agrarian farmers are also socially disadvantaged. Their means of survival is relieved through sending these children away to enable them cater for the rest.

As rightly observed by this theory and relevant to this study, government's intervention in the provision of social welfare which should involve taking care of basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter will not only ameliorate the situation of the needy and disadvantaged *Almajiri* in this situation, but will also serve as economic regulator which will help in resource distribution and allocation. Social welfare policy will immensely help in reducing too much concentration of very few capitalists through wider distribution when the government provides the socially disadvantaged with minimum means of survival.

In addition, this theory fits more into this study particularly the second assumption in Nigerian context with the role of government in the provision of modern *Almajiri* school system. This will help in poverty reduction as the school will be formalized where uniforms, feeding and shelter will be provided. This has already started in many northern states as it was the policy of the regime of Goodluck Jonathan to integrate them into modern system of education.

This theory is also handicapped in the sense that, no matter how government tries in carrying all along by taking care of the unprivileged in the society, the government could not possess enough resources to pursue this policy vigorously. Also, there are those who

are not willing to cooperate with the government in the execution of such policies like *Almajiri* parents for example.

The Institutional and Marxist Theories Combined

Both theories can clearly be situated within the context of this study. The first theory, which is the Marxist theory centrally focuses on social domination, exclusion and exploitation which will attract rebellion from the dominated and exploited. The *Almajiri* belong to this economically exploited class and they (*Almajiri*) strive to change the existing order characterized by economic exploitation and social domination. They established their independent school system outside the capitalist sphere. The more the capitalist system continues, so will the *Almajiri* school system as a response to the economic and social condition they found themselves.

The second theory, which is the institutional theory, seeks to explain an attempt to strike a balance between total capitalist domination and absolute collectiveness. The major tenet is all about fair resource distribution which will allow the capitalists to continue with their capitalism but a considerable level of welfare should be provided for the poor, the needy and the disadvantaged ones in the society (*The Almajiri*). Doing so will ensure stability and it can be achieved through government's efforts. The *Almajiri* can be taken care of through the process where their feeding, shelter and clothing can be guaranteed through social welfare scheme. The Nigerian government clearly understands that and is moving towards achieving that through a policy of the Modern *Almajiri* School System.

Both Marxist theory and Institutional theory are integrated in their explanation of the topic of study in the sense that, the two theories seek to promote a better and just

distribution of resources which will specifically target the unprivileged class. Their assumptions of governmental role in the provision of social welfare to ensure egalitarian society free of exploitation tallies with the nature of *Almajiri* deplorable situation which requires immediate attention of the policy makers before it leads to rebellion as predicted by Marxist.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology outlining the procedures for collecting data. The sub-sections consist of the study location, research design, and the source of data, sampling and sample size, techniques of data collection and analysis.

3.2 Study Location

The area selected for study is Gombe Local Government area of Gombe State. The introduction of regional system of administration paves way for Gombe Local Government to becoming a Divisional headquarters of the present day Gombe State with the creation of twelve (12) states in 1967. Gombe Metropolis is situated in the savannah region and is bordered in the north by Kwami local government area, Yamaltu Deba to the east and Akko local government area to the south-west. Gombe Metropolis has a population of about 266,844 residents (NPC, 2006). It has a land area of about six hundred (600) square km and its highly populated particularly now that it serves a dual role of local government headquarters and the capital of Gombe State. It produces cotton and groundnut in large quantities as well as beans, maize and other assorted grains. Among the indigenous ethnic groups are Fulani, Terawa, Bolawa, Kanuri and Hausa. The indigenes of Gombe Local Government are predominantly Muslims and they live in peace with one another. Some among the areas (*Unguwanni*) in Gombe Metropolis include Government Residential Area, Federal Low-Cost, State Low-Cost, Kagarawal, Unguwa Uku, Arawa, Tudun Wada, Pantami, Jekadafari, Bolari, Yelenguruza, Kwanan Alheri, Nassarawo, etc.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopts triangulation design. In this design, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected at about the same time. Triangulation is used when the strengths of one method offset the weakness of the other, so that together they provide more comprehensive set of data. For the quantitative method a descriptive survey design was used. The design is found suitable for this study since the study intends to collect data on an existing situation. Yakeen (2004) observes that survey design focuses on people and their beliefs, opinions, perceptions, and behaviors. Agbonifon and Yomere (1999) confirm that survey design is a kind of study which tries to find out the feelings of people or individuals about something. He maintained that survey design is systematic description of an event in a very factual and accurate manner. Qualitative methods of In-Depth interview and Focus Group Discussion were also used. The purpose of adopting this method is to complement the two so as to have a comprehensive explanation of the research. The reason for selecting *Unguwa Uku, Kagarawal and Kwanan Alheri* for choosing the respondents is, as a result of too much concentration of *Makarantun Allo (Almajiri school system)* in these areas more than any other area in Gombe, while there is no single *Almajiri* school in Federal Low Cost, Government Residential Areas. There are very few in the old areas of the town such as *Herwagana, Bolari, Jekadafari* etc. *Kagarawal* and *Unguwa Uku* are newly developed areas in Gombe outside the main town of Gombe. Strangers settle there and *Malaman Allo* or Qur'anic teachers settle easily with their *Almajirai* while the new arrivals are taken there directly. An in-depth interview was conducted with the Desk officer, *Almajiri/Tsangaya* Gombe local government area, two

Ulama from each ward and one *Mai Unguwa* (ward head) from each ward i.e. three *Masu Unguwanni*.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of the study is the 10538 (Ministry of Economic Planning, Gombe State, 2015) *Almajiri* pupils living in Gombe Metropolis. The respondents were chosen out of this number for Focus Group Discussion and questionnaire. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the Desk officer, *Almajiri/Tsangaya* education, Gombe Local Government, three ward heads, and the Ulamaas within Kagarawal, Unguwa Uku and Kwanan Alheri inside Gombe Metropolis with additional information through In-Depth Interview.

3.5 Sampling Size and Sampling Procedures

Two *Almajiri* schools were selected from each of the three (3) wards making a total of six schools from which the sample was selected. Purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting *Unguwa Uku*, *Kagarawal* and *kwanan Alheri* for this study, as a result of the concentration of *Makarantun Allo (Almajiri School System)* in these areas more than any other area in Gombe Metropolis. Seventy (70) *Almajiri* pupils were sampled using lottery method from the six schools making a total number of 420 *Almajiri* pupils.

The respondents selected for the FGD are the *Gardawa* were six people where purposively selected from each school making a total of thirty six *Gardawa* in all. Those selected for the IDI are the two Ulamaas from each school making a total of six Ulamaas, three ward heads from Kagarawal, Unguwa Uku and Kwanan Alheri and lastly, the Desk officer in charge of *Almajiri/Tsangaya* education in Gombe Metropolis.

3.6 Data collection procedure

To facilitate the conduct of the research, an introductory letter was collected from the Head, Department of Sociology, Bayero University Kano, which was taken to the Desk officer, Gombe Local Government area, ward heads and *Ulama* of the *Makarantun Allo* (*Almajiri* school system). When the permission was given, the researcher went round to administer the instrument with the help of three trained research assistants in each *Makarantun Allo* (*Almajiri* schools). The Questions were written in English and translated into Hausa Language for the respondents. The respondent's choice of options was filled in for them by the researcher and his research assistants.

3.7 Instruments of Data Collection

The quantitative instrument for data collection of this study was a questionnaire with both close and open ended questions designed to ask respondents the same questions and is divided into five sections namely to; discover the social background of Students of the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe metropolis, analyze the economic background of parents of *Almajiri* students in Gombe metropolis, examine the role of *Ulamaa* (teachers) in running the *Almajiri* system in Gombe metropolis, discover the role of Government in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe metropolis and lastly, discover the economic contribution of the students of the *Almajiri* schools in Gombe metropolis.

On the qualitative part, the instruments are In-Depth Interview guide and a Focus Group Discussion guide designed in such away to ask interviewees the same questions and discussants the same questions. Topics discussed include the following: discover the social background of Students of the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis,

analyze the economic background of parents of *Almajiri* students in Gombe Metropolis, examine the role of *Ulamaa* (teachers) in running the *Almajiri* system in Gombe metropolis, discover the role of Government in running the *Almajiri* system of education in Gombe Metropolis and lastly, discover the economic contribution of the students of the *Almajiri* schools in Gombe Metropolis.

3.8 Procedures of Data Collection

The responses generated from questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical package for Social Sciences computer (SPSS) computer program after which the result was also interpreted using univariate analysis of simple frequency counts, percentage, mean, cross tabulation and chi square to describe the responses from the questionnaires. The qualitative responses were collected using a tape recorder, then transcribed and used to substantiate or compliment the responses from the questionnaires.

3.9 Problems Encountered in the Field

The problems encountered in the field arise as a result of bombings and sporadic shootings by unknown gunmen within Gombe Metropolis. In other words, the actual problem was getting the trust of some of the *Almajiri* and the *Ulama* alike because most of them were security conscious. Some among the *Ulama* and the *Almajiri* sorrowfully explained how they are being harassed by the security personnel whenever there is attack by the unknown gunmen. This problem led to so much delay in distributing questionnaires and interviewing the *Ulama*.

The problems were overcome by the researcher through the use of some familiar *Almajiri* pupils who introduced him (Researcher) to the *Ulamaas* and the other *Almajiri* pupils.

The researcher also used direct unobtrusive observation in dealing with *Almajiri* pupils by attending their schools and winning their confidence.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the findings on a study of the students of Almajiri system of education in Gombe Metropolis, using results obtained from Questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion and In-depth Interview. The researcher administered the Questionnaires himself with the help of two research assistants. Mostly in the case of questions directed to the *Almajiri* and *Ulama*, the Researcher and the Assistants translated the questions in Hausa language for understanding. As in the case of FGD and interview, the researcher asked the questions in Hausa language and write down the responses in English language.

A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed to the *Almajiri* pupils out of whom 402 were retrieved by the researcher. An in-depth interview was conducted with three ward heads, six *Ulama* and the Desk officer in charge of the *Almajiri* Education. The responses analyzed below include information gotten through the Questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion and the In-depth interview.

Table 4.1: Age of the Respondents

Age of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
4-9 years	51	12.7
10-15 years	88	21.9
16-20 years	197	49.0
21 years and above	66	16.4
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.1 shows the age distribution of the respondents. It indicates that 12.9% of the respondents fall within the category of 4-9 years, 21.9% belongs to the category of 10-15 years, 49% is between 16-20 years of age with 16.4% belonging to the age category of 20 years and above. From the above, it is evident that, those that are engaged in *Almajiri* school system are youths and majority of them fall with the tender ages of early elementary school.

In addition, the IDI with the three selected wards heads responded that they have *Almajiri* of different category of ages from 4 up to 30. They have 3289 pupils in kwanan Alheri, 633 from Kagarawal and 954 from Unguwa Uku making a total of 4876 *Almajiri* pupils in all. As for the ward heads, the three of them revealed that they have ten *Almajiri* schools in total.

The sex distribution of the respondents disclosed that all the respondents are males leading to the total of 100%. This perhaps, is as a result of many factors such as culture, religion, conservative nature of the parents and equally the fragile nature of female sex.

Table 4.3: Level of Parent's Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Quranic education	231	57.5
Primary education	13	3.2
None	158	39.3
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.3 shows the level of parent's education. The table indicates that 57.5% of the respondents' parents have only the qualification of Quranic education, 3.2% possesses primary education while 39.3% neither have Quranic education nor any other qualification. Generally, the above statistics simply show that most of the parents of the respondents have no formal education or precisely, western education.

Table 4.4: Parent's Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	253	62.9
Business	22	5.5
Artisans	127	31.6
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.4 shows the parents' occupation of the respondents. It indicates that 62.9% are farmers, 5.5% are in business while the remaining 31.6% are artisans. This clearly indicate that majority of the respondents' parents are farmers while none of them is a civil servant. In addition, the above data indicate that most of the parents are poor with

low income since we know that farming in Nigeria today is characterized with peasant agriculture yielding low inputs with poor farming tools and low support from the government. This may also be consistent with the inability of the farmers to sponsor their children to attend formal schools.

Table 4.5: Parent's Income Level

Income Level Per Month	Frequency	Percentage
<N5000	21	5.2
N5,000 to N10,000	48	11.9
N10,001 to N15,000	118	29.4
Above N15,000	215	53.5
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.5 shows the income level per month of the parents of the respondents. It indicates that 5.2% earn less than N5000 per month, 11.9% fall between N5000 to N10000 and 29.4% fall within the category of N10001 to N15000 while 53.5% fall within the category of above N15000. The above figures indicate that, the parents of these *Almajiris* fall within the category of low income earners though, majority of them fall within the minimum wage standard.

On the question of whether the parents of the *Almajiri* can afford to sponsor them (*Almajiri* pupils) in any other school apart from the *Almajiri* schools, the FGD indicate the fact that majority or almost all the respondents believed that, their parents cannot afford to sponsor them to attend any school apart from the *Almajiri* school due to the conservative stand of their parents, low level of income and too many dependents with many number of wives and children. According to one of the *Gardi*:

We can only attend *Almajiri* School because our parents are poor village farmers who could not afford all the expenses that are attached to Western educational system, such as uniforms, books, school fees, among others. We found ourselves here not because we are not interested in Western knowledge or we are stigmatizing it but, rather we saw it as an affair of the privileged few in the society.

Table 4.6: Whether Parents are Alive or Not

Parents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	341	84.8
No	61	15.2
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.6 shows whether the respondents' parents are alive or not. The table indicates that 84.8% responded yes while 15.2% responded no. This explains clearly that majority of these *Almajiri* selected have their parents still alive which means most of the *Almajirai* parents are alive. This data also indicate that it is not the presence of parents that determine the enrolment of *Almajiri* in their school instead, the majority of the parents are still alive and they are taken to *Almajiri* schools.

Table 4.7: Father's Number of Wives

Number of wives	Frequency	Percentage
One	38	9.5
Two	71	17.7
Three	141	35.1
Four	152	37.8
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.8 shows the respondents' fathers number of wives at home. It indicates that 9.5% have only one wife, 17.7% have two wives and 35.1% have three wives while 37.8% have four wives. This statistics indicate that it is a fact that many of the children coming from these families into the *Almajiri* school system have father's number of wives as three and four respectively which constitutes 72.9% of the total respondents. The *Almajiri* father's number of wives determines social status which in turn can also correlate with economic status.

Table 4.8: Mother's Presence in the House

Mothers Presence	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	218	54.2
No	184	45.8
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.8 shows the respondents' mother presence in the house. It indicates that 52.2% responded yes, 45.8% answered no. This figure explains that, it is not the presence of the

mother in the house that determines going to the *Almajiri* School as majority of the *Almajiri* interviewed here have their mothers at home. A mother can be present at home but cannot determine the school enrolment of a child since it is the sole responsibility of male parents to do so. Besides, the presence of mother at home even escalates the possibility of going to *Almajiri* school sometimes because they will be two or more at home which worsens the economic conditions of that home leaving the parents with little option except searching for alternative in which *Almajiranci* is one of them.

Table 4.9: Number of Children in the House

Children in the House	Frequency	Percentage
2-5	131	32.6
6-10	241	60.0
10 and above	30	7.5
Total	402	100.0

Table 4.9 shows number of children in the house of the respondents. The respondents responded this way: 32.59% of the respondents have from 2-5 children, 6.22% between 6-10 children while 61.19% from 10 and above number of children. The above statistics indicate generally that most of the respondents have many children in their homes. For instance, 61.19% of the total respondents have 10 and above number of children. The presence of more number of children at home will commensurate with the increased spending on education, health and other regular daily requirements of life. Since majority of these parents are poor, they could hardly afford to do that. This explains why the parents are finding solace in sending their children to *Al majiri* School to relieve themselves from the burden that they could not cater for.

Table 4.10: Whether All your Brothers are in the *Almajiri* School or Not

Brothers in <i>Almajiri</i> School	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	293	72.9
No	109	27.1
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.10 shows the respondents' views on whether all their brothers are in the *Almajiri* School. It indicates that 72.9% answered yes while 27.1% responded no. This may not lack relevance with the fact that, majority are taken to the same school system by the same parents. The little percentage that responded no may have some of their brothers either not attaining the age for sending them to school or they have finished and returned back home. This clearly implies that the parents of these *Almajiri* tend to send all their children to the *Almajiri* schools.

Table 4.11: Contented being an *Almajiri*

Contented	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	13.2
No	349	86.8
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.11 shows the respondents' view on contented being an *Almajiri*. It indicates that 13.2% of the respondents are contented being with their status of *Almajiri* while 86.8% are not. This means majority of these *Almajiri* are not satisfied with their social status as

Almajiri. This may not lack relevance with the nature and manner they are looked with disdain in the society and welcome with condemnation.

The IDI analysis revealed that the selected respondents prefer the *Almajiri* system to continue. Some of the reasons they advanced include; fear of modernization, their phobia of western school system, their perception of *Almajiri* schools as the best means of retaining and memorizing the holy Quran (IDI for *Ulama*). According to one of the *Ulama*:

I will never support any attempt to stop this *Almajiri* school system of education. It's what we have inherited from our ancestors and benefit from. We cannot accept alien ideas that are not congruent with our culture, religion, civilization all in the name of modernization. To be candid with you, we are suspicious of this Western education. Can't you see how our leaders with Western education are making our life wretched and miserable?

The ward heads, however, responded negatively to the continuation of the *Almajiri* school system. Their reasons are: the system is becoming rotten leading to the breeding of criminals and nuisance to the society. The aim of the system is no longer tenable as most the *Almajiri* pupils no longer read the Quran like before.

As for the FGD, the participants selected i.e. the *Gardawa*, prefer the *Almajiri* school system to continue because to them, they benefit positively from it and the conservative stand of their parents will not stop them from sending their sons to the *Almajiri* schools. However, the *gardawa* respondents indicate their disenchantment with the system, and also a need for adjustment. The deplorable condition of the *Almajiri* school system is putting many of them in despair. According to the *Gardawa*, the system should be overhauled.

Table 4.12: Working for *Ulama*

Working for <i>Ulama</i>	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	365	90.8
No	37	9.2
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.12 shows the respondents' opinion on whether they working for their *Ulama* or not. It indicates that 90.8% of the respondents answered yes while only 9.2% responded no. This clearly shows that majority of *Almajiris* work for their *Ulama* in one way or the other and also, the *Ulamaa* are using them (*Almajirai*) for cheap labour.

On the nature of work they do for their *Ulama*, the respondents mentioned that they work on their *Ulama* farms, they do household jobs and sometimes assist in teaching the Holy Quran. The type of work the *Amajiri* do is mainly farm work for their *Ulama*. They also provide menial household jobs such as disposal of waste, fetching of water and shopping. They also provide laundry services to the people in addition to cobbling and manicure and pedicure services to the public. This complement their means of sustenance apart from begging and *sadaqah* (gift) received from the people.

Table 4.13: Feeding by Ulama

Feeding by Ulama	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	11.9
No	354	88.1
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.3 shows the respondents' opinion on whether they are being fed by their *Ulama*, indicating that, 11.9% said yes while 88.1% said no. This shows that majority of the *Almajiri* are allowed to cater for themselves through begging.

For those who answered that they are not being fed by their *Ulama*, they were also asked on how they get food. They answered that they get food mostly through begging, scavenging and menial household jobs for adopted masters.

Table 4.14: Receiving Support from Fellow Muslims

Receiving Support	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	11.9
No	354	88.1
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.14 shows whether the respondents are receiving support from fellow Muslims. It indicates that 11.9% responded yes while 88.1% answered no. This simply means that majority of them do not get any support from their Muslim brethren. This may be as a result of the public perception of the *Amajiri* school system as retrogressive.

On the role of the Muslim *Ummah* on the continuation of *Almajiri* system, most of the respondents perceived Muslim *Ummah* as hostile to their continuation as a result of low

support from the Muslim community and also constant condemnation even from some of the Islamic clerics. One *Gardi* revealed that: “some Muslims even accuse us of not really reciting the Quran the way it is supposed to be just because they hate to see us.”

The IDI asked the role of Muslim *Ummah* about sustaining the *Almajiri* school system. The response was that the Muslim *Ummah* played a big role through the offer of food, clothes, charity, shelter and other means of sustenance. This encourages many for coming into the system on the one hand. On the other hand, the Muslim *Ummah* is making it hard on the *Almajiris* through condemning and stigmatizing them as outcast in the Muslim society. And for those who answered yes, they said they get support from their fellow Muslims in form of money, cloth, food, *sadaqat*, and other daily needs of life.

Table 4.15: Condemnation for being *Almajiri* by Fellow Muslims

Condemnation by Fellow Muslims	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	284	70.6
No	118	29.4
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.15 shows the opinion on whether the respondents receive condemnation for being *Almajiri* by fellow Muslims. It indicates that those who answered yes constitute 70.6% while those who answered no comprise 29.4%. This means majority of them are being condemned by their fellow Muslims who perceived the system as un-Islamic.

For those who responded that they receive condemnation, they were further asked from whom? They answered, from Muslim communities and students of western education

schools. The forms of condemnation they receive include antiquated approach to knowledge, phobia of modernization and shoddy means of life. They also receive words of insults and abuses in motor parks and other public places when they beg for food or money.

Table 4.16: Getting assistance from Gombe State Government

Assistance from State Government	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	215	53.5
No	187	46.5
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.16 shows the opinion on getting assistance from Gombe State Government. It indicates that 53.5% answered yes while 46.5% answered no. This clearly means that, the majority are getting the assistance from Gombe State Government in one way or the other.

The FGD disclosed that the role played by the government in assisting the *Almajiri* school system is through donation to *Ulama* and also modernizing the *Almajiri* schools. The government also provides feedings to the *Almajiri* during Ramadan fasting, mosquito nets and immunization. The IDI data also disclosed that the building of modern *Almajiri* schools across the Northern states is a big role played by the government. The *Almajiri* schools within Gombe Local Government under construction include the one at *Hurumin Da'u*, *Herwagana*, *Malam Inna*, *Gabukka*, *Unguwan Sarkin Pawa (Imam Malik)*. According to the Desk officer in charge of the *Almajiri/Tsangaya* schools:

Building and furnishing of the schools will be provided by Gombe state government while feeding and clothing will be taken care of by Gombe local government. The Gombe state government had also set up a committee which is headed by the state Commissioner for Higher Education and members from different Islamic sects (*Tijjaniyya, Izala*) on the mandate of knowing the total number of *Almajiri* schools, *Almajiri* pupils and the *Ulama* within Gombe State. Lastly, Gombe State Government is organizing an enlightenment campaigns through traditional chiefs, staff of Ministry of education, etc on the need to sanitize the *Almajiri* schools.

Table 4.17: Condemnation from Government

Condemnation from government	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	244	60.7
No	158	39.3
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.17 shows the respondents' opinion on whether they receive condemnation from the government as a result of their activities. Thus, 60.7% responded yes while 39.3% responded no. This indicates that majority of the respondents are being condemned by the government for their activities as *Almajiri* pupils.

The IDI data on the role of government in discouraging the *Almajiri* system revealed that majority of the respondents perceived that, government discourage them through condemning their public nuisance, begging, shoddy condition of living and inability to integrate into the western educational system. At times, government officials harass the *Almajiri* especially Marshals and Health workers. An *Ulama* stated:

The Government is indirectly trying to get rid of *Almajiranci* which is far and far better than the so called '*Karatun Boko.*' Nobody has the right to prevent Quranic Recitation no matter how powerful or influential he is. Period!

For those who said they receive condemnation from the government, they were asked in what form? They responded thus: “through criticizing our condition, shoddy living, failure to integrate in modern educational system and our nuisance in public begging.”

When the respondents were asked, which government personnel condemned them, they answered that the personnel include health workers, security personnel and teachers from modern schools. The people that really condemn them these days are the security personnel who tend to see these *Almajiri* pupils as threats to National Security.

Table 4.18: Working as Houseboy in People’s Houses

Working as House Boy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	235	58.5
No	167	41.5
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.18 shows the opinion of the respondents on whether working as houseboy in people’s houses. The table indicates that 58.5% responded yes and 41.5 no. This shows that quite number of *Almajiri* work in people’s houses.

On the question of which other bodies are helping the *Almajiri* apart from government, the IDI gathered show that apart from government, other bodies assist the *Almajiri*. These bodies include philanthropists and Nongovernment Organizations such as UNICEF.

Table 4.19: Payment after Work

Payment after Work	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	219	93.19
No	16	6.81
Total	235	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.19 shows the responses on payment after work, indicating that 93.19% of the respondents answered yes while only 6.81% no. This indicates that majority of *Almajiri* that work in people's houses are being paid after working. When the respondents were asked how much they are being paid, they responded that the payment depend and varies on the nature of work. Some pay high while some pay less amounts of money after work. For those who answered no, they said that people tend to pray for them and also show appreciations for their services.

Table 4.20: Working in People's Farms

Working in People's Farms	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	174	43.3
No	228	56.7
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.20 shows the opinion on working in people's farms. It indicates that 43.3% of the respondents opined yes while 56.7% said no. This shows that majority of the *Almajiri* do not work in people's farms.

Table 4.21: Nature of Settlement after Work

Settlement after Work	Frequency	Percentage
Money	131	32.6
Food	36	9.0
Cloths	7	1.7
All of the Above	228	56.7
Total	402	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Table 4.21 shows the nature of settlement after work. The table indicates that 56.7% of the respondents are being settled with money, food and cloths while 32.6% of them are rewarded with money. From the above, we can deduce that majority of the respondents are being settled in monetary or material terms depending on the nature of the work or service and as deemed fit by their employers. When the respondents were asked on other income generating activities, majority of them answered that they are engage in activities such as local manicure, cap making, selling of dates and *Aswaq*, together with other menial jobs.

4.3 Cross Tabulations

This section of the study did some cross tabulation of some identified and selected variables. The independent variable selected in this study is ‘Contented being an *Almajiri* while the dependent variables are; Parent’s income level, Father’s number of wives and Mother’s present in the house. This was done to see the extent on how these variables could further elaborate on the continued existence of the *Almajiri* School System in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State.

Table 4.24: Cross Tabulation on: Contented being an *Almajiri* and Parents Income Level

		Parent's Income Level				Total
		<N5000	N5,000 to N10,000	N10,001 to N15,000	N15,000 and above	
Contented being an <i>Almajiri</i>	Yes	21 100.0%	32 66.7%	0 0.0%	31 14.4%	84 20.9%
	No	0 0.0%	16 33.3%	118 100.0%	184 85.6%	318 79.1%
Total		21 100.0%	48 100.0%	118 100.0%	215 100.0%	402 100.0

Source: SPSS (V20) Extracts, 2015.

Table 4.24 shows the cross tabulation of contented being an *Almajiri* and parent's income level. The table indicates that *Almajiri* whose parent's income is less than N5,000 constitute 100% of the people that answered yes to being contented because their parents are poor. Those with parents income level between N5000 to N10,000 in their majority agreed that they are contented with being *Almajiri* taking 66.7% of them with 33.3% not seeing a direct correlation between parent's income and their being *Almajiri*.

As for those whose parent's income's level fall between 10,001 to N15,000, the correlation of the cases revealed that, all of them show that there is no linkage between their parents income and their being *Almajiri*. There should be the present of other factors. This category comprises of 29.35% of the total respondents.

The last category in this table reveals that, 14.4% of the category fall within those whose parents earn from N15,000 and above who at the same saw a correlation between the income level and their being *Almajiri*. But majority which is 85% does not indicate a close relationship between parents' income and their being *Almajiri*.

Continuation of table 4.24 from right hand side

C.	f_o	f_e	$f_o - f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
A	21	4.39	21-4339=16.61	16.61 ² =275.89	62.85
B	0	16.61	-16-61	275.89	-16.61
C	32	10.03	21.97	482.69	15.08
D	16	37.97	-21.97	482.68	12.71
E	0	24.66	-24.66	608.12	24.66
F	118	93.34	24.66	608.12	6.66
G	31	44.93	-13.93	194.04	4.32
H	184	170.07	13.93	194.04	1.14
					143.89

Degree of freedom = 3

Table χ^2 value = 7.815

Calculated χ^2 value = 143.89

Decision: With $df = 3$ at the α -level of significance of 0.05, the calculated χ^2 value (143.89) is greater than the table χ^2 value (7.815), we therefore reject the null hypothesis that says “there is no significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and parents level of income” and accept the alternate hypothesis. This clearly shows that there is significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and parents level of income.

Table 4.25: Cross Tabulation on: Contented being an *Almajiri* and Father’s Number of Wives

		Father’s Number of Wives				Total
		One	Two	Three	Four	
Contented being an <i>Almajir</i>	Yes	10 26.3%	15 21.1%	112 79.4%	128 84.2%	265 65.9%
	No	28 73.7%	56 78.9%	29 20.6%	24 15.8%	137 34.1%
Total		38 100.0%	71 100.0%	141 100.0%	152 100.0%	402 100.0%

Source: SPSS (V20) Extracts, 2015.

Table 4.25 shows the cross tabulation of contented being an *Almajiri* and father’s numbers of wives. In the first column, the categories whose fathers have only one wife present an incidence of 26.3% very low as against 73.7%. For those whose fathers have two wives indicates a highest correlation between being an *Almajiri* and number of wives by their fathers to the highest level of 78.9% as against 21.1%.

Third category is for those whose fathers have three wives. The highest number shows a correlation of content for being an *Almajiri* resulting from higher number of wives to the maximum of 79.4% as against 20.6 % which shows no correlation. Like the third category, the cross tabulation in the fourth category shows a great linkage of *Almajiri* being where they are resulting from their father having four wives. This category consists of 84.2% of the total respondents as against those showing no correlation which gives 15.8%.

Continuation of table 4.25 from right hand side

C.	f_o	f_e	$f_o - f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
A	10	25.05	-15.05	226.50	9.04
B	28	12.95	15.05	226.50	17.49
C	15	46.80	-31.80	1011.24	21.61
D	56	24.19	31.81	1011.88	41.83
E	112	92.95	19.05	362.90	3.90
F	29	48.05	-19.05	362.90	7.55
G	128	100.19	27.81	773.40	7.72
H	24	51.80	-27.80	772.84	14.92
					143.89

Degree of freedom = 3

Table χ^2 value = 7.815

Calculated χ^2 value = 124.06

Decision: Since degree of freedom = 3 at the α -level of significance of 0.05, the calculated χ^2 value (124.06) is greater than the table χ^2 value (7.815), the null hypothesis that says “there is no significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and father’s number of wives” is rejected. This implies the acceptance of its alternate hypothesis that says “there is significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and father’s number of wives.

Table 4.26: Contented being an *Almajiri* and Mother’s Present in the House

		Mother’s Present in the House		Total
		Yes	No	
Contented being an <i>Almajiri</i>	Yes	53 24.3%	56 30.4%	109 27.1%
	No	165 75.7%	128 69.6%	293 72.9%
Total		218 100.0%	184 100.0%	402 100.0%

Source: SPSS (V20) Extracts, 2015.

Table 4.26 shows the cross tabulation of contented being an *Almajiri* and mother’s present in the house. This indicates that, over 75% of the total respondents whose mothers are present in the house are not contented being an *Almajiri* as against the other 24.3% who expressed contentment being an *Almajiri*, while the total respondents whose mothers are not present in the house (67%) shows that they are not contented being an

Almajiri, as oppose to other 30.4% who shows contentment being an *Almajiri*. This is an indication that there is no significant difference between those whose mothers are present in the house and those who are not in terms of the level of contentment of being an *Almajiri*.

Continuation of table 4.26 from right hand side

C.	f_o	f_e	$f_o - f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
A	53	59.11	-6.11	37.33	0.63
B	165	158.89	6.11	37.33	0.23
C	56	49.89	6.11	37.33	0.75
D	128	134.11	-6.11	37.33	0.28
					143.89

Degree of freedom = 1

Table χ^2 value = 3.841

Calculated χ^2 value = 1.890

Decision: Since degree of freedom = 1 at the α -level of significance of 0.05, the calculated χ^2 value (1.890) is less than the table χ^2 value (3.841), we therefore accept the null hypothesis that says “there is no significant relationship between contented being an *Almajiri* and mother’s present in the house.”

4.4: Discussion of Major Findings

Based on the data obtained so far from the field, the research discovered that, most of those who are *Almajiri* are within the age bracket of primary and secondary schools. They are either brought at earlier age or in their present age for *Almajiri* School. This clearly shows that, in Gombe or Northern Nigeria at large where *Almajiri* schools exist, illiteracy level in terms of western education will be higher. The *Almajiri* pupils based on the research are not contented or satisfied with their social status because most of them found themselves in the system as a result of parental background.

In addition, economic condition also leads to the *Almajiri pupil's* poor condition and situation. Most of the *Almajirai* parents are earning averagely between N10,000 and N15,000 monthly which is not enough to cater for their basic needs like food and clothing let alone their children's education. This is in consideration of the fact that most of *Almajiri* parents are having an average of two wives according to this research. Taking these children to the *Almajiri* School is a relief for their parents, since they cannot afford to pay for their formal school. And Gombe state is not a free education state and the modern *Islamiyyah* is expensive too where the school fees is too high.

The *Almajirai* are sometimes detested of their situation especially when they compare themselves with those in western education. However, one interesting fact here is; the presence of their mother's at home or her absence play a significant role in determining the *Almajiri* situation. Although, the difference is relatively low because table 4.8 indicates that those whose mothers are in the house are found to be more in number than those whose mothers are not at home.

Also, parental educational background matters a lot here. Almost all *Almajiri* parents are those without any advance qualification in western education. Their highest qualification is primary school certificate which only few parents obtained. The implication is that, these parents will continue to send their children to *Almajiri* Schools despite the dangers the *Almajiri* pupils are exposed to in Gombe Metropolis.

The research also discovered that, most of the *Almajiri* are not happy with their social condition as a result of constant condemnation and harassment from the general public and some government officials. They are perceived as nuisance and renegades who are against the doctrine of Islamic teachings by some people from the community. The clerics emphasized that, learning Quran cannot stop a child from enrolling into western system of Education. But the *Almajiri* parents remain adamant and staunchly conservative. The condemnation is making the *Almajiris* feel isolated and less relevant in the society.

On the issue of survival, the *Almajiris* are surviving in the system through begging, menial jobs and assistance from the Muslim *Ummah*. Of course, they work for their *Ulama* but it tends to be a free labour as the *Ulama* don't pay them for the services they render to them (*Ulama*). Instead, they wander from house to house begging for food a times using alluring songs and also scavenging for food from one street to the next. They, also survived through menial jobs of household keeping such as evacuating of refuse, fetching water, etc where in turn they are given food and sometimes token amount of money. Apart from this, some people give them clothes and even offer them shelter out of sympathy. This kind of assistance makes their parents feel comfortable with the system, which makes them continue to send their children to the *Almajiri* Schools.

There are other methods in which *Almajiri* survive in the system even without parental support. These ways include minor income generating activities such as nail cutting, cobbling, laundry services, etc. They earn money through these ways but it may not be enough to sustain them fully. They have to resort to begging and seek for assistance from the public. However, these economic activities are of little benefit to the people of Gombe in the sense that, they are not established businesses that can generate revenue to the Government because the *Almajiri* don't pay tax even with their minor sources of income. If there is any economic benefit to the people of Gombe, it is the provision of cheaper services which will have been more expensive than that of the *Almajiri* if provided by a corporate organization.

Interestingly, the sex of our study is one sided totally since there is no female *Almajiri*. Indeed, the *Almajiri* parents see co-education as one of the factors that make them to detest modern School System. They are too conservative to send their female children to *Almajiri* Schools. They believed that, male children can survive more under harsh conditions and are equal to the task of prevailing situation of *Almajiri* School system where the parents are comfortable in sending only male children.

The Government on its own part does not support the continuation of *Almajiri* system and also condemns it. For instance, the government openly encourages enrolment into the Nursery and primary School through enlightenment at both rural and urban areas. However, it gives assistance to the *Almajiri* system through endowments to *Ulama* and also giving the *Almajirai* immunizations and mosquito nets, etc. The decision of the present administration to modernize *Almajiri* School is seen as a step by the government to retain or reserve *Almajiri* School system but in an alternative fashion. This decision

will give the *Almajiri* and the *Ulama* the perceptions that, the *Almajiri* School systems is not bad and even the government is supporting it.

The implications of the above findings is that, there is every tendency that the phenomenon of *Almajiri* schools will continue in Gombe and beyond particularly as a result of the examined factors above which device a natural means for the survival of the system. The government and the host community may not support its continuation but rather prefer its modernization. The outcome is that a significant section of the population will remain probably unproductive or under productive as they may not acquire formal education that will prepare them for a better future. They mostly spent their lives in menial jobs such as cobbling, manicure and pedicure services and other trivial jobs that will leave them in a portion of less relevant people in the society. Also, the fundamentalist groups and selfish politicians will continue to have an easy access to recruitment of thugs and insurgents who keep emerging from the *Almajiri* as a result of their vulnerability due to social deprivation. In this case, crime and insecurity will continue in the society unabated.

The above findings and their implications are quite related and important in further understanding the works of scholars such as Baffa (2003) and Sule-Kano (2008). This is because the two works cited also discovered how poverty and social deprivation led to the survival of the *Almajiri* system of education or what Sule-Kano (2008) called Quranic Schools. In addition, this work supplemented the above two with the additional findings, such as poverty and social deprivation, plus other factors particularly the conservative nature of the parents of *Almajiri* and the *Ulama* as being hostile towards modern system of education. The methods adopted for survival by the *Almajiri* and the failure of

Government to provide a solution that is feasible in integrating the *Almajiri* schools with modern school system. Comprise other findings even though *Almajiri* schools will continue to exist, researchers need to continue with the search for a viable means of modernizing the system to remove the stagnation and destitution inherent in the *Almajiri* system of education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This research examined the social background of the students of the *Almajiri* School system in Gombe Local Government area of Gombe State. The research also talks about the link between *Almajiri* and some social problems like the *Maitatsine* and the *Boko Haram*. The research also examined why the system continue despite various measures taken by government to curb it and also roles played by the Muslim *Ummah* and other Islamic clerics. The research basically analyzed the social background of the students of the *Almajiri* system of education.

The research used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Questionnaire was administered through sampling of *Almajiri* in the six selected schools from three wards. A total number of 420 questionnaires were distributed and 402 were returned. In addition, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-depth-Interview (IDI) were also conducted through the sampling of *Ulama*, *ward heads*, Desk officer in charge of *Tangaya/Almajiri* education and also some *Gardawa*. The raw data obtained was presented and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result obtained was interpreted and the findings were discussed.

The research also used secondary data where scholarly views were reviewed on the subject matter of study. These include; The Holy Quran, the prophetic Hadith, Fafunwa (1975), Danbuzu (2012), Doi (1981), Sule-Kano (2008), Baffa (2003), Adamu (2000), Abdulqadir (2003), etc. The above scholars and many others cited in this work justified the genesis, continuity and other numerous issues linked with *Almajiri* School system.

The researcher reviewed these issues critically and commented adequately in addition to discussion and expansion of matters that arose from the issues examined.

The research integrated two theories in backing up hypothetical statement raised on the issues discussed i.e. the Marxist and institutional (interventionist) theories. The Marxist theory identified social condition of material being as the major argument behind social and economic struggle. This theory explains *Almajiri* School system from the perspective of class division as a result of economic determinism as discussed in detail in chapter two. The second theory is the institutional theory whose main tenet is to ensure provision of welfare services to the less privileged ones in the society like the *Almajiri* and also to integrate them into the society. The juxtaposition of where this theory explains our topic of study was also explained in chapter two. The research also elaborated clearly on methodology, population of the study, sampling procedure, sample size, sampling techniques, instruments of data collection were all explained thoroughly and adequately in chapter three.

The raw data obtained were presented, analyzed and interpreted in chapter four. This led to the discussion of research findings from the analysis of incidences and percentages collected from the field in addition to specialized interview. The findings led to the conclusion of the work and making of recommendations. The recommendations are suggestions and advices on how to improve the *Almajiri* system as provided in the last part of the work.

5.2 Conclusion

The research discovered that, *Almajiri* School system is existing and also perpetually continuing. This is as a result of many factors which consist of the parents of *Almajiri*, the *Ulama* who operate *Tsangaya* schools, economic situation and educational qualification of the *Almajiri* parents. As a result, the *Almajiri* School system will continue to exist unless these factors change and, the change is very difficult because the system is associated with conservatism.

The *Almajiri* School system is cheap since the parents do not pay quarterly school fees or other dues except some little token to the *Ulama* when they wish and at their own conveniences. The system allows for *Almajiris* to sustain themselves since the *Ulama* too do not feed them. This left the *Almajiri* with no alternative except to resort to begging, menial household jobs for food, cloth and other tokens.

The *Almajiri* School system is not of immense economic help to Gombe Local Government Area in the sense that, most of the economic sectors that do not pay either corporate or personal income tax. Also, they are established business venture to create employment or generate revenue to the government. Economically, the *Almajiri* pupils because of their large numbers in Gombe Metropolis are a burden to the government of Gombe State.

While Quranic teaching and learning are perceived by Muslims as a great priority, majority of the Muslim *Ummah* detest the modus operandi of *Almajiri* School system. As confessed by *Almajiri* themselves, they received condemnation from many Muslims as being nuisance who are scavenging from one place to another. The *Almajiri* themselves

are not fully contented with their social status as they are treated with disdain by the general public.

The government is putting some efforts in adjusting the *Almajiri* School system. The previous efforts of enlightening the parents and *Ulamaa* to adopt the modern structures and principles of learning Quran, was met with unrepentant resistance. Any attempt to introduce modernization was welcomed with disdain as secular by the *Almajiri* parents and their *Ulamaa*.

However, the recent policy introduced by President Jonathan's administration known as "*Almajiri* Modern School System" is gaining recognition and acceptability especially by the *Ulama* who are the custodians of the *Almajiri* school systems. Gradually, the *Almajiri* School system will be modernized in the long run if the present trend continued. But, there will be many attempts of resistance by both the parents and *Ulamaa* of the *Almajiri*.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered based on the research findings:

1. The *Almajiri* school system should be transformed like their western counterparts, but it should be gradual as any radical attempt to change the system will motivate more resistance. The government can build structures; assist in feeding and providing other items for *Almajiri* schools. This will facilitate their integration with modernization if carefully pursued. But, there must be caution especially in refraining from introducing any other curriculum except that of Quran and Islamic knowledge otherwise, the *Ulama*, parents and *Almajiri* themselves will be suspicious of the move.

2. The perception of western education by some *Ulama* and *Almajiri* as illegal, un-Islamic and totally secular must be changed. If this is not changed, it will continue to breed and produce radical and rebel movements or groups like that of the *Maitatsine* and *Boko Haram*. This will require massive enlightenment campaigns and awareness creation to enlighten the three categories: The *Ulama*, *Almajiri* parents and the *Almajiri* themselves. A workshop should be prepared from time to time where clerics who are sympathetic to the *Almajiri* School system's deteriorating condition will be engaged by the government to enlighten the categories identified above on the need to modernize their school system because of the dangers that the *Almajiri* are being exposed to.

3. The status of *Ulama* should be formalized by government to win their sympathy. They should be given salaries and allowances. This will make them feel important and also useful in the society. This will also make integration into modernization easy without much difficulties and hiccups. In addition, the *Almajiri* should be given some incentives like prizes and other Islamic books for the best students in order to make them feel also identified by the government.

4. The government on her own part should try to provide free primary and secondary education so that, many parents who cannot afford to sponsor their children and, who found an alternative in *Almajiri* School will now retreat. Some parents are not against western education except that; they lack the means to sponsor their children. That is why they detest the system and chose *Almajiri* School as an alternative. Free education will attract many parents in sending their children to the modern school system.

5. Government should look into the economic situation of *Almajiri*. There is need to diversify means of their sustenance by establishing training centres that will train them in better occupations than cobbling, caps making, laundry and household jobs. Centres should be provided for tailoring, carpentry, blacksmithing, etc for the *Almajiri* pupils to be self-reliant. This will address the issue of begging and scavenging. The *Almajiri* will no longer be seen as nuisance in the society. Their occupations will have economic benefit to the people of Gombe and Nigeria at large.

6. Parents too should be given special awareness on their responsibility towards their children which include; feeding them, shelter provision and also ensure that they give them sound and quality education. This can be carried out through the media especially radio stations and television channels. Gombe State government can also collaborate with North-Western states in this programme where the bulk of the *Almajiri* came from through the enlightenment campaigns and sensitization programmes.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire schedule for *Almajiri* Pupils

Department of Sociology,
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
Gombe State University, Gombe.

Dear Sir/Madam,

With much respect and honour, I am carrying out a research on “**A Study of the Students of *Almajiri* System of Education in Gombe Metropolis.**” I therefore solicit for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire; you are required to kindly circle the code number against the answer of your choice and or express your view where necessary. Be rest assured that all information you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for the purpose of this research only.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Misbahu I. Zamfara.

SECTION A

- 1. Age a. 4-9 years [] b. 10-15 years [] c. 16-20 years [] d. 20 years and above []
- 2. Sex a. Male [] b. Female []

SECTION B

- 1. Level of parents' education []
 - a. Quranic education []
 - b. Primary education []
 - c. Secondary education []
 - d. Tertiary education []
 - e. None []
- 2. Parents Occupation
 - a. Farming []
 - b. Business []
 - c. Civil Service []
 - d. Artisans []
 - e. Others Specify
- 3. Parent's income level per month
 - a. <N 5,000 []
 - b. N5,000 to N10,000 []
 - c. N10,001 to N15,000 []
 - d. Above N15,000 []

4. Are your parents alive?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []
5. Father's number of wives
 - a. One []
 - b. Two []
 - c. Three []
 - d. Four []
6. Is your mother among the ones present in the house?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []
7. Number of children in the house
 - a. 1 []
 - b. 2-5 []
 - c. 6-10 []
 - d. Above 10 []
8. Are all your brothers in the *Almajiri* School?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []
9. Are you contented being an *Almajiri*?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []

SECTION C

1. Do you work for your *Mallam*?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

2. What kind of work?

3. Are you being fed by your *Mallam*?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

4. How do you get food?.....

5. Do you get support for your activities from your fellow Muslims?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

6. If yes, what kind of support?

7. Do you receive condemnation for your activities from your fellow Muslims?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

8. If yes, from who?

9. If yes, what sort of condemnation?.....

SECTION D

1. Do you get assistance from Gombe State Government?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

2. If yes, what form of support?.....
3. Do you receive condemnation from government because of your activities in Gombe Local Government?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []
4. If yes, in what form?.....
5. If yes, from which personnel?.....

SECTION E

1. Do you work as a houseboy in peoples house(s)?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []
2. Do you get paid?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []
3. If yes, how much?.....
4. If no, what is the means of compensation?.....
5. Do you work in people's farm(s)?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []

6. How do you get settled after work?

a. Money []

b. Food []

c. Cloths []

d. All of the Above []

7. What other income generating activities do you engage in?.....

.....

.....

Appendix II

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) Guide for *Gardawa*

Department of Sociology,
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
Gombe State University, Gombe .

Dear Sir,

With much respect and honour, I am carrying out a research on “**A study of the Students of *Almajiri* System of Education in Gombe Metropolis.**” I therefore solicit for your cooperation in answering the questions below. Be rest assured that all information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for the purpose of this research only.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Misbahu I Zamfara.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

- Name of participant.
- Name of school.
- Place of school of participant.
- Position of birth in the family.
- Category of *Almajiri*.
- Share your view on the continued existence of the *Almajiri* school system in Gombe Local Government area.
- What is the level of your satisfaction being an *Almajiri*?
- Do you think your parents can afford to sponsor you in any other school than the *Almajiri* School?
- Economically, what benefit would you say the people of Gombe Local Government area get from the *Almajiri* system?
- Share your view on the roles played by the Muslim *Ummah* on the existence of the *Almajiri* school system in Gombe Local Government area.
- Is there any role(s) played by the Government on the existence of the *Almajiri* school system in Gombe Local Government area?
- Apart from Government and the Muslim *Ummah*, which other stakeholder (s) play role on the existence of the *Almajiri* school system in Gombe Local Government area?

Appendix III

In-depth Interview (IDI) Guide for *Mallams*

1. How many *Almajiri* pupils do you have in your *Tsangaya*?
2. Do you want the *Almajiri* system to continue existing?
3. Why?
4. What would you say is the role played by the Muslim *Ummah* in sustaining the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
5. What would you say is the role played by the Muslim *Ummah* in discouraging the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
6. What do you think the government of the state has done to encourage the existence of the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
7. What do you think the government has not done to encourage the existence of the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
8. What economic benefit would you say the people of Gombe local government area get from the *Almajiri* system?

Appendix IV

IDI Guide for Ward Heads and Desk Officer

1. How many *Almajiri* schools do you have in your ward/Gombe Metropolis?
2. Do you want the *Almajiri* system to continue existing?
3. Why?
4. What would you say is the role played by the Muslim *Ummah* in sustaining the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
5. What would you say is the role played by the Muslim *Ummah* in discouraging the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
9. What do you think the government of the state has done to encourage the existence of the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
10. What do you think the government has not done to encourage the existence of the *Almajiri* system in Gombe local government area?
11. What economic benefit would you say the people of Gombe local government area get from the *Almajiri* system?