

**NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ARABIC
AND ISLAMIC STUDIES (NATAIS)**

**PERSPECTIVE OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC
STUDIES IN REPOSITIONING QUR'ĀNIC
EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

37th National Conference

**OF NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ARABIC AND
ISLAMIC STUDIES (NATAIS) HELD AT OLABISI ONABANJO
UNIVERSITY, AGO-IWOYE, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

Edited

Conference Proceedings

2019 C. E. / 1440 A. H.

Abdul-Fatah K. Makinde, Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief

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Preface

The history of Qur'ānic education in Nigeria dates back to the history of Islam in the country. Wherever Islam reaches, Qur'ānic education is kick-started without any delay. This is because the Qur'ān is a sacred book of Islam and whoever embraces it, studies its book. This, of course, is one of the reasons why the elementary Arabic schools in Nigeria were called Qur'ānic schools, and both Arabic and Islam were taught simultaneously. These schools have made tremendous impact on Islamic scholarship and education in Nigeria; produced great scholars and saints as well as great centres of learning. However, the situation of Qur'ānic/Almajiri Schools seems to have changed recently. Almajiri school pupils have turned street beggars and become public nuisance; making Almajiri education to attract spectacular attention of the government and other stakeholders. Almajiri and the phenomenon of begging became issues most frequently mentioned in the media, in political campaigns and governmental policies, and in academic discourses. It has also generated greater interest in religious sermons and speeches much as it has gained primacy in Non-Governmental (NGO) and community-based activities.

Being a major stakeholder on matters of education, particularly, Qur'ānic Education, the Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies, as a professional body, deemed it fit to make its impact felt in the efforts of retracing the purpose of Qur'ānic Education with a view to repositioning it in the country. To achieve this goal, the Association decided to specially devote its 37th National Conference for the purpose of addressing the matter in order to reinvigorate the primary objective of Qur'ānic Education through the lens of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

The Ago-Iwo Conference held between 17th and 21st November, 2019 was set aside for this purpose. Scholars of the twin disciplines of Arabic and Islamic Studies from various institutions across the country converged at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria to present their papers on the main theme of the Conference: "Repositioning Qur'ānic Education in Nigeria: Arabic and Islamic Studies Perspective." Various papers presented addressed the challenges facing Qur'ānic Education in Nigeria and suggested ways and methods those challenges could be tackled with a view to repositioning Qur'ānic Education in the country.

From the foregoing, this edited book of proceedings of the Conference has been divided into two sections. The first section contains English papers while the second section contains Arabic papers, after they have been subjected to the consideration and judgment of peer reviewers. The book is published for the benefit of knowledge seekers, researchers, national and international bodies who want to be informed about Qur'ānic Education. The contributors displayed their expertise in Arabic and Islamic Studies by suggesting ways and methods of repositioning Qur'ānic Education in Nigeria. This book will definitely be of great help to the stakeholders and policy makers in education in Nigeria and beyond.

Abdul-Fatah K. Makinde, Ph.D.
National Editor-in-Chief

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REPOSITIONING QUR'ĀNIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Prior to the intrusion of colonial powers into Muslim territories in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a blossoming culture of scholarship which was purely according to the dictates of Islam. Northern Nigeria in particular had a long history of attachment to knowledge even before it earned that geo-political name. Historians narrate that the coming of Islam to the region can be traced to the early century of Hijrah when the Ibadi Berbers started dispatching groups of scholars into Black Africa with the mission of spreading Islam and dissemination of knowledge. In the same vein, we nostalgically read the unequalled intellectual renaissance that was witnessed during the Abbasid Dynasty whereas *Baytul Hikmah* served as a great citadel of learning and scholarship. Also worthy of notice, is the intellectual monumental treasure of Muslim institutions which by far preceded the so-called renaissance that hovered around Europe in the later time. The University of Qairawan, the Nizamiyyah College, the Azhar University and others were all in full operation at the time the West was wandering and wallowing in a state of darkness, perpetual ignorance and barbaric life. Coming back to Black Africa, the Kanem-Borno Empire had a long history of scholarship.

Over a stretch of centuries (13th – 18th) and across the life-spans of successive empires in the *Bilad -as-Sudan* (Ghana, Mali and Songhai; and Bornu), Islamic scholarship flourished producing great scholars and saints, great centres of learning, and numerous revivalist movements in later centuries, prominent of which was that of Sheikh Usmanu Danfodiyo in the Hausaland. Some of the great Islamic cities and centres of learning in *Bilad-as-Sudan* were Gao, Djenne and Timbuktu in the defunct Songhai Empire, and Kano, Katsina and Zaria in the Hausaland. It is noteworthy to mention that Timbuktu was the most distinguished city of learning, scholarship and piety. Its Mosque – the Sankore Mosque where thousands of scholars teach a great multitude of students from all parts of the *Bilad-as-Sudan* has been likened to a university by a number of scholars of West African history. There is, therefore, little wonder in the spread and domination of what is popularly called the ‘**Timbuktu tradition**’ of scholarship/education throughout the West African sub-region. **MakarantarAllo** and *Ilimi* schools that have up to this day survived in Northern Nigeria are essential representations of the ‘**Timbuktu tradition.**’

In recent times, the issue of Almajiri education has been projected to the fore in Nigeria. It has attracted spectacular attention and generally therefore, concerns and worries about its destiny and that of its clients (the almajirai) and the society at large have increased. Indicators of these concerns are obvious and quite glaring. Almajirci

and the phenomenon of begging are among the issues most frequently mentioned in the media, in political campaigns and governmental policies, and in academic discourses. It has also generated greater interest in religious sermons and speeches much as it has gained primacy in Non-Governmental (NGO) and community-based activities.

This unprecedented concern and attention over the Almajiri Education System is informed by several factors. They include explosion in population which increased churning out of almajirai, especially into increasingly chaotic urban centres and their concomitant and associated effects such as over-crowdedness and overstretching of the urban space and public utilities, upsurge in social deviation, maladjustment, and disorders and general vulnerability to all sorts of social hazards, e.g. child abuse, child trafficking, child labour, substance abuse and misuse, gansterism and multi-factor violence, etc.

This study attempts to examine the state of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria, with a particular reference to Qur'ānic education and the increasingly vexatious Almajiri phenomenon. It assesses the impacts of educational policies of colonial imperialists on the Islamic educational system. It highlights the existing educational situation in Nigeria before and after the coming of the Europeans. It also reviews the reform and intervention efforts made towards the educational system. It concludes by offering some suggestions through which the Almajiri education system can be better restructured to make the graduates produced by the system more productive to themselves and their immediate environment.

British Colonial Policy on Education in Nigeria

After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates which made Nigeria one and single political entity, the British colonial government focused on establishing the system of education they brought with them. The task was easy for them as regards some parts of the country which had ultimately sought to wholly assimilate to the European culture and values, perhaps due to having no better or superior preceding enlightenment. The issue in other parts of the country like the North and Southwest was however difficult, given that Islam has for centuries been in existence with all its system of education and leadership. This, therefore, posed a fear and presented a stumbling block for the acceptance of the norms and values of the colonial officers.

On their part, the colonial officers rose to address this imminent challenge. They sought to take the measure of distancing the Muslims from accruing the great concern the latter used to give to Islamic education. They made sure that they disconnected the contact the Muslims had with the Arab countries from where vast literature reached Nigeria. Even the attempts to establish some schools like the School for Arabic Studies, Kano, was to cut off scholarship sojourn to Arab countries so that the Muslims would willy-nilly accept the schools built in their localities. The curricula were made to incorporate some aspects of Islamic education but with a motive to both serve the interest of the West and to eventually alienate it. This logic would eventually produce people with socially and mentally deranged mindset, whose natural background was forfeited without being fully replaced.

The colonial education which Nigeria inherited from the British does little to make a meaningful and encompassing impact on the life of many Nigerians. The educational curricula were designed to suit the interest and reflect the values and norms of the colonial masters. The school system was modeled on the rigid structure of time periods and grade-level typical of Western style of education. The policy stipulates that six years shall be spent at primary schools, three at junior secondary school, another three in senior secondary school and four years in university (Ibukun and Aboluwodi, 2010). That is why the colonial policy of education is still subject of censure; it is accused of marginalizing a section of the country by failing to address most of their valuable aspirations. The policy deliberately refused to officially recognize the many Qur'anic schools in the country, thereby skipping them in any aid grants while those of missionary and voluntary agencies were part of the beneficiaries (Imam, 2012).

An Assessment of the Policies

It is an undeniable fact that modern education has brought about some development and advancement. This lies in the fact that western educational methodology is built upon scientific discovery and emphasis is given to findings that can be subjected to human rational investigation. Advancement in technological, medical and many other scientific aspects in their contemporary features could be seen as the products of modern education championed by the West. However, success in that regard may not be akin or synonymous to the result of the policies. Though, some credit can still be given to the policies for at least appreciating the course of progress, another glance at them will reveal that they have done a lot of harm.

As has been asserted earlier, Western education has been the agent of liberation for people with no superior or similar system of enlightenment. But the policies are too detrimental to Muslims in many respects. After all, Western system of education has a lot of blends and elements of Christianity. The main ulterior motive behind designing some packages like the Millennium Development Goals was to recreate people in the image of the West (Shehu, 2014). This is in addition to serious damage the policies did (and still does) to the system of Muslim education. The policies have, to a very great extent, succeeded in detaching religious education other than in the system of the West from any serious consideration. In fact, according to the policies, all our erudite scholars that have been able to not only read and write effectively but also memorize masterfully a sizable number of books should still be regarded as illiterate, having not attended an academy in the Western sense. All our Qur'anic memorizers have no business to enjoy the so-called dividends of governance. They are irrelevant in the scheme of affairs.

The system enhances the thirst for materialism. Education then becomes for the purpose of certificates not for enlightenment and self-purification. Bidmos (2013) succinctly captures this when he asserts that:

Incidentally, employment opportunity known in education as extrinsic value which was then the reason acquiring Western education remains to date the goal of Education in Nigeria. Unfortunately, intrinsic value which is education for mind cultivation, self-actualization, civilization and wisdom is not targeted (Bidmos, 2013).

It also seeks to replace the role of religion in inculcating moral values with modernism. Modernism in the Western sense is erected upon four pillars; atheism, agnosticism, humanism and liberalism. All these four components are based upon doing things without the slightest care or feeling that there is God, lest He dictates or regulates how things should be done. One of the objectives of Western system of education as outlined by Bidmos (2013) is to create a free and democratic society. This as everyone could see has resulted to the prevalence of immodesty, indecency and all forms of immorality. Campuses now have turned into mere brothels. Education packaged without utilizing the revealed truth component is like half-baked bread or preparing a meal with some essential ingredients missing (Bidoms, 2013). That is why as Fafunwa (1974) laments, the Nigerian schools have so far failed in their efforts at producing meaningful citizens.

Another gruesome effect this system develops is that, while governments at all levels are calling for wholehearted embracement of the Western system of education, the number of schools, teaching workforce and learning infrastructure are too statistically insignificant to cater for the educational needs of the masses. In other words, if every child will go to school in Nigeria, there are no enough buildings, effective facilities and adequate teachers that can smoothly handle the task.

An Overview of the Reform/Intervention Efforts on Almajiri Education

Reforms and intervention efforts have gone through a number of trends and have taken various perspectives and areas of emphasis. In this regard, it is imperative to recall that some efforts were made after Nigerian independence to revitalize and advance the Islamic education system to suit contemporary realities. Dori (2019) narrates that the northern regional government made the first intervention to rejuvenate the Islamic system of education. A group of scholars from across all the 13 provinces in the region were delegated to investigate how the system worked in countries like Egypt, Libya and Sudan and it was found that these countries had effectively integrated their Islamic education with modern education system. The then Minister of Education, Mr. Isa Kaita who chaired the ministerial committee charged with the task of reforming the Almajiri system endorsed all the recommendations offered by the committee. Soon, a pilot scheme for full implementation was made to start in 1964 but was abruptly halted by the 1966 coup.

From then on, different kinds of spectacular and elaborate actions and advocacies were carried out. Today, a lot of things are going on at local and national levels; and at official and unofficial (communal) circles. These are reviewed and analyzed below:

Makarantar Allo and Islamiyyah Schools as Variants of Tsangaya

The first shift from strict Tsangaya is the MakarantarAllo (of the *Zaure* type) usually populated by children in the neighbourhood, and supported by the famous '*KudinLaraba*' – a token given to the Mallam by each child. The less ambitious Malams find this very supportive and are usually contented with the proceeds. The teaching/learning methods are similar to the typical Tsangaya schools. In some cases, some dosages of *fiqhu* lessons are casually incorporated. This is what can be termed as the subtle reform effort. However, a very spectacular change is in terms of curtailment

of begging. These types of schools surely are great in number and are spread in urban and rural areas across the whole of Northern Nigeria.

Later, Islamiyyah schools started to spring up. The first one in northern Nigeria documented in history according to Kabo (1976) as cited in Shehu (2002) is the one founded in Zaria in 1956 by a group of NEPU activists. Shehu (2002) stated that these Islamiyyah schools continued to gain popularity and acceptance to the extent that today, they are spread in all nooks and crannies of Northern Nigeria. They are found in university staff quarters, GRAs and even military and police barracks are no exceptions.

The Islamiyyah schools show a greater shift from the Tsangaya. In terms of curriculum and methods of teaching and learning, the variations are more obvious. Although largely operating in *Soraye* (the entry rooms in local houses) in the urban and rural neighborhoods, they usually have designated and graduated classes. Besides the Qur’ān, other subjects taught include *Tawhīd*, *Fiqh*, Hadīth, Arabic and *Sīrah*, to mention the most common. In some cases, English and Mathematics are also taught. The table below presents a vivid picture of the spread of these schools, the MakarantarAllo and Islamiyyah in Kano State alone since about ten years ago. It should be noted that the first variable in the table (Qur’ānic-General) includes both Tsangaya and the neighbourhood MakarantarAllo described in this section (above).

Table 1: Number of Qur’ānic/Islamiyyah Schools in Kano

Schools	Number
Qur’ānic (General)	6, 070
Islamiyyah (General)	3, 396
Islamiyyah Primary	446
Qur’ānic Primary	187
Model Qur’ānic	20
Tahfizul Qur’ān	11
Total	10, 130

Source: Isma’il, 2003

It is instructive to note that the Tsangaya schools are still very popular in this part of the country and there are therefore, a very large population of local people that cherish them and would always prefer to take their children and wards to them than the so-called *boko* schools. Far from the figures given above by Ismail (2003), the most recent research in Kano conducted by the office of the Special Adviser on Education and Information Technology reveals that there are up to 14, 335 Tsangaya schools in Kano State with a student population of 1,272,844, and 45, 454 teachers.

i. Seminars Conferences, Workshops and Advocacy Groups/Organizations on Tsangaya

Concerns for reform in Tsangaya education continued to grow. They later exploded into seminars, conferences and workshops. These started from the late 1950s and they

became a recurrent happening in the 1990s. Hardly would a year come and pass without one seminar or the other being held on Almajirai. These were widespread. Most of the time in Kaduna, and other times in other cities in Northern Nigeria, prominent among which are Kano, Sokoto and Maiduguri. One can safely assert that there is hardly any single issue that has attracted seminars and conferences more than the Tsangaya education. Books have severally been published out of these seminars and workshops. Without prejudice to the present conference, it is pertinent to observe that if the seminars and conferences were followed by the right kind of actions, we would not have been at the point we are today.

Besides seminars, advocacy and philanthropic groups and organizations also started to be formed. These are usually formed with the aim of assisting the Tsangaya schools and its pupils in a number of ways, which include material assistants, vocational training, etc. The Almajiri Initiative in Sokoto is one example in this regard, formed sometime in the year 2000.

ii. Integration as the Boldest and Practical Reform Action

The crisis in the secular educational institutions made Muslims to be warier and more disenchanted. However, because of the importance of developing a comprehensive education system, there is growing interest in merging or integrating the two systems of learning with a view to enhancing the intellectual and other productive potentials of Qur'anic/Islamiyyah pupils in a complex and fast changing Nigerian society.

Integration at the early stages can be said to be somehow isolated individual or group efforts. This is especially the case with the Ansar-ud-deen efforts of the 1920s and Malam Aminu Kano/NEPU's activities of the 1950s. Later the colonial government responded to Muslim agitations and established post-elementary integrated schools like the Kano and Sokoto Judicial Schools and the School for Arabic Studies in Kano. After independence, the northern states established other integrated post-primary schools – the Arabic Teachers' colleges like the ones in Katsina, Gombe, Sokoto, Kano and Maiduguri. The opening of many Women Arabic Teachers' Colleges in the states followed this. At the nursery and primary school levels, there was no any significant noticeable governmental and even individual efforts throughout the 1970s, until mid – 1980s.

In the 1980s, some Islamic organizations started establishing Model Islamic Primary Schools. Some of them are the Islamic Education Trust (IET) Minna, the Islamic Trust of Nigeria (ITN) Zaria, the Islamic Foundation, Kano, the Hudaibiyya Foundation, Kano, the Da'awah Group of Nigeria, Kano, etc. The need for such types of schools and the awareness kept growing rapidly. At the turn of the decade, that is, from the early 1990s the awareness had grown tremendously and there seemed to be a kind of mass mobilization. The scope of integration and the spread of interest in it exploded. Before this time, there was virtually, no discussion about integrating the traditional Qur'anic schools but it however started emerging. In many Islamiyyah schools, subjects like Hausa, English and Mathematics were introduced. Later, real integrated Islamic primary schools came to be opened in many cities and towns. In these types of schools, sufficient doses of Arabic and Islamic studies are injected in their academic

programmes. In some cases, children that attend these types of schools no longer needed to attend the evening/night Islamiyyah schools, as it used to be previously.

The latest trend in the integration efforts is the establishment of Tahfeez schools at the primary level, and Integrated Islamic Secondary Schools. These are now too numerous to mention here. It is however, interesting and noteworthy to mention that, these types of schools have not only gained tremendous and overwhelming acceptance in the society, but have come to be seen as a source of salvation and a means of redeeming the Muslim Ummah from the onslaughts of secular education.

iii. NGO Intervention Initiatives

Another very important development worthy of note is that nowadays, not only Islamic organizations are interested in integration. This cuts across numerous interest groups that include the government (all its tiers), local and international NGOs and International Donor Organizations like the UNICEF, USAID, UNESCO, NEI, ESSPIN etc. The government has been advocating integration through its various agencies, the ETF first and now as a cardinal mandate of the UBEC. With varying objectives and degrees of commitments, the IDPs and other donor organizations have been advocating, funding and researching on the project.

iv. Official (Governmental) Interventions.

There are varied responses to the integration of secular education with Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah ones. Many state governments in the North, and other Federal Institutions like Universal Basic Education (UBE), Education Tax Fund (ETF), Northern Education Research Project (NERP), Arewa House, National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), Abuja, etc. are all tackling the integration project.

In 1981, the Federal Government National Policy on Education acknowledged the responsibilities of some state governments in absorbing Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools' graduates into primary education (FGN, 1981). Kano State Government, in particular, in its white Paper on the Committee on Almajirai (1988) categorically accepts the integration of Islamic education with the Western education. Since then and despite the fact that there were Qur'ānic Schools Registration Edicts of 1980 and 1985, it is only in the Shekarau era that Kano State government remarkably started implementing decisions on supporting and boosting Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah schools.

It is pertinent to mention here that Kano State Government in the times of Shekarau took much bolder steps to reform the Tsangaya school system. The office of the Special Adviser on Education and Information Technology is essentially assigned to undertake this project.

At the level of the 19 Northern state governments, integration had gained a position of policy that should be pursued and executed as a matter of collective task. This is clearly mentioned in the general recommendations of the Northern Education Research Project when it states that:

In view of the high proportion of children in Qur'ānic schools, and in recognition of their contribution to raising literacy levels and providing moral training, there is the urgent need for government involvement in

the integration and transformation of the Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah Schools with the conventional schools for the rapid development of a large part of the nation's manpower resource (p.14).

One major characteristic of the integration movement sadly though, is the fact that so far, the efforts are uncoordinated, unorganized, haphazard and indeed, there are, one can say, some elements of confusion. This is the factor that informed the formation of a body that is supposed to co-ordinate such efforts and bring them together. That is the National Association of Model Islamic Schools (NAMIS) formed in Minna, convened by the IET in 1998. While the influence of this association seems to be felt only within the central and south-western regions, its effectiveness in bringing the schools together within the said region is really fair enough. It has organized workshops, seminars and conferences for the proprietors of such schools. In spite of that however, the efforts are still in disarray, and every individual proprietor or group continue to operate their integrated schools along their own vision and aspirations. This situation leads to discussion on the unresolved issues and problems of the integration movement.

Methods and Patterns of Integration in Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah Schools

Research findings have shown that there are no well-organized systems of integration in Qur'ānic school system in Northern Nigeria (Shehu, 2002; 2003; Umar, 2003). Findings of IITN-sponsored research on 50 integrated Islamiyyah primary schools in Kano metropolis, Kumbotso and Ungogo Local Governments, showed that there are varied ratio of integration and subject combination (Abbas, 2001).

Table 2: Curriculum Ratio of Integration in the Integrated Islamiyyah Primary Schools in Kano State.

Western/Islamiyyah Education	Frequency	Percent
100:00	5	10
70:30	20	40
50:30	20	40
30:70	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Abbas, 2001

As the table above shows, the dominant curriculum ratio of integration between Western and Islamic education is (70:30) 40% and (50:50) 40%. Again, the use of dual curriculum is not uniform. The bulk of the schools (90%) patronize the integrated subjects and from the entire samples, the schools with more fifty percent of integration constitute 80%.

In another IITN-sponsored research on Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah schools in Borno, Kano, Kwara and Sokoto States, more data was found on integration in terms of subject combinations in rural and urban schools (IITN, 2003).

Table 3: Subject Combinations in Rural/Urban Schools

Subject Combination	Borno		Kano		Kwara		Sokoto		Total
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	
Religious Subjects only (Qur'ān, Hadith, Fiqh and Arabic)	18 (15.9%)	9 (8%)	17 (15.4%)	32 (28.3%)	6 (5.3%)	14 (12.4%)	14 (12.4%)	3 (2.7%)	84 100%
Religious Subjects and Modern Subjects (English, Arithmetic, Integrated Sciences, Social Studies etc)	16 (19%)	3 (3.6%)	15 (17.9%)	-	17 (20.2%)	6 (7.1%)	16 (19%)	11 (13%)	84 100%
Total	34	12	32	32	23	20	30	14	197

Source: IIITN, 2003.

There are significant religious subject combinations in the urban centres particularly in Kwara State. The teaching of modern subjects is consistently higher (in all the samples) in the urban than in the rural schools.

Table 4: Summary of Subject Combinations in Urban and Rural Areas of the Selected States

Subject	Urban	Rural	Total
Religious Subjects	55(49%)	58(51.3%)	113(100%)
Religious/Modern Subjects	64(76.2%)	20(23.8%)	84(100%)
Total	119	78	197

Source: IIITN, 2003.

It is instructive to note that where there are religious and modern subject combination the percentage is more skewed to urban (64/76.2%) than rural areas (20/23.8%), so there is more integration in the urban than in the rural areas.

The methods of integration, as they are being practiced within the Islamiyyah primary schools are largely two:

Teaching secular subjects from Islamic perspective; and Teaching additional secular subjects alongside the religious subjects.

Defining the Scope and Framework of Reform in Almajiri Education

While a lot is being done on trying to reform the Almajiri Education System, what seems to be missing is the absence of clearly defined scope, areas and framework of intervention. There are several issues, problems and challenges that are involved in the system all of which are interrelated. Because of lack of clearly defined scope and framework, certain things are emphasized at the expense of others, or as the case may be, priorities are misplaced. It is, therefore, pertinent to propound a clearly defined scope and framework for reform project. In this regard, and for this purpose, this study identified a five-point scope/framework of intervention as presented below:

1). Curriculum and Pedagogy

The most laboured issue of integration falls within this point. Most intervention efforts focus on this issue. But as Shehu (2003) posits, there are still a lot of unresolved issues in the integration project. Shehu (2003) projected these issues and raised a number of questions asserting that, although integration has progressed and developed over the recent years, there are yet, unresolved issues that pose problems and challenges to the drive. Some of these are fundamental issues, while others are of lesser degree. These are discussed below:

Absence of Well-Defined Conceptual and Operational Framework:

This is the most fundamental issue that characterizes the integration efforts. The fact of the real and sharp differences between the Islamic and Western values of, and approaches to education necessitates that there should be a conceptual and operational framework for integrating the two. This framework again, should be shaped by the prevailing educational vision and aspirations of the Muslim Ummah in Nigeria. The absence of this framework therefore, means that there is no single, dependable and articulate reference point. This problem actually, is a consequence of the absence of a tangible educational agenda, which may be intended to be accomplished by the integration movement. This then led to other problems like,

i. Variations in approaches, patterns, forms, depth and dimensions of integration:

There are now several patterns/approaches to integration. Variations are also found in the intensity and the dimensions. While some schools simply increase the number of Islamic religious periods in the timetable while the secular subjects occupy greater proportions of the periods, the reverse is the case in some schools. Some schools simply adopt Islamic name, create a somewhat Islamically oriented school environment and atmosphere (injecting some prayer – *azkār* sessions and adopting Islamically approved uniforms especially for girls). Others combine all these in addition to in-depth training in both aspects of education on a 50-50 basis. Still, as Mogahed (2002) rightly pointed out, one other approach to integration is the infusing of Islamic perspectives in all subjects that are taught, such that students shall not only be made to appreciate the relevance of Islam to all disciplines, but shall also relate everything to the Muslim's **Absolute Reference Frame (al Tawheed)**. The implication of this problem then, is that,

ii. There is no commonly adopted curriculum:

Each integrated school adopts a curriculum and an academic programme that best suit the vision of the proprietor/board of trustees. Again, the motives of government and international NGOs and donor agencies may not necessarily be similar to what Muslim communities, groups or organizations aspire to achieve. This certainly means that these interest groups may continue to operate in divergent ways, pursuing different sorts of academic programmes, and perhaps, variant educational goals/aims. In analyzing this particular problem/absence of uniform curriculum, Shehu (2002) posed a number of questions as follows:

- Given our numerous educational needs and aspirations, shouldn't we choose to formulate different sorts of curricula, i.e. as it obtains in the various approaches currently prevailing in the various integrated Muslim schools?
- For the sake of uniformity, isn't it better to design one standard curriculum to be adopted by all integrated Islamic schools, so that they shall all be made to operate the same academic programme? And that this presents greater convenience and uniform criteria for assessing/evaluating the performances/standards of the schools?
- If we take the first option, how then do we deal with and or manage the varieties and divergences?
- If we take the second, how do we convince all to adopt the common one we shall design, especially if its standard is either below or above what some of the schools are already operating?

The answers to these questions all boil down to the first issue raised in this study. That is, there is an urgent need for defining and articulating an educational vision, thereby coming up with a conceptual and operational framework that shall serve as a reference point.

iv. Staffing and the Crisis of Qualified Manpower (Teaching Force)

Generally, in the Muslim predominated areas/states, there is a dearth of qualified teaching force. In the sciences especially, this problem is more pronounced. This problem naturally, has caught up with the integrated schools. It is expected that, a specially trained teaching force, that has in addition to its professional training, the moral disposition to teach in those kinds of schools, is required. However, due to the fact that the integration project can almost be described as an accidental educational phenomenon, teachers are in most cases indiscriminately employed. In addition to the above, the austere conditions in which these schools, operates preclude the possibility of employing and retaining the best and more qualified teachers available. Researches (e.g. Abbas,2001) have attested to this assertion. And closely linked to this problem is,

v. Poor Administration and Management

The poor staffing condition also finds expression in the administrative and management cadres of the integrated schools. Usually, as reported in Abbas

(2001), less qualified persons, sometimes amongst the poorly qualified teaching staff, are assigned to administer the Islamic integrated schools. The poor management of such schools is born out of the fact that in a lot of cases, the proprietors are not necessarily educationists, and they hardly employ the services of professional educators in running the schools, nor do they consult them. Some schools however, like DarulArkam Islamic primary school, in both Kano and Yola; Uthman bn Affan, Sabilur-Rashad, al-Azhar, all in Kano, etc. do have well-structured governing and management organs. Though, such organs in certain cases, rarely function well and effectively.

vi. **Poor Funding**

Almost all the issues and problems raised above, and others that may still be discussed later in this study, largely resulted from the poor funding of these types of schools. Whatever type is the integrated schools: Qur'ānic, Islamiyyah, primary, secondary, etc., they suffer the same problem. In most cases, they depend on only school fees that are usually token and meager, and do not actually sustain the schools. The society still suffers from the hangover of the notion of the almost free and charitable "Makarantarallo." Thus, Islamic integrated schools cannot charge high and realistic school fees. Even the meager amounts charged are hardly paid. This problem as we all know, is very serious, because it has a direct bearing on the quality and standards of such schools and their outputs.

viii. **Participation and Performances in Public Examinations**

Since the integrated Islamic primary schools cannot operate in isolation, they have to identify and relate with the mainstream education system, and also for now, participate necessarily in the public examinations, that are being used as the basis/tool for selection into higher educational institutions. It is interesting to note that some of those schools known to this writer, have performed wonderfully in the national and state common entrance examinations and WAEC/NECO examinations, in case of the secondary schools. Some of these schools are Darul-Arkam Kano and Yola (Islamic Primary Schools for Tahfeez), Uthman bn Affan, Kano; Ubayyu bn Ka'ab, Kano; and al-Iman Islamic Secondary School in Jos, Nana Asma'u Islamic Girls' Secondary School, Sokoto, etc.

In spite of the successes mentioned above, a large chunk of these schools however, going by their standards, cannot really measure up to the standards required in these public examinations. Even in the case of the schools mentioned above, such performances are not usually maintained in the subsequent years. A number of factors are responsible for this. Some of them include the fact that when the schools are smaller in size, they are better managed, hence the good performance. When they grow bigger, both their staff force and facilities become overstretched and the management also becomes poorer, hence the setbacks. All these factors combine with the other problems earlier discussed, to make matters worse in such schools.

viii. **Accreditation, the Labour Market and the General Society**

The foregoing issues and problems suggest another important one. That is the issue of accrediting these schools. Accreditation as rightly stated by Mogahed (2002) is predicated upon facilities, teacher to student ratios, a commitment to continuous improvement and meeting the standard a school set for itself. Going by these criteria, only a few of the integrated Islamiyyah schools can get accredited. This poses very serious challenges about survival.

Another dimension of this issue is the relevance of the graduates of these schools to the labour market. In one way, this does not appear to be a serious problem, because both the public and private sectors do not employ even secondarians nowadays. Thus, as long as the graduates of integrated schools can reach the tertiary levels of education, their employability is guaranteed, like all other school leavers. In another way round however, the society up to now, tends to look at these categories of students in the same way as products of the traditional Islamic education system, who may not necessarily perform effectively and competently in the field. This is due to the hangover of the secular education notions about Islamic education. A re-orientation and enlightenment campaign can help eliminate this mentality.

2). Provision of Infrastructure for Learning, Sanitation and Shelter:

This is certainly one domain that direly requires intervention. The Almajiri schools as they exist all over Northern Nigeria and beyond almost completely lack infrastructure. This condition makes both the *alarammomi* and *almajirai* very vulnerable to a lot of serious environmental hazards. No meaningful reform or intervention programme would neglect this issue, needless to say that it is very much capital-intensive. It is, therefore, appealing that the present Almajiri Education Programme has taken this aspect of reform with a great deal of policy and financial commitment. But the most critical question that keeps coming up is its sustainability.

3). Provision of Basic Welfare Needs (Nutrition, Clothing and Personal Hygiene)

This is another fundamental area that requires enormous and sustained expenditure, just as it also requires elaborate and concerted support. As it were, covers the welfare of the *alarammomi*, the *gardawa* and the *almajirai*, and therefore, it is recurrent and thus very costly. However, what makes intervention into it very critical is because, it is the principal factor that necessitates begging by the *almajirai* to provide or fend for their *alarammomi*, the *gardawa* and themselves. What may need to be noted here is that mere integration, or provision of infrastructure would never eliminate the menace of begging. An exclusive welfare intervention plan is necessary in this regard.

4). Methods and Mechanisms of Reform/Intervention

What is meant here is the issue of approach. The critical questions here are whether the three domains identified (1-3 above) should be confronted simultaneously or consecutively; or since they are inter-related, they should be addressed at the same time or some domain should attract greater priority. Other critical questions include to what

extent would government be involved and what critical roles should non-government partners and the community play in order to ensure sustainability? What would be the best arrangement for the relationship between government and community involvement? How would the community be much more involved? These questions and many more around this particular issue have not been resolved in the view of this writer.

5). Sensitization, Advocacy and Mobilization

Whatever the case may be, one fact that cannot be swept under the carpet is the necessity of enlightenment, sensitization, advocacy and mobilization of all stakeholders. Since the reform/intervention programme is a change project and process, the significance of awareness and enlightenment cannot be overemphasized. This is very central to the success of the project. The most important stakeholders in this regard are the *alarammomi* and the parents, or the overall Muslim community. While the *alarammomi* must be educated, enlightened and conscientized about the necessity of those changes, the entire Muslim community must be sensitized and mobilized to stand up to its responsibility of taking charge of supporting/participating in this process of change.

Recommendations

That the current integration drive should be seen as a genuine and purposeful educational endeavour that must not only be supported, but should be incorporated within the mainstreams of our educational policies. Far from being a pastime or anything of that sort, the integration drive has the potency and promise of providing the kind of balanced education yearned for, and cherished by our community.

A baseline study should be conducted to determine the location, size, staff strengths facilities and problems of the Qur'ānic schools that are appropriate enough to be involved in the integration project;

That northern state governments should support and promote the already existing integrated schools, in terms of infrastructural development, staff recruitment, training and development and other means possible;

That for a successful implementation of the project, northern state governments should initiate special teacher training and production programme. This should cover the two dimensions of quality and quantity. As for the former, it is necessary to have teachers that have an integrated training, to make them competent in the new dispensation. The latter case (quantity) is obvious because, the tendency for an exploded enrolment in the event of the flourishing of the programme cannot be ruled out;

Massive and elaborate public enlightenment is required in order to sensitize and convince the general public as well as the proprietors and teachers of the Qur'ānic schools on the importance of the introduction of modern disciplines in the Qur'ānic schools. Hausa films and Radio programmes can be sponsored for this purpose;

Proprietors and teachers of the integrated model Qur'ānic schools need to be trained on basic teaching methods, administrative skills, school management and child management;

Routine supervision and inspection are required to ensure the success of the integration project; and

Vocational education that provides skills related to occupations like carpentry, welding, farming, etc. should be introduced for adolescents and adults attending the Qur'ānic schools.

Conclusion

This study examined the state of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria, with a particular reference to Qur'ānic education and the increasingly controversial Almajiri phenomenon. It assessed the impacts of educational policies of colonial imperialists on the Islamic educational system. It highlighted the existing educational situation in Nigeria before and after the coming of the Europeans. It also reviewed the reform and intervention efforts made towards the Almajiri educational system. Towards the end, the study offered some suggestions through which the Almajiri education system can be better restructured to make the graduates produced by the system more productive to themselves and their immediate environment.

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QUR'ĀNIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE CHALLENGE OF RELEVANCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY: ACASE OF SOUTHERN KADUNA

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Introduction

The establishment of Qur'ānic schools for the acquisition of Islamic knowledge is very important to all Muslims as it serves as a gradual base of the first education to be obtained by every Muslim. The Muslims regard the Qur'ān as Allah's message revealed to the Noble Prophet, Muhammad (SAW) for the guidance of mankind. Qur'ān is the origin of knowledge, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) wanted its preservation through memorization and documentation to take precedence over everything else including the recording of his *ahadith*.¹ This total concentration on the Qur'ān at early stage of learning serves as the first point of call by every properly educated child since Qur'ān is unanimously regarded as the key to the core science of fundamental priority.

Qur'ānic schools are found in Northern Nigeria hundred years before the arrival of Europeans and Western education in many areas, both in Northern and Southern Nigeria.² There are many graduates of the Qur'ānic schools in Nigeria. For a Nigerian Muslim parent, it is a pride to see that one's son or daughter graduates from Qur'ānic school before he or she is married. It is not that the children will only secure good job after graduation, but principally to fulfill Allah's enjoined obligation of educating their children in the way of Allah. This in itself means a great deal of accomplishment, since by sending the children for Qur'ān education will among other things make them:

- i. to be closely link with social life both in the material and spiritual senses;
- ii. to be collective nature;
- iii. to have many sidedness; and
- iv. to enhance progressive societal development in conformity with the ethics of Islam.³

Since Qur'ānic education is an integral part of the early socialization process for every Muslim child, it is an established norm for parents to enroll their children to a given Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah school. The expectation being that by the time a child graduated

from such a school, he would be able to recite the Qur'ān as well as read and write in Arabic and help in societal development.

Islam as a divine religion and complete way of life, demands its dissemination to the humanity through the acquisition of knowledge. This was the reason upon which Almighty Allah (SWT) sent through His Messenger the religion of Islam to lead humanity in an Islamic way of life, for prosperous living on earth and bliss in the hereafter. With all sincerity, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) fulfilled his mission with best teachings, thereby setting the cornerstone for scholarship in Islam. This was followed by his companions to their disciples. Since that time, Qur'ānic schools came to be established as the great means at disseminating Islam to others especially the younger ones. This will continue to be cherished throughout history up to date.⁴

Wherever Islam sets to reach, such schools were established. This is the background against which schools came to be found in the midst of Muslims in Nigeria. From the time the religion of Islam was brought into Nigeria, such schools have played some significant roles in the spread of Islamic scholarship. However, with the change on the condition of people, various factors are militating against the smooth operations of such schools or causing many changes that corrupt the structures and manners of running such schools to date. Some of the obstacles are due to certain basic conditions in terms of teaching methodology and the nature of the learning environment.⁵

However, today, Qur'ānic schools are gradually giving away their authoritative platforms and are being phased out gradually with lesser participation by Muslims. Perhaps this could be as a result of stigmatization from non-Muslims as they regard the roles believed to be played by students during conflicts particularly in the Southern Kaduna as the recruiting centres for riots. The low patronage of the Qur'ānic schools could also be as a result of globalization and the establishment of Western schools as a replacement for this system of learning. The consequences of this are the reduction in the number of Qur'ānic memorizers and also poor attention to the orthodox system of learning the Qur'ān. These reasons form the need for this study to find out the challenges and relevance of Qur'ān school system in the 21st century with a focus on Southern Kaduna.

Brief Description of Southern Kaduna

According to James, the area known as Southern Kaduna or Southern Senatorial District of Kaduna State is a geo-political entity that is composed of eight Local Government Areas, which include - Jaba, Jama'a, Kachia, Kagarko, Kaura, Kauru, Sanga and Zangon-Kataf. It is located between longitude 5° and 7° east. Its landscape has hill as its dominant feature; example of which is the Kagoro Massif, with a height of over 400 feet and rises 200 feet above the surrounding land. The area is well watered in its landscape and rich in soil fertilities that encourages a lot of human activities like farming, mining and hunting. The settlement patterns of the inhabitants take the forms of either hill related or non-hill related.⁶

Southern Kaduna is inhabited by multi-various ethnic and linguistic groups belonging to the broader Niger-Congo. Linguistic family occupying district geographical location with the exception of Hausa and Fulani are found in almost every part of the area. Its

main sub-division is the Benue Congo linguistic group; it has about seventy different ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna.⁷

Position of Islam in Southern Kaduna

According to Saidu, Islam came to the Southern Kaduna and established itself there in 1810 under the leadership of Mallam Usman Danroro Yabo, a onetime disciple of Shehu Usman Danfodiyo. There are five major things that make Islam to gain more position and full grand.⁸ These include the following:

- i The effort of the Muslim leaders who struggled in the past to extend their rule and establish Islam in every nook and cranny of the area, through various means like, diplomacy, process of assimilation and preaching to people of the area. This was opined by James that:

The penetration of Islamic influence into the Southern Kaduna territory commenced with the control of political power. The creation of an entirely new power base in Kajuru, Kachia, Kauru, Kagarko, Jama'a, Lere, Zangon Kataf.⁹

Tijjani added that:

The system of indirect rule which the British Colonial administration operated in Northern Nigeria and the improvements in communication appears to have facilitated the growth and expression of Islam in the area. The adoption enabled the leaders to continue with their usual struggle in the propagation of Islam.¹⁰

- ii. The preaching by Islamic scholars who came to the area from different parts of Northern Nigeria in order to preach, teach Islam and try to convert the non-Muslims in the area to Islam, brought a successful development. However, they were able to go to many towns and villages and settle there with the aim of preaching, teaching and converting people of the area to Islam. Many people accepted Islam through their efforts.
- iii. The efforts of the Muslim traders and artisans who came to the area through trade routes made a great impact to commercial and religious activities. Three of these long distance trade routes include the following:
 - a. The route from Kano, Faki-Zaria, through Kauru-Zangon - Fatake later Zangon-Kataf-Keffi-Nupeland-Oyo to Gonja (Ghonja).
 - b. The route from Kano – Zaria-Igabi – Kakuri - Kajuru - Kachia – Kagarko - Keffi - Oyo to Gonja.
 - c. The rout from Kano – Gadas – Lere – Zangon Katab – Jama'a and Loko.

They traded with various tribes, bought, and sold various goods. The traders were able to penetrate into almost all the nooks and crannies of Southern Kaduna, more than the preachers and Islamic scholars. As usual, whenever a Muslim goes, he carries along his religion. Through their interaction and simplicity with people of the area, many people who traded with them showed

interest in the religion; hence, some people accepted the religion of Islam through persuasion of the traders. Therefore, Hausa trading community facilitated the cause of Islamization.¹¹ Tijjani added that:

Other factors also assisted the growth of Islam in Northern Nigeria during the colonial era, the role played by the Muslim traders and one must also bear in mind the activities of such influential Muslim leaders such as the Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello around the time and shortly after independence.¹²

- iv. The last efforts made by Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and premier of the Northern region, that is, before his death in 1964, he succeeded in converting thousands of people to Islam, to the extent that today there is no big town or village in Southern part of Kaduna State without a mosque, and no tribe out of about seventy tribes of Southern Kaduna that has no Muslim representatives. In an oral interview with Malam Jibril Muhammad in Gidanwaya, he revealed that:

The visit of Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto in 1956 to the area was another great success to Islam, many non – Muslims accepted Islam and were given teachers to teach them Islam. The legacy of that is still in existence even though there are cases of reversion.¹³

Formation of Qur’anic School System

According to ‘Azami, Qur’ān is the word of Allah and the supreme source of legislation and guidance for all entities, is a corner stone of every Muslim’s beliefs.¹⁴ The first appointment of teacher in Qur’anic schools started during the life time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and developed rapidly. This continued during the period of *Khulafā’u ar- Rāshidūn* - orthodox caliphs, (Abubakar, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali) and teachers were also appointed in every country where Islam penetrated. The importance of Qur’anic schools is so great that it became obvious that it must be regarded as an independent responsibility. This work is an important factor in the spread of the faith that penetrated into Africa. Islam in Africa did not strengthen its roots until it adopted education as means of communication amongst the tribes. Qur’ān was the spring board from which all these emanated. Soon after establishing itself in a country, the first obligation of followers was to establish Qur’anic schools for new converts. This was the practice in West Africa and Nigeria particularly, Southern part of Kaduna is not an exception.¹⁵

Kinds of Qur’anic Schools System

According to Sanusi, Qur’anic schools are those schools in which the traditional Islamic way of learning is taught to the pupils. But other scholars used the term specifically to refer to the schools which only concerned itself with teaching the pupils on how they should read, write and memorize the Glorious Qur’ān in its Arabic text.¹⁶ It is not the concern of the school teachers to teach the pupils its meaning, they would

memorize the whole text without understanding the meaning but any pupils hoping to know more about what Qur'ān teaches and its meaning deeply must have to enroll for another type of Islamic school called '*Ilimi*' school (Advance level of the Qur'ānic school). Bidmos observes that:

Qur'ānic school is a system of learning which transmits the revealed and acquired knowledge to the younger generation of Muslim in order to prepare them for life and enable them to discharge their duties as vicegerent of Allah on earth with sole aim of achieving success here and in the hereafter.¹⁷

The kinds of Qur'ānic schools in Southern Kaduna are:

- i. The Qur'ānic schools (*Makarantan Allo*) and
 - ii. The advance schools (*Ilimi* schools).¹⁸
- i. The Qur'ānic schools (*Makarantan Allo*). This school adopts oral method of teaching with *Allo* (wooden slate). In these schools, Qur'ān is the primary subject of learning. The schools also adopt both boarding and domestic arrangements. Usually, the boarding alternative was preferred by students from rural areas. The neighbouring Mallams that came to Southern part of Kaduna with their students from the North or those interested in advanced and higher Qur'ānic learning system took to the domestic jobs and this arrangement was normally for the children of the entire community too.¹⁹

In Southern Kaduna Areas, most of the Qur'ānic schools were located in the mosques which serve the dual purposes of place of worship and schools, especially in rural areas. While in some urban areas, the schools were specially built for that purpose, the verandah or porch of Mallam (scholar), shadow of trees and compounds of houses were used. The students sit on the mats, floor or ground either in a semi-circle or straight line. Each child holds his/her written *Allo* (wooden slate) and recites the verses of the Glorious Qur'ān.

- ii. The Advance Schools (*Ilimi* Schools)
- The Advance school called *Makarantan 'Ilmi* in *Hausa* literally means school of knowledge. Technically, it means a school of advanced learning, which covers the whole range of Islamic literacy, theological and legal education. This is because lessons taught in these types of schools are much more complex than the Qur'ānic schools. Also, the students of these types of schools read and write Arabic alphabets. The mode of understanding is higher than that of the students from elementary Qur'ānic schools. There was no formal structure. A student, of any age who wished to continue his higher education would seek permission of Mallam (scholar) in Advance school, who had a reputation for devoutness and sound learning, and who was prepared to accept him. The Mallam (scholar) would satisfy himself that the candidate had satisfactorily completed the elementary Qur'ānic school, in other words, that he could read and write Arabic and could recite the whole of Qur'ān.²⁰

Challenges and Relevance of Qur'anic School System of Education in Southern Kaduna

Qur'anic school system of education in Southern Kaduna faces a lot of challenges. It will be appropriate if this study looks at these challenges with a view to determining their effects on the relevance of Qur'anic system of education in the area. In view of this, the following will be discussed:

Stigmatization and Patronage of Qur'anic School System

In assessing whether there is stigmatization against the students of Qur'anic schools and of what impact it has on the patronage of Qur'anic education, observations were made on the students around the study area while transcribed information from the interviews with the proprietors/teachers were analyzed.

Various forms of stigmatization are found with Qur'anic students across the study area. Evidences through observations revealed that Qur'anic students are mostly regarded as “*Mabarata*”, “Beggars”, and “Carriers”. They are highly disrespected to the extent that anywhere in the North, a traveler looks for them to carry his/her load; they serve as housemaids (mainly washing, dumping, sweeping, and cleaning works) in exchange for food, torn clothes, and meager amount of money. In the public places like restaurants, they are reduced to parking and washing plates only to eat the remains. Worse still, they are offered “leftover” foods from residential houses of people, including Muslims. In fact, life becomes tougher in an area where they do not exist because one has to do virtually everything for himself/herself.

In areas where *Almajirai* (students of Qur'anic school) exist or in the streets they patronize, virtually every house has one or two *Almajirai* boys undertaking their domestic works. This has replaced employing house girls/boys, hiring housemaids, and paying urban development officers for refuse dumping exercises. As a result, they hardly concentrate in their primary aims of learning as they are found on the streets as early as 6:30 am and stay till late as 11:30 pm. One wonders the time they spare for learning in their various schools.

Above all, these students suffer family neglect, the cause of other forms of stigmatization being faced. Virtually, all the 100 students interviewed across the study area revealed that their parents/guardians do not visit them, do not send them comfort materials, and even if they send requests to their parents/guardians (whether using their Mallams' names or personal) they do not respond to such requests. The arrangement in existence for such issues was only when they are leaving home for school. Further investigation through interview revealed that these people believed that the more the suffering or hardship faced, the greater the blessing of Allah in Qur'anic education; and as such, they would not be given enough even as at when they were leaving home for school.

However, responses from proprietors/teachers of Qur'anic schools show that over the past five (5) years, students' enrolment have been on increase with an estimate of 6,000; 10,000; 11,000; 12,000; 12,500; and 13,500 Qur'anic students in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 respectively from the six Qur'anic schools covered by the study. The main reasons given was that majority of the parents/guardians wanted their wards

to have at least elementary Qur'ānic knowledge before they were enrolled in the secular secondary schools. It is a rule in many families that unless a child can recite the whole Qur'ān, there will be no enrolment into the secular secondary schools.

Moreso, female students were only found in day schools and within their vicinity, that is, in area of their parents' residence or the residence of their relatives. A female is not let to attend Qur'ānic schools far from her home where none of her relatives reside. Hence, despite the evidences of stigmatization being faced by Qur'ānic students, its patronage has not been negatively affected. The patronage has thus been on increase in the study area (Southern Kaduna).

Impact of Western Education and Globalization on the Development of Qur'anic School in Southern Kaduna

In evaluating the impact of Western education/globalization on the development of Qur'ānic schools, interviews with the proprietors/teachers on the subject matter show that in the pre-colonial Africa in general and Northern Nigeria in particular, there was a well-defined and organized political system through which societal issues were managed. Various empire rulers had recognized the importance of Qur'ānic education and as such provisions were made in their daily running; some of these rulers included Mai Hume Ibn Abduljalil of Kanem – Borno (1075 – 1086), Mallam Abdulkarim al-Katsinawi (1835-1886). During their regimes, as early as 11th century, the leaders initiated the system of conferring *Hurma* (sanctity) on Qur'ānic scholars and granting them land on which to settle with necessary required autonomy. Financial supports as well as exception from tax payment with adequate social provisions to the *Mallamtaies* (settlement of Mallams) were also in place. With these firm supports from the state, Qur'ānic system of education thrived and it provided the needs of the society amongst which were jurists, mathematicians, and astronomers in addition to medical practitioners.

With the arrival of colonialism (Western education and globalization), the traditionally well-established Qur'ānic education system was neglected because the mechanism for supporting the Qur'ānic education system was no longer operative but was just to explore other means for survival. Since the 19th century, the era of colonialism, political and socio-economic managements of the society have rested on the stand of Western education. At worst, even the Islamic judicial system was not left alone but also transformed to imbibe Western certificate elements before being qualified to participate in the management of Islamic ethics.

The proprietors/teachers that were interviewed indicated that their schools neither received any support from the government nor paid salaries/wages by the government or its agencies. At worst, their support came from the parents/guardians of their students as well as the general public in the form of *Zakāt*. Thus, the effort being made by the government was to organize workshops aiming at making traditional Qur'ānic education work in the contemporary societies and nothing more than this. Promises made were hardly fulfilled and where they were, they were very meaningless.

From the above presentation of facts, Western education and globalization had been found negatively impacting on the development of Qur'anic education in Northern Nigeria as a whole and Southern Kaduna in particular.

Government and Development of Qur'anic Schools System in Southern Kaduna

As stated in the previous section, the colonial system neglected the well-established Qur'anic educational system which had provided the needs of the society in terms of experts to manage the socio-economic, political, and cultural antecedents of the society. The Western society regarded education as humanity's best hope and most effective means in the quest to achieve sustainable development. In a statement made in 1997 in the UNESCO report: *Educating for a Sustainable Future*; brought to the attention of the world leaders at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development which paved way to the establishment of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). It states further:

To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms, we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.²¹

The Summit made it in such a way that children should enroll in Western schools as early as three years of age, a stage of elementary Qur'anic learning, and consequently, giving no room for Qur'anic education. In support of this, Universal Basic Education was established which enabled a child to study from elementary levels through primary and junior secondary classes at the expense of the government in collaboration with World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and UNESCO.²²

Moreso, every secular school established by the community was taken over by the government, but none of the Qur'anic schools enjoyed this opportunity. Qur'anic schools are not even captured in the state budget or national policy on education; no social amenities, no feeding and accommodation provisions by the government. Above all, none of the graduates of the traditional Qur'anic schools was given the opportunity to be employed in public service.

From the proprietor/teacher's perspective, they asserted that their Qur'anic schools were encountering some problems. According to them, these problems could be classified into two sets: basic problems and structural problems. The basic problems are those that have to do with school maintenance (finance, accommodation, conducive space, feeding and medical, clothing, and portable water), while the structural problems consist of government and societal neglect. The governments have no budget allocation, no staffing support, no remuneration support, no recognition in public assignments, no security provision, and there is detachment from public opinion participation in relation to Qur'anic schools. On the part of the parents, those with keen interest of their wards to learn Qur'ān at their early stage do nothing to ensure proper playground. Parents commit very little resources if at all to their wards in Qur'anic schools, while all efforts are made to meet up with all demands from secular schools -

financially, morally, and otherwise. The proprietors/teachers indicated that Qur'anic schools would have grown to an un-imaginable level if Nigeria government had shown some level of commitments.

Based on the problems identified above, two major recommendations were proposed as solutions; these are: government recognition (as it used to be practiced during the pre-colonial Nigeria) and parents' equal commitments to both educational systems. Although, government recognition was given as the key solution, because once Qur'anic school graduates enjoy national benefits as their secular counterparts, Qur'anic education will be considered as lucrative; hence, proper attention will be given to it by the participants involved. For this recognition to be possible, however, effective integration is imperative.

Students' problems begin with accommodation, as they live with their Mallams irrespective of the available bed space. Thus, they do not talk of the bed space but available rooms. Another irritating issue is what they sleep on. All the students interviewed said they had not been sleeping on mattress or related materials, but at best on mats and usually cartons collected from petty shop owners.

Next is the feeding issue. All of the interviewed students responded that their parents/guardians did not provide them with feeding allowances of any form. As a result, their meal (eating) was described as haphazard, a meal far away from being called balanced diet. They ate only when any good Samaritan gave them food or money to buy same when moving from house to house in the street. Closely related to this is their dressing format. Apart from set of clothes they used to come along with, they relied on good Samaritans to provide them with fairly used clothes. This is the main reason why most of their clothes were either over-size or under-size since the initial measurement was not meant for their usage. Moreso, money to buy soap with which to wash their clothes constituted another hindrance, as such, they moved about with all sorts of dirty and tore clothes.

Furthermore, the students revealed that they did not have portable pipe borne water in their residential areas, whereas they lived mostly on well, nearby streams, and lagoons and therefore, taking bath regularly was seen as luxury. Similarly, health facility provision was a stillborn dream for these students. When they fell sick, medical test was absent, professional prescription was absent as well, and they used to buy tablets based on self-medication if money was available. They lived on Allah's Mercy for recovery as boiling even herbs was as difficult as buying modern tablets for fever treatment.

Despite the distracting factors, all the students interviewed confirmed that they knew they were for Qur'anic learning and therefore endured these circumstances to achieve their primary objective. As a result, none had the opportunity to attend secular educational institution. Evaluating Qur'anic school problems from the parents/guardians perspective showed that majority of them which was about 70% did not have the background of Qur'anic knowledge. While about 50% had no educational qualification, not even primary education, 30% were with primary education certificate, 10% with secondary education certificate and 10% with OND and NCE certificates.

Among these people, only 45% had a child in the Qur'anic schools while the remaining 55% had more than one child in the Qur'anic schools.

Findings further showed that all the parents engaged in non-payment of school fees, rather they gave some token amount of money to the Mallams of their children in form of showing appreciation and this happened at most once in a year. Moreover, these parents/guardians were not of the habit of checking on their children in their various Qur'anic schools nor had much concern about the attendance of the children in schools. They believed in Mallams as the custodians of their children.

Ironically, both parents/guardians and students of Qur'anic schools believed that the problems confronting learning in these schools were mainly due to government neglect. To them, once government assumes its basic role, Qur'anic schools would triumph beyond imagination of man. However, parents too have their own contributions to make. They need to put in place great concern about the schools and their children to bring the attainment of these realities. Therefore, all hands must be on deck in addressing the problems confronting the running of Qur'anic schools and taking care of their products after leaving the schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Qur'anic schools are found in virtually all Muslim communities across the globe in spite of the hatred and discrimination against its graduates. As the establishment of Qur'anic schools continues, this reveals its inevitable role in the life of Muslims and in the development of education globally. However, some problems were found to serve as hindrance to the cohesive running of Qur'anic education system which are basic and structural. The basic problems are those that have to do with school maintenance (finance, accommodation, conducive space, feeding and medical, clothing, and portable water). The structural problems are based on government and societal neglect. Therefore, adequate provisions must be put in place to address the problems with a view to accommodating the ethos of sound scholarship between the westernized and Qur'anic schools in the Southern Kaduna for the benefit of all.

Recommendations

Given the findings of this study, the following recommendations are imperative to the development of Qur'anic education in Nigeria and Southern Kaduna in particular. There should be a political will on the part of the government and society and parents should play their roles. The government at all levels of administration should seriously and sincerely support, without doing lip services, the issue of integration of Qur'anic schools within the mainstream of Nigeria educational policies. Other recommendations include:

- i. The government should develop an acceptable framework in which all stakeholders will be given equal play-ground in participating fully in providing the necessary inputs and supports towards successful integration of Qur'anic schools with the secular system of education in Nigeria.
- ii. The existing numerous Qur'anic schools across the Northern Nigeria should be strengthened.

- iii. Government should provide the Qur'ānic school graduates the opportunities to enjoy national benefits in terms of employment opportunities and seeking public opinion as their counterparts in secular schools.
- iv. The parents should take the mandate of their children as prescribed by Allah (SWT) in all affairs of life: training, feeding, accommodation, travelling, among others.
- v. The parents should as well invest in Qur'ānic education of their children as they invest in the Western education and as such, all arrangements and dignity should accompany Qur'ānic school pursuit.
- vi. Moreover, parents should from time to time visit their children in Qur'ānic schools; take time to interact with both their children and teachers so as to discover the progress being made over time.

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Alaramma Ibrahim Yusuf, A Qur’ānic School Proprietor in Mayir, Ungwan Hausawa, Aged 50, in an Interview Conducted on 20th August, 2019, Mayir, Kaduna State.

Mallam Abdullahi Aruwa, A Qur’anic School Teacher in Makarantar Mallam Abdullahi Aruwa, Aged 67, in an Interview Conducted on 28th August, 2019, Kagarko, Kaduna State.

Mallam Adamu Shehu Muazu, Officer-in-charge of Qur’ānic Schools in Primary Education Board of Kachia LGA, Aged 40, in an Interview Conducted on 24th July, 2019, Kaduna State.

Mallam Ahmed Mohammed, A Qur'anic School Teacher in Makarantar Ahmed Muhammad, U/Liman, Aged 49, in an Interview Conducted on 24th September, 2019, Kachia, Kaduna State.

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REPOSITIONING THE PARAMETER OF QUR'ANIC RECITATION COMPETITION OF THE IJAYE-KURUMI YOUTH ORGANIZATION IN ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE NIGERIA

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Introduction

Since the time immemorial, template has been set with regards to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Allah. During the Cave Hirah encounter between the teacher, Angel Jubril and his student, Prophet Muhammad (SAW), emphasis was laid on the total adherence to the recital (i.e. recitation with *Tajwid*) of the former. To this effect, the Qur'an declares: "But when We have promulgated it, follow its recital (as promulgated)" (Q75:18). "And recite the Qur'an with measured recitation" (Q73:4). Following this divine instruction, the Prophet used to recite the Qur'an with *Tajwid*, while he also taught his companions the Qur'an with *Tajwid*. Mubin Olatoye states that:

It is in line with the directive that all through the history of Islam, Muslims involved themselves not only in memorization of the Qur'an but also rendering it in its poetic beauty with eloquence and unique characteristics of recitation.¹

According to Ibn Al-Jazari, 'applying *Tajwid* in Qur'anic recitation is an issue of absolute necessity, whoever does not apply *Tajwid* to the Qur'an then a sinner is he.'² Hence, applying the rules of *Tajwid* is an obligation to keep away from the major mistakes in reciting the Qur'an. Abdul confirms that:

The un-tired efforts of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) listening with rapt attention to the recital of his scribes like Zayd bn Thabit, Zubayr bn Awwam and Ali bn Abi Talib to guarantee total adherence to his own recital with *Tajwid* as learnt from Angel Jubril (His teacher).³

Moreover, Khan established further that:

Khabbab (R.A) was one of the Qur'an memorizers during the life time of the Holy Prophet (SAW). His house was a centre for learning recitation of the Holy Qur'an because he was an expert in reading Qur'an with *Tajwid*. He posits that sister of Umar Ibn

Kattab and his sister in-law studied recitation of the Holy Qur'an under his purview.⁴

There are various Prophetic narrations also showing us the importance of *Tajwid*. Ummu Salamah was once asked about the recitation of the Prophet (SAW) and she described it as a recitation “clearly distinguished, letter by letter.”⁵

However, Jimoh posits that:

There was mixed up in the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in the areas known as Yoruba land because most of their teachers were Hausa indigenes. This is evident in their mode of teaching and recitation of the Qur'an. For instance, Arabic alphabets like; *ba'*, *ta'*, and *tha'*, resembles that of a bow, which is called *goje* in the Hausa language, they were read as *ba' goje*, *ta' goje* and *tha' goje* respectively. In the same vein, letters *kha* (خ) as read as *ha' mairuwa* (ha' with water) because it has a dot on top in order to differentiate between it and letter '*Ha*' (ح) that has no dot on top. Also, for the purpose of differentiation, *ha'* (ح) is read as *ha keremi* (lit. small ha') while *ha'* (ه) is read as *ha' baba* (lit. big ha').⁶

In the same vein, to showcase the total deviation from the Prophet's recital (i.e recitation with *Tajwid*), Adekola submits that Hausa system of teaching and recitation of the Holy Qur'an was prevalent in Ijaye kunrunmi Abeokuta since the emergence of Ijayes in Egba land as at 1862.⁷ In addition to the Hausa form of recitation, the *Markaziyyah*, *Adabiyyah*, and *Shaziliyyah* are also popular among the Qur'anic teachers (*Aafas*) in the area. Although, these recitations were originally *Tajwid* applied with melodious intonations by their originators, Shaykh Adam Al-Ilory, Shaykh Kamaldeen Al-Adaby and Sheikh Shazily Sambo of the blessed memories respectively, they were later corrupted by their affianced due to their prevalence. As a result, these recitations are regarded as obsolete in both local and international Qur'an competitions as they are now devoid of *Tajwid* with exception of some *Tajwid* oriented schools.

It is noteworthy to mention, however, that in spite of their obsolescence and defects, these recitations are used as criteria for judging participants at the local Qur'anic recitation competitions organized by Ijaye Youth Organization (IYO). Consequently, this has affected their performance at the State level and eliminated their names from the list both at the national and international levels. There is the need, therefore, for repositioning the method of Qur'anic recitation as well as the pre-requisites for participating in the Qur'anic recitation competition organized by Ijaye Youth Organization, so as to reorient the participants about the necessity of adopting a *Tajwid*-applied form of recitation that is unanimously agreed upon by scholars of great repute, keep them abreast of the proper conducts of Qur'anic recitation competitions as required by the national and international organizing bodies and educate them about their obligations as Qur'anic reciters to memorize a significant part of the Qur'an if not the whole.

***Tajwid* as a Yardstick for Judging Participants in Qur'anic Recitation Competitions**

Islam has, ever since its inception laid a greater emphasis on memorization and recitation of the Qur'an with *Tajwid*, though with no specific rules and guidelines. As observed by Jimoh:

Talqin (guide reading) was said to be the method of practice, and not until the end of the third century that the scholars who specialized in the recitation of the Qur'an formulated the rules of recitation which, in fact formed the basic science of Arabic phonetics, outlining the correct method of pronunciation for the letters of the Arabic alphabets, involving words and sentences.⁸

It is against the above background that Oseni explains that:

Qur'an memorizers and reciter began to pay attention to certain rules of *Tajwid* such as *al-Izhar* (manifestation), *al-Ikhfa* (hiding), *al-Idgham* (assimilation), *al-Ghunna* (nasalization), *A'lamaat al-Waqf* (punctuation marks), etc. For this reason, copies of the Qur'an are heavily loaded with punctuation marks the types of which cannot be found in any other Arabic book.⁹

Therefore, observing the rules of *Tajwid* in memorization and recitation of the Qur'an protects both the reciter and memorizer from making mistakes and guarantees them the correct manner of the recitation of the Prophet and his companions. As a delicate language, a slight mispronunciation of an Arabic word can completely change its meaning. Thus, *Tajwid* is one of the most honored sciences due to its relation to the words of Allah; hence, its knowledge and application is an issue of absolute necessity. Knowledge of *Tajwid* is *Fardh Kifayah* (collective responsibility). It means that some members of the Muslim community must know it, and its application is *Fardh A'in* (individual responsibility). This indicates that it is required by all Muslims who have complete or part of it memorized, even if it is only one chapter.

The History of Ijaye Youth Organization (IYO)

Ijaye Youth Organization was established in the year 2000 at Oke-Idiroko quarter of Ijaye, Abeokuta. The rationale behind the establishment of the organization was of three folds, namely, to see to the upliftment and development of Ijaye land; look into community challenges on united front with the hope of preferring satisfactory solution to them; and help the less privileged people in the community.¹⁰

Interestingly, the constitution of IYO spells out the officers that will be on the helm of affairs of the organization as follows: President, Vice President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer, Chief- Whip, Social Secretary, Public Relation officer (PRO), Financial Secretary/Auditor and Ex-officio.¹¹

Meanwhile, it is worth mentioning to note that the organization has contributed positively to the upliftment of Ijaye Kunrunmi community through numerous profitable projects such as:

- i. Donation of first aid boxes with drugs to the three public schools, in Ijaye Bode Ijaye Primary school, Oja-Aro, First Baptist Day school, Oja-Ale and Community Primary School, Gbanga Abeokuta.
- ii. Awarding of scholarship to the best participants (1st, 2nd and 3rd position in the yearly Qur'an competition).
- iii. Construction of modern toilet for Ijaye community primary school, Gbanga Abeokuta
- iv. Free distribution of raw food stuffs like rice, garri, live fowls etc to widows, destitute and orphans in the month of Ramadan.
- v. Visitation to the State Hospital Ijaye, Abeokuta to pray for the sick irrespective of religion affiliation. They at times foot the bills of less privileged or distribute money to buy drugs prescribed by doctors.¹²

It is pertinent to discuss briefly the event that prompted Ijaye Youth Organization to replace the yearly get-together party tagged "Carnival" with Qur'an competition among youths in Ijaye land. It has become norms among the youth organizations in Abeokuta South Local Government to organize a get-together party at eve of December tagged "Carnival".¹³ Since Ijaye Youth Organization is one of them, her own carnival was the talk of the town whereby a famous musician entertained guests from night till dawn.¹⁴ But the carnival was characterized by thuggery which allowed the use of dangerous weapons like, axe, cutlass and knives. Casualties were often recorded yearly.¹⁵

In as much as the outcome of the carnival witnessed unrest and chaos which created bad impression about the good names which Ijaye people have been known for years, the organization thought of a way out of this mess.¹⁶ It was on this note that the then Olori Ratibi of Ijayeland, Imam Musa Olomu (now the Chief Imam) suggested in the year 2008 that the annual get-together should be replaced with Qur'an competition among the youths in order to restore peace and tranquility in the community.¹⁷

Modalities for Ijaye Youth Organization Qur'anic Recitation Competition

Ijaye Youth Organization commences its yearly Qur'an competition with free distribution of participation forms in the first week of Rajab to the thirteen mosques in the community. The mosques are: Adebakin Mosque, Anuoluwapo Mosque, Isale Abese Mosque, Omidele Mosque, Oja-Ale Mosque, Ayuba Mosque, Oke-Idiroko Mosque, Igbehin Adun Mosque, Omotara Mosque, Modele Mosque, Mayegun Mosque, Oyalowo Mosque and Oladosu Mosque.¹⁸

Moreover, the participants' form is of two categories. The first category is for the participants between ages 6-13 years, while the second category opens to the youth between ages 14-20 years. The forms bear the name, age, sex, address of the participant and the name of mosque he/she represents. The complete filled form must be endorsed by the Imam of the mosque where the participant is from, and it must be returned to the headquarters of Ijaye Youth Organization (IYO) at Oja-Ale on or before the last day of Shahaban.¹⁹

Also indicated on the form is the chapter in which the participant would be examined, time and venue of the event. The competition normally holds on the second Sunday in the month of Ramadan. The participants are to be seated by 9:30am in Ijaye Kunrunmi central mosque, Oja-Ale Abeokuta. It needs to be mentioned that the panel of judges are Imams from the neighboring towns to stem the injustice if chosen from Ijaye.²⁰

Meanwhile, the panel of judges read out the areas in which participants would be examined, such as their mode of dressing, salutation and pronunciation of letters while reading the *Mushaf*. The recitation lasts for two minutes. The participant drops the microphone as soon as the bell rings. At the end of competition the three judges harmonize their marks and assign positions to the participants.²¹

Challenges Facing Qur'anic Learning and Memorization in Ijaye Kunrunmi, Abeokuta

There are several challenges hampering the stability of Qur'anic learning and memorization in Ijaye kunrunmi Abeokuta. These include:

- i. **Western Education:** Muslim parents want their children to have a taste of western education. There is need to enroll their wards into both private and public schools, in the community. More hours are spent in the school to the extent that most of them do not have enough time to attend Qur'anic *Madrrasah* (school) during the working days because schools open at 7:30am and close by 2:30pm officially. Aside the official closing hour, the students must attend the compulsory school extra lessons from 3:30pm-5:30pm and this hinders them from attending *Madrrasah* which starts around 4:15pm and ends by 5:45pm.²²
- ii. **Government Policy:** The Government policy of employing Arabic teachers also contributes to challenges facing Qur'anic learning and memorization. The right pegs are not put inside the right hole. For instance, the Arabic teacher employed to teach Islamic Studies in Ijaye Community Primary School Gbangba could not teach the chapters from suratun- *Nas to suratl-'Ala* with *Tajwid* as slated in the curriculum. Instead the *Adabiyyah* and *Markaziyyah* intonations were used. Hence the chapters were not properly taught talk more of committing them to memory.²³
- iii. **Traditional Illimiyyah Schools** teach their students with *Markaziyyah* and *Adabiyyah* methods of reading. The students only recite to memorize the last ten chapters of the Holy Qur'an and these were recited until it is time to close for the day. A good number of the proprietors of those schools do not know *Tajwid* rules and they discourage their students from reading Qur'an with *Tajwid* thinking that if they allowed their students, it will undermine their *Madrrasah* or spoil their reputations.²⁴
- iv. **The Attitude of the Students:** The students that attend *Tahfiz* (Qur'an memorization) class outside Ijaye community do not take it serious. When part of the Qur'an is given to memorize before the next class, most of them because of their laziness were found wanting and when they cannot move

along with their colleagues they started playing truancy which lead to withdrawal from the *Madrasah*.²⁵

- v. **Cruelty of the *Tahfiz* Teachers:** Most of the teachers handing *Tahfiz* are very wicked and apply unfriendly methods of teaching. And whenever students commit blunder in their pronunciation or recitation, they apply corporal punishment on them and as a result, many students flee away from *Madrasah*.²⁶
- vi. **The Attitude of Well-to-do:** The well-to-do Muslims do not emulate their Christian counterparts who shoulder the responsibility of the items needed for Sunday schools and pay the salaries of the teachers, supply the necessary text-books and writing material for students free of charge. Instead, they turn their backs and close their eyes. Most of the students who cannot afford *Madrasah* fees starting from ₦5,900 upwards withdraw from *Tahfiz* (Qur'an memorization) class or they do not attend at all.²⁷

Prospect of Qur'anic Learning and Memorization in Ijaye Kunrunmi Abeokuta

As being said earlier on, Qur'anic learning and memorization with *Tajwid* is alien to Ijaye Muslim Community. Also, memorizing and reciting part of the Qur'an in competition is seen by proprietors of *Illmiyya* schools as innovation which leads to hell fire. However, in spite of the above-enumerated challenges, there is still hope of prospect for Qur'anic learning and memorization. Apparently, what is prevalent in Ijaye Muslim Community is the memorization of Suwar *Mulik*, *Waqiah* and *Yasin*, which are read during burial ceremony to extort money from the attendees. In addition, verses of the Qur'an are memorized to corroborate sermon during public lectures by Imams and *Alfas* in the community.²⁸

However, the prospect for Qur'an learning and memorization are many. For instance, group of concerned Muslims in Ijaye have established a *Tahfizil* Qur'an school at Ijaye Central Mosque where Qur'anic memorization is taught with rules of *Tajwid* during weekends.

Also, there is another *Madrasah* at Asofe Compound Ijaye, where Ustadh Abdul Wahid was employed to teach recitation and memorization of the Qur'an with *Tajwid*. The conscious Muslims who are well-versed, are aware of the fact that the Qur'an cannot be thoroughly read without knowledge of *Tajwid*, they therefore send their wards to Al-Hudah School Oke Aregba where *Tahfizul* Qur'an is studied with *Tajwid*.

Even some mosques in Ijaye like Ayuba, Omotara, Oke-Idiroko employed the service of teachers who are well versed in Qur'an recitation with *Tajwid* to teach their children purposely to prepare them for the yearly Qur'anic recitation competition by Ijaye Youth Organization as well as the Bameke Qur'anic recitation competition coordinated by NACOMYO Ogun State chapter. In other words, the role being played by Ijaye Youth Organization in organizing Qur'an reading competition raises hope of prospect for Qur'an learning and memorization in Ijaye community.

The Need for Repositioning the Parameter of Qur'an Recitation Competition Organized by Ijaye Youth Organization

Research has revealed the fact that the parameter used in judging and examining the participants in the Ijaye Youth Organization Qur'anic recitation competition is faulty and this has been responsible for the poor performance of their representatives at the Bameke State level of the competition anchored by Ogun State chapter of the National Council for Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO). The parameters upon which the participants are examined include their mode of dressing, salutation and pronunciation, reading directly from the pages of the Qur'an without emphasis on *Tajwid*.

Meanwhile, Jimoh opined that the motive behind the introduction of National Qur'an competitions by the centre for Islamic Studies, Usman Dan Fodio University in 1986 is to produce Qur'an memorizers who are well versed in rules of *Tajwid*.²⁹ Similarly, Raji submits that the criteria for examining participants in both local and international Qur'anic recitation competitions is the ability to recite from memory the verses of the Qur'an with *Tajwid*.³⁰ Aside from reading with *Tajwid*, the participants were examined on the rules guiding pronunciation of each verse. It can be inferred from this that the primary objective of any Qur'anic recitation competition (local or international) is to produce flawless reciters and memorizers of the Qur'an. In the case of Ijaye Youth Organization, these elements are lacking in the procedures used for conducting her Qur'an competition.

There is the need, therefore, to re-organize the conducts of the competition if only the participants can compete with their contemporaries both at the State and National levels. Describing the criteria for any Qur'anic competition either local or international, Kilasho submits that the names of the panel of judges and the certificate they processed must be made known to the public to showcase their competency and areas of specialization.³¹ This precedent is obviously lacking in Ijaye Youth Organization Qur'anic Recitation competition as students of Arabic and Islamic Studies are given the role of examining the participants. As a result, the integrity of the panel is often challenged and the outcomes of the competition could be rejected by the participants due to unfair treatment. Also, the two minutes allotted to each participant calls for adjustment. This is because in other standard competitions, at least ten minutes are given to test the reading ability, the length of their Qur'anic memorization and application of *Tajwid* in the verses read.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing, attempt has been made to explore the conducts of the yearly Qur'anic recitation competition organized by Ijaye Youth Organization. The competition was first introduced through the advice of the present Chief Imam Musa Olomu of the community as a result of the unprecedented unrest often engulfed the community which allowed free use of sophisticated weapons by the youths. However, unlike the Bameke's Qur'an competition anchored by NACOMYO, the Ijaye Youth Organization Qur'anic recitation competition needs to be repositioned. This is because the parameters laid down to examine its participants are weak and defective. Though there is a profusion of hopefulness for the competition, if only the following recommendations can be adopted by the organization:

- i. There is the need for the organization to establish Arabic classes where capable hands will be employed to properly teach youths *Tahfizil Qur'an*.
- ii. The organization must also set as a parameter for participation, memorization of a significant part of the Qur'an, if not all.
- iii. The competition panel of judges must consist of certified memorizers of the Qur'an who are experts in the field of *Tajwid* from recognized institutes of Arabic where *Tahfiz* and *Tajwid* are thoroughly taught.
- iv. The competition should be of two stages. The first stage will serve as a preliminary for the entire candidates. In the second stage, the best three participants in the first and second stages will be thoroughly examined and the overall best thereafter be decided.
- v. There should be continual assessments for the overall best candidate to keep him/her fit for the State and National levels of the competition.

It is the belief of the researchers that, if the above recommendations are strictly adhered to, Ijaye Youth Organization Qur'anic recitation competition will produce *Huffazul Qur'an* (memorizers of the Qur'an) who will perform brilliantly in any local or international Qur'an competition.

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12. Interview with the immediate past Chairman comrade Adegbite Azeez at the secretariat of the organization Oja-Ale, on 18th December 2018 at 9:30am Aged, 38yrs
13. Culled from the speech delivered by comrade Adegbite Azeez on the occasion of the 18th year anniversary of the organization at Hotel Royal Gbangba Market on 7th April 2018 at 12:30pm. Aged 38yrs
14. Interview with Luzman Fashina one of the past Chairmen of the completion at Oke-Idiroko mosque, Ijaye Abeokuta, on 26th October, 2019. Age, 51 years.
15. Interview with Kehinde Omirinde at his residence, Kasumu compound Ijaye Abeokuta, at exactly 10:45am, Aged 49years.
16. Interview with Kehinde Babanisa, at Abese quarters, Oja Ale, on 25th October 2018. Time 10:00am aged 48years.
17. From Adegbite Azeez, at his residence, Olode's Compound Ijaye Abeokuta, at 10:55am. Aged 38years
18. From the welcome address by Adebite Azeez at Gbanga market on 7th, April 2018. Aged 38years
19. Interview with Imam Fashina Azeez at Oke-Idiroko Mosque, Ijaye Abeokuta on, 15th December 2018 at 10:45am. Aged 62 years
20. Interview with comrade Kehinde Omirinde at Gbangba market during the 18th year anniversary at 12:45pm aged 49 years
21. From sheriff Akinfena, a representative of Anuoluwapo Mosque, during a Qur'anic competition organized by Ijaye Youth Organization on the 5th September, 20018 at 12:30pm, aged 13 years
22. Alhaji Lukmon Busary, one of the panels of judges at the Qur'anic recitation competition for the year 2017, Ijaye Central mosque, 10:30am, aged 48 years
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24. Interview with Imam Tapa Central Mosque, Alhaji Taiwo Sowami, former Chairman leagues of Arabic teachers Abeokuta north on 25th March, 2018, at Tapa mosque, time, 10:20am, aged 53
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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF BEGGING AMONG QUR'ĀNIC SCHOOL PUPILS IN LAFIA, NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Introduction

The Qur'an is the supreme authority in Islam. It is the essential and paramount source of the creed, rituals, ethics, and laws of Islam. It is the book that differentiates between right and wrong. When the Muslim world is dealing with such universal issues as globalization, the environment, fighting terrorism and drugs, issues of medical ethics, and feminism, evidence to support the various arguments is sought in the Qur'an. This supreme status stems from the belief that the Qur'an is the word of Allah (SWT), revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) via angel Gabriel.¹ The first five verses revealed in the Qur'an discussed acquisition of knowledge, as Allah (SWT) says:

Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created. He created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He taught man that which he knew not, (Qur'an 96:1-5).²

Therefore, education to the Muslims from the beginning, is the learning of the Glorious Qur'an and its language, Arabic. In other words, this system of education is called Qur'anic education. However, Qur'anic education or learning is synonymous to the tradition of Islam. Wherever Muslims found themselves or settled, they organized themselves as a community, built mosques and established Islamic learning centres. The traditional Quranic teacher is called *Gwani* (Qur'anic Expert) or *Mu'allim* changed as *Mallam*, in Hausa tongue. The *Mu'allim* had only one complete manuscript, but dictated to learners in piecemeal for memorization.³

Three types of Qur'anic schools developed in Lafia town were *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate-School), *Islāmiyyah* as a primary school and *'Ilmi* school (Higher Islamic School). The first school is meant for beginners and *Islāmiyyah* for its advanced, while the Higher Islamic school embraces all aspects of Arabic and Islamic knowledge including Western education. This work examines the effects of begging and its occurrence among the Qur'anic school pupils, by confining itself to *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate School) within the Lafia town of Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State of Nigeria.

Qur'anic Schools in Lafia

The first Qur'anic school known as *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate School) had been traced back to 18th century started at Kofar Kaura Lafia, and later spread to other parts of the

town. In Lafia town, three types of Qur'anic schools developed, they are *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate School), *Makarantar-Islāmiyyah* (Islamic Primary School) and the higher Islamic school (*'Ilmi* School). The *Makarantar-Allo* in Lafia town is the foundation of Qur'anic education. Apart of *Makarantar-Allo* as the elementary stage. Also, the Qur'anic schools could be categorized into two. The first category may be described as a primary school (*Makarantar-Islāmiyyah*), while the second category is the higher Islamic schools or *'Ilmi* school which may be regarded as the secondary level.⁴

Method of Teaching in *Makarantar-Allo*

In the *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate or Tablet School), the *Mallam* could gather his own children and those of his Muslim neighbours in his sitting room or in the veranda of his house and starts a Qur'anic school. On the other hand, a wealthy person, community or a leader may invite a *Mallam* to teach the Qur'an to the children of his community. Mosques are also used as venue for Qur'anic classes with pupils sitting together on mats spread on the floor. There is no age limit in this type of Qur'anic school, and pupils of different ages could be on the same level of studies. The duration of the course in the school is not specified. Therefore, one could spend between four and ten years before graduation. Official uniform is unknown in these local Qur'anic schools; pupils wear different kinds of dress. The pupils pay no tuition or other fees to their *Mallam*. The *Mallam* receives no monthly salary or allowances except a little weekly tribute known as *kudin-Lāraba* (Wednesday Money).⁵

***Walīmah* Celebration**

Occasional feasting in the *Makarantar-Allo* or Qur'anic school pupils known as *Walīmah* could be held on the completion of the Qur'an known as *Sauka* (graduation of the Qur'an) with grandeur celebration. The parents of the graduand give great importance to this ceremony. Relatives, friends, well-wishers and important personalities are invited to grace the occasion. The occasion serves as an impetus to the other young pupils of the schools as well as others. Undoubtedly, the *Walīmah* ceremony boosts the morale of the *Mallam* for whom the completion of the Qur'an by the pupils is an accomplishment and therefore a very happy occasion.⁶

The virtues of these feasting cannot be over-emphasized in any way; they provide sustenance to the *Mallam* who is already noted for not receiving a fixed amount salary. Thus, this ceremony contributes immensely to the subsistence of Qur'anic schools in Lafia town. Therefore, after the primary level of Qur'anic schools (*Islāmiyyah*), the pupils pass to the secondary level, which is known as Higher Islamic schools. This level, has more elaborated curriculum drawn its students from the graduands of the primary level who must have acquired high skill in reading and writing of the Qur'anic verses. The main assignment at this level is the learning of the meaning of what the pupils had read and memorized at the previous stage. Even though before this is done, the pupils in the *Islāmiyyah* were already been taught some *Ahādith* (saying of the Prophet) about knowledge with their meanings. This is to motivate and encourage the pupils to love the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake.⁷

Thereafter, the pupils are introduced to other subjects like; Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), Basic knowledge of the Unity of Allah; like Islamic theology (*'Ilm al-Tauhīd*),

Arabic Grammar (*Nahw*), Morphology (*Sarf*), Arabic Literature (*'Adab al-'Arabiyy*), Rhetoric (*al-Balāghah*), Prosody (*'Arūd*), Traditions of the Prophet (*Hadīth*), and Biography of the Prophet (*Sīrah*).⁸

After this level of Arabic and Islamic education, the student, if he wishes could proceed to the tertiary institutions. At this level, a student will choose his area of specialization. It was assumed that after this stage, many of Muslim students had turned to scholars who were able to read, translate and interpret the Glorious Qur'an and other Islamic theological and philosophical works.

Features of Learning

The features of *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate School) learning manifested and operated in form and manners shown below:

1. Materials: Writing in the *Makarantar-Allo* situation involved using the following: a pen called *al-Qalami*, locally prepared ink called *Tawada* and a wooden slate known as *Allo*.
2. Learning Environment: There are different designated places for *Makarantar-Allo* learning. These included: the *Mallam* (teacher)'s parlour, verandah, courtyard, house frontage and under tree shades or inside the mosque.⁹

List of Famous Makarantun-Allo (Slate Schools) in Lafia town

1. *Makarantar* Mallam Ali, Ungwar Wajen Rabo Street.
2. *Makarantar* Mallam Liman, Ungwar Wajen Rabo Street.
3. *Makarantar* Gwani Kasimu, Ungwar Zugun Street.
4. *Makarantar* Mallam Baban Tani, Ungwar Zugun Street.
5. *Makarantar* Mallam Musa Mai Sunan Mallam, Rice mill Street.
6. *Makarantar* Gwani Mai-Kabila, Kofar Zanwa Street.
7. *Makarantar* Mallam Balarabe, Ungwar Doka Street.
8. *Makarantar* Gwani Umar Shalele, Ungwar Yazawa Street.
9. *Makarantar* Mallam Hassan, Gindin Lemu Street.
10. *Makarantar* Gwani Atiku, Sabon Garin Kurikyo Street.
11. *Makarantar* Gwani Mai-Babban Allo, Sabon Pegi Street.
12. *Makarantar* Gwani Bala, Sabon Kasuwa Street.
13. *Makarantar* Mallam Muhammadu Rafa, Sabon Kasuwa Street.
14. *Makarantar* Gwani Sule, Sabon Pegi Street.
15. *Makarantar* Gwani Salisu, Sabon Pegi Street.
16. *Makarantar* Gwani Mai-Kobo, Doma Road Street.
17. *Makarantar* Gwani Ali, Tsohon Kasuwar Tumatur Street.
18. *Makarantar* Mallam Sabo Baba, Tsohon Kasuwar Tumatur Street.
19. *Makarantar* Mallam Dan-Tanimu, Ungwar Wajen Lalle Street.
20. *Makarantar* Mallam Hassan, Kukan Bisa Street.

21. *Makarantar* Gwani Yahya Dan-Baiwa, Ungwar Liman Street.
22. *Makarantar* Gwani Bello, Ungwar Jaba Street.
23. *Makarantar* Gwani Sani, Ungwar Tibi Street.
24. *Makarantar* Mallam Aboki, Bakin Gwangwaro Street.
25. *Makarantar* Mallam Ibrahim, Ungwar Dokan Arago Street.
26. *Makarantar* Mallam Haruna, Ungwar Tibi Street.
27. *Makarantar* Mallam Jalalu, Ungwar Magaji Street.

Definition of begging

Begging means asking people for money, food, shelter or other things, when one is not able to give anything instead. It is also referred to as sponging, spanging (short for "spare-changing") or (in American English) panhandling. In larger cities, it is common to see beggars who ask for money, food, or other items. Typically, beggars often beg for spare change using coffee cups, mugs, small boxes, hats, or other items into which monies can be placed and sometimes display signs with messages such as "Help me. I am homeless."¹⁰

Begging (also panhandling or mendicancy) is the practice of imploring others to grant a favour, often a gift of money, with little or no expectation of reciprocation. A person doing such is called a beggar, panhandler, or mendicant. Beggars may be found in public places such as transport routes, urban parks, and markets. Besides money, they may also ask for food, drink, cigarettes or other small items.¹¹

The Islamic Rulings on begging

It is not permissible for anyone to ask people for money when he is not in need or he is able to earn a living. There are certain categories for whom it is permissible to ask of people. They are the poor person who is destitute, the man who owes a debt, and the one who has been stricken by financial calamity and lost all his wealth. In these cases, it is not permissible to ask for more than one's needs, except that he does not have enough to meet his needs and is not able to earn enough for his livelihood.¹² The *Hadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayrah said: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

The poor person is not the one who goes round the people and ask them for a mouthful or two (of meals) or a date or both. But the poor is that who has not enough (money) to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give him something in charity, and who does not beg of people, (Al-Bukhāri: 2:25:554).¹³

Based on the above *Hadīth*, a poor person in the Islamic conception, is one who has not enough (money) to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give him something in charity, and who does not beg of people. Whereas, a well-off person is the one who has genuine feelings for the restraint poor people to the extent that makes him look for them and try to satisfy their needs without doing anything contrary to their dignity. Hence the Prophet (SAW) reaffirms, in the above *Hadīth*, the concept of a poor person and explains that he is not the one who goes round

the people and ask them for a mouthful or two (of meals) or a date or two. Rather, he is the one who is suffering so much from poverty and at the same time, he restrains himself from begging or asking people for help.

This self-restraint or chastity that characterizes this poor person stems only from one's contentment and satisfaction with what Allah has bestowed upon one be it much or little. A satisfied and contented person is the one who is pleased with what Allah has given him and who is certain that what Allah has chosen for him must be nothing but the best. The Ever-Glorious Qur'an refers to this outstanding category of people as saying what means:

Those needy ones who are wholly wrapped up in the cause of Allah, and who are hindered from moving about the earth in search of their livelihood, especially deserve help. He who is unaware of their circumstances supposes them to be wealthy because of their dignified bearing, but you will know them by their countenance, although they do not go about begging of people with importunity. Whatever wealth you spend on helping them, Allah will know of it, (Qur'an 2:273).

Notwithstanding, one should not understand that begging is totally prohibited and forbidden under all conditions. The Prophet declared that begging or asking people for financial help is permissible in specific situations and nothing more. Qābisah Ibn Mukhāriq al-Hilāliyy said:

I was under debt and I came to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and begged from him regarding it. He said: 'Wait till we receive *sadaqah*, so that we order that to be given to you.' He again said: 'Qābisah, begging is not permissible but for one of the three (classes) of persons: one who has incurred debt, for him begging is permissible till he pays that off, after which he must stop it. A man whose property has been destroyed by a calamity, which has smitten him; for him begging is permissible till he gets what will support life, or will provide him reasonable subsistence. And a person who has been smitten by poverty the genuineness of which is confirmed by three intelligent members of his people, for him begging is permissible till he gets what will support him, or will provide him subsistence. Qābisah, besides these three (every other reason) for begging is forbidden, and one who engages in such consumes that what is forbidden, ((Muslim:5: 2271).¹⁴

Sālim Ibn `Abdullah reported on the authority of his father that:

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) gave to `Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb some gift. `Umar said to him: 'Messenger of Allah! Give it to one who needs it more than I.' Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: 'Take it; either keep it with you or give it as a charity, and whatever comes to you in the form of this type of wealth, without your being avaricious or begging for it, accept it,

but in other circumstances, do not let your heart hanker after it.’
And it was on account of this that Ibn `Umar never begged anything from anyone, nor refused anything given to him.” (Muslim: 2272).¹⁵

The scene is that, the Prophet would give `Umar something and `Umar would ask him to give it to someone who is poorer than himself. However, the Prophet (SAW) teaches `Umar and instructs him that if someone is given something without asking for it or having greed for it, one should take it; and if one is not given anything, he should not run for it. Thereupon, the above *Hadīth* shows that it is permissible for a needy person to accept what is given to him without begging or without being avaricious.

On the other hand, the Prophet (SAW) in another *Hadīth* refers to an issue, which may have adverse effects and catastrophic impact on the individual in this life as well as in the hereafter. This issue of begging is widespread in many of the Islamic societies and communities of today. Hamzah Ibn `Abdullāh Ibn `Umar heard his father say that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) had said: “The person would continue begging from people till he would come on the Day of Resurrection and there would be no flesh on his face” (Muslim:5: 2263).¹⁶

In another *Hadīth* that is narrated by Abū Hurairah, that Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said, “He who begs the riches of others to increase his own is asking only for live coals, so let him ask a little or much” (Muslim:5: 2266).¹⁷ He is “asking only for live coals,” means, that he would be punished in Hell-Fire for this derogatory act of his; namely, asking people for some of their wealth or a portion of their earnings without being deserving or entitled to receive any of it.

Qur'anic School Pupils Participation in Begging

Majority of the Qur’anic school students who engaged in the act of begging were from the *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate school) called *al-Mājjirai*; in Hausa word. *Al-Mājjirai*, is the plural of *al-Mājjiri* simply means a student. The word frequently used to command respect, sympathy and solidarity, and it nowadays generates obnoxious feeling in the public domain. What quickly comes to the mind of many people whenever the word is uttered is the image of malnourished and destitute school age-street children, who constitute public nuisance and security threat to the society. In addition to child labour, child abuse, and a vague future, the *al-Mājjiri* pupils today are linked to the insurgency in the country due to their vulnerability to crime. While justifying this assertion, some analysts argue that a person who solely relies on begging for survival; who is enduring instead of enjoying the preamble of his life as a result of societal negligence; and who does not know where his next meal will come from, can easily fall prey to terrorism. However, a data survey and analysis from the interviewees and questionnaires showed that 99 percent of the pupils in *Makarantar-Alla* participated in attitude of begging were strangers not the indigens of the town and they were all male, calling themselves with *al-Mājjirai* (students).¹⁸

Effects of Begging to the Qur’anic School Pupils

The system of this kind of Qur’anic school i.e, *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate school) today in Lafia town faces with a myriad of challenges with glaring abnormalities. The

proprietors, *Mallams* and their pupils were left unmonitored. Findings revealed that 70 percent of beggars in *Makarantar-Allo* were not indigene; most of them while attending the schools never find their ways back home and majority of them eventually stopped attending the schools. Instead of being brought up, they grow up like wild grass and lose out their integrity, educationally, morally and above all, religiously. It is on record that the current insurgency (Boko-Harām) in Nigeria and neighbouring countries are recruiting their soldiers from the pupils of *Makarantar-Allo* (Slate school) after brainwashing them that the Western system of education is a sin.¹⁹

It is known that Lafia town confronts with complex problems of begging which have socio-economic and physical implications for the State. These problems are also experienced by some of the Qur'anic school pupils most especially *Makarantar-Allo* of the town.²⁰ One obvious manifestation of these problems in this kind of schools is the act of asking people for money, food and clothes. The problem became a social menace, which has a negative implication not only for economies of the town and socio- physical environment, but also for the pupils themselves and their Qur'anic schools called *Makarantar-Allo*.²¹

The increasing population of beggars in these schools constitutes an eyesore or environmental nuisance and health hazards, particularly those carrying infectious diseases like hepatitis b, tuberculosis, and other contagious diseases. It leads to social relegation and stigmatization to the students and pupils of Qur'anic slate school. Beggars of *Makarantar-Allo* known as *al-Mājjirai* caused a social threat to the Lafia society especially the Qur'anic schools. They portray a bad image to outsiders or strangers.²²

Begging also constitutes economic threat to the society, as beggars are not economically productive in any way since they contribute nothing to human development. At most strategic roads, many of these pupils are seen with some form of diseases and could be seen at the centre of the road with bowls in their hands soliciting for help by repeating "*Fīṣabīlillāhi* (for Allah's sake). Majority of these pupils are controlled by Mallams, while others by godfathers who are entitled to a 'cut' of their money for protection and support. The godfathers are also responsible for costuming i.e. fake wounds on appropriate parts of their bodies for the lame. Wheelchairs and wheelbarrows for the blind and another child or pupil leads him around and collect the day's earnings.²³

Most worrisome is the fact that today, each office you go, either at the federal, state or local government level, there would be Qur'anic school pupils (*al-Mājjirai*) who indulge in one form of begging and the other. It is fast becoming an embarrassment across the town,²⁴ In Lafia town, many of the *Makarantar-Allo* pupils could be seen in every nook and cranny; at the street, market, working places, ministries, hotels, stadium, motor park, garages, most of road junctions across the town etc asking for gift or in which ever is applicable. A situation like this cannot bring the best out of these pupils. They do not care about the image of their learning not to talk of their reputation. Unfortunately, those in authority do not care nor take notice of this problem.²⁵

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations below:

- i. Qur'anic school pupils should be assisted by their administrators, school *Mallams*, elites, parents, politicians, Emirates council, stakeholders and government in general, in order to tackle the problems of begging in the *Makarantar-Allo* as well as a sin in the society.
- ii. The Nasarawa State Primary Education Board and Local Government Education Authority and Emirate Councils must ensure that only well-trained and qualified Qur'anic teachers and reciters are allowed to teach in the Qur'anic schools.
- iii. Special Guidance and Counseling (G&C) unit should be established by Qur'anic school administrators in Lafia town for advising our Muslim children in order to have a sound knowledge of the Qur'an.

Conclusion

Islam puts great emphasis on making effort and earning one's own living rather than going out asking others for it for no reason. It also devises a well-balanced Muslim society for all where everyone gets its due share. Those who are rich are directed to help others in need through an obligatory action of *Zakāh* (Charity).

Begging is a social challenge that is more rampant in Lafia town than elsewhere in Nasarawa State of Nigeria. There are many beggars, especially children, and some of them resort to tricks to attract sympathy of the people. For example, one of them may pretend to be blind, and so on. Begging is no more than laziness and manipulating philanthropic feelings of the community.

The work found out that other nations have taken some serious actions to reduce the act of begging, whereas in Lafia Local Government Area, this trend of begging increases day by day, almost found on every roundabout, pavement, in front of mosque and main roads asking for alms. The number of beggars in Qur'anic schools is rising. The work found out that 99 percent of the pupils in *Makarantar-Allo* engaged in this habit and were not the indigenes of Lafia town. Also the future of pupils in these schools especially those who prefer a dignified means of livelihood among them end up as *Maigādi* (gate/security man), housekeepers, conductors, shoemaker, etc. The lazy ones who are comfortable with the life on the street continue to beg throughout their lives.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF QUR'ĀNIC EDUCATION IN DOMA: CHIEFDOM OF NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Introduction

The attempt in this paper is to examine the Qur'anic education and its memorization in Doma Chiefdom. The paper is divided into sections which includes concept of Qur'anic education in Islam, the coming of Islam to Doma, the origin of Qur'anic education in Doma Chiefdom, Qur'anic education and its memorisation in Doma Chiefdom, challenges facing Qur'anic education in Doma Chiefdom, conclusion, and recommendations.

Doma Local Government is situated in the southern part of Nasarawa State of Nigeria and Doma town was founded by Andoma Osabonya Ogoshi in 1232 C.E. Doma Local Government Area (LGA) shares boundaries with Lafia, the Nasarawa State Capital in the North, Awe LGA in the North East, Keffi LGA in the North West, Nasarawa LGA in the West and Makurdi LGA of Benue State in the South.¹

The Qur'anic education has a long history of existence in Nigeria. It started in the northern part of the country, long before the advent of western education. It operated through the Qur'anic school or *makarantan allo* in Hausa language, whose main objective was to familiarize pupils with the tenets of the Qur'ān and probably make them to become Islamic scholars. The Qur'ān has been the core-curriculum of this system of education since its beginning because it plays a central role in the life of a Muslim spiritually, politically, socially, economically, etc.² Some scholars said that the problem of the Qur'anic school started with the colonial invasion of the Northern part of Nigeria, which led to the relegation of Islamic education to the background, and this led to the gradual erosion of Islamic educational system. Curriculum contents, teaching methods, teacher qualification, infrastructure and administration have been compromised, however, the Qur'anic school remained archaic. Accordingly, the *Almajiri* is more of a social problem than a useful member of society is. *Almajiris* are vulnerable to being used as political thugs by benefactors who take advantage of their lack of formal education. They are considered as great security risk as many of them have become miscreants who actively participate in ethnic, religious and political violence and terrorism.³

Concept of Qur'anic Education in Islam

There are so many definitions of Qur'anic education; therefore, to understand the meaning of the term, it is necessary to know the definition of education according to

experts. According to Hussain and Ashraf, in their book *Crisis in Muslim Education*, education is the transfer of experience which can be divided, for a Muslim, into two categories: experience in the form of skill or technical knowledge which nature varies from age to age and which is bound to change constantly; and experience based on some constant or permanent values embodied in religion and scripture. The latter consists of those eternal truths which are not subject to change and which for a Muslim are defined in the Qur'ān and the tradition of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) in the clearest possible terms. They go further to say that education which has been characteristic of Muslim society down the ages, has always attempted to uphold the premises referred to above. Believing this as it shows that the true aim of education is to produce men who have faith as well as knowledge; the former sustaining the latter. Islam does not think that the pursuit of knowledge by itself without reference to the spiritual and moral goals that man must try to attain can do humanity much good. Knowledge removed from faith is not only partial knowledge; it can even be described as a kind of new ignorance. Islam considers the man who has lost faith in Allāh (SWT) but has extensive acquaintance with books as a person, who has acquired only a fragmentary view of the universe.⁴

Fidaus and Shah assert that education from Islamic perspective is often defined by Muslim scholars from three different dimensions which are reflected in different concepts introduced. Important among them are: *tarbiyyah* - the process of education that gives emphasis on physical and intellectual development of an individual; *ta'dīb* - the process of education that gives emphasis on nurturing good human beings with noble codes of conduct/ethics approved by Islam, so that they may conduct and position themselves in society with justice; and *ta'līm* the process of education that is based on teaching and learning. The concept of education in Islam must take into consideration all the dimensions stated above. No matter which one of the above concepts is preferable to scholars, it should not be used as a pretext for controversy and intellectual acrimony among scholars; because what matters is not the concept per say but the practice, methodology and its objectives.⁵

The Coming of Islam to Doma

There are many versions of how Islam came to Doma. The first is through trade, the second is payment of tax to the Emirate of Zazzau (Zaria) by Alago people of Doma in 1808, and the last is the fall out of the Jihād of Usman Dan Fodio of 1804.⁶ Abdulkadir asserts that on Plateau (Jos), Hausa Muslim traders had long been interacting; some of these Muslim traders later settled and inter-married with the host communities. The visit of these Muslim groups to and their settlement around the confluence region and the hinterland meant that non-Muslim groups like the Igala, Ebira, Kakande, Jukun, Idoma, Doma, Tiv, Bassa Nge, Bassa Komo and several others came in contact with Islam. Thus, the main agents of early diffusion of Islam were at first the Muslim traders and missionaries.⁷ It was said that the items that the Hausa Muslim traders used to come and purchase in Doma are: *Wandu* Doma (Trouser with embroidery and black smite product), specials spears, big and small hole, iron box, as well as iron dishes (Ogande).⁸

As to the version of payment of tax to Zaria by the Alago people of Doma, Sirajo observes that the Emir sometimes used to lead the expedition on his vassal areas in order to enforce payment of the *gandu*. These vassal states or sub-emirates of Zazzau

were Kauru, Kajuru, Lere, Jama‘a, Keffi, and Nassarawa. He mentions further that Kauru and Kajuru were already under Zazzau even before the Jihād, while Lere, Kagarko, Jama‘a, Keffi and Nassarawa were brought after the Jihād in 1808. According to him, the other areas that also came under Zazzau after the Jihād were Kusheriki, Galadiman Kogo, Doma, Lafiyan Barebari, Lapai and Koro Chieftaincies of Zuba, Izom, Kawu, Jiwa, and Kuji.⁹ By this assertion, there is an indication that Doma and other areas had early contact with Islam through the conveying of taxes to Zaria Emirate in 1808.

The importance of Qur’anic education or learning to every Muslim lies in the fact that the Qur’ān, the *Ṣunnah*, and the sayings of the Companions of the Prophet (SAW) lay emphasis on the significance of learning. It is binding on every Muslim to learn about his/her religion and all issues relating to the worship of Allāh, which is the exclusive purpose of his/her creation (Q, 51:56).¹⁰ Moreover, Allāh urges Muslims to keep reading and learning the religion, in the first verses of *surah* 96, which were revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). Allāh says in His Glorious Qur’ān:

Read in the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists),
has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).
Read and your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the
writing) by pen. He has taught man that which he knew not. (Q,
96:1-5).¹¹

The *Sunnah* of the Prophet also corroborates this as follows:

Abu Hurairah reported: The Messenger of Allāh (SAW), Peace and blessings be upon him, said: “When the human being dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him.”¹²

The Origin of Qur’anic Education in Doma Chieftdom

The son of Shaykh ‘Abdulrahman Muḥammad by name Muḥammad said that, it was during the reign of Andoma Ari Onyamale Osabo who ruled Doma in 1869 that Shaykh ‘Abdur-rahmān Muḥammad came to Doma on a scholarly visitation. The Andoma accepted him whole-heartedly and gave him a befitting accommodation. This prominent Islamic scholar was requested to pray for the progress and stability of Doma Kingdom. His activities in Doma through recitation of the glorious Qur’ān advanced the course of Islam and its scholarship in Doma. The Andoma gave him a wife by name Hassana (Opene, her traditional name); the Shaykh was therefore integrated into Doma society and was conferred with citizenship of Doma. He was eventually given a large portion of land with which he settled down his family. Shaykh ‘Abdulrahman Muḥammad established the first Islamic school and built the first *Masjid* for education and worship of Allāh (SWT), and the school (*Zaure*) and the *Masjid* are still in existence till date.

Thereafter and gradually, four Islamic schools were established during the reign of Andoma Attah Okete in 1881 and Andoma Owuso Akabe in 1890 by the following scholars in Doma; Shaykh Yahya ‘Adamu in Ungwan Nupawa, Shaykh Sidi ‘Ali in Gida wangwa at Ungwan Dawaki, ‘Abdullāh Yawuri in Ungwan Galadima, Shaykh

Mustapha ‘Abubakar at Ungwan Liman, all within Doma town and alongside Shaykh Abdul Banufi in Ruttu, Shaykh Gana Rilwanu in Iwashu, Mallam Ali Kasimu in Alagye, Shaykh Isa Ashafa in Brumburum.¹⁴ All are outskirts communities of Doma.

It will be necessary at this juncture to review the system of Islamic school of *Makarantar Allo*, *Tsangaya*, *Ilimi*, *Makarantar Zaure* and some related works to this study. According to Garba *Makarantar* in Hausa language literally means a school while *Allo* means slate. When put together, *Makaranta Allo* literally means ‘a school of slate’ (i.e. a school where wooden slate is used as instructional material). This name refers to a school of the elementary stage of Islamic education, and it has many names in different Muslim communities. For instance, it is called the *Kuttab* in Egypt, the *Madrasah* in Pakistan, and the *Tsangaya* in the olden Kanem-Borno Empire.¹⁵ The Hausa call it so, because slate is the main apparatus or teaching equipment being used in such schools. This kind of schools is considered as the centre of Islamic education, and in virtually all the Muslim communities, every child is expected to start his education with this type of school. Its main objective and priority is teaching the recitation of the Qur’ān to the children, and it is expected that, every Muslim child must learn the sacred text or some parts of it by heart. Importance is therefore given to the recitation, writing, and memorization of the Qur’ān. The structure of the *Makarantar Allo* differs radically from the present day *Islamiyyah* and the western secular schools, as its schedule is very flexible with no clear cut classes or examinations. This allows a child to progress at his or her own pace. Thus the length of time it takes for an individual to memorize the whole Qur’ān depends on his intelligence and commitment, and the *Makarantar Allo* is expected to end with the complete memorization of the Qur’ān and a graduation ceremony is organized for the graduands. From thereon, the graduands may then move to the *makarantar ilmi* for advance Islamic education where other branches of knowledge such as *Tafsīr*, *Fiqh*, *Tawhīd*, *Manṭiq*, *Sīrah*, *Ṣorf*, *Balaghah*, *Tasawwuf* and so on are taught.¹⁶

Qur’anic Education and its Memorisation in Doma Chiefdom

There are many Qur’anic education centres and schools for memorisation in Doma, and below is a table of selected ones and their enrolment:¹⁷

S/no	School	Enrolment		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1.	Makarantar Shaykh Mustapha Abubakar	30	15	45
2.	Makarantar Mallam Umar Ahmad Baduku	38	12	50
3.	Makarantar Alarama Shu’aibu	80	21	101
4.	Makarantar Alarama Sirajo Ahmad	40	30	70
5.	Makarantar Haruna Jibrin	35	25	60
6.	Makarantar Adamu Kawis Abdullahi	40	45	85
7.	Makarantar Hussaini Shu’aibu	50	35	85
8.	Makarantar Abdulsalam Shu’aibu	60	40	100
9.	Makarantar Alarama Muhammad Idrisu	40	30	70

S/no	School	Enrolment		
		Boys	Girls	Total
10.	Makarantar Alhassan Shu' iabu	32	24	56
11.	Makarantar Shaykh Abdul Banufi in Ruttu	20	15	35
12.	Makarantar Shaykh Gana Rilwanu in Iwashi	30	11	41
13.	Makarantar Mallam Isa Ashafah in Burum-Burum	35	25	60
14.	Makarantar Mallam Ali Kasimu in Alagye	40	22	62
15.	Kulliyatu Isa Litafeezul Qur'an	230	204	434
16.	Mu'assatu-Tillawatil Qur'an	150	42	192
17.	Raudatu Abi Unaisa	250	150	400
18.	Al-Furqan	40	25	65
19.	Darul Ilm	300	150	450
20.	Annur Litahfeezul Qur'an	300	192	492
21.	Ummul Qur'an	150	100	250
22.	Assasuddinil Islam	100	140	240
23.	Nurutilawatil Qur'an	200	118	318
24.	Albayan	120	80	200
25.	Sa bilu-Rashad	60	40	100
26.	Kulliyatu Ishaqa	30	26	56
27.	Kuliyatu Wawo	220	180	400
28.	Darul Hudu	120	86	206
29.	Ahmad Shakir	100	55	155
		2940	1938	4878

Challenges of Qur'anic Education in Doma Chieftdom

The problems being encountered by Islamic scholars in imparting Qur'anic knowledge to pupils in Doma chieftdom are very many as exemplified below:

- i. Lack of Curriculum: Every teacher used his own devices to the pupils, due to lack of curriculum. The Islamic teachers are left to their descriptions in their devices in imparting knowledge to the children. In some cases, some teachers design their own syllabus and arrange timings in which they conduct their lessons. Others teach children the way they were taught without any standard formula.
- ii. Lack of Classroom: The pupils are often taught in big halls or in houses and in some cases, in the open spaces. Qur'anic education is a voluntary assignment in which teachers teach and expect their rewards from Allah. In this case, one can gather pupils in a big hall or in one's house or in the open space under the shade

of a tree. In case there are no big halls to accommodate the pupils, lessons are conducted in open or outer space in the morning and at night after the *Ishā'a* prayer.

- iii. Lack of Accommodation: There is no accommodation especially for pupils who are brought from others town and villages; hence, they always sleep in halls or just anywhere they can lay their heads. Instances of such are available in Wamba, Bauchi, Kano, etc.¹⁸
- iv. Lack of books: Only slates are used as teaching and learning aids. In most cases, slates were normally used as instruments of instructions by the teachers due to lack of books. A pupil will start from a small slate to a bigger one as he advances in knowledge.
- v. Lack of graduation: Pupils normally go to other scholars for learning for change of environment as they wish.¹⁸
- vi. Lack of recognition by the government at all levels: Even though Islamic scholars have certificates, they are never considered relevant in the scheme of government. The scholars of Qur'anic Education in Doma Chiefdom are not being paid salary due to lack of recognition by the government at all levels.
- vii. Lack of financial ability of the scholars of Qur'anic education in Doma Chiefdom to feed the pupils. The pupils always go to beg as *Al-Majiri*.¹⁹ *The al-Majiri* is associated with clumsiness because of lack of good sources of water and toilets for the pupils.²⁰
- viii. There is corporal punishment in *Makrantar allo* in Doma Chiefdom. Most of Qur'anic teachers resort to using cane as a form of disciplinary action on stubborn and lazy pupils who do not want to learn.

After examining some of the challenges facing the teaching of Qur'anic education and its memorization in Doma Chiefdom, the study would propose solutions to them as provided in recommendations.

Recommendations

In an attempt to provide solutions to the challenges faced by Qur'anic education in Doma Chiefdom, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There is a need for the government to provide curricula for Islamic education through Muslim organisations and in consultation with the Nigeria Institute of Curriculum Development for the unity of the Islamic curricula. This will help the institutions to maintain standards in their delivery of the content and make the assessment of learners at the end of the study easy while at the same time improve the quality of the Qur'anic education and its memorization provided in these institutions.
- ii. Government should find a way of addressing the welfare of the pupils in Qur'anic system of education to avoid house to house or street to street begging and its social effects on the pupils as well as the entire Doma Chiefdom.

- iii. The Qur'anic system of education and its memorization should be properly funded by the government of Nasarawa State.
- iv. Infrastructural facilities should be provided by the government of Nasarawa State to Qur'anic education schools with a view to playing a significant role in reforming the system in Doma Chiefdom.
- v. The punishment being meted to the pupils in *Tsangayah*, and *makarantar allo* is too severe to the extent that some of the pupils lost their lives. Therefore, there is a need for moderation and modification in the processes of imparting knowledge to the pupils. In this regards, it is considered important for a group of Islamic scholars in the areas to moderate teaching in *Tsangayah* and *makarantar alo*. In this consideration, the scholars can setup standard of learning and discipline in the schools.
- vi. There is a need for Nasarawa State Government to recognise the importance of Islamic education, *Ilimi* School, and *Zauri* Qur'anic schools, because they play important roles in the socialization of the Muslim child. They also contribute to the achievement of education for all as the contents taught in many subjects are based on the religion of Islam. Recognition of these institutions will give them legitimacy and room for negotiation for improvement and quality control. The graduates from these schools will also participate in nation building and be part of package of the development of the nation. These categories of graduates currently feel that they are left behind in the process of the nation building and hence, become easy targets of radical groups who strike on wreaking havoc in the country.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it will be imperative to make some observations under the conclusion to the study. It is observed that almost all the schools for Qur'anic education and memorization in Doma Chiefdom are deprived of basic needs. It is also noted that there is no curriculum in the Qur'anic education in Doma Chiefdom and this prevents the pupils from literacy and it is not adequate. Moreso, there is financial problem owing to lack of funding from the government at all levels, individuals, and wealthy people. This serves as one of the major challenges facing the Qur'anic education system in Doma chiefdom. In addition, there is no provision of classroom by the government which has also posed major challenge being faced by the system of Qur'anic education in Doma Chiefdom. In order to reform the Qur'anic system of education and its memorization therefore, government of Nasarawa State, Local Government Education Authority, and Islamic Organisations should provide standard curriculum for effective teaching and learning in the Qur'anic schools in Doma Chiefdom. They should also train the pupils on vocational skills, so that the knowledge will significantly influence their living standards through the system of Qur'anic education and its memorization in Doma Chiefdom, Nasarawa State, and the nation at large.

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ROLE OF *DA'WAH* GROUPS IN THE INTEGRATION OF *ISLĀMIYYAH* AND *ALMAJIRI* SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEMPORARY SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

Qur'anic schools are the oldest school system in Northern Nigeria, which transformed into nowadays *Almajiri* phenomenon that flourishes through numerous traditional Qur'anic schools. Initially, the Qur'anic teachers were sustained by the Muslims' authorities, communities, *Zakah* funds and other forms of dues. However, the system witnessed a serious obstruction when the colonial administration imposed Western system of education with full recognition and supported by the authority in government and the ancient schools were competitively neglected with no any support and recognition by the government.

According to conflicting estimates, *Almajiri* are nearly 15 million in the North, out of which 65% of them are from the Northwest alone and nearly 90% of these children do not attend conventional schools. In 2010, the Federal Ministry of Education estimated that there were 9.5 million *Almajiri* pupils in the Northern part of the country, which means there is no ascertained data of *Almajiri* pupils.¹

It is observable that, *Almajiri* system of education is related to lack of wisdom (*Hikmah*) of the *Da'wah* groups to take-off a collective crusade on preaching against the *attitudinal ignorance, negligence or laziness of the parents and the inappropriate approaches by the government policies* to the major challenges that make it difficult to integrate the two system of education. It then becomes necessary through this study to state that, sensitization of the Muslim communities and transformation of the *Da'wah* activities to focus on integration of *Almajiri* and *Islāmiyyah* schools into the conventional system of education, is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders particularly the *Da'wah* groups. This should be without any *sectarian inclination, as both the Almajiri and conventional schools are not sectarian system of education.*

Conceptual Definitions

According to the title of this study, there are three key concepts, which are *Islāmiyyah*, *Almajiri* and *Da'wah* groups. The terms require some definitions for appropriate usage to reflect the context in the study.

i. *Islāmiyyah*

The word is derived from Islām, which literally means Islamic school. It also refers to school or *Madrasah*. The word *Islāmiyyah* refers to a specific type of school for the study of the Islamic religion. The curricular of *Islāmiyyah* schools is generally restricted to *Qur'ān*, *Hadīth*, *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) and Arabic Language, which are offered to the children with Islamic background. The word *Madrasah* is derived from the tri-consonantal Semitic root *د-ر-س* to learn, to study, through form/stem (مفعل(ة); *Maf'ala (tu)*, *Madrasa(tu)* which generally means a place where learning and studying take place.²

ii. *Almajiri*

According to Adamu, Shehu and Yahaya, the term *Almajiri* is derived or emanated from the Arabic word *Al-Mahājirun*, meaning emigrants.³ The word *Almajiri* has several meanings in Hausa Language which include Qur'anic pupils, students, needy and it is a humble response used by scholars to present themselves. However, in respect to this study, the word is about the Qur'anic pupils in the Northern Nigeria as learners who left their hometowns usually to other places for obtaining Qur'anic education. In this study, therefore, *Almajiri* schools are the schools of Qur'anic pupils that are not integrated to the conventional schools whether child or adult schools. They are also known as *Makarantun Allo* (slate schools).

iii. *Da'wah*

Da'wah is the transliteration of the Arabic word *دعوة*, formed from the three lettered verb *دعا* (*da'ā*) يدعو (*Yad'ū*) دعوة (*Da'wah*). According to Ar-Rāzī and Ibn Munzur, *Da'wah* has several meanings, which literally include to call, demand, assemble, pray, request, appeal etc. The person who carries out *Da'wah* is called *Dā'iyah* (داعية) or *Dā'ī* (داعي) and its plural is *Du'āh* (دعاة).⁴ Technically, it is the transmission of Islām to people and teaching them its application in the real life.⁵ *Da'wah* is to awaken people to be good and shun away evil, to inspire the well-being.⁶ *Da'wah* is the struggle of *Dā'ī* to deliver the religion of Islām to people according to the suitable approach which corresponds with the categories of invitees, circumstances of the recipients at all times and places.⁷ It is also to stimulate people to do virtuous deeds, to enjoin what is right (*al-'Amr bil Ma'rūf*) and forbid what is wrong (*al-Nahy 'an al-Munkār*) for the prosperity of the present life and the Hereafter.⁸ In this regard, *Da'wah* groups are proselytes (*Du'āh*) that are awakening people to be virtuous and shun away evil deeds. They struggle collectively or individually in a suitable approach to save people from the evils they are living in (*al-Nahy 'an al-Munkār*) and (*al-'Amr bil Ma'rūf*) for the prosperity of the present life and the Hereafter.

Educational Responsibilities of Children

Child is a gift from Allāh that has several rights from his parents. Such rights include educational right, which is central and mandatory upon the parents to deliver to their child, regardless of whether parents are rich or poor, at home or away, in a friendly environment or in remote area. According to a Ḥadīth narrated by 'Abdullāh bn 'Umar,

the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) was reported to have said: "... and your child has rights over you."⁹

Parents are obligated to properly remunerate or put in order the religious education and training of their children. The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: "...verily the most entitled to take wages for is Allāh's Book."¹⁰ Anās bin Mālik narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: "Be kind to your children, and perfect their edification."¹¹

In addition, parents must not show inclination for a gender to suppress or neglect the other. Allāh says:

...He creates what He wills (and plans). He bestows (children) male or female according to His Will (and Plan), Or He bestows both males and females, and He leaves barren whom He wills: for He is full of Knowledge and Power (Qur'ān 42:49-50).

Children at age of ten have a right even to have a separate sleeping bed. Narrated Abdullāh bn 'Amr bn al-'As that, the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: "... and arrange their beds (to sleep) separately (when they are at ten)."¹² Therefore, it is seen as deceitful and betrayal of trust to send a teenager away from home without any proper arrangement for his livelihood. The *Da'wah* groups and *Du'āh* should enlighten the generality of the Muslims about the Islamic injunctions on the responsibilities of parents in order to avoid this illegitimate hardship of *Almajiri* system of education which is becoming a source of societal depravities and it diminishes the traditional values of society and spiritual well-being of the Muslims' children.

Integration of *Islāmiyyah/Almajiri* Schools in the Contemporary System of Education

Section 1 subsection 3 (d) of Nigeria's National Policy on Education published 2013 stated that, "education is compulsory and it is a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender or religion ...". The policies made by the governments were not centred on the *Almajiri* system of education. Such include the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999 and Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in 2004. The curriculum and the syllabus were entirely centred on western education system. The past administration introduced *Almajiri* Model Boarding Schools, which were established in some states and inaugurated at Gagi, Sokoto State in 2012. The structures and the learning environment were not pre-arranged for the ordinary *Almajiri* user-friendliness. Findings reveal that some of the schools have been converted to conventional schools and are no longer operated or occupied by the *Almajiris*. For instance, the school in Talata Mafara Local Government was converted to Command Science Secondary School, while the one in Damba was converted to Government Girls Secondary School in Zamfara State.

The fact remains that there is gap between the *Almajiri* and the preparations in place. Modibbo accused Northern State Governors of abandoning the *Almajiri* schools and frustrating the initiatives. Some schools were left unoccupied, abandoned and vandalised because most of the governors refused to fulfil their own obligations as

contained in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Government.¹³

Findings show that Kano State *Almajiri* Model Primary Schools at Warawa, Kibiya and Tsakuwa are averagely maintained to an extent that one would have thought that they are private conventional schools. Teaching and learning in the schools are moderately carried out. More significantly, many *Islāmiyyah* and *Almajiri* schools were intergraded and integrated in the State and Local Government Education system. State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has intergraded many *Islāmiyyah* schools and pupils are being taught with the state-approved integrated curriculum consisting of English, Mathematics Quantitative, Verbal Reasoning and Religious Subjects. The State provides facilities such as textbooks, other teaching materials and staff support for both Islamic and secular subjects. Many primary schools certificate holders and *Islāmiyyah* teachers were trained and recruited to teach in such schools.¹⁴ In an interview with one of the teachers, he mentioned that he was trained and many of them had gone for further training and they are now NCE holders with full qualifications to teach in any conventional primary schools.¹⁵

A number of *Islāmiyyah* schools in Kano run in the evening. Very few are running in the morning while some run in shifts, morning, afternoon and evening. The schools are normally established by the communities and operated across the wards in the State. Many teachers posted from SUBEB and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) to teach in these private *Islāmiyyah* schools are there for upgrading them to be accredited into Primary or Junior Secondary Schools. There are many Qur’anic (*Tahfīz*) Model Secondary Schools, Senior Islamic Schools (S.I.S) and Schools for Arabic Studies (SAS), which are equivalent to senior secondary schools in many local governments’ areas. Recently, the State Government inducted 600 volunteer-teachers to be deployed to 393 schools across 44 local government areas in the State. These teachers would teach English and Mathematics lessons on Thursdays and Fridays at the *Almajiri* schools in order to build the capacity of the students in both verbal and quantitative reasoning for the integration of *Almajiri* and *Islāmiyya* schools into the conventional school curriculum.¹⁶

Number of Qur’anic and *Islāmiyya* Schools in Kano.

Schools	Number
Qur’anic (General) <i>Almajiri</i>	6, 070
<i>Islāmiyya</i> (General)	3, 396
<i>Islāmiyya</i> Primary	446
Qur’anic Primary	187
Model Qur’anic	20
Tahfīzul Qur’ān	11
Total	10, 130

Source: *The Report of a Survey of Tsangaya Schools in Kano State*¹⁷

The above table represents the spread of these schools in Kano State since about two decades ago. From the recent development, these records must have changed positively due to the government’s effort particularly from 1999 to date. According to the reports

of *Daily Trust* and the *Nation News*, in October, 2019, the State presented letters of appointment to the volunteer-teachers of *Almajiri* schools, and the government had also concluded plans to employ 3,000 more teachers to expedite the integration process so that students of Qur'anic schools would be issued certificates on completion of their studies.¹⁸ Therefore, had it been that the Northern state governors and other stakeholders could have put in same effort as Kano State, the plight of *Almajiris* would have been wiped out.

Roles of the *Da'wah* Groups

Da'wah groups should consider the intergrading of *Islāmiyyah/Almajiri* schools and integrating them into the conventional system of education as an act of *da'wah* for propagating sound education, which is the path of all virtues. It is the wisdom (*al-Hikmah*) which Allāh (SWT) directed the proselytes (*Du'āh*) to be more focused in the course of their *da'wah*. In this regard, *da'wah* groups should transform their activities to this central sector. The *da'wah* groups should work toward the upgrading schools in their dominion for accreditation and participation in the public examinations conducted by the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS). The groups should work together to train their thousands youth guards (*Yan'agaji*) and recruit them for the task irrespective of their ideologies. The *da'wah* groups should guide the government on the needed support toward the challenging system of *Amajiri* education.

Jumu'ah Mosque leaders should centralize and run the process of intergrading *Islamiyyah/Almajiri* schools to meet the requirements of NBAIS for accreditation. The Board as a National Examination and Regulatory Body should be ready to accredit any intergraded school into dual syllabus of both Islamic and secular education. The Board has been saddled with some responsibilities, which include the following:

- Conducting examinations for Junior and Senior Arabic and Islamic Schools' Certificates.
- Standardization of examination for the award of certificates for Arabic and Islamic Schools and Colleges.
- Collaboration with State Ministries of Education in the quality control of government, community, private Arabic/Islamic Schools and Colleges.
- Liaising with NGOs on Arabic and Islamic education for the progress of education in general.
- Advising Federal, State Ministries of Education and NGOs on policies concerning Arabic and Islamic education.¹⁹

The *da'wah* groups should organize seminars/conferences and workshops for advocacy groups/organizations on the integration as well as enlighten and preach to the general public and stakeholders to put in place necessary facilities and settings that can smoothen teaching, learning and integration. The *da'wah* groups should re-orientate their followers and compete based on the number of schools they have intergraded and integrated into conventional system of education to reduce the multiple populace that are not pertinent in the educational output or manpower of the state labour.

The birthday celebrations (*Mawlud*) of different personalities and national preaching (*Wa'azin Kasa*) by the major *Da'wah* groups in the cities are not adding needed value

to the contemporary challenges of the fellow Muslims. This is because the focus of these events is the cities where Muslim children are begging on the street for Qur'anic education. Similarly, the Fulani herdsmen and other Muslims in the far-off environments are grossly ignorant about Islām, hence, many are being converted into Christianity and their children are enrolled into missionary schools from primary up to university levels.

Unfortunately, at this age, some scholars are preaching against the integration and encouraging beggary of minors. However, these scholars may have religious education but they are not conscious of the setback they caused to the intellectual advancement of the Ummah, particularly the Almajiri pupils. The Almajiri system of education could have been easily integrated for certification and compatibility for further training to breed double benefits of light upon light (Nūrun 'Alā Nūrun). This should be a personal concern for Muslims and their religious responsibility, which needs not to rely on any secular administration to do for them. Therefore, the Da'wah groups must be responsive and co-ordinating.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Da'wah activities should be reformed and focused on intergrading of Almajiri and Islāmiyyah schools. This should be made as a collective effort of all stakeholders particularly the Da'wah groups and should be considered as an act of Da'wah Ilal-Lāh for sound knowledge, productive personality as well as social foundation of the religion of Islam so that the path of all virtues of the two lights are well accomplished. Obviously, it is an act of wisdom (Ḥikmah) to be mindful of earthly and spiritual knowledge. It is said that wisdom (Ḥikmah) is the lost property of a believer, so, wherever he finds it, he has more right to it. The Da'wah groups should carry the crusade of centralizing Islāmiyyah/Almajiri schools into public schools in almost all the central mosques. This will eradicate the ones that are negligent of the transformation and give them more enlightenment, sensitization and advocacy that will bring mobilization of all stakeholders. The significance of these efforts, if collectively addressed by the Da'wah groups irrespective of their sects, cannot be overemphasized. It will certainly bring about success of the integration. The most important stakeholders in this regard are the Da'wah groups, the parents, and the Muslim community. However, the parents must be educated and enlightened about the necessity of those modifications, while the entire Muslim community must be sensitized and mobilized to stand up to its responsibility of taking charge and participating in this process. As a result of this, the study recommends that:

1. The northern governors should introduce State Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (SBAIS) for the integration of Almajiri Schools for them to meet the standard of the conventional syllabus for NECO, WAEC, NABTEB in order not to restrict them to only the NBAIS examinations.
2. The stakeholders, particularly, the Da'wah groups should compete with the number of integrated schools in the contemporary system of education under their domain.

3. Governments at all levels and other stakeholders should provide more enabling policies and operational facilities to address the resource constraints of the Qur'anic schools' standardization and integration.
4. Lastly, the proselytes (*Du'āh*) and Islamic scholars should embark on an intensive enlightenment and re-orientation by preaching to mobilize people, particularly the parents that are ignorant or negligent of the double benefits of integration.

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QURĀ'NIC SCHOOLS AND PROBLEMS OF BEGGING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: THE MORAL IMPLICATIONS

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Introduction

Al-Qur'ān is the Book of Allah (SWT) revealed to the last Prophet, Muhammad (SAW) for the guidance of humanity to imbibe best practices and conducts. The revelation of this Great Book was in piecemeal and took a period of 23 years. The essence of this piecemeal revelation was to enable humanity learn and understand its contents on one hand and practicalise its teachings on the other. Learning, understanding and putting the teachings of this Great Book into practice is very paramount. It is through the knowledge of the Book that many other aspects of learning are pursued and acquired. Therefore, in order to acquire or learn the Qur'ān, establishment of venues or centres became imperative. These centres or venues now are referred to as Qurā'nic schools. This study discusses the concept of Qurā'nic schools, aims and objectives of Qur'ānic schools, nature of learning the Qur'ān in the Sokoto Caliphate, moral problems associated with the Qur'ānic school learning system in our present time and the causes of these moral problems. Finally, some recommendations are proffered with a view to helping to improve the present condition.

The Concept of Qur'ānic Schools

Qur'ānic schools refer to the basic elementary level of learning in most Muslim societies. This basic level involves the learning of Arabic alphabets and memorization of the verses and chapters of the Qur'ān. Schools like this abound in many cities, towns and villages that are dominated by Muslims. In Nigeria, they are very common in the Northern and Western parts where the populace is predominantly Muslims. Lessons in these schools are usually conducted in the morning hours or evening depending on the convenience of the community concerned. The lessons are usually attended by children from the ages of 3 to 12 or even above.

Aims and Objectives of the Qur'ānic Schools

Learning the Qur'ān is very important in Islam. Establishment of Qur'ānic schools is considered very meritorious and the proprietors will earn bounteous reward from Allah. That is why many well-to-do persons establish Qur'ānic schools, employ teachers who are paid monthly or based on what was agreed upon. Some teachers who have knowledge of the Qur'ān and other sciences of Islam do establish their own Qur'ānic schools or use part of their houses as Qur'ānic schools to teach pupils of the locality how to read the Qur'ān and other sciences.

Like any school system, the Qur'ānic school has its aims and objectives. Qur'ānic school education basically, aims at inculcating what Badaru al-Isman calls “eternal values that are unchangeable and very clear.”¹ It is at first to acquaint the learner with the skills of reading the Qur'ān starting from the memorization by heart of few verses and short chapters, to learning writing of the alphabets. Secondly, Qur'ānic school education, as the starting point of learning, aims at inculcating in the learners, strong relationship with Allah in a way that he/she will be aware that all his/her actions are linked with Him. This is so because Allah says: “Truly my prayer, my service, my life and my death are (all) for Allah the Cherisher of the Worlds (Q6:162). Thus, it is in the Qur'ānic schools that the seed of abiding by the Qur'ānic ideals, having unquestionable loyalty to Allah and following the footsteps of the Prophet (SAW) is sowed. Purification of the souls of the individuals from negative attitudes is one of the objectives of Qur'ānic schools.² In other words, in the Qur'ānic schools, learners are expected to know Allah and believe in Him; know the Prophet (SAW) as the last Messenger of Allah and his family; acquire piety and render services to Allah; and learn virtuous behaviours and practice them in day-to-day life.³ Therefore, any Qur'ānic school that fails to provide these virtues is a failure.

Nature of Qur'ānic Schools in the Sokoto Caliphate

With the success of the Sokoto Jihad, many learning activities sprang up in the caliphate. Qur'ānic schools were established in order to educate the populace on the Qur'ān like how to read and write the verses and *suwar*. While trying to show the magnitude of Qur'ānic schools in the caliphate, Balogun postulated that Abdulkadir bin Gidado bin Lema had Qur'ānic school which at that time had 400 students attending lessons at different times.⁴ He further noted that there were similar schools that were established at the same time with Gidado's and they were not less than fifty.⁵ The contributions of these Qur'ānic schools included the production of about 136, 165 pupils and 142 teachers in the various schools established by the Jihadists in the first, second and third generations respectively.⁶

The greatest benefit that the caliphate had from the Qur'ānic schools was not production of scholars that are highly morally upright alone, but also helped in the running of the caliphate governance. Many of these enlightened scholars assisted in the resuscitation of unity and peaceful coexistence in the Caliphate, administration of the caliphate and learning of the Qur'ān and other Islamic sciences. Appointments to key positions were made among them. For instance, the post of vizier was given to Gidado, then his son Abdulkadir; the latter was described as the “most learned of the then generation of the inhabitants of Sokoto.” The post of *Mu'azzin* went to scholars like Ahmad; Sharif Imam, Abubkar Malam, Secretary to the Caliph, Sidi Shaykh. He was also legal adviser as well as doctor to the caliphate administration. Qadi Malam Musa, Qadiri Shaykh, Qamar al-Din etc. were all part of the scholars that were given posts to assist in the day-to-day affairs of the caliphate. This had helped tremendously in uniting as well as fostering peaceful coexistence and cooperation in the *ummah*.

Learning in the Qur'ānic schools then was not modernized. In most cases, slates were used due to lack of adequate or absence of paper. Many of this type of schools were built by the caliphate government or individual scholars and some rich persons who

employed Qur'ānic teachers to oversee the schools. Some of these practices continue till today.

Unlike the period of the Sokoto Jihad leaders where these Qur'ānic schools are known and controlled, it is very difficult today, even with the efforts that the governments at state and federal levels are making. In fact, it is very difficult to give an accurate figure of the total number of Qur'ānic schools in the country presently. This is so because of the total absence of guidelines on the establishment of Qur'ānic schools and even if they exist, they are not enforced strictly. In addition, there is lack of effective supervisory body and there is the desire of some proprietors of the schools to make worldly gains as the main priority.

Moral Problems of Begging by Learners of Qur'ānic Schools

Moral problems bedeviling Qur'ānic schools due to begging in Nigeria are many. Few of these moral problems are discussed briefly below:

1. Roaming streets aimlessly.

In this way, learners waste time, which they are supposed to use in learning and acquiring the knowledge of the Qur'ān and other Islamic sciences. This practice is very common among learners whose teachers are itinerant. These teachers move from one place to another exposing the children to all kinds of hazards. They have no accommodation for their learners nor do they have means of feeding them. Consequently, the learners were left to roam the streets, market places and other business centres at the expense of their leaning. Instead, they resort to begging.

2. Resorting to begging to meet the daily needs particularly feeding

As seen briefly above, that Qur'ānic schools were established since the time of the *Sahaba* down to the period of the Sokoto Caliphate to the present time with the aim of achieving some objectives. However, what is happening among the Qur'ānic school children now is alarming and needs serious attention. Begging which means to “ask somebody for something especially in an anxious way because you want or need it very much.”⁷ Therefore, begging is the movement of people from place to place or house to house seeking for charity in form of cash or food, or clothes and the likes.

Islam is vehemently against begging. In many traditions of the Prophet (SAW), begging was discouraged or even condemned. The Prophet (SAW) is reported by Abdullah bn 'Umar to have said while addressing people on the Pulpit (*Mimbar*), regarding charity and restraining oneself from begging thus “the hand that is higher is better than the hand the is lower, begging.”⁸ In another tradition, as reported by Abu Hurairah, he said: “By the One in Whose Hand my life is, it is better for anyone of you to get rope and fetch fire-wood on his back (and sell to make a living), than to approach a man whom Allah has given out of His bounties, and ask him who may give you or not.”⁹

The implication of begging among children of Qur'ānic schools is that they are being trained to become professional beggars instead of scholars and morally upright persons. Income gotten from begging is an easy money for no much toil was made to get the money. Therefore, as the children to continue to beg and get money through this way and become used to the practice, they do not work for lawful earning. Rather, they

follow people, place-to-place or house to house to beg. Consequently, the moral uprightness that they are expected to acquire at the schools will be absent. They will abandon their learning and take begging as a profession, which looks lucrative. Learning the Qur'ān, which is the main objective of sending them to the Qur'ānic schools will hardly take place.

Another moral implication of begging among Qur'ānic school children is the inculcation in them negative values of laziness and idleness. Islam is against laziness and idleness. Islam teaches that people should work hard to earn a living. They are to engage in any venture or activity that does not go contrary to the *Shari'ah* so as to feed themselves and their family.¹⁰ Idleness is the opposite and is vehemently condemned by Islam. This was emphasized in the writings of the Jihad scholars. Bello was very stern on this. He quoted many traditions of the Prophet (SAW) and sayings of the companions to prove that idleness is not encouraged by Islam. According to Bello, Ibn Masud said: "I detest seeing a man making no effort neither for his worldly life nor for the life to come."¹¹

In many traditions, the Prophet (SAW) has discouraged idleness and instead urged Muslims to shun begging but to engage in trade in order to be independent of others. He said: "Take to trade, because there are nine portions in it out of ten portions of all income."¹² Umar b. al-Khattab said: "selling grass by one of you is better than his being a loafer."¹³ These are some evidences to show that Islam condemned idleness and begging. Therefore, learning the Qur'ān and other Islamic sciences will be seriously affected if the present trend of begging among Qur'ānic school pupils is allowed to continue. Idleness which begging is inculcating among Qur'ānic school children is immoral and therefore should not be encouraged.

3. Acquiring of immoral behaviours like stealing, homosexuality etc.

Acquiring of immoral values like stealing and homosexuality are also among the moral problems of resorting to begging among children of Qur'ānic schools. Since begging involves moving from place to place looking for food or money, many times these pupils do engage in stealing of people's belongings. Sometimes they hawk along restaurants and food vendors washing plates and other containers. In this process, they are exposed to stealing minor items. Gradually, the habit of stealing becomes inculcated in their conducts. Worst still, is that this hawking sometimes made them become involved in homosexuality. The case of a Qur'ānic or Islamiyyah school in Kaduna State as recently pointed out by the State Police Command is a point to reckon with.

4. Withdrawal from Qur'ānic schools to join gangs

Next moral problem of begging among Qur'ānic school children is that it leads to withdrawal from Qur'ānic schools for joining of gangs. Since begging looks lucrative than staying in schools to learn, there is that likelihood that the pupils withdraw from school to look for money. In this process, they are recruited to be members of criminal gangs. This is evident in the case of Boko Haram in Borno State. Many of the children from Qur'ānic schools withdrew and were used by Boko Haram members to prosecute their activities. They used them to move explosives to public places or places that the insurgents designate as a target. Consequently, many of the children left their schools and joined the group. Similarly, pupils from Qur'ānic schools are mobilized by

hoodlums to fuel crises during protests or peaceful demonstrations. Resultantly, the peaceful demonstrations become violent and bloody.

5. Becoming victims of some people who engage in human rituals

Begging, sometimes also makes the children to become victims of people who engage in human sacrifices. Examples of this are many. One is the famous case where Qur'ānic school pupils' eyes were plucked in Sokoto and Zaria by unknown persons. In addition to this, the cases of nine children from Kano State, four in Gombe State and two in Kebbi State who were kidnapped, sold, had their names and religion changed are to be reckoned with. Some of these children were abducted from Northern Nigeria by Non-Muslims while they were going to Qur'ānic schools or roaming about in the town. They were sold and converted to Christianity. In fact, there are still claims that many children from Kano State are still at large. Thus, showing the need to discourage begging among children in Northern Nigeria.

Causes of Moral Problems in Qur'ānic Schools

There is anxiety among parents to see that their children excel in possessing the knowledge of the Qur'ān. This has given birth to higher enrollment of learners, especially children within the ages of 3 and 10 in different Qur'ānic schools. Many times, the parents just carry their children to some of these schools without taking pains to find out about the schools. On the other hand, some of the schools have no limits to the number of students they can enroll. In addition, some of the schools have no adequate space to accommodate the learners nor do they have the means to take care of the daily needs of the pupils. Some of the schools are just attachments to the houses of the teachers. Worse still, some of the teachers are itinerants, moving from one place to another with the pupils, particularly from the rural to urban or city areas. In the urban and cities, life styles are difficult and meeting conditions of learning is very hard to be met. Consequently, pupils from the Qur'ānic schools are forced to roam on the streets during the period when lessons are not on going and in most cases, it resorts to begging in order to meet daily needs particularly feeding. In the process, they become subjected to various abuses. In brief, some of the causes of moral problems of begging in Qur'ānic schools are discussed below:

- a) Over-population in some of the schools, which as a result, the teachers cannot control the movement of the children. In fact, there is no control over the number of the Qur'ānic schools. Unlike the period of the Sokoto caliphate where Qur'ānic schools were known and controlled by the government. Today, knowing the exact number is difficult if not impossible, not to talk of knowing their exact figures.
- b) Poverty among most of the parents is another cause. Many parents claim to be poor and could not care for the up-keep and other requirements of their children in the Qur'ānic schools. Due to this, they dump their wards with the teachers and do not bother whether things are moving in the right direction or not.
- c) Little or lack of concern from the part of governments. There is little or no concern from the governments at Federal, State and Local government levels. The Qur'ānic schools are not regulated or monitored like the secular primary

schools. The teachers in the Qur'ānic schools are not given much regard as their counterparts in the primary schools.

- d) Materialism on the part of some of the teachers in the Qur'ānic schools. This is where they depend on their pupils to bring something monetary to them. This consequently forced some of the children to resort to begging.
- e) Misunderstanding of Islamic position on begging. Many children in the Qur'ānic schools think that begging is permitted by Islam. In fact, some think that it is even rewarding to beg. This perception is due to lack of enlightenment because Islam has not institutionalized begging.
- f) Morally bankrupt society. Our society is dirty and morally bankrupt to the extent that people are always ready to take advantage of any situation to make money without a concern for moral issues. It is because of this reason that some children who engage in hawking in an attempt to look for food are captured and got their eyes plucked out or sometimes even killed for sacrifices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To conclude this study, it is important to stress that emanation of immorality in Qur'ānic schools is sad indeed. Begging as a practice is not condoned in many civilized societies. The Qur'ān is pure and as a result should be the venue where knowledge of the Qur'ān is given. Its products are supposed to be the most morally acclaimed persons in the society. Therefore, any challenge that erupts to prevent the realization of moral uprightness in these schools must be addressed. Based on what has been discussed so far, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should regulate and control the Qur'ānic schools in order to ascertain their number for easy and effective administration.
- ii. Salary should be paid to the teachers in Qur'ānic schools like their counterparts in the primary schools.
- iii. Teachers of Qur'ānic schools should try to engage in some sort of trade to earn a living rather than depending on the products of begging brought by their pupils.
- iv. Begging should be checkmated by the governments.
- v. There should be inclusion of moral training in the curriculum for both the teachers of Qur'ānic schools and their pupils
- vi. Feeding of pupils from Qur'ānic schools should be shouldered by the community and government while the rich can be employed to render assistance.
- vii. All those who are found to have abused children should be prosecuted and punished according to the extant laws
- viii. Muslims should imbibe moral values and bear in mind that whatever good act one does, one gets rewards.

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE *ṢŪFI* CONTRIBUTIONS TO *TAḤFĪZU'L-QUR'ĀN* IN ILORIN

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Introduction

The Glorious Qur'ān is regarded, especially by the Muslims, as the leading and recognised Islamic religious scripture across the globe. It is also regarded as the first primary source of Islamic law (*Shari'ah*).¹ The names of the Qur'ān are numerous such as; *Al-Burhān* (The Evidence; Q4:173), *Adh-Dhkir* (The Reminder; Q36:69), *Al-Kitāb* (The Book; Q2:2), *Al-Furqān* (The Criterion; Q25:1) and many more.² Indeed, the revelation of the Glorious Qur'ān is a blessing and guidance for the entire Muslims, and even non-Muslims. It comprises of both the secular and religious matters. It also contains a number of laws. It is a book of history, science and sociology, and many more. The Qur'ān is a compendium of all knowledge - both terrestrial and celestial affairs. In short, the *ʿIjāz* (miraculous nature) of the Qur'ān is unique and inimitable.³ It is the written words of Allah which is inevitable and matchless.⁴ A scholar observes that:

The Qur'ān is the word of Allah that reveals to the seal of the Prophets; Muhammad (peace be upon him) in both verbatim and meaning. It enshrines meaningful frequent pronunciation in verses and certainty, and its recitation is a form of worship. It is written in a book from *sūratu'l-Fātiḥah* to *sūratu'n-Nās*.⁵

Indispensably, the Qur'ān is considered as the highest miracle because such could not be produced or formed by anybody or group of people (Q10:38-39). Thus, the uniqueness of the literary style, grammatical expression and configuration of the Qur'ān is greatly admired by scholars. For example, Al-Ilory posits that:

The Qur'ān was revealed in a literary style that is indispensably unique and exclusive as it is neither a prose nor poetry! Rather the Qur'ān is *Dhikr* as affirmed in Q36:69⁶ and some other verses.⁷

Badmos further explains that the uniqueness of the Qur'ān is manifested in its language and style, contents and arrangement, as well as rhetoric. This is why the experts in the field of rhetoric and style could neither found any error in the Qur'ān nor produce something similar to it.⁸ The Qur'ān is revealed to the Prophet for the period of twenty-three years in Makkah and Madīnah respectively. The revelation started when the Prophet was about forty years old and ended at the age of sixty-three. Actually, Prophet Muhammad was *Umiyy* (an unlettered) Messenger of Allah, yet he received the Qur'ān from Allah through Angel Jibrīl who dictated it to him. The Prophet, having received the Qur'ān, immediately dictated it to his *ṣaḥābah* and asked some of them to record it

down.⁹ Thus, the necessity of recitation of the Qur’ān became a task on the Prophet and his companions, as Allah says: “...and recite the Qur’ān as it ought to be recited” (Q73:4). In shedding more light on this, the Prophet was reported to have said that: “Recite the Qur’ān, for it will come on the day of resurrection as mediator (intercessor) for its companions (reciter).”¹⁰

In lieu of these illustrations and many more, the Prophet and his *ṣaḥābah* embarked on the recitation of the Qur’ān through *tahfīzu’l-Qur’ān* and documentation of its verses and chapters. Thenceforth, *tahfīzu’l-Qur’ān* was given priority among the *ṣaḥābah* to the extent that it was later regarded as one of the fabulous and meritorious act of *‘Ibādah* (worship). The Prophet says: “The best act of *‘Ibādah* of my *ummah* is recitation of the Glorious Qur’ān”¹¹. However, the legacy of committing the Qur’ān into memory has become hereditary among the Muslims of all ages hitherto.

Brief Historical Trends of *Tahfīzu’l-Qur’ān*

One of the articulate methods adopted by the Prophet to retain the Qur’ān is the *tahfīzu’l-Qur’ān*. He also dictated the verses to his companions and instructed them to commit them into memory. Thus, the memorisation of the Qur’ān gradually commenced. Interestingly, a number of *ṣaḥābah* committed the Qur’ān into memory. Among them were: Abūbakr bn Abī Qaḥāffah, ‘Umar bn Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān, ‘Alī bn Abī Ṭālib, Khālid bn Sa‘īd, Mu‘āwiyah bn Abī Sufyān, Zayd bn Thābit, and a host of others.¹² Another method applied is that the Prophet used to direct his companions to write any verse or chapter revealed to him down. Ibn ‘Abbās reports that:

كان رسول الله إذا نزلت عليه سورة دعا بعض من يكتب فقال: ضعوا
هذه السورة في الموضع الذي يذكر فيه كذا وكذا

If any chapter (of the Qur’ān) is revealed to the Messenger of Allah, he would call those who could scribe it and would say: write this chapter in the verse that so and so is mentioned.¹³

This Ḥadīth gives an insight that the configuration of the Qur’ānic chapters and verses are unambiguous right from the time of the Prophet; and that its compilation had been completely done. Thus, it was written on different materials such as, pieces of palm trees, wood, flat stones, parchments, for documentation.¹⁴ Some of the *ṣaḥābah* such as his four rightly guided caliphs, Mu‘āwiyah bn Abī Sufyān, Zayd bn Thābit, Ubay bn Ka‘ab¹⁵, and host of others, were the Prophets scribes who were put to the task. However, the task of standardisation of the Qur’ān had been perfectly done during the time of ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān, and that was why it is named as *Ar-Rasm al-‘Uthmānī* (‘Uthmānic edition) which is in use until today.

It is obvious from the illustration that there is no much or less question on the compilation and standardisation (documentation) of the Qur’ān, especially after the time of *ṣaḥābah*. Thenceforth, the areas focused by scholars are *tahfīzu’l-Qur’ān*, study of the Qur’ān and the science of *Tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur’ān), especially after the time of the *ṣaḥābah*. However, up till today the Qur’ān is still read, memorised and taught in its original language (Arabic) by millions of people across the world.

Importance of *Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān*

Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān as said earlier was the earliest form of transmission of the text and has been practised since revelation began. Generally, in Islam, it is an obligation for memorisation of the Qur'ān as much as it is possible for the Muslims, because every act of *ʿIbādah* particularly *ṣalāt* (ritual prayer) requires recitation of portion of the Qur'ān. The Prophet says: “He in whose heart there is no part of the Qur'ān is like unto a desert house.”¹⁶ In addition, its recitation is an act of *ʿIbādah* itself, where both the reciter and the listener would be rewarded abundantly from Allah. Thus, the virtue of the recitation of the Qur'ān has become a spectacular practice right from the time of the Prophet. Ibn Mas'ūd narrates that:

The Prophet asks me: recite the Qur'ān to me. He says: I say; I should recite it to you, and on you it is revealed? He (The Prophet) says: I like to hear it from others. So, I recite *sūratu'n-Nisā'* till I reach “How (will it be) then when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people? (Q4:41). Then, he (the Prophet) asks me to stop. Hence, I see tears coming out from his eyes.¹⁷

Beside that of *ṣalāt*, there is justification according to the Ḥadīth for the recitation of the Qur'ān. Perhaps this is the reason why *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* competition is given priority among the Muslim scholars. In addition to this, the portfolio of Imāmship (religious leadership) is preferred for he who memorises much among the contesting aspirants.¹⁸ Moreso, in the scenario of the battle of *'Uḥud*, two or three martyrs were buried together in the same grave, and the Prophet would ask them to put first the most memoriser of the Qur'ān inside the tomb among them, and he (the Prophet) would say: “I will bear witness for them on the day of resurrection.”¹⁹ This is why it is even regarded as a *sunnah* of the Prophet. Portion memorised is also useful for *da'wah* work. It is very interestingly obvious that *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* was given reputation right from the time of the Prophet. Beside the religious factors, *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* has some other benefits, such as the followings:

- a. it stimulates the sense of creativity for the memoriser;
- b. it boosts and widens the potential horizon of the retentive memory;
- c. it removes evil spirits from the mind and body of the memoriser, and even the environment or places where the Qur'ān is recited;
- d. it facilitates the mind of endurance and makes the memoriser (reciter) to proffer articulate solution to any problem he may experience;²⁰
- e. it is a means of harmonising some languages through proper pronunciation of letters, because the Qur'ān combines some of the letters used in the world in different dialect;
- f. it leads to a deeper understanding of the messages of the Qur'ān and to have deeper faith in Allah;
- g. memorisation and repetition of the Qur'ān facilitates frequent remembrance of Allah cum His message;

- h. memorisation of the *aḥkām* (legal matters) passages leads to more consciousness and determination; and many more;²¹
- i. one who reads the Qur'ān, learns it and acts upon it, will crown his parents on the Last Day and will clothe them with cloaks that are valuable than the whole world. They deserve this, due to the importance paid to al-Qurān by the child (through their care).

Synopsis of the *Ṣūfis cum Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān*

Generally, *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* has become an imperative assignment to the *Ṣūfis*. Although *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* as opined by Imām Suyūṭī is *fard kiffāyah*²² (an obligation that is not compulsory on everybody), the *Ṣūfis* see it as hereditary from the Prophet and his companions which ought to be appraised and immortalised. Secondly, it is a way of showing and consolidating the miracles of the Qur'ān and its eloquence in terms of pronunciation, articulation and coherence. In a nutshell, the Qur'ān which is proved as the source of Islamic *taṣawwuf* is vividly embraced and revered by the *Ṣūfis*.

In an attempt to immortalise the Qur'ān, a number of prominent *Ṣūfi* scholars committed it into memory at their early age. For example, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī one of the foremost *Ṣūfis* memorised the Glorious Qur'ān at the age of fourteen despite the fact that his parents were slaves and that his father Abū al-Ḥasan bn Yaṣār al-Baṣrī was then newly converted to Islam. Shaykh Aḥmad Tijānī (1737-1815) was born in 'Aynu'l-Māḍ in South Algeria. He was the founder of Tijānīyah order. To his credit, he memorised the Glorious Qur'ān at the age of seven.²³ Another *Ṣūfi* exponent who is popularly known as the Reformer of the Tijānīyah order; Shaykh Ibrahīm bn Abdullah Ni'ass (1900-1975), was born in Kawlakh. He also memorised the Qur'ān at the age of seven. It is very credible that all the seventy-five children of Shaykh Ibrahim both males and females also memorised the Qur'ān before they reached age of ten.²⁴

Equally, Shaykh Hasan Cisse (1945-2008) who was the grandson of Shaykh Ibrahim and the former Chief Imam of Madinah Kawlakh Mosque in Senegal also memorised the Qur'ān at age of eight years. Another exponent of Tijānīyah, Shaykh 'Uthmān Ṭāhir Bauchi (b.1927) memorised the Qur'ān at the early age. It is very fabulous to say that about sixty-one among the children of the Shaykh have memorised the Qur'ān and his one hundred and sixteen among his grand children have also memorised the Qur'ān. Currently, the total number of *al-Ḥuffāz* (the Qur'ān memorisers) among the descendants of the Shaykh was one hundred and eighty.²⁵ Beyond any doubt, it is glaring from the illustrations that the *Ṣūfis* hold firmly with the memorisation of the Qur'ān, and it has become their primary assignment. Thus, this legacy seems to be inherited by some *Ṣūfis* across the globe, the city of Ilorin inclusive.

Growth and Development of *Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* in Ilorin

According to Al-Ilori, Ilorin was established towards the end of eighteenth century in the year 1780, thirty years before the arrival of Shaykh 'Ālimi.²⁶ The town since the establishment has been popularly known as the home of peace. This is because of their adherence and love for the Qur'ān. More importantly, the arrival of Shaykh Ṣāliḥ bn Aḥmad Janta popularly known as 'Ālimi to the town after some years of its establishment was a landmark of progress and unprecedented development to the

reading and studying the science of the Qurʾān. Shaykh ʿĀlimi was an erudite Islamic scholar who hailed from Sokoto. He was blessed with *karamāt* (charismatic miracles) and *Istijābah* (acceptance of prayer).²⁷ In addition to this, his epitomic knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies, especially the half-part of *tafsīruʾl-Jalālayn* of the Qurʾān which he brought to Ilorin, made his contemporaries among the hosting scholars in Ilorin to name him as ʿĀlimi (a Knowledgeable Scholar),²⁸ and hence they accepted him as their leader. Since the inception of Shaykh ʿĀlimi, Ilorin has been flourished in the recitation and studying the science of the Glorious Qurʾān.

After the death of Shaykh Ālimi in 1820, his son ʿAbduʾs-Salām emerged as the first Emir of Ilorin. To his credit, the Emir recruited the specialists in the Qurʾān from Hausaland to teach the sciences of the Qurʾān in Ilorin. Very interestingly, after the death of ʿAbduʾs-Salām, his successor Shīta gave maximum support to the growth and development of Islamic sciences and arts. He employed scholars from among the Hausa and Nupe to train the Ilorin people the science of the Qurʾān. Fortunately, his son, Maḥmūd was among the beneficiaries. The development of the Qurʾānic studies made one of the Emirʾs sons, Muhammad to become the first *Hāfiẓ* (the memoriser of the Qurʾān) in Ilorin. To his credit, he equally mastered the seven authentic forms of the Qurʾānic recitation and subsequently became the authority in the field.

It is a pride to say that a number of *al-Huffāz* were found in Ilorin in twentieth century, such as: Hāfiẓ Shaykh Muhammad Jumuʿah Baba-Ita (d. 1945) who committed into memory the Qurʾān and *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and Shaykh Muhammad al-Mukhtār bn Abī-Bakr Isale-Koto (d. 1955). Also, Shaykh Girgisu bn Abī-Bakr al-Katsināwi (d. 1930) and Shaykh Muhammad al-Amīn Babata (d. 1951).²⁹ Shaykh Muhammad bn Habīb bn Mūsa al-Adaby (d. 2005) memorised the Qurʾān at age of ten and embarked on *daʿwah* at the age of fifteen. Shaykh Muhammad Thambu, Imām of Alore also memorised the Qurʾān³⁰. Thenceforth, Ilorin became popular in the recitation of the Qurʾān up till today.

Brief History of *Taşawwuf* in Ilorin

Historically, *taşawwuf* according to Martin Lings and R.W. Austin, is entirely originated in Islam.³¹ The emergence of *taşawwuf* in Ilorin in the nineteen century has been given priority. Impressively, a number of *Şūfi* orders have emerged in Ilorin, such as Qādiriyah, Tijāniyah, Rifāʿiyah, Ikhilāṣiyah, etc. However, the Tijāniyah, which is the focus of this study, shall be discussed briefly. The penetration of the Tijāniyah in Ilorin was said to have been initiated by one Shaykh Muhammad Wāli of Ita-Kudimo Area, in Ilorin, before he was tortured to death. Fortunately, Waliʾs death revived and paved way for the great acceptance of the Tijāniyah in Ilorin because of the *karāmāt* (charismatic miracles) that happened in his grave.³²

However, the Tijāniyah resurfaced in Ilorin after the returning of Mallam ʿAbduʾs-Salām (d.1942) from Makkah. Through him, people were initiated into the order and these included Al-Ḥājj Abūbakr Alore, Al-Ḥājj Nda-Rabi, Al-Ḥājj Oniwa Kuntu, Muhammad Al-Ghazzālī, etc. The first *Zāwiyah* in Ilorin was said to have been constructed in 1896 by Al-Ḥājj Abduʾs-Salām³³, while in 1918 another one was built at Adangba area in Ilorin by *Muqaddam* Bashar (d.1956). Al-Ḥājj Eleha was also reported

to have been among the precursors who made the Tijāniyah spread rapidly in Ilorin because of his *karāmāt* (charismatic miracles).

Contributions of the *Ṣūfis* to *Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* in Ilorin

It is imperative to note that the *Ṣūfis* have made a landmark in the development of *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* in Ilorin. For example, Shaykh Kamālu'd-Dīn Al-Adaby was a *Ṣūfi* and *al-Hāfiẓ* as well.³⁴ In addition, Al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Umar bn Khalīfah Baba Taofiq is one of the direct sons of one time Grand *Khalīfah* of Tijāniyah in Kwara State (Baba Taofiq). He memorised the whole Qur'ān in Gussau, Zamfara State and graduated in 1998.³⁵ There are many more people among them who are *huffāz*. This and some other factors influenced the *Ṣūfis* to establish *madārīs* (Arabic schools) for *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* in Ilorin. However, only four out of these schools are discussed in this present work as follows:

a. *Madrasat Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān li'l-Shaykh Ibrahīm Ni'ass*

The school was established by Shaykh Abūbakr Sidīq Yūsuf Abayawo. He was born in Lokoja in 1941/Rajab 1360AH to the family of Al-Ḥājj Yūsuf bn Aḥmad Rufā'i bn Muhammad Qāsim who hailed from Agbade Area, Oke-Apomu, Ilorin.³⁶ His mother was Alhaja Fāṭimah Ajoke bnt 'Abdu's-Salām, the granddaughter of *Amīr* Mama, one time Emir of Ilorin. Shaykh Agbade has opportunity of having both Arabic and Western education. He was one time a civil servant between 1962 to 1985. He was initiated into Tijāniyah order in 1953. To his credit, he established *zawāyah* in Katsina (1963), Sokoto (1966) and Kogi (1967), before he finally came back to Ilorin in 1967. He is very popular among the followers of Shaykh Ibrahim Ni'ass. He has travelled time without number to Faz and Kawlakh; the home cities of Shaykh Aḥmad Tijāni and Shaykh Ibrahīm Ni'ass respectively. He celebrates every year the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, Shaykh Tijāni and Shaykh Ibrahīm Ni'ass respectively.

Shaykh Agbade is a prolific writer who has a number of books particularly on *taṣawwuf* cum Tijāniyah such as, "A Translation of The Hierarchy of Sufism in Islam of Shaykh Ibrahīm Ni'ass" into English, "The Light: Twenty-Five Questions and Answers on the *Tarīqah* of Tijāniyah", "Touch Light into TIMSAN, IOTB and *Ṣūfi* Brothers", "The Loss of the time for the Deviants to the Guide of the Time", and among others. He has a very big *Jumu'at* mosque which he named as *Masjid Istijābah lil-Shaykh Ibrahīm Ni'ass* at Medinah, Abayawo Area, Ilorin. He is currently the Chief Imām of the mosque. He has thousands of *Murīdis* (disciples) across the nation and even beyond.³⁷

The school, *Madrasat Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān li'l-Shaykh Ibrahīm Ni'ass* was established by Shaykh Agbade in the year 2010 at Medinah Alagabado, Gaa Osibi Area, Ilorin. At the initial stage, one *Mallam Al-Ḥāfiẓ* Ibrahim Dan Dūmi from Maiduguri was employed as the facilitator with the financial assistance of the Shaykh single-handedly. Ibrahim later left the school in 2011. After his departure, the direct sons of the Shaykh *Al-Ḥāfiẓ* Hamzat Abūbakar and *Al-Ḥāfiẓ* Abdullah Ahmad Fazāzī emerged as the facilitators in the school. Interestingly, the first set of *Al-Huffāz* of the whole Qur'ān graduated in 2017. They were seven in number. Among them were Abdu'r-Raḥmān Ibrahim from Okene, 'Isā Ḥasan from Niger State, Salmān 'Abdu'r-Razzāq from Ilorin, and others.

It is noted that the students of the school come from different parts of Nigeria, not only Ilorin alone. For instance, presently, the students in the school are from Kogi, Kaduna,

Nasarawa, Ondo, Lagos, Oyo, Niger, Osun, Kwara, etc. Impressively, the prospective second batch of the memorisers of the Qur'ān was celebrated in the year 2020. The present population of the school is one hundred and sixty-nine. Beside *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* school, the Shaykh also established some other schools, such as *Markaz Ihyāu'l-Islām fī Dirāsāti'l-ʿArabiyyah* where both *Ibtidā'iyyah* and *Idādiyyah* classes are being operated in the evening time. Three years are programmed for each stage respectively. A number of students have been graduated from both stages. Presently, the number of the students in *Ibtidā'iyyah* is sixty and *Idādiyyah* is thirty-five. 'Ustādh Daw'ūd Muhammad Tihāmy, 'Ustādh Ahmad Tijāni, and a host of others are the teachers in the school.

Another Arabic and Islamic school is also established as a special academic programme for *Al-Fulāniyyūn*/the Fulanis i.e. the students who are from Republic of Benin; those who do not understand Yoruba Language. Presently, they are more than thirty in number. 'Ustādh Ahmad Badmas is chosen to be their facilitator because of his ability to hear and speak Fulani language. As a method of making reconciliation between Arabic and Western education, Shaykh Agbade established another Group of schools named *Kulliyyah Ash-Shaykh Ibrahim Ni'ass fī Ad-Dirāsāti'l-Islāmiyyah Wal-ʿArabiyyah*. The school operates both primary and secondary schools in line with Western system of education; nevertheless, both Arabic and Islamic Studies are also taught in the school.

In considering the problems of the school, it is pathetic that despite the commitment of Shaykh Agbade to the development of *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* in particular and Arabic/Islamic in general, a lot of challenges are facing the institutions. First and foremost is the financial problem; most of the students' parents only pay for the tuition fees at the first entrance of their children into the school, after which most of the parents neglect payment for the school fees and their wards' feeding. This ugly situation imposes the responsibility on Shaykh Agbade by providing accommodation and feeding of three square meals freely for almost one hundred and fifty students every day. Another challenge is that, neither a philanthropist nor government intervenes financially to help the school. Therefore, the situation forced the Shaykh to embark on farming as an alternative means of sustaining the livelihood of his students and family.³⁸

b. Markaz Raḥmatu'llahi li-tahfīzi'l-Qur'ān Farʿu li-Markaz Shaykh'Uthmān Bauchi

The proprietor of this school is Dr. Haruna Mohammed Ndakogi. He was born in Tsaragi in Edu Local Government of Kwara State. He had his highest degree as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria between 1975 and 1980. Ndakogi was an administrative person per excellence. To his credit, he had occupied different government portfolios at both the state and the national levels. At the national level, he was Deputy Director, Federal Civil Service Commission, 2009-2011; Deputy Director, Air Force Hardware, Ministry of Defense, 2007-2009; Deputy Director (Planning and Monitoring), 2003-2007, and many more. At the state level, he was formerly the Director, Kwara State Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), 1988-1994. On special assignment, he was formerly the Honourable Commissioner for Works, Land and Housing, 1985-1987, Honourable

Commissioner of Kwara State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives, 1995-1999. He is a *Ṣūfi* of note who belongs to Tijāniyah order. He is presently given the title of *Samari-N-Faydah* of Tijāniyah in Kwara State. He is married and blessed with children.³⁹

The school, *Markaz Raḥmatu'llahi li-tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* was officially established in 1992 at Tanke area, Ilorin, through the influence of his wife, *Al-Ḥāfīzah* Maryam Ndakogi who is one of the daughters of Shaykh ʿUthmān Ṭāhir Bauchi. Ndakogi married Maryam at the age of fourteen, who had already memorised the whole Qur'ān before getting married. However, Ndakogi sought permission from Shaykh Bauchi to establish *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* school and hence his wife (Maryam) became the first facilitator in the school. According to him, the institution is said to be the first *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* school in Ilorin. Initially, the facilitation began inside the mosque, and in 1993, Ndakogi started the construction of the school. In 1994, the construction of the school was completed and officially commissioned by one time Emir of Ilorin, Emir Abdu'l-Qādir Baba Agba.

There are some facilities provided in the school such as standard latrine sponsored by UNICEF, electricity and a motorised borehole. Equally, boarding accommodation is provided for the students, and boarders among them are given three square meals satisfactorily. It is interesting to note that the school since its establishment has been producing a number of *Al-Ḥuffāz* (the memorisers of the whole Qur'ān) almost every-year. The first graduation ceremony started in 1998, where only a male student was graduated. In 1999 and 2000, there were two and six graduands respectively. A total number of ten *Al-Ḥuffāz* (memorisers) graduated in the year 2019. However, the total number of *Al-Ḥuffāz* who had graduated from the school was more than one hundred. It is interesting to say that some among them have become lawyers, doctors, lecturers, etc. in their respective carriers. There is equally a large patronage from different parts of the countries and even beyond. For instance, students come from Ekiti, Oyo, Lagos, Jagawa, Osun and Adamawa States, as well as Republic of Niger.

The school has been registered with the Kwara State Ministry of Education. There is administrative hierarchy in the school. For example, there are Dr. M. N. Haruna (Patron), *Al-Ḥāfīzah* Maryam Haruna (Proprietress), *Al-Ḥafīz* ʿUthmān Abdullah (Principal), *Al-Ḥafīz* Tukur Muhammad Zaria (Vice Principal) and Alhaji G. Salam (School Secretary). In another development, another school was established where both Arabic and Islamic studies are taught, but as a result of financial factor, it is gradually going into oblivion. The school presently has a number of fifty-five students comprising of both *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* and non-*tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* students.

The school is facing a lot of challenges, especially financial one. Despite the tuition fee which is very low, some of the parents are still defaulting. For example, the tuition fee for the boarders is five thousand naira and their counterparts (non-boarders) pay three thousand naira only. According to the patron, it is only the first payment that is paid by the parents, but many parents became defaulters in the subsequent payments. This experience is worsening the development of the school. In an attempt to seek for government assistance, the patron expresses that various letters had been forwarded to the Kwara State government since 1999 to date, but there was no positive result. It was

during the time of Dr. Abdul-Fatah Ahmad government that the school was given the total sum of Two hundred and fifty thousand naira (₦250,000) in 2017. However, the responsibility of salaries of the staff, feeding and accommodation of the students and some other miscellaneous issues become a bothering challenge to the patron. To manage the school, the patron has to appeal for public donations, and he also made use of part of his monthly pension fund to finance the school.⁴⁰

c. *Markaz Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān Wath-Thaqāfatu'l-Islāmiyyah lil-Shaykh Ṭāhir 'Uthmān Bauchi*

The founder of this school is Al-Ḥājj Ādam Ibrahīm 'Uthmān. He is born in Dosoo State in Niger Republic in 1966. Ādam learned the recitation of the Qur'ān from his father, but never has the opportunity to further his education. He started to puzzle his livelihood which made him to leave his hometown and later settled at Sango Area, Ilorin, as far back as thirty years ago. In Ilorin, he started business to make a living, and he later embarked on farming as supplementary to his primary profession. He is a successful merchant. He belongs to the Tijāniyah order. He is married and blessed with children.⁴¹

The school, *Markaz Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān Wath-Thaqāfatu'l-Islāmiyyah* was established as a result of the poor performance in Arabic and Islamic education of the people of Republic of Niger, especially the children that reside at Sango Area in Ilorin. The founder sees this circumstance as a setback and untidy development among his people. He, however, established the school in 2011/1439AH at Zango Area, Ilorin. This is the reason why 95% of the total population of the school is children of Niger Republic people. Presently, the school has the total number of two hundred and fifty students. Initially, the school embarked on teaching of the recitation of the Qur'ān, but later adopted *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān*. In 2018, two memorisers of the whole Qur'ān were graduated: Al-Ḥāfiz 'Abdu'llah Ibrahīm Shīth and Al-Ḥāfiz Muṣṭafā Ibrahīm Shīth.

In addition to *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān*, the school has a section of the students who learn the recitation of the Qur'ān only, and they are the majority of the school population. The students are divided into three sections. The section for kids is taken care by 'Ustādh 'Abdu'r-Rashīd Zakariyah, Muhammad Rābi'u Shīth and 'Abdu'l-Ḥamīd Shīth, while Al-Ḥāfiz Mallam Sa'ad is for adult section, before he later quit the school. Also, the school is operating three times in a day. The morning class starts from 8:30am to 12.00pm, the evening class starts from 3.00pm to 6.00pm, while the night class which is for adults only, starts from 8.30pm to 11.00pm. It is very interesting to note that over one hundred and twenty-six students have graduated from the school after the completion of recitation of the Qur'ān.

According to 'Ustādh 'Abdu'r-Rashīd, the staff of the school collect their monthly salary from the founder's purse. Moreso, he constructed six classrooms and a mosque by himself without assistance from anybody. Ironically, the students do not pay a single penny as school fee. The founder sees the school as a charity and as his personal contribution to Islam and service to humanity. Although, the school is not officially registered by the ministry of education, it is functioning very well. The source further stated that during graduation, every graduating student would be requested to pay a sum

of fifteen thousand Naira and a mat. Part of the money is shared among the staff, and the rest is used for school's development.⁴²

One of the major problems facing the school is trivial attitude of people, especially the proprietor's kinspersons to Arabic and Islamic education. For example, despite the fact that there is no payment in the school beside that of graduation, some parents still willingly disallow their children to go for such type of education without any convincing or solid evidence for doing so. Secondly, the school would have been developed better if there is financial assistance from other sources in addition to that of the proprietor. Thirdly, many of the graduated students failed to proceed in their educational career. This however, has contributed to the setback, problem of half-baked knowledge and lack of civilization among them.⁴³

d. Al-Ikhwah Islamic Foundation; Centre for Qur'ānic Memorization and Islamic Propagation: A Branch of Sheikh Ṭāiru Usmān Bauchi's School

The school is founded by Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abdulmumini Abdulmalik Obalowu Babaloma. He was born in Babaloma in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State in 1988. He attended UMCA Nursery between 1994 and 1996 and Primary school and Community Primary school from 1996 to 2002, all in Babaloma. He further proceeded to Jama'at Nasiri'l-Islam College Babaloma for his secondary education from 2009 to 2012. After then, he embarked on *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* at *Markaz Raḥmatu'llahi li-tahfīzi'l-Qur'ān Far'u li-Markaz Shaykh 'Uthmān Bauchi*, Tanke Branch, under the auspices of Dr. Haruna Ndakogi, while Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibrahim Ghani was his facilitator, between 2009 and 2012. Equally, he has Diploma Certificate in Islamic Studies at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 2018. He belongs to Tijāniyah order. He is married and blessed with children.⁴⁴

The school, *Al-Ikhwah* Islamic Foundation was established in June, 2012 at Ajegunle Phase Two Area, Alagbado in Ilorin. The school has been registered under the Kwara State Ministry of Education, Ilorin. The school since its establishment has developed rapidly both in academic and administrative activities. It is very impressive to note that the school presently has more than three hundred students for *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* and Arabic/Islamic studies. The school has students from different states in Nigeria, such as Kwara, Kaduna, Bauchi, Kano, Niger, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, etc. Some students also come from Côte D'ivoire (Abidjan). According to the proprietor, the school academic programme is scheduled as follows:

1. *Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* is scheduled between 8:00am to 12:00pm;
2. Learning of *Tajwīd* and *Tafsīr* starts from 12:00 pm to 1:00pm;
3. *Ta'alīm 'Arabiyyah* and *Islāmiyyah* between 4:00pm to 6:00pm; and
4. *Tilāwatu'l-Qur'ān* as general revision starts from 8:00pm to 10:00pm.⁴⁵

In addition to this, there are some other extra-curricular activities such as *Tafsīr* on every Thursday, lecture at the end of every lunar month, *Wazīfah* in the school after Magrib prayer every-day, *Dhikri-Jumu'at* on every Friday between 5:30pm to 7:00pm. Others are *Ṣalāt Tasbīh* every last Thursday of the month and *Mawlid an-Nabiyy* which comes up annually. Presently, the school has four classrooms and a number of twenty-eight staff comprising of both the teaching and non-teaching who are working in the

school. Some are paid for their services, while some are doing it in the course of Allah. Also, some *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān* instructors engage in some other ways of sustaining their livelihood. This however makes them to collect meager amount as salary from the school. It is noteworthy that more than seventy memorisers of the whole Qur'ān (*Al-Huffāz*) have been graduated from the school. The youngest among them were Muhammad Mansūr Alabere from Ilorin and Abdul-Malik Abdul-Malik, Adabata, Ilorin who were nine and ten years old respectively. The duration for *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān* usually range between 6 months to 4 years depending on the age and brightness of the students.⁴⁶

According to the proprietor, a lot challenges are facing the school. First and foremost, financial factor is one of the major problems facing the school. Although the school is collecting tuition fee from the students, a lot of default is recorded because many parents fail to pay their wards' school fees promptly and adequately. As a result of this, the school adopts system of generating funds from the Parents/Teachers' Association (PTA) as a measure to reduce the situation. Feeding of the students is another challenging factor and this however, made the proprietor to involve in indirect farming system as an alternative measure to feed the pupils, but it is not adequate.⁴⁷

Lack of accommodation is another major factor. Actually, the school is operating boarding system, yet there is no accommodation facility provided. The students are residing in some uncompleted buildings that are very close to the school premises with the permission of the owners. Another one is the health challenge of the students. To arrest this problem, the proprietor makes sure that the balance diet is provided for the students as well as provision of first aid treatment for them. Also, the school has been registered in the nearest hospital for treatment of the students, and this is championed by the help of the patron and matron of the school. Another problem centres on age and lack or low knowledge of Arabic and Islamic fundamentals of some students before embarking on *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān*. Thus, this leads to the classification of the students according to their ages and their basic pre-knowledge about the Arabic education.⁴⁸

Another challenge is that some students are not familiar with Western education system. Therefore, some teachers are employed to give them summer lessons so that there will be a balance between Western and Arabic education. Forgetfulness is another problem facing the students. Some of them usually forget what they have memorised. To solve this problem, a weekly pamphlet for each of the students on what he has memorised is designed as revision for motivation and assessment. Another measure is that some of those that have graduated are fixed in some Nursery, Primary and, or Secondary schools as instructors of *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān*, while some establish *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān* centres by themselves.⁴⁹

From the foregoing, it is noted that the Sūfis, especially the Tijāniyah adherents play a vital role in the growth and development of *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān* in Ilorin. Despite the great challenges that face them on the assignment, their commitment compel them to strive to find positive solution to any prevailing circumstances, in order to make sure that *tahfīzu 'l-Qur'ān* is embraced and well functioned in society, particularly in Ilorin. Not only that, they give priority to Arabic and Western education in order to bridge the gap between the two systems of education. It is obvious from the analysis that *tahfīzu 'l-*

Qur'ān centres are facing a lot challenges. However, to improve the standard of *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* as well as Arabic education in Ilorin particularly, and in Nigeria at large, this study endeavours to make some recommendations as can be seen below.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will be of great help in improving the standard of *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* and Arabic education:

1. *Tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* should be considered as one of major instruments that can be used to install peace in Nigeria. However, government should look into the affairs of *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* centres by providing some facilities that would help them to function well or smoothen their operations as that of the conventional government schools.
2. The government should help these institutions by giving them subvention or payment of staff salary which seems to have weakened the academic potentials and credibility of some *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* centres.
3. The religious stakeholders, cooperate bodies and, or philanthropists should endeavour to support these institutions financially or materially, by providing accommodation, feeding, instructional materials, etc. This would help some of them to perform better in their academic career, and would serve as motivational factor for the founders.
4. Beside the private or cooperate bodies, government should also establish this kind of institution for the Muslim pupils alone or incorporate *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* as a subject in both primary and secondary schools' curriculum. The government may also take over the existing ones through negotiation and consent of their owners. This would help to consolidate the correct recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān among the Muslim children and they would be acquainted with some basic knowledge of Arabic and Islamic education. It will also create employment for *Al-Huffāz*.
5. Government should see *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* as an instrument that is used to arrest the current insecurity in Nigeria. Hence, financing these institutions is a way of setting society free from security challenges, corruption and ungodliness.
6. Other Arabic and Islamic centres should emulate the *Ṣūfis* by incorporating *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* into their academic programme, thus the glory of the Qur'ān and conventional recitation of it would be sustainable.
7. The registration of these institutions should attract favourability in terms of payment and other dues. This would help the prospective founders to have interest of establishing the institution. In addition to this, there should be a regulatory body from the government to look into the academic affairs of these institutions so that their operations would be uniform.
8. The religious leaders and the Muslim clerics should enlighten their community about the virtue and reward attached to *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān*. This would serve as a motivational factor for having interest and patronising the institution.

9. The parents, especially those who patronize the schools should know that irregular or non-payment of school fees, feeding and some other statutory fees kill the growth and academic development of the schools. Therefore, regular payment should be their priority. They may equally help the school financially and or materially.

Conclusion

Our journey so far has highlighted some basic knowledge on *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān*. It is glaring that the contributions of the *Šūfis*, especially the Tijāniyah to *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* and Arabic education in Ilorin cannot be over-emphasised. As a matter of fact, *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* needs a lot of resources of both human and material. A lot of problems are encountered by the proprietors of these schools. Nevertheless, this does not distract their commitment; they use their wealth, energies, discretions and precious times to ensure the sustainability and productivity of the Qur'ānic recitation among the people through the establishment of *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* centres. Fortunately, *tahfīzu'l-Qur'ān* also contributes to the development of society by installing peace and security, promoting godliness, among others. However, if the government could assist these schools, there is a tendency for rapid development of the Qur'ānic schools cum Islamic education in Ilorin in particular and Nigeria at large.

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32. The *karāmāt* (miracles) that took place was that the people could hear the audible of chanting of *Lā-illah illa Allah* for seven days consecutively in the grave of the deceased (*Shaykh* Muhammad Wali) after he had been tortured to death by the then Emir of Ilorin. See Ajadi, *A Study of the Yoruba Tijaniyyah Ṣūfī Works*, 121

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QUR'ĀNIC SCHOOLS IN AKOKOLAND OF ONDO STATE: ROLES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

The glorious Qur'ān is a revelation from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) for the guidance of the entire human being and Jinn, (the spirit world), (Qur'ān 2:2).¹ The science of reading the Qur'ān is known as *Tajwid*. During the revelation of the Qur'an, the Prophet memorized it and encouraged his *Sahaba* (companions) to do the same. This culture is still in practice throughout the world today. It suffices to say here that memorization of the Qur'ān is the best way through which the book of Allah could be preserved from one generation to another.²

Specifically, the purpose of man's creation is to serve and worship Allah. This worship could be carried properly through Arabic and Islamic education that could be realized through Qur'anic school. In Arabic and Islamic education, there are three terms used for acquisition of knowledge; *ta'lim* which means to learn, *tarbiyyah*, to educate and *ta'dhib*, to be refined and cultured. Islamic scholars describe Qur'anic education as the body of knowledge, which covers all spheres of human endeavours. Islam as a complete way of life, enjoins Muslims to research into all fields of study to achieve freedom, self-reliance, and independence. In Islam, genuine knowledge is the one that could lead to realization of Allah and the one that benefits humanity intellectually, spiritually and morally. Qur'anic education is therefore described as the totality of learning experiences which centres on the relationship between man and his Creator (Allah) and between man and his fellow human being.³

Qur'anic Schools in Akoko land

The spread of Qur'anic education is synonymous to the spread of the religion of Islam itself. This is because as soon as Islam enters any community, Qur'anic education begins there also.⁴ The spread of Islam into Nigeria most especially the Yorubaland and indeed Akokoland brought in its tail the introduction and spread of Qur'anic education. In the 17th century, when the Nupe scholars came to Akokoland, their base was Ikare Akoko⁵ where many people converted to Islam, and from Ikare Akoko, Islam spread to other parts of Akoko such as Oka, Oba, Supare, Ogbagi, Arigidi, Isua, Ikaram, Ikun, Ifira, Ajowa, Ugbe among others⁶ In all towns and villages in Akokoland, there was at least a Qur'anic school where Muslims children acquire Arabic/Islamic education. The teaching and learning of the Qur'an was carried out by the Nupe itinerant scholars and merchants who brought the religion of Islam to Akokoland hundred years before the arrival of the white men⁷. In Akokoland for

example, Qur'anic schools are known as *Ile – keu* while the Northern part of the country called it *Makarantan Alo* (the school of the slates). In Akokoland, the teachers in the Qur'anic schools are called *Aafa or Alufa*. The Northern part of the country called them “*Mallam*” or “*Mallami*”. In those days, every child had a wooden slate known as *Walaa* on which *Aafa* would write Arabic letters for the pupils to read. For those that have memorized the Arabic alphabets, the *Aafa* wrote some verses of the Qur'an on the *Walaa*, starting from *Suratun Nas* for them to read. He later washed away the chapter or verses mastered by the student to accommodate a new one. As the pupils proceeded to *Surah ul Fil*, *Suratul Masad*, *Suratul Yasin* and *Suratul Baratu mina Allah*, *Aafa* would ask the pupils to prepare food with fowl, beans and ram with food which is going to be taken by the *Aafa* and the pupils. This innovation by *Aafas* of those days was to encourage and enhance the pupils' enrolment into the Qur'anic schools.⁸

Parents could enroll their wards at any time, as there was no specific calendar for school programmes. In those days, no amount of money was charged as school fees. The *Aafas* of Qur'anic schools depended on *Sadaqah* (charity) for sustenance.⁹ Scholars are of the view that the noble principle which was successfully applied in the early stage of the development of Qur'anic education, reduced the status of a teacher (*Mu'alim*) to that of a mere looking *aafa* for charitable Muslims to patronize him and give him food and shelter. In those old days, whenever the efforts of the *Aafas* were not sufficient to procure the basic necessities of life, those *Aafas* sent their pupils from door to door for charity to sustain themselves and pupils living with them in the Qur'anic schools.¹⁰ Also, no emphasis was attached to *Tajwid* (the science of the Qur'anic recitation) as it is today in many Qur'anic schools in Akokoland and elsewhere. There were no modern buildings for Qur'anic schools, but nowadays, there are modern structures which are built by Islamic scholars such as Al-Batuta College of Arabic and Islamic Studies and Al-Barakah Model Islamic Secondary School all at Ikare Akoko where Qur'anic and *Ilmiyyah* education are the major concern. In these schools, school fee is paid on termly basis and there is school uniform to recognize every student. In other towns in Akokoland, there are many Qur'anic schools in nooks and crannies of the region situated in mosques, and personal buildings. More importantly, many Qur'anic schools have changed from local recitation to Arab intonation with proper application of the science of *Tajwid*.

The Qur'anic schools have in no small measure contributed to the growth and development of *Ilmiyyah* schools. In 1900, it was reported that Lord Lugard estimated that there were 20,000 Qur'anic schools as the basis education of the Muslims populace of the Northern states, and favoured the use of *Ajami* as the medium of learning in this part of the country.¹¹ He was later dissuaded, to abandon his decisions. In 1996, there were 27,000 pupils in both Qur'anic and *Ilmiyyah* schools in the Northern Nigeria only.¹² The future of Qur'anic schools in Akokoland is very bright because various reforms are being introduced in the system such as introduction of school uniform, inter house sports competition and other extra-curricular activities to make the schools attractive to students and others.

Role of Qur'anic Schools

Qur'anic schools have played a significant role in ensuring the preservation of the original language of the Qur'an, Arabic. Qur'anic schools have also consolidated the culture of memorization of the Qur'an. The introduction of the Qur'anic Recitation Competition in 1986 by the Centre for Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto, was a welcome development.¹³ Qur'anic schools have also enhanced the growth and development of the *Ilmiyyah* schools in Nigeria. With this development, Muslim children are able to study Arabic or Islamic education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and abroad. It is interesting to note that the Qur'anic competition has geared – up many redundant Qur'anic schools. This measure has encouraged the teaching and learning of the science of *Tajwid* in Nigeria.¹⁴ Through the Qur'anic schools, the *Ilmiyyah* schools would continue to flourish, as Muslim scholars do not require millions of Naira before setting up a Qur'anic school.

In Nigeria, through Qur'anic schools, many Muslims are able to practise the fundamentals of Islam, most especially the observance of five daily prayers. It is from Qur'anic schools that they learned and memorized short *suwar* that they use for day to day religious activities. Qur'anic schools are the agents of transformation. They transform society from darkness to light and from ungodliness to Godliness. Qur'anic education promotes piety, development, justice, transparency and accountability in governance. Indeed, Qur'anic education embrace knowledge that cater for all sectors of society, be it economy, social, political among others.

Achievements of Qur'anic schools

Qur'anic schools facilitated the memorization and preservation of the Qur'an. It also laid down the foundation for the growth and development of *Ilmiyyah* schools in the country. Qur'anic schools are the agents through which Arabic and Islamic culture and values were detected and preserved. The establishment of Qur'anic schools otherwise known as *Ile-keu* as earlier noted, had helped to train participants in the annual national Qur'anic competition. It has also helped to produce many *Huffadh* (Qur'anic memorizers) in the country. Based on these clear achievements, the traditional Qur'anic schools system will continue to grow and flourish.

Arabic and Islamic scholars of the Qur'anic settings have made remarkable contributions to Arabic literary productions in Akokoland. A research on their works shows that they are mainly on Arabic literature and prose. A critical look at the works of these scholars reveals that many of them paid special attention to modern norms of Arabic writing. Some of the notable scholars in Akokoland are Shaykh Ibrahim Taosiri of Okela quarters, Ikare-Akoko; Shaykh Shaba Olorunjenjere of Ikese quarters, Oka-Akoko; Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Jamiu of Isanlu quarters, Epinmi Akoko; Shaykh Musa Bello of Igbelu quarters, Akungba-Akoko, among others.¹⁵ These great scholars founded various Qur'anic schools during their time and many students have graduated under them in 1950s, 1960s and 1970s respectively. In the early period of Islam in Akokoland, the products of Qur'anic schools were appointed as Imam, *Mu'adhin*, Qur'anic exegetes and *Naibu Imam* in various towns and villages in Akokoland. This development has brought about more understanding of Islamic religion into the region.¹⁶

Challenges of Qur'anic schools

Parents' Negative Attitude: Some un-informed Muslim parents pay more attention to Western education than Arabic and Islamic education. In the past, Muslim children used to attend Qur'anic schools in the evening and in the weekend. But with the various programmes of the conventional schools, the Muslim children are denied the opportunity of attending Qur'anic schools.¹⁷ More importantly, some Muslim parents, due to low level of Islamic awareness, do not encourage their wards to attend Arabic and Qur'anic schools. This scenario has a serious negative effect on the growth and development of Qur'anic schools in Akokoland.¹⁸

Negligence of some Muslim Clerics: Some *Aafa* are not innovative, as some of them still believe that Qur'anic schools should still be run in the way it was done five decades ago. Some of them are not aware that modern technologies such as computer, slides, radio and television are relevant in teaching and learning process in Qur'anic schools. Some Muslim clerics usually over-emphasize the spiritual aspect of Qur'anic education to the total neglect of the material aspect in their attempt to dissuade people from concentrating on earthly matter like quest for wealth and they almost forget the concept of education that seeks to strike a balance between the two concepts as observed by Islamic scholars.¹⁹

Religious Apartheid on the part of the Government: In spite of the monumental contributions of Qur'anic schools to science, arts and technology, government in South Western Nigeria played religious apartheid as regards contributing to the growth and development of Qur'anic schools. On yearly basis, funds and instructional materials were voted to French and English languages, while Arabic and Qur'anic schools were neglected.²⁰ This scenario does not augur well for the growth and development of Arabic and Qur'anic education.

Non-availability of Modern Instructional Materials: Instructional materials such as T.V set, Radio, DVD among others were not provided to enhance the teaching and learning in the Qur'anic schools. The provision of these materials will go a long way in the teaching and learning process in the Qur'anic schools. Muslim parents should encourage their children by motivation, buying for them materials such as bag, shoe, food flask and other things that could facilitate learning in classroom.²¹

Societal Attitude towards Qur'anic Schools: Our society is dominated by Western culture and values which have negative effect on Qur'anic school children. In Akokoland for example, many derogatory words and qualifications were used to discourage the pupils of the Qur'anic schools. The effects of Western education, still takes its toll on the growth and development of Qur'anic schools in the region. More importantly, Muslim parents have not given the desired motivation to encourage their wards to show more interest in learning the Qur'an as they motivate them for the conventional schools.

Recommendations

1. More teachers of *Tajwid* should be trained in our *Ilmiyyah* schools to teach the science in the Qur'anic schools.

2. Government should support the growth and development of Qur'anic schools, because that is the foundation of all fields of knowledge such as sciences, arts, philosophy, mathematics, theology, physics and medicine.
3. Muslim philanthropists should support the Qur'anic schools in the area of funds and provisions of instructional materials.
4. More Qur'anic schools should be opened in all cities, towns and villages so that Muslim children could be exposed to Arabic and Islamic traditions, values and culture. In doing this, moral standard in Nigeria would improve in no small measure.
5. National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) should open an office in each State of the Federation to monitor and supervise the existing Qur'anic schools in those States.

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THE GLORIOUS QUR'ĀN AND ITS TRANSLATION INTO OTHER LANGUAGES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

The Glorious Qur'ān was revealed for the guidance of Mankind. It was revealed in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad, (SAW) through angel Jibril. For proper comprehension and digestion, the revelation occurred in piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years, occasionally in short chapters and sometimes in longer chapters. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was tasked by Allah (SWT) with preserving, disseminating and explaining its verses to the entire world.¹ Hence, the explanation of the messages contained in the Glorious Qur'ān is a divine obligation on all Muslims right from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) till the present day. The fact that the sacred book was revealed in Arabic language for the guidance of mankind thus, the need to understand its content is a religious obligation to every Muslim, male and female, young and old.²

It is important to note that throughout the 23 years of the period of revelation, the Muslim community was confined to Arabian lands where majority of the *ummah* can read the glorious book and comprehend its meaning in Arabic; hence, there was no need for translation. However, with the expansion of the Muslim territory to non-Arab lands and to accommodate people of different nations, communities, tribes and languages that were not conversant with Arabic language, the need for translation into local languages arose. The result of this development is that only few among the Muslim population across the globe can read and understand the content of Glorious Qur'ān in Arabic. Majority of Muslims across the globe depend on a translation to understand and carry out their religious activities accordingly.

Consequently, the Glorious Qur'an is now translated into different languages of the world - English, Malay, Persian, Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo etc. The zeal to understand its meaning and application pushed many to consume distorted translations especially in the age of globalization; when every dick and harry can translate and post on the net without making reference.

In addition, having been written in a highly symbolic and classical form of Arabic language, the translation of the Glorious Qur'ān requires profound knowledge and understanding of the language. This has become a challenge to the entire Muslim world in its efforts to disseminate the knowledge of the Glorious Qur'ān especially in the contemporary period of information Technology (IT), which has become a veritable instrument of transporting distorted translations.

Historical Origin of Translation

Translation is undoubtedly a tool of communication as it removes the barriers between any two languages. However, to achieve fruitful communication between any two different linguistic codes, full command of the two languages is required: the source language (SL) and the target language (TL).³

The translation of the Glorious Qur'ān into any language remains a challenge as it is an undertaking of a great magnitude, and its significance is paramount since it involves interpreting the word of Allah, a claim of understanding the divine mind and an attempt to convey its meaning. It is on record that the early Muslim scholars worked hard to understand the various aspects of the divine revelation, interpreting it, making every effort to serve the Qur'ān text and extract from its wisdom that they could apply in their lives and to better human condition.⁴

Historically, the first attempt to translate the Qur'ān was in the 7th century by Salman Al-Farisi, who translated the first verse into Persian. Then in the 10th and 12th centuries, Persian Islamic scholars completed the Qur'ān translation into Persian. The translation efforts continued from then and by 2010, there were translations in 112 languages.⁵ Unfortunately, not all of these translations are accredited, as some of them were done by non-Muslims who were orientalists. However, there are distinguished efforts made by individual authors and Muslim organizations in many countries, which ensured that it is translated, revised and edited by a committee of highly selective Muslim scholars.⁶

Types of Translation

It is argued that types of translation are dependent on the translator's intention. However, two main approaches are highlighted. Catford⁷ identified two kinds of translation - word for word translation or literal and free translation and the "free" translation that can be grouped into total translation and restricted translation. The former involves replacing the grammar and lexis of the SL by their TL equivalents; necessitating that SL phonology/graphology will be replaced by non-equivalent while the later involves the replacement of SL textual material by its equivalents at any level.

Significance of Translating the Glorious Qur'ān

The Muslims' need for translating the Qur'ān into other languages particularly English arose mainly out of the desire to disseminate the message of Islam to non-Arabic speakers and also to combat the missionary effort of non-Muslims in spreading wrong information about Islam and Muslims. In addition, one major significant motivation for the translation of the Qur'ān into other languages such as English is the fact that many Muslims do not speak Arabic. Thus, the need for scholars to translate the Glorious Qur'ān to communicate its message to Muslims all over the world is paramount.⁸ For

nearly two billion Muslims across the world, the Qur'ān is considered the most important religious reference for them.

Qualities Required in a Translator

Among the qualities required in a translator of the Qur'ān is ability to have mastery of Arabic and excellent command of the target language, its grammar and the science of rhetoric. He must also possess the following sciences:

- i. Linguistics: Semantics, Grammar and the grammatical analysis of the nouns and verbs and the articles. He must know terms, vocabulary and concepts from all branches of contemporary languages and sciences. He must be able to understand rational proofs, axioms and deductive arguments, and distinguish between the general verses and those with particular meanings - literal and figurative, and the manners in which the information is conveyed, in it explicit declaration or ambiguous passage, commands and prohibitions.
- ii. He must have the knowledge of Islamic Jurisprudence: From *Fiqh ul 'Ibadah* to legal rulings *Ahkām*, categorizing the permissible and the forbidden, including the penalties, and the whole subject of inheritance.
- iii. He must be conversant with Natural sciences: The nature passages, the creation of the universe, natural phenomena, like the rain cycle, night and day, the movement of the celestial bodies.
- iv. He must have the art of writing and poetry: This helps to appreciate the literary excellence, style, figurative expressions, the fluency, the rhythms, harmonious succession of ideas, forewords and conclusions.
- v. Spiritual inclinations: Insightful understanding of terms which discuss Allah's relationship with humanity and subtle things, the divine presence, fear and love, estrangement contraction and expansion, mindfulness and piety, faith and reliance.
- vi. He must have knowledge of History: Knowledge and understanding of primordial, pre-antiquity and antiquity, Jewish and Christian stories and narratives.
- vii. Oratory: This helps to understand the succinct wise, witty sayings that touch the human heart and mind. Mainly focusing on the promises and threats, the warnings and the glad tidings that the Qur'ān gives at the mention of death and resurrection.⁹

Challenges of Translating the Qur'ān

There are a number of challenges facing the translation of the Qur'ān into other languages. It becomes necessary to look at these in this study. Therefore, the challenges of translating the Qur'ān into other languages are discussed under the following:

1. Characteristics Peculiarities of the Qur'ān Style and Lack of Good Knowledge in the History of Revelation

In an attempt to translate between two languages, many challenges are likely to occur. Some aspects of translation are quite difficult regardless of which language you are translating to or from. However, it should be understood that the Arabic language has certain characteristics that make it even more difficult to translate, in addition to other characteristic peculiarities of the Qur'ān itself as a standard of the Arabic language. According to Muhammad, "Arabic is a brief, rich and forceful language when used expertly and meticulously. Arabic is a remarkably terse, rich and forceful language; it is sticking, vivid, tender and breath-taking."¹⁰

Therefore, one of the challenges in translating the Qur'ān is that some lexicons are Qur'ān specific, and they do not have equivalents in other languages like English. For instance, in the Qur'ān, the word (الله) does not have an equivalent word in English.¹¹ Thus, when an attempt is made to translate this word into English, its original meaning could be lost.

Another thing is that there are some deviations and under translations as a result of not referring to the interpretations of the Qur'ān due to lack of understanding of Arabic. Moreover, due to factors such as the lack of equivalence of some cultural words in the target language, translators of the Qur'ān have been critiqued for their inability to completely convey the true and accurate meaning.

The Qur'ān is written in a highly symbolic and classical form of the Arabic language, so translating it requires a profound understanding of its meanings and an ability to reflect those meanings into the target language. The Qur'ān is one of the world's classics, which cannot be translated without grave loss. It has a rhythm of peculiar beauty and a cadence that charms the ear. Arabic words can have a variety of different meanings depending on context and the didactical symbols can change the meaning of a word significantly.

The Qur'ān is written in Classical Arabic, which is different from the Modern Standard Arabic that is used today. The structure and some words have changed over time. Therefore, it is not just the work of a single translator and it cannot be done by any native Arabic speaker. It requires a full committee of Islamic scholars who have great mastery of the Classical Arabic language, Islamic studies and the target language.

Moreover, the Qur'ān has to be interpreted in light of the historical circumstances of the early Muslim society when the Qur'ān was revealed. The Qur'ān and *Hadīth* are deeply related, so scholars attempting to translate the Qur'ān should be fully aware of the *Hadīth* and *Sīrah*. There are some verses that cannot be understood completely except with the help of the *Hadīth*.

2. Motives behind the Translation

Despite the historical fact that the early Muslim community's stand on the translation of the Arabic text of the Qur'ān was undecided, the general Muslim attitude remains so to this day, as indeed, the act of translation may be logically viewed as a natural part of the Muslim exegetical effort. However, whereas the idea of interpreting the Qur'ān has

not been so controversial, the emotional motives behind rendering the Qur'ān text into languages other than Arabic have always been looked upon with suspicion.¹²

Obviously, Muslims could not allow the missionary effort - invariably confounding the authenticity of the text with a hostile commentary of its own - to go unopposed and unchecked. Hence, the Muslims' decision to present a faithful translation of the Qur'ān text as well as an authentic summary of its teachings to the world. Later, the Muslim translations were meant to serve even those Muslims whose only access to the Qur'ān revelation was through the medium of the European languages. Naturally, English was deemed the most important language for the Muslim purpose, not least because of the existence of the British Empire, which after the Ottomans had the largest number of Muslim subjects.¹³

The same rationale, however, applies to sectarian movements within Islam or even to renegade groups outside the fold of Islam, such as the Qadiyanis or orientalisks. Their considerable translational activities are motivated by the urge to proclaim their ideological motives.

Another major challenge is that of translating the Qur'ān to support deviant ideology. This is common especially in the age of globalization where any deviant group can interpret the Qur'ān and post it on the Internet. This is done to promote their deviant ideologies.

Prospects of Qur'ān Translation

Qur'ān translation today, as the *ummah* matches into a globalized world, benefits from the use of computers, digital materials and the spread of databases of technologies that offers translators a considerable wealth of linguistic resources. Nowadays, translation has become an important industry in the Muslim world. The field of translation now benefits from many university programmes and cultural organizations that promote the translation profession. Translation is being systemized by specialized translation institutions and translators in various fields: literature, science, technology, and medicine,¹⁴ etc. With the great efforts now being exerted to enhance the quantity and quality of Arabic online and offline content, by either Arabic translation or Arabic creative writing, hopefully the *ummah* is at a new renaissance in the Arabic culture.¹⁵

The prospect of translation of the Qur'ān was not only for transferring knowledge, but it also helped to extend the message of Islam to non-Muslims. Arabic and in addition translations helped preserve and spread the advances in Islamic knowledge.¹⁶ Translated copies of Qur'ān are now available online for Muslims and non-Muslims to read and understand the message of Islam. This has increased the spread of Islamic knowledge in the recent time. This development has created good avenues and opportunity for many to embrace Islam in different parts of the globe. Moreover, the availability of translated Qur'ān has eased the conduct of research to the students and teachers in the department of Islamic studies and other related departments in tertiary institutions all over the world.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has tried to discuss the historical development and the significance of translation of the Glorious Qur'ān. It has also tried to show the prospects and challenges involved in the translation of the Glorious Qur'ān especially in the age of globalization. It then tried to look at the current realities of different groups of people from within and outside Islamic circle who engaged in the work of translation and spread wrong information about the original text of the Glorious Qur'ān. However, as much as translation of the Qur'ān into various languages in the world is necessary due to reasons already adduced, it becomes incumbent on the *ummah* across the globe to be sensitive to the art to avoid misinterpretation and interpolation of the Glorious Book. Therefore, looking at the challenges and prospects involved in the translation of the Glorious Qur'ān, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. The fact that the work of translation is rewardable, Muslim community should form different councils to monitor the activities of deviant groups like Qadiyan and orientalist both from Muslims and non-Muslims so as to minimize the excess of wrong translation of the Qur'ān and misinformation about Islam and Muslim.
- ii. Muslim organizations should organize special training through conferences, seminars and workshops on information and communication technology so as to have experts in the field who will monitor the unrestricted uploading of different translations on line.
- iii. Departments of Islamic studies in the universities and colleges of education should liaise with other departments, particularly that of Arabic to introduce special courses to train students in the field of translation.
- iv. Other professional bodies like NATAIS should form a special committee to handle the issues of translation.

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THE IMPACT OF JIBWIS *MUSABAQAH* IN PROMOTING QUR'ANIC EDUCATION AMONG YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The first source of *Shari'ah* in Islam is the Glorious Qur'an which is the final divine Message from Allah (The Most High) to humanity. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) transmitted the Glorious Qur'an precisely as it was revealed to him, explained its fundamental teachings and followed the principles and regulations of the divine Book. Since the time of the Prophet, Muslims have, generation after generation received the Qur'an as it was revealed to the Messenger, passing it precisely as it was taught by Angel Jibril without addition or subtraction.¹ The Qur'an provides guidance to billions of people in the world, Nigeria inclusive. Apart from those who adhered to this great religion, many unbelievers are eager to have knowledge of the history and documentation of this sacred Book.² Similarly, among those who adhered to the learning and teachings of the Glorious Qur'an in Nigeria is the *Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa-Iqamatis-Sunnah* organization (JIBWIS) where its members highly recognized *the 'Ulumu-al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic Sciences) and strived hard to transmit this to other people in the country. This is why its members participated in the National *Musabaqah* from 1986 to 1996. However, in 1997, JIBWIS established its own *Musabaqah* and continues with it annually. The paper discusses brief history of JIBWIS, historical background of the JIBWIS *Musabaqah*, meaning of Qur'anic Education, roles of JIBWIS *Musabaqah* in promoting Qur'anic Education among the Youths in Nigeria, Impact of JIBWIS *Musabaqah* on Muslim youths in Nigeria, problems facing the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS, suggestions and conclusion.

Brief History of JIBWIS

JIBWIS is one of the Muslim organizations founded in 1978 by some Muslim scholars in Nigeria with the aim of establishing leaders and members who adhere to the code of conduct clearly defined for the Muslim Community in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is known as *Jama'atu Izalatil Bidi'ah Wa Iqamatis Sunnah* abbreviated as JIBWIS, simply refers to as *Izalah* (Organization for the Eradication of Innovation and Establishment of *Sunnah*).³ According to Yandaki, JIBWIS is a religious organization that emerged in Nigeria for the upliftment of Islamic *Da'wah*, through the teachings of its spiritual leader *Shaykh* Abubakar Mahmud Gumi and the effort of his student *Shaykh* Isma'ila Idris Jos.⁴ After the formal inauguration the Organization in 1978 at Jos, it is by 1980, JIBWIS widespread in Nigeria particularly the Northern part of the country and it continues to develop with *Shaykh* Isma'ila Idris Jos as the Chairman Council of *Ulama'* and other administrative leaders.⁵

It was in 1981 the constitution for the running the activities of the movement was drafted and based on that, JIBWIS was registered as a corporate body on the 12th December, 1985 by the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs under the Land perpetual Succession act of 1962 under the then Military Government of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.⁶

It is based on this constitution that JIBWIS executes its various programmes in Nigeria. These programmes brought a lot of effective changes in the Nigerian society and beyond. These include:

- i. organizing preaching and meetings at local, state, national and international levels;
- ii. raising fund to co-ordinate the activities of the Organization which include building of Mosques, *Islamiyyah* schools and secretariats as well as providing transport and other working facilities etc;
- iii. publication of JIBWIS Magazines and Newspapers as well as use of Media (like *Sunnah TV*, *Manara TV*, *Manara Radio* etc.) in its system of *Da'wah*;
- iv. organizing conferences, seminars, workshops and *Musabaqah* (Qur'anic Recitation Competition) at local, state and National levels; and
- v. camping of First Aid Group of the Organization at local, state and national levels.⁷

However, in 1991 JIBWIS became fragmented into factions due to some misunderstanding from the leaders with each faction operating on its own namely Kaduna and Jos Factions. Later in 2011, reconciliation was made between the two factions and consequently the activities of the two factions were merged and so the administration of the Organization continued successfully. But all of a sudden, a problem emerged in 2012 and the organization re-separated again. It is based on these factions that *Musabaqah* is being organized annually by the Jos faction of JIBWIS.⁸

Historical Background of the JIBWIS *Musabaqah*

The term *Musabaqah* is an Arabic word which its prefix *sabq* means to contest, compete, race, test, examine and quiz.⁹ In the on-going usage, technically, it refers to the competition of such act or action by which the word can be wedge, i.e *Musabaqatul-Qur'an* which means to contest or be tested or joining a race or to be examined on the Glorious Qur'an in particular. For this, *Musabaqah* or *Musabaqatul-Qur'an* refers to competition of recitation, memorization and scientific analysis of the Glorious Qur'an. The World Muslim League in Saudi Arabia is the first Islamic organization to reframe scheme in such competition in the 4th century of *Hijra* at Makkah. *Shaykh* Jabir *Al-Jaza'iri* and *Shaykh* Yusuf Al-Qardawi have explained the legality of Qur'anic recitation competition where they opined that it is permissible for any philanthropist (or public/private sector) to stipulate that whoever memorizes specific portions of the Qur'an or Hadith or answers *Fatawah* or even solve mathematical problem would be given a reward of so and so, in form of cash or kind.¹⁰ By this the entire Muslim communities over the world join the race mid services, Nigeria is a particular example.¹¹

Records have shown that, the Qur’anic Recitation Competition was introduced in Nigeria by the Centre for Islamic Studies, Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto in 1986, where the first National competition was organized and held in Sokoto, with few states participating. It gradually drew attention of many Northern States and some Southern states of the country. Since then, the competition started gaining acceptance and prominence across the country in terms of participation.¹² But later the *Musabaqah* faced a lot of challenges, such as the problems of Panel of Judges in awarding marks to the contestants during the competition, inter-mingling between males and females in the process of the *Musabaqah*, lack of recognition of the participants from JIBWIS, etc. To overcome these challenges, JIBWIS vehemently preached in villages and cities calling the people to abide by the objectives of the *Musabaqah* and sent delegates to Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto calling the Centre to make corrections on the above challenges. However, it seemed that the University showed no interest in the demands of JIBWIS. So, JIBWIS decided and to embark on its Qur’an recitation competition separately and independently. On 7th November, 1997, JIBWIS called an Executive Meeting at Jos and ruled out that *Musabaqah* should be initiated in the system of JIBWIS from local up to the National levels so as to have the opportunity of making correction on the challenges against the General National *Musabaqah* and to achieve the objectives outlined by the National *Musabaqah* which are to:

- i. bring unity and understanding among Muslims in Nigeria;
- ii. inculcate the habit of recitation and memorization of the Qur’an with *tajwid* as received from the Prophet (S.A.W) in the minds of the youths; and
- iii. foster Islamic brotherhood by holding firmly to the Islamic Faith as ordained by the Almighty Allah.¹³

It is based on the above process that JIBWIS under the leadership of *Shaykh* Isma’ila Idris (The Founder) held the first *Musabaqah* in Jos, capital of Plateau State from 11-16/11/1418AH equivalent to 9th – 14th May, 1998 at the Lecture Hall of the University of Jos and from this therefore the event of the *Musabaqah* continues annually with remarkable success.

Brief Explanation 0on the Qur’an as a Revealed Book

The word Qur’an is derived from *Yaqra’u* which literally means: “To collect” but later on the word came to be used for “Reading” because the words and letters are collected together while reading something. The *masdar* or verbal noun is *qara’atu* and Qur’an.¹⁴ According to Zarqanee as quoted by Amm’ar, the word Qur’an is defined as:

The Arabic speech (*Kalam*) of Allah, which He revealed to Muhammad (SAW) in wording and meaning, and which has been preserved in the *Mus-hafs*, and has reached us by *Mutawaatir* (transmission), and is a challenge to mankind to produce something similar to it.¹⁵

This definition explains clearly that the Qur’an is based on two type of education, that is knowledge of its recitation (*Tajwid*) and knowledge of its interpretation (*Tafsir*) and it is on this that the *Musabaqah* of Izalah is based. The most popular name of the Glorious Qur’an is Qur’an. However, some scholars have counted the names of the

Qur'an to be more than 90; the fact is that they have reached these numbers by considering the various attributes of the Qur'an as its names.¹⁶ But actually the names of the Qur'an are limited to only five viz: i, Al-Qur'an (The Reading), ii, *Al-Furqan* (The Criterion), iii, *Al-Zikr* (The Advice), iv, *Al-Kitab* (The Book), v, *Al-Tanzil* (The Revelation).¹⁷

It is based on these definitions and names of the Glorious Qur'an that the Qur'anic education is the centre point of Islamic principles and teachings which deals with the Divine nature, God's intervention in history, and spiritual lessons learned from nature, life and history. It deals with major themes which are often illustrated with bits of relevant stories of previous Prophets and of by-gone cultures, kingdoms, and empires. All of these themes are interwoven throughout the Qur'an, although some Chapters deals more with matters of faith and others with matters related to living a good life, family and community affairs, justice, rule of law, administration, economics and the like. Various parts of Qur'an have emphasis on regular prescribed prayers, constant supplications, deep self-evaluation, fasting, pilgrimage, specific rules related to equity and inheritance, charity and social justice for all irrespective of social status.¹⁸ So, the Glorious Qur'an, the word of Allah (The Most High) which deals with every aspect of the human life. It is a comprehensive revelation for mankind and it suits every place and time.

***Musabaqah* of JIBWIS and Promotion of Qur'anic Education among the Youth in Nigeria**

This section analyses the efforts made by the JIBWIS *Musabaqah* towards promoting Qur'anic Education among the youth in Nigeria. This annual exercise has achieved a great deal and kudos could be given to JIBWIS for the inspiration to plan and execute such enormous, progressive and enduring competition. These roles include:

1. Formation of Committee to Conduct the Event of the *Musabaqah* Annually

Before JIBWIS started organizing its own *Musabaqah* annually, it first of all enrolled in the National *Musabaqah* as explained earlier, where its youths made great impacts. Interview conducted with *Hafiz* Abubakar Muhammad Ribah (a renowned Qur'anic reciter and interpreter of the JBWIS, Jos) revealed that:

Actually, I was among the youths of JIBWIS who benefited a lot in the National *Musabaqah*. This happened due to the good training of the Qur'anic recitation and interpretation that we received from the teachings of JIBWIS. I have over the years attended the National *Musabaqah* and most of the time, maintained 3rd, 2nd and 1st positions. For instance, in the early 1997, I participated in the Qur'anic recitation and tafsir *Musabaqah* at Local Government, State and National levels and took first position in each level. This permitted me to represent Nigeria in the International *Musabaqah* organized by Saudi-Arabia where I won International Award of 4th position. It was after my return from Saudi-Arabia that in 7th November, 1997, *Al-Shaykh* Muhammad Sani Yahaya Jingir (National Chairman Council of Ulama' of JIBWIS Jos) called the Executives

Meeting at Jos and ruled out that *Musabaqah* should be initiated in the system of JIBWIS from local government up to the National levels so as to have the opportunity of making correction on the challenges in the National *Musabaqah* and also to achieve the objectives outlined by the National *Musabaqah*.¹⁹

As highlighted in the unpublished material of the JIBWIS Jos, a 14-man committee was set up under the Chairman Council of *Ulama'* of JIBWIS to run the activities of the *Musabaqah*. They were the National Coordinator who was the Chairman of the Committee, Deputy National Coordinator, Head of the committee of judges, Secretary of the Committee of judges, Head of the committee of finance and welfare, Secretary of the committee of finance and welfare, Head of the committee of publicity, Secretary of the committee of publicity, Head of the reception and accommodation, Secretary of the committee of Reception and Accommodation, Head of the committee of Accommodation of the participant, Secretary of the committee of Accommodation of the participants, Head of the committee of security, and Secretary of the committee of security.²⁰

The committee had the following terms of reference:

- i. fixing the date for the commencement of the *Musabaqah*;
- ii. drafting the time table for the process of the *Musabaqah*;
- iii. arranging the venue for the *Musabaqah*;
- iv. creating effective ways for the development of the *Musabaqah* through establishing *Tahfizul - Qur'an* Islamic Schools as well as publications of Calendars, Magazines and Journals which propagate the activities of the *Musabaqah*;
- v. appointing Judges of the *Musabaqah* after every three (3) years;
- vi. appointing Representatives of the Committees whenever needed;
- vii. organizing meeting for consultation on the issue of prizes to be given in the *Musabaqah*; and
- viii. calling for the General Meeting.

Since the inception, the committee has been able to organize the *Musabaqa* in the following states (1). Plateau State 1418/1998 (2). Bauchi State 1419/1999 (3). Gombe State 1420/2000 (4). Niger State 1421/2001 (5). Zamfara State 1422/2002 (6). Yobe State 1423/2003 (7). Kebbi State 1424/2004 (8). Nasarawa State 1425/2005 (9). Taraba State 1426/2006 (10). Jigawa State 1427/2007 (11). Kano State 1428/2008 (12). Bauchi State 1432/2009 (13). Sokoto State 1430/2009 (14). Gombe State 1431/2010 (15). Kebbi State 1429/2011 (16). Niger State 1433/2012 (17). Kaduna State 1434/2013 (18). Taraba State 1435/2014 (19). Bauchi State 1436/2015 (20). Plateau State 1437/2016²¹

2. Encouraging Muslim Youths to Memorize and Interpret Qur'an in a Proper Manner of its Recitation and Interpretation

To achieve this major objective, the first *Musabaqah* was held at the lecture Hall of the University of Jos for a period of five (5) days from 9th – 14th May, 1998, under the

leadership of *Shaykh* Muhammad Sani Yahaya Jingir who was the Special Guest of Honour at the occasion. Letters of invitation to the *Musabaqah* were sent to various states in Nigeria from which 15 states were in attendance. Six (6) learned scholars were selected by the committee to be the Panel Judges of the *Musabaqah*, namely *Hafiz* Aminu Yusuf Nuhu (Chairman), *Hafiz* Abubakar Muhammad Ribah (Secretary), *Hafiz* Abu Sumayya Usman (Member), *Hafiz* Abdullahi Musa Galadima (Member), *Hafiz* Muhammad Abdullahi (Member), *Hafiz* Sa'adu Ibrahim Gombe (Member). At the end of the *Musabaqah* thirty-five (35) participants from different states received prizes in cash and kind. These were the winners of the first; second, third, fourth and fifth positions in the seven categories of the *Musabaqah*. First position winners received: N300,000 with Motor Car and honour of Turbaning as *Gwarzon Shekara* (Heavy Weight Champion of the year), N200,000 with Motor Cycle, N100,000 with Motor Cycle, N70,000 with Bicycle, N60,000 with Bicycle, N50,000 with Bicycle, and N40,000 with Bicycle based on categories. Second position winners received: N100,000 with Deep Freezer, N60,000 with Tailoring Machine, N40,000 with Tape-Recorder, N30,000 with Tape-Recorder, N25,000, with Radio, N20,000 with Tea-Flask, N15,000 with 20 yards of Shedder Cloth. Third position winners received: N80,000, N60,000, N40,000, N30,000, N20,000, N15,000, N10,000. Fourth position winners received: N40,000, N25,000, N20,000, N15,000, N10,000, N8,000, N5,000; while Fifth position winners received: N30,000, N20,000, N15,000, N10,000, N8,000, N7,000, N5,000.²²

Similarly, another role of the JIBWIS to encourage the youths to concentrate on the learning of the '*Ulumu-al-Qur'an*', was that *Shaykh* Muhammad Sani Yahaya Jingir as a Guest of Honour delivered a speech on the importance of *Musabaqah* to the society where he stated that the annual gathering of the members of JIBWIS from various States of Nigeria would further facilitate the desired unity, prosperity, tranquillity and triumph of JIBWIS. According to him, the competition would create positive response among the youths and awaken the elderly Muslims to hold the Glorious Qur'an more seriously. He therefore urged members of JIBWIS to learn not only proper recitation and interpretation of the Qur'an but also to implement its messages into action. He called upon participants and the committee of the *Musabaqah* to have sincere motives in seeking for the pleasure of Allah in their undertakings, and to safeguard them against the evil of pride.²³

3. Establishing *Tahfiz* classes and schools for learning '*Ulumul-Qur'an*' among the youths

In the JIBWIS Jos Magazine, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sani Yahaya Jingir revealed that the organization since inception has established 4,131 schools across the country from which 80 of these schools were *Tahfizu-al-Qur'an* schools. These schools were established purposely to train youths how to recite, memorize and interpret the Qur'an in a proper manner of Islamic teachings so that each year they would participate in the local government, state and national *Musabaqah*.²⁴ Therefore, these schools were also directed to train the participants on the following categories of the *Musabaqah*:

1st Category: Memorization of the whole Qur'an with *Tajwid* theoretically and practically, and the *Tafsir*.

2nd Category: Memorization of the whole Qur'an with *Tajwid* theoretically and practically

3rd Category: Memorization of 40 Hizbs of the Qur'an with *Tajwid* theoretically and practically

4th Category: Memorization of 20 Hizbs of the Qur'an with *Tajwid* theoretically and practically

5th Category: Good Recitation of the Qur'an theoretically and practically (*Nazari*)

6th Category: Memorization of the 10 Hizbs with good Intonation (*Tangim*)

7th Category: Memorization of the 4 Hizbs of the Qur'an with *Tajwid* ²⁵

4. Requirements for Participation into the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS

The requirements for participating in the exercise of the *Musabaqah* are:

- i, ability to memorize certain portions of the Qur'an;
- ii, possession of rudimentary knowledge and application of the science of *Tajwid* of the Qur'an theoretically and practically;
- iii, participant must be an indigene of Local Government or State he is representing; and
- iv, he must not be a child of either a member of the *Musabaqah*, Panel of Judges or the National Organizing Committee.

In view of the above, the organizing committee also outlines the following:

- i. every participant should be seated while the *Musabaqah* is going on. No participant is allowed to leave his seat unless with a strong reason.
- ii. Any participant whose name has been called for the first time and is nowhere to be found would be entertained later, unless he has a genuine reason for not being around.
- iii. For participant to qualify for the award first or second prizes in each category, he must have scored an average of 70% of the total marks, while 60% average is earmarked for the third, fourth and fifth positions.
- iv. It is compulsory for all participants to adhere to Islamic manners of dress and otherwise throughout the *Musabaqah*, and if a participant shows any act of misbehaviour in the course of the *Musabaqah*, ten (10) marks shall be deducted from his total marks. ²⁶

5. Mobilization of Funds for all the Activities of the *Musabaqah*

When he was asked about the funding of the activities of the *Musabaqah*, *Ustaz* Abdunasir Abdul-Muhyi (Former National Secretary of the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS) said that:

Activities of the Committee and conduct of the competition are facilitated by the generous donations received from all the members of JIBWIS and other philanthropists. For instance, the highest donation was received from all the states of Nigeria that are participating in the *Musabaqah*. while

many donations from individuals, Plateau State Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, University Jos, and other industrial companies were received respectively. The same system of collecting donations for funding the *Musabaqah* continued to date.²⁷

6. Panel Judges and Conduct of the Competition

As highlighted in item two of this section that six (6) Qur'anic scholars (*Huffazu-al-Qur'an*) were selected to be the Panel of Judges of the *Musabaqah*. *Hafiz* Aminu Yusuf Nuhu was among the Panel Judges selected and was much time assigned Chairman of the Panel Judges of the *Musabaqah*, in responding about the conduct of the competition stated that:

Conduct of the Competition is one the major roles in the activities of the *Musabaqah* which serve as the centre point where Judges are assigned to strictly follow the rules and regulations of the *Musabaqah*. During the *Musabaqah*, a participant would be tested based on the envelope he selected, which contains questions. Testing of memorization of participant is based on his ability to pick up recitation from that of the judge responsible for initiating recitation. The numbers of recitations are determined by the category being contested. While the participant recites, all the Judges would be closely observing him to detect mistake for reducing marks or correct recitation for awarding marks. Whenever a participant makes a mistake in recitation (*Tajwid*) or memorization (*Hifz*) a Judge assigned the duty of detecting mistakes would indicate to him by switching on a red light once, twice or thrice until he corrects himself, otherwise he would be corrected. The timekeeper signals the end of time for each question for a participant by switching on a green light. He also uses green light to indicate the end of all questions. For some of the categories, the chief Judge examines their theoretical knowledge in *Tajwid* by asking them questions they selected in the envelope they pick. A Judge is assigned to test *Tafsir* and Arabic Grammar related to it.²⁸

Impact of JIBWIS *Musabaqah* on Muslim Youths in Nigeria

Abu Sumayya Usman is one of the members of the Panel Judges of the *Musabaqah* who made vital response with regard to the impact of JIBWIS *Musabaqah* on Muslim Youths in Nigeria, he said:

Musabaqah has become a prominent institution of JIBWIS interest featuring many activities and gathering thousands of people from different States of Nigeria. Its role is not only on Qur'anic Education, but social, political and economic. Besides bringing Muslims together by meeting between the youths and other people of JIBWIS every year, the number of Qur'anic Memorizers and *Mufassirun* (Interpreters) has been increasing since the inception of the *Musabaqah* to date. This can be

observed from the Invitation and Programmes of Events of subsequent years of the *Musabaqah*. Each Invitation and Programme of Event shows that every year 35 participants who win the competition and other participants who didn't win from different States of Nigeria memorized Qur'an off head as result of the *Musabaqah* activities. It is unlike before around 1990 when the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS was not even established.²⁹

Similarly, *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS highly facilitated the development and propagation of *Ilm-al-Tajwid* and *Tafsir* to the youths and other members of JIBWIS. Before the advent of JIBWIS *Musabaqah*, majority of the people of JIBWIS in Nigeria lacked *Tajwid* knowledge and thus recited the Qur'an according to influences of their mother tongues. For instance, some aspects of *Tajwid* like *Izhar*, *Idgham*, *Ikhfa'*, *Iqlab*, *Madda*, *Tanghim*, *Tarqiq* were hardly observed by reciters of the Qur'an by members of JIBWIS. However, there is now a positive change in the sense that not only participants at the *Musabaqah* but also many other reciters of the Qur'an such as Imams in the Mosques and those invited to recite Qur'an for opening and closing ceremonies at public gathering in the system of JIBWIS are trying to adopt the correct rules of *Tajwid*. In addition, *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS had also contributed to the emergence of *Tahfiz* Qur'anic schools in the system of JIBWIS. This is because from the beginning very few *Tahfiz* Qur'anic schools were established but now, there are more than 80 *Tahfiz* Qur'anic schools across the country owned by JIBWIS.³⁰

Another impact of JIBWIS *Musabaqah* on Muslim youths was shown in the result of the *Musabaqah* of Kano State which was written by the Chairman Panel of Judges, *Hafiz* Aminu Yusuf Nuhu. This result displayed the names of the participants of JIBWIS from different States who won prizes in the National *Musabaqah* in different categories as follows:

Mustapha Dahir; Kaduna State, 1st position in complete Qur'an, *Tajwid* and *Tafsir* (*Gwarzon Shekara*). Nafi'u Usman; Bauchi State, 1st position in complete Qur'an and *Tajwid*. Umar Dalhatu; Bauchi State, 1st position in 40*Hibz* and *Tajwid*. Usman Idris; Bauchi State, 1st position in 20*Hibz* and *Tajwid*. Abubakar Muhd Auwal; Nasarawa State, 1st position in 60*Hibz Nazari* and *Tajwid*. Muhd Sani; Kebbi State 1st position in 12*Hibz* and *Tangim*. Muhd Abubakar; Gombe State, 1st position in 7*Hibz* and *Tajwid*.

Apart from the winners of the 1st position, there were many participants on the result of those who won 2nd to the last position according to the categories of the *Musabaqah* respectively and since the inception of the *Musabaqah* the result was provided annually.³¹

It is because of this *Musabaqah* that many memorizers of the Glorious Qur'an who serve as teachers in various *Islamiyyah* schools of JIBWIS were produced. Some of these teachers are:

- i. *Hafiz Kabiru Umar Wasagu*: As a result of his participation in the JIBWIS *Musabaqah*, he was admitted by *Jami'atu-al-Islamiyya* of Madina and studied first and second degree respectively and now one of the Chief *Imams* of the Central Mosque Birnin Kebbi and a Principal of Abdullahi bn Mas'ud *Litahfizu-al-Qur'an*, Secondary School Birnin Kebbi.
- ii. *Hafiz Nafi'u Usman Bauchi*: After winning the first position in the JIBWIS National *Musabaqah* of Kano State in 2007, he represented Nigeria in the International *Musabaqah* organized at Kuwait and now teaching *Ulumu-al-Qur'an* in JIBWIS Schools of *Tahfizu-al-Qur'an* Bauchi. The National JIBWIS appointed him as one of the Panel Judges of the *Musabaqah* from 2016 to date.
- iii. *Hafiz Abubakar Abubakar Argungu*: He attended the National *Musabaqah* for many years, teaching Qur'anic Sciences in *Ma'ahad* Abubakar Mahmud Gumi *Islamiyyah* Secondary School of JIBWIS, Argungu.³²

Similarly, to the social benefits of the JIBWIS *Musabaqah*, students from different schools get to know one another during the competition and exchange ideas on the Qur'anic recitation. Through this interaction, students who need to attend other schools for learning the *Ulumu-al-Qur'an*, made arrangement among themselves and this brought many students of JIBWIS to excel in the *Musabaqah* as result of the inter-school learning.³³

JIBWIS *Musabaqah* has also economic benefits in the sense that a lot of participants win huge amount of money and other prizes like motor car, motor cycle, freezer, tailoring machine, and a sit to perform pilgrimage at Makkah, which helps them to eradicate poverty through investing these items they received from the Qur'anic Recitation Competition into businesses and that help them to sustain their lives and that of their families. As a result, some beneficiaries become big business men.³⁴

Challenges confronting the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS

With all of the impacts of the *Musabaqah*, there are still challenges confronting the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS which include:

- a. Lack of full support by the Government to sponsor all the activities of the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS as against the National *Musabaqah* which has adequate support of the Government.
- b. Lack of recognition by the international *Musabaqah* of Saudi Arabia. Participants and prize winners in the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS have not been able to participate in the International *Musabaqah* of Saudi-Arabia and so could not enjoy international status.
- c. Some Muslims in Nigerian criticize JIBWIS for conducting the *Musabaqah* separately to only benefit its members; they opined that this idea of *Musabaqah* of Izalah encourages disunity among the Muslim *Ummah* in Nigeria
- d. Some States and Local Governments do not have enough participants in some of the categories of the *Musabaqah* especially *Tafsir* and *Tanghim* participants.

- e. Mostly Izalah depends on appeal funds and seeking donations from the people for running the activities of the *Musabaqah*. This sometimes, discouraged people from giving the assistance.
- f. Shortage of ‘*Ulumul-Qur’an*’ teachers who can train the youths on various skills of the *Musabaqah* in some of the areas of JIBWIS in the country.
- g. Some Muslim scholars in the country are challenging some of the activities done in the process of the *Musabaqah*. They compared awarding prizes to winners of the competition to selling of Allah’s Book for some miserable price.
- h. Some of the contestants were not seeking the Pleasure of Allah in doing the competition rather their intentions were headed towards materials prizes and pride.

Recommendations for improvement

The following recommendations are put forward to address the challenges facing the *Musabaqah* programme of JIBWIS:

1. There is a need for the Government to fully support the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS financially and administratively. This is because Muslim youths in Nigeria benefited a lot by this *Musabaqah*, in the sense that they memorized Qur’an off head and serve as Qur’anic teachers in the *Islamiyyah* and Government public schools.
2. Since it is only through the National *Musabaqah* that a participant get access to the International *Musabaqah*, JIBWIS should allow participants in its own *Musabaqah* to be attending the National *Musabaqah*, so that they would enjoin international status. According to *Imam (Hafiz) Yusuf Abubakar Suru*, Chairman of the Panel Judges of the National *Musabaqah* of Kebbi State Chapter and other Muslims in Nigeria that:

People of JIBWIS especially (The Participants of the *Musabaqah*) made a mistake for not attending the National *Musabaqah*, though they are thinking that they are right for one reason or the other, but this increases disunity and haleness among the Muslims in Nigeria and Allah is encouraging Muslims to always be united whatsoever the case. Therefore, let them participate and adjust the short comings of the *Musabaqah* until they achieve success for the unity of Muslims.³⁵
3. States and Local Governments who have deficiency of participants in the categories of the *Musabaqah* should find possible ways on how to fill the gap so that they can also compete with their counterparts.
4. JIBWIS must think of different ways of generating funds for the purpose of the *Musabaqah* thereby reducing the burden of seeking donations on its members.
5. There is a need for those States and Local Governments who have shortage of Qur’an and *Tajwid* teachers to organize refresher courses from time to time so that their youths would have effective training on *Ulumul-Qur’an*.

6. Additional efforts should be made in arousing the interest of those people who go contrary to awarding prizes to the winners of the *Musabaqah* so that they will understand the ruling of some Muslim scholars as regards to that.
7. Judges and participants of the *Musabaqah* of JIBWIS should make sure that the conduct of the *Musabaqah* is done solely for the sake of Allah not for any other worldly gain.

Conclusion

In this paper, review was made on the brief history of JIBWIS, the role made by the JIBWIS in governing the activities of its *Musabaqah*, as well as the meaning of Qur'anic Education. In the discussion of the topic, it was found that JIBWIS attaches great importance to the activities of the *Musabaqah* by making great impact in the National *Musabaqah* from the beginning and later played an important role in the conduct of its own *Musabaqah* which brought about the promoting of Qur'anic Education among the youths in Nigeria. The paper also highlighted on the impact and problems associated with the *Musabaqah* of Izalah and lastly some suggestions were given for solutions to the problems.

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ISLAM, THE MISCONCEIVED: *ALMAJIRIS* AND BEGGING SYNDROME

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Introduction

The acquisition of education, either the Islamic or Western oriented one at an early age is encouraged in Islam. If this is the reason some parents resolve to send their adolescent children to Qur'anic School, it is commendable. But abandoning these children to fend for themselves is not just disheartening, it is criminal. Islam encourages parents not only to provide education for their children and wards but also to cater and provide clothing and shelter for them. The *Almajiri* system in Nigeria which appears to encourage pupils to beg in order to feed themselves is seen by people as part of the method of acquiring Islamic knowledge in Nigeria. This idea is totally repugnant to Islam, as the religion discourages begging and enjoins its adherents to labour for survival. This notwithstanding, the religion enjoins rendering assistance to individuals who genuinely need one, because rendering such assistance serves as charity to the one who renders it. This however does not mean people should take advantage of the enjoinder to give charity or assist the needy, by disguising as beggar or taking begging as a professional means of earning a living.

This paper is triggered by the common notion that *Almajiri* represents Islam and that begging is approved by Islam. Even some Muslims view begging as something that is accepted, enjoined or at least condoned by Islam. In this regard, the current paper reveals the position of Islam on begging – explaining that while both the Qur'an and Hadith advise people to help one another in terms of needs, the texts condemn in totality the idea of soliciting people for their properties in order to earn a living.

The *Almajiri*

The word *Almajiri* was taken from *Al-Muhajir* (plural, *Al-Muhajirun*), an Arabic word used for the immigrants who migrated from Makkah to Madinah with Prophet Muhammad at the end of the first decade of the mission of Islam. In Nigeria, *Almajiri* is often used to refer to a student undergoing or in the process of acquiring Islamic knowledge, an indigent, an insolvent or a destitute, especially when the individual involved is a child.¹ *Almajiri* is also perceived as an individual (usually a child), who is either a beggar or a student in traditional Arabic School, who is either ordered by the parent/guardian or teacher to roam about streets for the aim of getting food from people.² According to Yusuf Dalhat, the *Almajiris* are usually male children from Muslim homes/backgrounds, who are sent to Islamic schools to acquire early Islamic education.³ *Almuhajir* as argued by Ogundokun, was 'Hausanised' – brought into

Hausa language as *Almajiri* to mean one who travels out of his village/town to another location in order to concentrate on seeking Islamic knowledge.⁴

In the words of Sanusi, *Almajiri* means an emigrant, which “is taken from the Arabic word, *al-muhajir*, that is, someone that migrated from one place to another. Thus, *Almajiris* are known for leaving their hometowns or states for another with the aim of seeking Islamic knowledge under the tutelage of local Malams who accommodate them in their homes and take charge of their well-being.”⁵ This method of acquiring knowledge has been known to man from time immemorial, and through it, many have become scholars. But unfortunately, the system has changed and those innocent children and knowledge seekers hardly have access to the rudimentary or fundamental knowledge of Islam. Instead, they are left to cater for themselves, majorly through begging. This has consequently, as argued by Sanusi, given birth to social problems and security challenges for the society. Sanusi discussed further that the *Almajiris* are often seen looking tattered and wandering the streets asking people for food, especially leftovers and money.⁶ This inhuman manner of nurturing is totally against the directive of Islam on child upbringing, as the children are supposed to be given formal education and good care by their parents and teachers.

Begging

Begging, which involves asking people for help or soliciting them for survival is said according to Philip Lynch, to mean

...the solicitation of a voluntary unilateral gift – most often money – in a public place. This definition of begging encompasses various begging categories or ‘techniques’, including ‘passive begging’ (that is, sitting or standing in one place with a sign and/or a receptacle entreating donations), ‘active begging’ (that is, approaching people in a public place and asking them for money or other gifts) and ‘aggressive begging’ (that is, following or asking a person threateningly or repeatedly for money or other gifts).⁷

Depending on the reason for it, begging as discussed by Nadia Azam, can be based on two different categories; need and convenience. Begging which is based on need is engaged in by individuals who have no other alternative(s) to survival; they therefore have no option than to give recourse to asking people for help. Begging based on convenience is usually engaged in by lazy people, who, despite having skills to do other things, conclude that begging is the easiest way for them to earn a living. This is the most common category of beggars in Nigeria today.⁸ The *Almajiris* in Nigeria fall under need, because without begging, the children, who are already malnourished may not survive.

Some parents, guardians and teachers who release their children to the street for begging, usually blame their poor economic conditions for such action. They claim that allowing the children (who are mere consumers as against producers), to beg for food does not only reduce the number of mouths feeding under them, it also provides food for them, as the children may return home from their begging expedition with excess food at times.⁹ This position appears untrue, because there are parents who are not

better placed economically than the parents of *Almajiris*, but they still give good upbringing to their children. The prevention of the social problems that often result from *Almajiri*, coupled with the importance of quality education for the children are good enough reasons to eradicate or at least reduce the prevalence of *Almajiri*. The religion of Islam obliges Muslims to give serious and proper upbringing to their children in order to avoid social vices like begging, robbery, kidnapping etc. The Prophet is reported to have said: “Nothing a parent may award his (her) child that is better than a good upbringing.”¹⁰ If children are afforded good nurturing and upbringing, such children will not become *Almajiri* and will not be exposed to begging at any point of their lives. In the long run, such children are not likely to become security threats like kidnapers and insurgents to the country.

It must be stated that Nigerians also contribute to the problem of begging in the country. This is because, people usually make spiritual consultations, and after that they are directed by their consultants to give alms to beggars. In reality therefore, such people do not want begging to stop in the society; hence the continued growth of begging in the country.

Islam and Begging

In some parts of Northern Nigeria, begging is perceived as a cultural cum religious activity. This has created the notion that beggars must be assisted and not neglected, as defaulters will be dealt with by Allah. While it is true that many Nigerians are philanthropists who assist both beggars and non-beggars as a form of charity, some give money to beggars out of pity and others give to beggars with the belief that such giving will atone for their sins, clear evils/hardships from their paths or draw fortunes to them.

Furthermore, many Nigerians, including Muslims, are of the impression that the religion of Islam approves and enjoins begging. To those people, the religion allows one to take begging as a profession. It must be mentioned that this view is incorrect. That Muslims engage in begging, legalise it as a professional means of livelihood without feeling humiliated or dishonoured, does not make begging legitimate. The fact that some Muslims scholars survive or benefit in one way or the other from it does not validate it.¹¹ To this end, it is important to explain to people the true perspective of begging in Islam.

In Islam, it is enjoined on the rich to render help to the poor and less privileged, this does not in any way encourage the needy to start begging. To this end, the Islamic economic system encourages its adherents to strive for survival by making lawful use of available resources to attain legitimate means of livelihood. Allah says:

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا
 أَكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا أَكْتَسَبْنَ وَسَوَّوْا لِّلَّهِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

And wish not for the things in which Allah has made some of you excel others. For men is reward for what they have earned,

and for women there is reward for what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Surely, Allah has full knowledge of all things” (Qur’an 4:32).

It is clear from the above verse, as commented by Ibn Kathir, that individual will get his earnings from his handiwork.¹² That is, everyone should labour for survival, hence; the condemnation of all kinds of laziness in Islam. The Islamic law does not allow reliance on people, especially when one is able and possesses the physical ability to make efforts. Deducing from the above verse, it can be said that the only condition for begging is when one is completely stranded or in abject poverty and tattered penury, and has no option whatsoever except begging. In such condition, one is allowed to seek assistance from others. It must however be mentioned that once, the need has been met, such individual must stop begging and explore other means of survival.¹³ The conditions that can warrant begging in Islam were mentioned by the Prophet while advising one of his companions, Qabisah bin Mukhariq Al-Hilali, the Hadith containing that admonition reads:

تَحَمَّلْتُ حَمَالَةً فَاتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَسْأَلُهُ فِيهَا فَقَالَ "أَقِمِ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَنَا
الصَّدَقَةُ فَنَأْمُرَكَ بِهَا" ثُمَّ قَالَ "يَا قَبِيصَةَ إِنَّ الْمَسْأَلَةَ لَا تَجِلُّ إِلَّا لِأَحَدٍ
ثَلَاثَةٍ رَجُلٍ تَحَمَّلَ حَمَالَةً فَحَلَّتْ لَهُ الْمَسْأَلَةُ حَتَّى يُصَيِّبَهَا ثُمَّ يُمْسِكُ وَرَجُلٍ
أَصَابَتْهُ جَائِحَةٌ اجْتَا حَتَّ مَالُهُ فَحَلَّتْ لَهُ الْمَسْأَلَةُ حَتَّى يُصَيِّبَ قِوَامًا مِنْ
عَيْشٍ - أَوْ قَالَ سِدَادًا مِنْ عَيْشٍ - وَرَجُلٍ أَصَابَتْهُ فَاقَةٌ حَتَّى يَقُومَ ثَلَاثَةَ مِنْ
ذَوِي الْحِجَابِ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَقَدْ أَصَابَتْ فُلَانًا فَاقَةٌ فَحَلَّتْ لَهُ الْمَسْأَلَةُ حَتَّى
يُصَيِّبَ قِوَامًا مِنْ عَيْشٍ - أَوْ قَالَ سِدَادًا مِنْفَمَا سِوَاهُنَّ مِنَ الْمَسْأَلَةِ يَا
قَبِيصَةَ سُحْتًا يَأْكُلُهَا صَاحِبُهَا سُحْتًا عَيْشٍ

I undertook a financial responsibility, then I came to the Prophet and asked him (for help) concerning that. He said: ‘Hold on, O Qabisah! When we get some charity we will give you some.’ Then the Messenger of Allah said: ‘O Qabisah, charity is not permissible except for one of three: A man who undertakes a financial responsibility, so it is permissible for him to be given charity until he finds means to make him independent and to suffice him; a man who was stricken by calamity and his wealth was destroyed, so it is permissible for him to ask for help until he has enough to keep him going, then he should refrain from asking; and a man who is stricken with poverty and three wise men from among his own people testify that so-and-so is in desperate need, then it is permissible for him to ask for help until he finds means to make him independent and to suffice him. Asking for help in cases other than these, O Qabisah, is unlawful, and the one who takes it is consuming it unlawfully.¹⁴

This Hadith obviously states that begging is not allowed in Islam except if one is incapacitated by poverty, debt or catastrophe. The Prophet further advised Muslims in the following words:

الْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى، فَالْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا هِيَ الْمُنْفَعَةُ، وَالسُّفْلَى هِيَ
السَّائِلَةُ

The upper hand is better than the lower hand. The upper hand is that of the giver and the lower (hand) is that of the beggar.”¹⁵

This Hadith goes in concomitance with a popular Yoruba saying that “*Oke ni owo a fun ni n gbe*” – “The giver’s hands reside at the top”. Despite the permissibility of begging when situations warrant, it is always better to persevere during difficult times. Some of the companions of Prophet Muhammad demonstrated perseverance and the Qur’an made reference to them as follows:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ
إِلْحَافًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

(Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land, seeking (For trade or work). The ignorant man thinks they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark: They do not be of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely, Allah knows it well (Qur’an 2:273).

This verse is talking about the people who migrated with the Prophet to Madinah, some of whom were poor and had no opportunity of working or trading¹⁶. Despite that, they did not choose begging to survive. The phrase: “They do not be of people at all”, as contained in the verse shows that those people did not ask people for help even when they were lacking.

It is reported in one of the traditions of the Prophet that Abu Sa’id was sent by his mother to ask the Prophet for help, but when he got there, the Prophet told him

مَنْ اسْتَعْتَى أَغْنَاهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ اسْتَعْفَّ أَعَقَّهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ اسْتَكْفَّ كَفَّاهُ اللَّهُ،
وَمَنْ سَأَلَ وَلَهُ قِيمَةٌ أُوقِيَتْ فَقَدْ أَلْحَفَ

Whoever felt satisfied, then Allah will enrich him. Whoever is modest, Allah will make him decent. Whoever is content, then Allah will suffice for him. Whoever asks people, while having a small amount, he will have begged the people.”

Then, Abu Sa’id remembered that he even had a camel that was worth more than the small amount he would have gotten from the Prophet, he then returned without asking

the Prophet for help further.¹⁷ In another related tradition, the Prophet discouraged begging as narrated by Abu Hurairah thus:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ . أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَأَنْ يَأْخُذَ أَحَدُكُمْ حَبْلَهُ فَيَحْتَطِبَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ رَجُلًا، فَيَسْأَلَهُ، أَعْطَاهُ أَوْ مَنَعَهُ"

On the authority of Abu Hurairah: Allah’s Messenger (Peace be upon him) said, “By Him in Whose Hand my life is, it is better for anyone of you to take a rope and cut the wood (from the forest) and carry it over his back and sell it (as a means of earning his living) rather than to ask a person for something and that person may give him or not.”¹⁸

This Hadith indicates that enduring difficulties in earning a living is by far better and more preferable to begging in Islam. It is worth noting that Allah created every living being and placed some of them above the others in ranks and status, both economically and otherwise. Allah says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“And it is He Who has made you inheritors of the earth. And He has raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in that which He has bestowed on you. Surely, your Lord is Swift in punishment, and He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” (Qur’an 6:165).

This verse informs us that it is Allah who created man and made him dwell on earth generation after generation, century after century. And it is He who raised some above the others in status and provided different means of living for individuals, making some people poor and enriching some people.¹⁹ This difference in status has existed from time immemorial and will continue to exist. Therefore, both the rich and the poor are supposed to coexist with the understanding and agreement that the rich employ the service of the poor, while he remunerates him for the service. This will not only bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots, it will also bring respect and mercy from both parties and, in the long run, restore peace to the society. Yusuf Dalhat, remarkably remarked as follows:

...by a common sense, one will understand that making a living by begging from door to door thereby regarding it a form of occupation has no basis in Islam, and has never been a recommended act in Islam. It is only a concession granted to those in need in order to remove hardship for them. If that is the case, then there is no sin religiously speaking, if a Muslim chose not to help those who beg in order to get richer and richer without any justifiable need.²⁰

Notwithstanding, it is obligated on Muslims to assist themselves and give alms to people even when there are no demands or no one is begging. The absence of beggars does not prevent alms giving, as alms can be given to one who does not beg. The Prophet is reported to have said:

لَيْسَ الْمُسْكِينُ بِهَذَا الطَّوَّافِ الَّذِي تَرُدُّهُ التَّمْرَةُ وَالتَّمْرَتَانِ، وَاللُّقْمَةُ
وَاللُّقْمَتَانِ، وَالْأُكْلَةُ وَالْأُكْلَتَانِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْمُسْكِينُ الَّذِي لَا يَجِدُ غِنًى يُغْنِيهِ، وَلَا
يُفْطِنُ لَهُ فَيُتَّصَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا

The *Miskin* (needy) is not he who wanders about and whose need is sufficed by a date or two, a bite or two or a meal or two. Rather, the *Miskin* is he who neither has enough resources to sustain him, all the while people, are unaware of his need so they do not give to him, nor does he ask people for anything.²¹

Recommendations

1. In Islam, parents are mandated to nurture and train their children both spiritually and morally. Therefore, children should be given the proper upbringing that include provision of cloth and shelter. This will reduce if not eradicate the involvement of the children in begging and other social vices.
2. While the acquisition of Islamic education is obligatory for Muslim children, it is also imperative for parents not just to expose their children to Western education, but make them go deep in it. By so doing, the children will be refined both spiritually and morally, something that will in turn guarantee peace for the children themselves, their parents and the society at large.
3. To ensure proper and adequate monitoring, parents should painstakingly bring up their children under their own watch. This will not only enhance character training; it will also unmask potential vices and ill behaviours the children might be exposed to at early stages of their lives.
4. According to one tradition of Prophet Muhammad, actions are judged according to intentions. It is therefore apt for parents to have sacred aims for sending out their children or handing them over to other people for upbringing. This is because, some parents release their children to anyone as long as the economic responsibilities of such children will be taken off them and such parent will claim to the public that the children are released for the acquisition of knowledge.
5. Insurgency is one of the major security challenges facing Nigeria. While some insurgents are brainwashed and initiated into it, others are cajoled into it. It is then important that children are made to know the evils of being an insurgent so that they will avoid it and probably report the first person who might attempt to talk them into it.

6. As long as the existence of mankind lasts, government policy is one thing people will continue to adhere to and take seriously. The government should then implement the laws on compulsory education for every child.

Conclusion

Child upbringing is an obligation upon parents in Islam. It is ordained on Muslim parents to train their children not as a favour to the children but as an obedience to the commandment of Allah, the law Giver. The negligence of child upbringing can therefore be concluded as dereliction of duty on the part of the defaulting parents. When children are well brought up, the risk of *Almajiri*, begging, insecurity and other social vices will reduce. While begging is allowed in Islam, it is not permitted for believers to take it as a professional means of earning a living. In fact, it can only be made permissible when there is no other option at all. The people who engage in begging with the claim that there are no jobs or other flimsy excuses should therefore stop.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE ARABIC LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED QUR'ĀNIC/ARABIC TEACHERS IN YORUBALAND

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Introduction

Three stages of Arabic education and the indelible contributions of the early scholars to these successive stages of Qur'ānic, *Ilmi* and advanced stage in Yorubaland have been identified and discussed elsewhere.¹ We shall avoid going into details on the *modus operandi* on these stages here to prevent unnecessary overlapping and digression from the main focus of this paper. This paper examines the literary contributions of purposively selected Qur'ānic and Arabic teachers in Yorubaland. Within the context of this paper, 'Qur'ānic teacher' is used for the '*Ulamā*' who adopted the traditional system of Arabic education. 'Arabic teacher' is used for proprietors of modernized Arabic schools. Attention is also paid to the participants in literary activities amongst the members of the *Zumratul mu'minīn* group in Yorubaland.

It should be remarked that the work is intended to draw our attention to the successful combination of teaching, learning and writing as obtained in the early stages of the spread of Arabic scholarship in Yorubaland. It also aims at identifying members of *Zumratul mu'minīn* group as active participants in Arabic writing, in spite of the one-sidedness of their curriculum which gives prominent attention to theological, at the expense of linguistic sciences.

Due to the factors of time and space, the study is limited to just few of the '*Ulamā*' with lists of their literary productions provided where applicable. Appraisal of these works is left as an area for further research into Arabic literary scholarship in Yorubaland. Selection of subjects is also limited to three Yoruba-speaking states of Lagos, Osun and Oyo for the same reasons enumerated above.

Arabic Literary Production in Northern Nigeria

While confirming the availability of Arabic works in Hausaland prior to the seventeenth century, Khani observes that the area (Hausaland) witnessed the rise and growth of local authorship and literary activities within that century. According to him, the period witnessed the emergence of a great number of indigenous '*Ulamā*' of Hausa/Fulani stock on the field of literary productions.² A real revolution in Arabic-Islamic writing took place in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, associated with the reformist Fulani scholars Shaykh 'Uthmān b. Fūdī (d.1817), his brother 'Abdullāh (d. 1826) and his son Muhammad Ballo (d. 1837). Between them, they produced over three hundred works in prose and verse as well as dozens of occasional poems.³

However, the tempo of Arabic literary production, which kept expanding during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dwindled considerably in the twentieth century. Two factors were responsible for this dwindling. The first factor was the importation of printed Arabic textbooks, especially from Egypt. These imported books served many purposes; they satisfied the spiritual needs of the scholars and provided them with the opportunity of reading many valuable works within a short time. The books also provided a better option to spending much time on writing and reading hand-written, time-consuming texts to which people were earlier used.⁴

The second factor was colonialism. Prior to the advent of the British rule, the emirates of northern Nigeria were administered by the Sokoto caliphate and the Islamic empire of Bornu. Arabic had become well established as a means of communication as far back as the eleventh century within the emirates. One Muhammad Ibn Mani from Fezzan (North Africa) was said to have settled in Bornu and taught Islamic texts to the Muslims and that included at least three rulers (who reigned) before Humm 'Al-Jilmi (r.1085-1097). Between 1242 and 1252, the status of Arabic had become so strong within the emirates of Bornu to the extent that a hostel was established at Al-Azhar University in Cairo for Bornu students.⁵ The tradition of Arabic literary activities had become the culture of scholarship and higher standard of Arabic and Islamic education continued until the coming of the British to Lagos, which later became the capital of the geographical entity named Nigeria in 1861.⁶

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Sokoto caliphate had been conquered by the British. The British, no doubt, met resistance from the emirates during the course of their conquest of the northern Nigeria. However, with the fall of Sokoto caliphate and the consequent brutal assassination of Sultan Attahiru Ahmadu at Burmi in 1903, the establishment of British rule in Northern Nigeria was completed. About ten other Emirs in various parts of the northern Nigeria were either killed or deposed in the process of consolidating the British colonialism.⁷

It should be noted that only those who were prepared to be loyal and obedient to the colonial masters were appointed to replace the assassinated or deposed Emirs. As the situation progressed, the role of Northern Emirs changed from the custodian of Arabic and Islamic legacies to agents of imperialism and colonialism in which their privileged and exalted positions of integrity, honour, respect and influence were manipulated by the colonial masters and re-directed to serve the latter's vested interests.⁸ The conquest of the emirates by the colonialists marked the beginning in the decline of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the northern Nigeria, the result of which is given by Shehu - Sokoto as follows:

At independence in Nigeria, there was only one Islamic education institution of British sponsorship in Nigeria, which had survived the years of hesitant British educational policy. This was the Kano Law School, which later became the School for Arabic studies.⁹

Cultivation of Arabic Literary Production in Yorubaland

The credit of initiating the establishment of modern Arabic schools in Yorubaland goes to itinerant Arab scholars, some of whom were also merchants by vocation based in

Lagos. Mention should also be made of the role of Sharif 'Abdul-Karim Al-Muradi (d. 1926) from Lebanon who travelled widely in the west Coast of Africa and was in Lagos, the heartland of Yorubaland, around 1890. Many natives studied under him. It was to his credit that printed Arabic works, usually brought from Arab countries, became fashionable here.¹⁰

The book *Miftāhu 'l-lughati 'l-arabiyyah*, one of the earliest works in Arabic was authored by another Arab, Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa 'l-'Afandi, a Syrian. Records in our possession portray this scholar as the founder of the first known modern Arabic school in Yorubaland in 1904 at Lagos. According to Abubakre:

The first known modern Arabic school in Yorubaland was founded in Lagos in 1904 by Shaikh Muhammad Mustafa 'l-'Afandi, a Syrian who gathered pupils around him. He wrote and had a textbook in Arabic printed for his pupils as a result of his experience with them. The book *Miftāhu 'l-lughati 'l-arabiyyah*, proved to be one of the earliest works in Arabic which see the teaching of Arabic to West African pupils from the perspective of student. Another alien pioneer worthy of note was Shaykh Abdul-Karimi't-Tarābulisī, whose name suggests that he was probably from Tripoli.¹¹

The participation of Yoruba '*Ulamā*' in contributing to Arabic literature was a by-product of the teaching materials available for their studies and their callings as religious scholars and teachers. Literary activities began from copying of the reading materials which were mostly in manuscripts commonly used in teaching by the early peripatetic scholars¹². These works were copied by interested students either from the migrant scholars who took these writings along for their teaching career or from the teachers they met at their various towns outside Yorubaland in the process of seeking for specialists at the '*Ilmī*' (advanced) stages of Arabic learning. After copying, the works were studied by the students under the tutelage of the scholars who made the works available. This system prepared the ground for the participation of Yoruba '*Ulamā*' in Arabic literary production.

Commenting on the positive effects of this system of textbook copying in serving as catalyst for the cultivation of Arabic literary scholarship in Yorubaland, Abdul-Rahmon notes:

Many of them did not stop at copying of textbooks, rather they, after mastering the books wrote explanatory notes for the benefits of their own students. Such works in turn became the textbooks tenaciously studied by other students. Gradually many of them started to write abridgments and versifications of prose works, while *Tashīr*, *Takhmīs* and *Tathlīth* were written on verse works.¹³

Furthermore, in order to meet the almost insatiable demand of Muslims for reading printed works in Arabic in replacement for time consuming copied texts, Shaykh Ya'qūb who engaged in bookselling in the course of his travels had an idea of rare

books that were of high demands in local Islamic schools, so he later edited and re-published them. His travels afforded him the opportunities of contacts with Mustafā 'Al-Bābī 'Al-Halabī, the Egyptian bookseller and publisher, who published seven of his works.¹⁴

Generally speaking, all the Arabic works of Ya'qūb consisting mainly of annotated editions of popular Islamic poems and prose texts were widely used in Arabic schools. Our efforts to locate the original copies of these works, which could have assisted us in assessing the extent of Ya'qūb's contribution proved futile. However, as an editor, he must have probably bowdlerized some details considered unnecessary to his audience from these works while relevant additions were made to fill in some lacunae noted therein. Though the task of editing these works did not qualify him as the original author, nevertheless, the significance of his contribution lies in preserving these valuable works from going into abeyance. He succeeded in establishing himself as one of those who contributed mostly to Arabic literature in Yorubaland in the twentieth century.¹⁵

Apart from the seven published textbooks on religious observance,¹⁶ Shaykh Ya'qūb is also credited with four unpublished didactic compilations on Arabic language. A collection of these writings is preserved on microfilm at the University of Ibadan library with ms: Ibadan (UL) 509 as its accession number. The texts are given the following titles:

- (i) *Ta'limu 't-talāmīdh sabīli 'r-rasā'il* (ms:Ibadan (UL.) 509, no 16)
- (ii) *Muqarrib 't-tarīq li 'l-mukhātibīn 'l-mubtada'in fī tadrīs 'l-lughah 'l-'arabiyyah* (ms:Ibadan (UL.) 509, no 16).
- (iii) *Ta'lim ba'd 'l-lughah 'l-'arabiyyah wa 'l-'āmiyyah ma'an* (ms:Ibadan (UL.) 509, no 17).
- (iv) *Ta'limu 'l-lughah 'l-'arabiyyah 'alā sabīli 'l-'as'ilah wa 'l-'ajwibah mushafahatan wa qhayraha* (ms:Ibadan (UL) 509, no 18).

Stressing the contributions of the migrant scholars of northern Nigeria extraction to the teaching of Arabic and production of reading materials in the early 20th century in Yorubaland, Abubakre states that:

A native scholar who first introduced the teaching of Arabic by the use of illustrated textbooks was Waziri Bida 1900 and later Shaykh Muhammad Labib, d. 1926, popularly known as Tāju l-Adab. The latter was a native of Ilorin and lived in Iwo, Ibadan and Abeokuta. The former was a Nupe who lived in Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin teaching and publishing.¹⁷

Folorunsho describes Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri (1917-1992) as one of the prominent migrant scholars from Ilorin who finally settled in Lagos and made significant contributions to Arabic scholarship through the establishment of an Arabic Training Centre popularly called *Markaz 'al-Ta'lim 'al-'Arabī* at Agege, Lagos.¹⁸ The success of Markaz in serving as a veritable fountain of Arabic/Islamic scholarship stimulated the springing of so many other Arabic schools mostly established by the

former students of Shaykh Al-Iluri, his admirers, mentees and others respectively. While confirming this assertion, Opeloye and Makinde observe that:

By the establishment of *Markaz*, it began to serve as a centre that gives impetus to the renaissance of Arabic and Islamic studies not only in Southwest but in Nigeria as a whole and some neighboring West African countries. There is no gainsaying the fact that the school influenced many others to spring up in different parts of Yorubaland.¹⁹

Shaykh Adam Al-Iluri was not only a teacher but also a prolific writer and sound scholar. Shaykh Adam wrote well over one hundred books, articles and manuscripts in Arabic on Arabic language, literature, Islam and related subjects. Parts of these books have been written as aid to explain some difficult books; some were written to run commentaries on some ambiguous publications, while some were written mainly as textbooks for the students.²⁰

It is obvious that the instinct to promote learning through writing and publication of valuable Arabic texts that would meet the need of the target audience prompted served as catalyst for the establishment of the Islamic Cultural Printing Press as an organ of the *Markaz*.²¹ Abubakre observes that Shaykh Adam has written on virtually all the subjects of Arabic and Islamic studies.²² Though Shaykh Adam is no longer alive but his children keep alive the legacy of contribution to Arabic *belles lettres* for which he became prominent. Emphasizing this, Abubakre submits that two children of Al-'Ilūrī; Habīb 'Ādam 'Abdullahi Al-'Ilūrī and Thawban 'Ādam 'Abdullahi al-'Ilūrī are keeping the culture of publishing in Arabic alive. The first who is the *Mudīru-l-Markaz* organizes annually a colloquium to commemorate the demise of his father, the proceeding of which is published every year. The other produces pamphlets on current issues in Arabic on a regular basis.²³

Shaykh Mustafā Zughlūl, who established the famous citadel of Arabic and Islamic learning known as *Dāru-d-da'wah wa'l-'Irshād* in Isolo, Lagos was also an erudite scholar and prolific writer. An observation of his works shows that in addition to projecting the ideals of Islam, he also made immense contributions to social and political issues as evidenced in his *Saya'ūd 'al-'arab 'ilā falastīn*. Some of his literary productions are the following:

- (i) *Saya'ūd 'l-'arab 'ilā falastīn*
- (ii) *'Al-mar'ah bayna 'al-hijāb wa'l-sufūr*
- (iii) *Miftāh 'l-hadīth*
- (iv) *'Azhār 'r-rubā fī 'akhbār bilād yūrubā*
- (v) *Rawā'i 'l-ma'lūmāt*

Of all the Arabic writings of this great scholar in our possession, *Miftāh 'al-hadīth* is the only text specifically written in conformity with a school syllabus as stressed by the author, who was a tutor at *Markaz 'al-ta'līm 'al-'arabī 'al-'islamī*, Agege, when the text was published. In the introduction, the author writes;

I compiled it as a prescribed text particularly for the students of secondary classes at *Markaz 'al-ta'līm 'al-'arabī 'al-'islamī*, at Agege, Nigeria and for the seekers of knowledge in general. I pray the Almighty to make it an illuminating lamp from which the old and young seekers of *'ilm 'al-hadīth* will benefit.²⁴

Zumratul mu'minīn

Zumratul mu'minīn as an organization embraces the teachers as well as students of a scholarly religious movement believed to have been made prominent in Yorubaland by Shaykh Abdul-Salām Bamidele Bada of Amunigun Ibadan. Kankawī²⁵ traces the origin of this group to Shaykh Yusuf Abubakri of Agbaji quarters of Ilorin in 1907. Their literary contributions which covered a wide range of themes were intended to correct the erroneous impression that only the graduates of modernized Arabic schools who had deep exposure to linguistic sciences could write flawless Arabic.

Of the members of this group who have written on diverse issues through the medium of Arabic is Shaykh Abdul-Latīf Owolabi. In spite of being a member of *Zumratul mu'minīn*, a group known for the lopsidedness of its curriculum which works against its votaries in communicating in flawless Arabic, Shaykh Abdul-Latīf Owolabi actually distinguishes himself as a rare breed through his well-constructed literary productions.²⁶ Having studied for a period of twelve years under Shaykh Abdur Rashid Olore of Ibadan, Shaykh Abdul-Latīf Owolabi automatically became a member of this group because his master was a prominent member of the group. Some of his original works are *Nūrul – Islām*, *Misbāhu 's-salām*, *Fawākihu 't-tulāb fī 'afwāhi 'l- 'ahbāb* and *Tashīru 'l- 'Akhdarī*.

Products of *Zumratul-mu'minīn* Arabic centres whose system of education was a replica of the traditional system had, by their interactions with the modern Arabists in Yorubaland and elsewhere cultivated the linguistic skills which enhanced their participation in literary activities. From this group we have more valuable contributions like *Fā'idah 'amīmah fī 'l-'indhār wa 'l-'irshād* (140 lines), composed by Shaykh 'Abd 'al-Rashīd Muhammad Jāmi', *Natā'ij 'al-'ijtihādiyyah (sic) li 'l-'akābir wa 'l-ghilmān* (140 lines), composed by Shaykh 'Ismā'īl Muhibbud-Dīn. Another member of the group, Shaykh 'Ishāq 'Al-Mubārak contributed the following:

- (i) *'Al-taqārīz li fadīlat 'sh-shaykh Ahmad Faya*
- (ii) *Qasīdah haflat 'l-mawlid*
- (iii) *Tahni 'ah*
- (iv) *'Al-Qasīdah 'l-'irshādiyyah*

Contributions from Traditional Qur'ānic Centres

Arabic scholars of the traditional settings also made significant contributions to Arabic literary productions in Yorubaland. A survey of their works shows that they are mainly in verses with reasonable contributions also in prose. An appraisal of the writings reveals the compliance of many of them with the modern norms of Arabic writing. This is probably because many of these *'Ulamā'* have adequate exposure to linguistic

sciences. Shaykh Bunyamin Adisa Motala whose grandfather was said to have migrated from Oluponna near Iwo in Osun State and finally settled in Ibadan was one of such great scholars . He started the Qur’anic education under the tutelage of his father and it is interesting to note that all his studies were done under his father in Ibadan.²⁷ He established an Arabic school at Oje in his residence where he taught different categories of students in 1940. Prominent among his students were Shaykh Ahmad Muhalli of Ile-Amin in Iwo, Alhaj Amin Badmus of Oke-Adu and Alhaj Khāmis of Ijebu-Ilara in Ogun State. His literary works cover various themes and prominent among them are the following:

- i. *Sharh ‘ala kitāb ghashina by Suhayl ibn Muhammad Al-Singhali*
- ii. *Sharh ‘ala shaghrab or addid of Shaykh Tājul-Adab*
- iii. *Sayf al-burhan ‘alā ahl al-tughyān*
- iv. *Dalil al-ghāfil ila ‘afw al-ghafir*
- v. *Mi’atay qamus by an anonymous author*
- vi. *Al-qāmus ad-dāliyyah*

Shaykh ‘Ahmad Al-Rufā‘ī Bello of Oke-Are in Ibadan was also a prominent Arabic scholar in Yorubaland. He started the Qur’anic education under his father at the age of and learnt different branches of Arabic and Islamic studies from different scholars before he eventually joined Shaykh Muhammad Wazir Bida whom he accompanied for a long period of time till he became an authority on different subjects.²⁸ He was appointed the *Muftī* of the western region. He wrote on various themes on Arabic literature and Islamic Studies. Among his literary works are the following:

- i. *Nubdhat min tarājim ‘ajd ād al-Muslimīn fi baldat Ibadan*
- ii. *Rā’iyat rithā’ al-Shaykh Muhammad Kharashi,*
- iii. *Marthiyyat li sadiqih al-Shaykh Salah al-Din Apaokagi,*
- iv. *Hujjat Asātidhatina,*
- v. *Hujjat al-Fāsilah,*
- vi. *Tuhfat al-Latif al-Khabir*
- vii. *Hibbat al-mawlā fi bayan ma ‘āni lā*

Conclusion

The paper has revealed the attempt of selected Qur’anic/Arabic teachers to solve the much-argued problem of dearth of suitable textbooks in the process of teaching the Qur’ān and Arabic language in Yorubaland. It traced the beginning of participation in Arabic writing to copying of didactic texts obtained from the peripatetic scholars who were the agents of the spread of Arabic education in Yorubaland. In addition, editing of rare texts which were highly used in local Arabic centres, as undertaken by Shaykh Ya‘qūb was also a factor in the participation of Qur’anic/Arabic teachers in Arabic literary activities in Yorubaland.

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QUR'ANIC SCHOOLS IN GOMBE METROPOLIS: ROLES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Introduction

Islamic schools that facilitate memorization of the Qur'an have been existing in the Middle East and Africa since the seventh century CE. These schools share a set of historical roots that can be traced back to Arabia and the educational practices of the Prophet Mohammad. As Islam spread, the schools that taught the Qur'an spread. Like the religion they promulgated, these schools intermixed with local institutions and took on the distinctive cultural characteristics of the localities in which they were situated. The schools are frequently referred to as Qur'anic schools in English because of their focus on Qur'anic memorization. This study aimed to portray roles and achievements of Qur'anic education as the processes by which accumulated values, skills, experience and knowledge are given both formally and informally, from one generation to the other.¹

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses, such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality. In Islamic theology, knowledge is gained in order to actualize and perfect all the dimensions of the human. The paradigm of perfection is the Prophet (Peace be upon him), and thus the goal of Islamic education is for Muslims to live as he (Peace be upon him) lived and to imitate him.² Education is an important factor in the development of any society. The level of development of any nation is usually determined by its level of education. At the same time the nature of education available to any community, will depict how the affected community would look like. It is this context that makes it paramount for Muslims to look inwardly into the situation we find ourselves today politically, socially, economically and spiritually.³

This study examines the challenges and prospects facing Qur'anic Schools in Gombe metropolis. Primary and Secondary methods of data collection were used. Findings revealed that: Qur'anic schools have been confronting with the challenges of uncared attitude of the government, lack of resources, and lack of enlightenment. The study recommended standardization of the mainstream Qur'anic schools by government, and availability of resources should be giving attention and that there should be vigorous enlightenment campaign showing the merits of Qur'anic education and fruits of its success if implemented.

Conceptual Framework Qur`anic Schools and Islamic Educational System in Nigeria

The history of Islamic education in Nigeria is the same as the history of the religion of Islam itself. This is because Islam goes to any place or community along with its own form of education.⁴ Islam, which predates Christianity in Nigeria, is said to have come to the country in the 11th century. It is on record that when Kanem Ummi Jilmi of the old Borno accepted Islam, he established the first Qur`anic School in his palace. It is not a matter of coincidence or accident that Islamic religion and Islamic education go together. The fact is that, without the latter the former cannot be said to have been firmly entrenched and understood. The Holy prophet was reported to have said that, “if Allah wants to do good to a person, he makes him to understand the religion.”⁵

Islamic education was handled non-formally in the residence of the Mallam. It should be pointed out here that there had not been either any form of government assistance or foreign aid to Islamic education as at that time. In spite of this segregate attitude of the government, Islamic education continued to grow along with the increasing population of Muslims in the country.⁶

Factors Inhibiting the Development of Qur`anic Schools in Gombe Metropolis

The factors militating against the development of Qur`anic Schools are multifarious, but they are all artificial and not, therefore, insurmountable. They could be grouped as relating to government, the proprietors, parents, the society and the media.

Government

A study of this nature cannot adequately do justice to the inhibitive roles successive governments have played on Islamic education in Nigeria. On funding, the government not only funds Western education, it has also taken over its full control. So, what started as mere grant-in aid soon graduated into full take-over.⁷ This alone has a negative consequence, in order to be fair and just to this large Muslim population, Qur`anic schools should be accorded a more dignified attention than it is presently being given.

Proprietors

The problems being created by the proprietors of Islamiyyah schools for Islamic educational system can be likened to a proverbial kola nut having a problem of the parasitic insect living in it. More worrisome is lack of unity among the proprietors even within the same locality. This made it impossible for them to have a forum to articulate their views on how to move the system forward.⁸

Muslim Parents

Muslim parents of students in Islamiyyah schools have their own share of the problem. The manners in which students attending Islamic schools do more harm than good. In a place of study, an average Muslim parent does spend heavily on Western education for their children. Some take Islamic education as secondary; while some send to Islamic schools, the children who, in their opinion and conclusion, cannot mentally cope with Western education or who have one form of disability or the other.⁹

The Society

What is happening in the society is a reflection of what happens in the families. Some members of society do not see anything beneficial in the Islamic system of education other than the religious knowledge. There is an impression that anybody undertaking Islamic education can only function either as a full time Mallam (a teacher) with teaching being a profession that is already looked down upon. Not only this, in some religiously hostile communities, Islamic education is disrespectful regarded as education for the Al-majiris (corrupt form of Al-Muhajirin), which originally means the immigrants but misconstrued to be beggars. No thanks to some Muslims who have upgraded begging to an art and a profession.¹⁰

Electronic Media

The popularization and misused of the electronic media tends to diverts the attention of most of the students of Qur'anic schools. This causes major sets back in the routine memorization of Qur'an in the mind of the students as they spend most of their fruitful time on watching, charting, and face booking etc.¹¹

Qur'anic schools in Gombe Metropolis

Islam is the predominant religion in Gombe metropolis and it influences the life of the inhabitants both Muslims and non-Muslims especially in dress code and in social life. Islam was in Gombe areas as early as when the inhabitants came from the east i.e Borno caliphate around 13th century or beyond. It was intensified or reformed after the jihad of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio, when Bubayero launched his jihad in the area.¹²

The scenario today is that of a complete transformation of the system, a wholesome improvement on the pioneering effort of the traditional rulers, stakeholders, Muslims organizations. Islamic educational system now competes with its western counterpart in structure and infrastructure. We now have the primary up to post-secondary levels. Similarly, there are many Islamic educational institutions that have all the paraphernalia of the modern school systems. Such schools operate programmes and activities on terminal basis, go on short and long vacation and have incorporated co-curricular activities into their programmes.

Roles of Qur'anic Schools in Prosperity and Peaceful Development

Qur'anic schools tries to ensure that it articulates the knowledge contained in Qur'an towards the production of a balanced and righteous community of humanity on earth, a community that will deploy its acquired experience, skills and knowledge to the realization of the better life on earth and assist its members attain eternal success. In other words, as far as Qur'an education is concerned, the utilitarian purpose of education is only a means towards a higher purpose: the establishment of a sustainable harmony between humans - *Khalifatullah* -Vicegerent of Allah¹³ and other entities in the cosmos.

The roles of Qur'anic school will not be completed without identifying its basic effort made to explain the root meaning of the word Islam, *silm* which is to enter into peace. Islam therefore means entering into peace. In this sense, a Muslim is one who makes peace with Allah and man. Peace with Allah implies complete submission to His will

and peace with man is not only to refrain from evil or injury to another but also to do well to him.¹⁴

However, the communiqué issued at the end of the First World Conference on Muslim Education which was held in Makkah in 1977 speaks to this. It says, in part, as follows: “Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man’s spirit, intellect, rational feelings and bodily senses. Education in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific and linguistic, both individually and collectively, motivates all the aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection.”¹⁵

Moreover, Qur’anic schools serve as a means of preservation of knowledge, and as a means for meaningful transformation and development. This manifested by the actions of colonial government when they protected the Muslim religion from Christian penetration.¹⁶

Achievements of Qur’anic Schools in Gombe Metropolis

The Traditional Qur’anic Schools (TQS), their characterization as ‘traditional’ is not to suggest that they are indigenous to communities in Nigeria, but is used to describe their retention of many of their prototype features since being introduced in Northern Nigeria in the 14th century. The primary function of Qur’anic schools is to contribute to the early upbringing of Muslim children by training them in the reading and memorization of the Qur’an. In performing these functions, Qur’anic schools laid the foundation for the emergence of an Islamic system of education long before the advent of western education in Northern Nigeria.¹⁷ Known in Hausa as *Makarantan Allo*, Qur’anic school is the first of the two phases that Islamic education typically consists of; the other being *Makarantan Ilmi* or school for advanced learning. While Qur’anic schools provide the equivalent of modern pre-primary and primary education, *Makarantan ilmi* is a long educational experience designed to provide students of Qur’anic schools with an understanding of the meaning of the Qur’an and exposure to other specialized branches of Islamic learning.¹⁸

In the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1983), it is allowed to study Arabic and Islamic studies at all levels of education which was not so before.¹⁹ Before then, for many years back in the history of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria, graduates from Qur’anic schools had no future, because the Qur’anic or Arabic and Islamic schools had no uniform curriculum. It was not only difficult to determine the level of attainment of the scholars, but also to fix salaries for them. These problems were removed with the establishment of the School for Arabic Studies in 1947 when programme for training Arabic and Qur’anic teachers for primary schools started. Later, similar programmes for post-primary Qur’anic and Arabic teachers were established.

The *madrasa* curriculum, on the other hand, offers exposure to a classical Arabic and Islamic education and provides only limited space for a secular content and the use of English as an instructional or communicative medium. In the analysis of the curricula content of these schools, Tikumah²⁰ notes that out of the 12 subjects on the curriculum, 9 focused on the study of Islamic theology, jurisprudence and Arabic. The 4 remaining subjects, apart from carrying less weight on the curricula, are the only

subjects taught in English. English is not only the instructional medium in Nigerian schools from the fourth year of primary education but also the lingua franca for a diverse population with over 250 languages. As far as linkages with public education are concerned, the use of Arabic as an instructional medium in *madrassa* restricts contact with the broad curricula offered by Nigeria's higher institutions of learning. While *madrassas* provide their students with formal qualifications that allow access to higher education, their presence is largely felt in Arabic, Islamic legal studies, and Islamic studies courses.

The latest addition to this list is the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Arabic Medium programme that has been designed to enable products of *madrassas* to obtain nationally approved professional teacher training for the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies. The NCE Arabic Medium programme substitutes English with Arabic as an instructional medium for the teaching of core professional teacher education courses that form part of the NCE programme run in Colleges of Education (COEs) especially in the northern part of Nigeria. This is in addition to their study of Arabic and Islamic studies as teaching subjects using the same medium of instruction. General Studies and General English (collectively called GSE courses) are the only components of the NCE Arabic-medium programme that are taught in English.²¹

Therefore, although *madrassas* may be said to have modernized the contents and delivery practices of the old Islamic schools from the pre-colonial era, they have only limited engagement with the national curricula or instructional medium, particularly at the secondary and post-secondary school levels. This limitation also reflects in the overall integration of *madrassa* students in the national discourse and action in the political, economic or social spheres.

With regards to *Tsangaya* schools (*Makarantan Allo*) in Gombe metropolis, there are about 100 number of Qur'anic schools enrolling pupils from the age of three at the lower level of which the graduates of *Ilimi* schools (higher level) become teachers, Imams and Judges. The Muslim clerics are very influential and important in the community. They are the officials responsible for naming ceremony, marriage contract and funeral prayers.²²

Presently, in Gombe metropolis, there are about 112 public and private primary schools, 73 junior secondary schools and 61 senior secondary schools and 2 Technical Secondary Schools that are offering Islamic studies related subjects/courses.²³ Today, the Federal University in the State is known for the programme in offering degrees at various levels such as Bachelor of Arts (B. A.), Bachelor of Arts Education (B. A. Ed) and intends in its 2019/2020 academic year to commence Master of Arts (M. A.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) in Arabic and Islamic Studies. In the same vein, the State owned-university offers same as above without Arabic programme. Likewise, in most Colleges of Education, Arabic and Islamic education are studied with qualified lecturers employed by the Government. Furthermore, some colleges are established by the Government like College of Arabic Legal Studies in Nafada, while some other private Islamic colleges got affiliation from universities in Nigeria.²⁴

Although many of the Islamic schools described above had humble beginning as Qur'anic schools, the expansion they have witnessed has been concentrated at the

advanced level of Islamic learning. In other words, the lower level of Qur'anic schooling has not witnessed the same degree of modernization and reform as the advanced level.

Challenges Facing Qur'anic Schools in Gombe Metropolis

There are many challenges blocking the way of Qur'anic schools in Gombe Metropolis. Some of them are:

- a. **Government Patronage:** The chance of patronage from government is low. Government will not allow any individual or group of individuals to use her school for such a programme under the guise of secularity and national character. However, there is no certification for graduates of Qur'anic schools and no remuneration for their teachers since they are not employees of governments.²⁵
- b. **Inadequacy of Qualified Teachers and Material Resources:** Basic elementary knowledge of linguistics ought to be a prerequisite for anyone who wishes to specialize in the teaching of a language. Arabic specifically requires this and something more. To teach or learn a language outside its native environment requires motivation and devotion. There is a dearth of qualified teachers in quantity vis-à-vis primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in many parts of the State. Besides, a great number of the few available ones lack linguistic background. Still with regard to challenges of material resources, we cannot hope for achieving anything tangible except books are written by learned and committed Muslim intellectuals.²⁶
- c. **Enlightenment:** Another problem is enlightenment. Men are enemies of what they are ignorant about. The concept of Islamic education is alien to some people even if it would benefit them at the end, they show antagonism to it at initial stage. Some would interpret it to mean introduction of Shari'ah. One should not be surprised if one discovers that the first antagonists are Muslims, the unenlightened ones. Their reaction to the idea would add impetus to that of the non-Muslims.²⁷
- d. **Attitude of Some Muslims Parents:** Negative attitude of some Muslim parents to the teaching and learning Qur'an apparently drive away people from it. Because of typhoon of modernity, a great number of Muslim parents, particularly the elite, have lost touch with their religious heritage. Consequently, learning of the Qur'an now occupies a peripheral position in their scales of value. Children of such Muslims now relate to the Qur'an the same way Christians relate to the Bible- a book which is useful only on Fridays.²⁸
- e. **Lackadaisical Attitudes of the Students:** Some students of Qur'anic schools tend to become frustrated as soon as they are confronted by some difficulties. Their response is either dropping out, which is common, or to display a lukewarm response.²⁹

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations provided for the study:

1. Standardization of mainstream Islamic Education: Our traditional Qur'anic schools should be standardized and reinvigorated so as to meet the current demand particularly lower level (TQS). This may involve recognition, certification and cared attitudes from Government towards Qur'anic schools.
2. Human and Material Resources: Efforts should be made in training manpower for the teachers of Qur'anic schools and schools should be established specifically for this purpose because without manpower Qur'anic schools are doomed to fail.
3. Enlightenment Campaign: We should embark on vigorous enlightenment campaign showing the merits of this exercise and fruits of its success.
4. Parents and stakeholders should build their families and communities respectively by portraying positive attitudes towards the Qur'an and through maintaining the religious heritage.
5. The remedy of non-motivated attitudes of students can come from the teachers, if the teachers are a motivated and devoted one, he/she will employ various tactics to excite and regenerate the interest of the students. They should combine the pedagogical method in Arabic-Islamic tradition with that of Western epistemology.

Conclusion

Islamic education embraces the teaching of Islamic doctrines through effective education to ensure that the outputs from this system can be worth its salt worldwide and as well be beneficial to the society. Qur'anic schools serve as agents of preservation of knowledge and as a means of transformation for meaningful development. Islam is said to have come to the country in the 11th century and it was in Gombe in the 13th century or beyond. Therefore, this study concluded that Qur'anic schools in Gombe metropolis are being confronted with the challenges of uncared attitude from government, human and material resources and enlightenment among nominal Muslims and non-Muslims among others.

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REPOSITIONING QUR'ĀNIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION

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Introduction

Education is the gateway to knowledge and development for individual and the nation. The law of individual differences that is based on experiences and cultural background paves way for different concepts of education. *Encyclopaedia Americana* defines education as a process from which an individual gains knowledge or insight or develops attitudes and skills.¹ According to Fafunwa, education is the total sum of all the processes by which a child acquires the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour that are of positive value to the society in which he lives.² Aladejana in her own view believes that education is the most effective means that a society possesses for confronting the challenges of future; it is the acquisition of the art of utilization of knowledge.³ It can also be described as a process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the community; it is the knowledge or skill obtained or developed through a learning process. Therefore, education is the means through which attitudes are changed and skills and other forms of development are acquired. It is no doubt an essential aspect of life as it focuses on the physical, social, moral, mental and emotional development of the people and consequently the overall development of the nation.

Education is conceived as a set of activities which entail the handling down of the norms of a given society from generation to generation. It involves the transmission of worthwhile values and ideas in form of knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and everything cherished and held in a very high esteem by a given society. These norms, values and ideas are not just acquired; they are also observed and applied under specific contexts determined by the society's educational aims, goals and objectives.⁴ This seems to be the reason why education has been adopted by Government as an instrument per excellence for achieving national unity and nation building.

Repositioning on the other hand, has something to do with transformation. It is to place in a better way in order to give new direction to a particular programme. It is a process of changing the way people think about a thing. According to *Longman Dictionary*, transformation or repositioning is a complete change in appearance, form or character of something especially in a way that improves it.⁵

Concept of National Integration

The concept of integration according to Tijani is wider and it is a process of uniting groups with different background into one entity bound by common norms, values and interest.⁶ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as quoted by Opeloye views integration as

a process of bringing out or achieving equal membership of a population or social group, removal or absence of discrimination against groups or people on racial or cultural grounds.⁷ Integration according to Jacson and Chinatu is the incorporation of disparate ethnic and religious elements of the population into a unified society, providing equality of opportunity for all members of that society.⁸ Osahon explained national integration as striking a balance between cultural relations in a multi-ethnic diverse polity as well as sensitizing the citizenry for peace education, cultural accommodation, developing attitudes and values for collective national existence.⁹ National integration is thus, the process of uniting different people from all ethnic group, religion and works of life into a single whole; this will bring about peace, stability, prosperity and performance. It is also the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. This means that, though we belong to different tribes, religions, states and culture, we recognize the fact that we are all one and must live in unity. National Integration is the bond and togetherness between people regardless of their caste, creed, religion or gender. It is the feeling of oneness, brotherhood and social unity under communities and society in a country.

National Integration helps to keep the country unified and strong from within, despite the diversities. National integration plays a dynamic role in uniting the country as one. This happens only by providing equal opportunity for each citizen. It also offers an equal platform in terms of educational, social, cultural, religious and economic development. It helps to unite the minorities as well as given them the freedom to live their life in their way without any interference. So, the importance of national integration can be from the fact that, the nation which remains integrated will always progress on the track of development and prosperity. As national integration demonstrates a crucial part in the development of a country, it becomes important to develop the feeling of national integrity among its citizens. Therefore, focus on all the sections of society and making them value oriented by curbing corruption and regulating human life in all spheres of life: intellectual, moral, political, economic and social to promote national integration.

Since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 by the colonial masters, Nigeria has been facing ethno-tribal crises, religious crises, political crises, social up rising, marginalization, favoritism, nepotism, ethnocentrism and all kinds of corruption. All these problems stand as the factors that hinder national integration. Peter mentioned some of the efforts made by the subsequent governments of Nigeria to enhance national integration and peaceful co-existence. Such efforts include series of national conferences, federal character and quota system, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), national sports festival and cultural festivals.¹⁰ Also, the government encourages inter-tribal marriages where people from different ethnic groups can get married, so as to enhance integration among the various ethnic groups who get married. The need for national integration was demonstrated by the federal government of Nigeria when it included the issue in the 1999 constitution in Section 15 Sub sections 2 and 3; also included in that Section is the freedom of movement.

Concept of Qur'anic Education

The word Qur'an a verbal noun, which is equivalent in meaning to *qira'ah* and both come from the verb "*qara'a*" which means "to read"¹¹. That is, Qur'an literally means "a reading or reciting". Qur'an could be defined as Allah's words which were revealed in Arabic and in a rhythmical form to Prophet Muhammad (SAW).¹² Qur'an is thus, a book which contains the words of Allah (Q, 3:23, 35:29), revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the guidance of mankind. The term "Qur'an" is mentioned in a number of places throughout the book in reference to itself. For instance, the chapter seventeenth of the book, verse nine, says: "Verily, this Qur'an guides (humanity) to that which is most just". Qur'an gives hints in respect of various branches of learning and advises man to use intellect. Qur'an is not a book of science or any other particular field of knowledge but it deals, mainly with basic principles of human life. The central themes of the Qur'an are creation and invitation of man to the right way which the prophets from Adam to Muhammad were engaged.¹³ Therefore, Qur'anic concept of education is that, it explicitly teaches its readers principles in each and every sphere of life so that its followers have complete knowledge about their pattern of life. For example, Allah says concerning Qur'an thus: "And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims) (Qur'an 16:89). Qur'an is the fountain head of wisdom, from which all other sources of knowledge derive their authority. Allah also refers to it as law, or plain path to be followed in order not to be misguided by those who are ignorant (Qur'an 45:18).

Resultantly, Qur'an is the first primary source of Islamic law. It is the book of guidance to the Muslims, their way of life and their code of conduct. The Qur'an plays an important role in the field of education. The Qur'an at the levels of the individual, the family, the community and the nation leads man to achieve the highest degree of moral and spiritual nobility possible in life. It also regulates human life in its noblest form and in all its spheres political, economic, social, intellectual and moral. It (the Qur'an) deals with creeds, gives moral instructions, lays down laws, invites people to good, admonishes the disbelievers, draws lessons from historical events, administers warnings, gives good tidings, all blended together in a beautiful manner.¹⁴

From the word 'Qur'an' is Qur'anic education formed, which means, learning and teaching in accordance with the Qur'an, the word of Allah, the Creator of everything. The first meaning that comes to mind is induction of a subject by the master to the minds of students, so the pupils could imitate it from the teacher and learn to repeat it. The issue of Qur'anic education in Islam is so important that in the first revealed verses of Qur'an, Allah commanded Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through angel Jibril to repeatedly read thus: "Read in the name of your Lord Who Created. He Created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most Honourable. Who taught (to write) with the pen. Taught man what he knew not" (Qur'an 96:1-5). These verses marked the beginning of the acquisition of knowledge in Islam and thus, Qur'anic education became the bases for Islamic education for Muslims all over the world. Though an ancient education, Qur'anic education is dynamic and so, moves with the changing world. The system of learning remains unchanged in some aspects as a natural divine revelation. The originality of Qur'anic education also remains unchanged in its basis,

principles and objectives throughout ages. But this is not disallowing some modifications in the methodology of learning and teaching where necessary. It is meant for constant reading and recitation.¹⁵ It is the only book that is learnt by heart through memorization even by unlettered person (Q,62:2).

The first thing that one learns as a Muslim, is the Qur'an and thus remains the basis for Muslim education. In Islam, knowledge is of two types, revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge. Revealed knowledge has been given to human beings, through prophets by Allah. Acquired knowledge is that which is being acquired by the human beings through the study of natural phenomena, attitude of man and through the study of society. The Qur'an says that for the prosperous life on earth both kinds of knowledge, revealed and acquired are necessary. It shows the basis of the educational set-up in Islam where the children are not only equipped with acquired, that is, scientific knowledge, but also with revealed knowledge which is Qur'anic education, so that they can live a righteous and prosperous life. That is why the knowledge in Islam is considered as the greatest gift of Allah to Man. It helps man to attain righteous and prosperous life. Islamic philosophy derives its origin from the spirit of teachings of the Quran.

Historical Development of Qur'anic Education

The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) piece meal for the period of twenty-three years (610-632 C.E.), thirteen years in Makkah and ten years in Madinah. The first revelation of the Qur'an happened in the Cave of Hirah in the month of Ramadan on a night of majesty known as Lailatul Qadr (Q 2:185; 97:1). This was sequel to Angel Jibril's visit to the cave at the time Muhammad (SAW) was on meditation at the cave.¹⁶ Whenever a portion of the Qur'an was revealed, the Prophet would commit it into memory, and also recite it to his Companions around him who would also commit it to memory. By this method, the whole of the Qur'an was committed to memory since the period of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Perhaps, the Qur'an was easier preserved in memory than in writing. The Arabs were talented memorisers. They had all their poems and long genealogies committed to memory since they believed that memory was the safest of repositories and they relied so heavily on it that they took pride in being called *umiyyin* (people who would neither read nor write). For the Arabs, memorization served the purpose of writing. The Qur'an was enthusiastically memorized by the Arabs because they saw it as a code of moral and social laws proceeding from no other than Allah.¹⁷ They learnt Qur'an by heart, but still the Prophet (SAW) commanded some of them to write it down on the available materials then.¹⁸ They also recited it regularly in prayers to keep it fresh in their memories. Through this, an excellent methodology of teaching and learning was devised by the Prophet (SAW).

By the time Prophet Muhammad (SAW) died, the whole of the Qur'an had been memorized by the *huffaz* (memorisers). Thus, according to Opeloye, the first Qur'anic collection took place in the heart (*al-jam'u fi sudur*) before it was collected in a book form (*al-jam'u fi sutur*).¹⁹ This is the evidence to the fact that Qur'an has been preordained to be in book form as the Qur'an refers to itself as book in so many verses of the Qur'an.

Qur'anic education is synonymous with Islamic education because Islam is a religion and a way of life, while Qur'an is the code for that way of life. In fact, whoever is acquiring Islamic education must primarily acquire it with the Qur'anic education either as a convert or as a young Muslim. So, the history of Qur'anic education began with the revelation of the Qur'an and prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) in Islam.²⁰ With the current technological advancement and information technology, Qur'anic education is taken a new dimension. Information on Qur'anic Arabic texts, transliteration, translation, Commentary, interpretation (*Tafsir*) from all *Tafsir* Schools, Qur'anic Recitations, Qur'anic Syntax, *Asbabun-Nuzul* (Reasons of revelation) and other Qur'anic Sciences are courses undertaken online. Qur'anic recitations are not only found in audio and video cassettes, it is now found on CD's Digitalized Mechanism, USB Flash and other electronic devices. Initially, teachers and students of Qur'anic education used audio cassettes for effective teaching -learning process. But with the information technology, there are numerous Islamic websites in the internet rich in Qur'anic education.²¹

History of Qur'anic Education in Nigeria

The coming of Qur'anic education in Nigeria is synonymous with the advent of Islam there. The religion was the vehicle that conveyed Qur'anic education to the country. Since Islam goes to any place along with its own form of education, the very beginning of Qur'anic education in Nigeria was when Islam entered the country and this began around the 9th century when the Northern part of the country was ruled by Mai Idris Alooma.²² This was the time when Islam took its place in the hearts of many Nigerians and in a great part of the country. With the spread of the religion, other cultural and traditional aspects such as Qur'anic education spread as well. However, it was informal as at that time and up till now it has not been placed under government control in some regions in Nigeria most especially South-western Nigeria. In recent times, there are numerous traditional Qur'anic schools where Qur'an is being studied but the fact still remains that it has not been fully integrated into formal educational system of the country. Today *Madaris al- Tahfiz* (Schools for Qur'anic memorization) are numerous in Nigeria and are all effectively vigilant in recitation and memorization of the Qur'an. This is why Qur'anic competitions at local, state and national levels are widespread in the country.

The Benefits of Repositioning Qur'anic Education in Nigeria

The repositioning of Qur'anic education towards the integration of human knowledge have been of great importance, not only to the general phenomena of education, but also to other disciplines. Qur'anic education serves as a problem-solving discipline which can be used to transform the nation into a united and peaceful country if put in the right place. Qur'anic education provides basic knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for the development of nation's wealth through enhancing economic growth and eradication of interest and hoarding. It brings about values of truthfulness, justice, equality, equity and fair play, love, healthy living, tolerance, good relations, unity and brotherhood while condemning injustice, oppression, rebellion, cheating, indiscipline and other vices. Consequently, Qur'anic education is supposed to be a field of study and thus developed as a school subject for universal basic education and secondary

education in Nigeria educational system. Its objectives and that of national policy on education go hand in hand. When effectively utilized by the ministry of education, curriculum planners, school administrators, teachers and students, Nigeria would be united and this could reduce the crises which result in the destruction of lives and property in Nigeria. Qur'anic education is designed by God to bring about national integration. It is out to solve the problems of disunity, corruption, tribalism etc., through the inculcation of right values and instilling God's consciousness into the mind of the youth.

The national goals of Nigeria, which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation of the national policy on education, are the building of: a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.²³ It is only through national integration and unity in diversity that development can be attained. Qur'anic education should be taken as a subject in primary and secondary schools. Nigeria in the present time needs an educational system that will bring about greater justice, peace, equality and fundamental human rights.

Qur'anic education should be a school discipline with the ultimate goals of training and preparing Muslims to be responsible individuals who contribute his/her quota towards solving personal and society problems. Qur'anic education need to be rooted primarily in academic disciplines of universal basic education and secondary education. The repositioning approach in the teaching of Qur'anic education need to be adopted in order to train individual Muslims that will be functional in almost every endeavor, with the belief that such individual will be practically sound in proffering solutions to those controversial issues that are rearing their ugly head in the socio- potential and economic life of the nation.

To effectively address the problem of controversial issues which have assumed global dimension in the Nigerian context, Qur'anic education curriculum needs to accommodate significant volume of global education learning contents in order to curb the menace of ethnic rivalry, kidnapping, child labour and abuse, child trafficking, terrorism, electoral malpractices, corruption and host of others. Making Qur'anic education a functional school discipline calls for the need to teach law of God in schools. How to teach it and the learning content to teach are part of the processes of repositioning Qur'anic education for national integration in Nigeria. It is only through national integration and unity in diversity that development can be attained. Qur'anic education should be taken as a subject in primary and secondary schools in order to achieve this objective maximally. However, this study is meant to educate the curriculum planners, reviewers and those who implement curriculums to make use of the original objectives of Qur'anic education for national integration in Nigeria. According to Akinboye, an educated person without good character and appropriate moral values is a dangerous citizen; hence, character education, which can generate lasting values of discipline, moral stamina, self-control, honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, integrity and others should be critical components of the envisaged reforms considered in value-added education for Nigeria.²⁴ Education is the trust, while religion is encompassing. If adherence to the religion is weak, so would country be. It is

an obligation to build a nation through the proper religious and worldly knowledge. Both of them should be integrated and shall not be separated.

Processes for Repositioning Qur'anic Education in Nigeria

The main factors that can promote the success of repositioning Qur'anic education programme to be integrated are:

- (i) The support of the Government to see Qur'an as the guiding principle for Muslims in their daily activities;
- (ii) The conceptualization of Qur'anic education in the country's programme.
- (iii) The highlight of Integrated Qur'anic education as the new concept to be applied in the Nation's Education system.

Consequently, the following steps need to be taken:

- 1) to have close discussion between the Ministry of Education and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and other related organizations to discuss mainly the Integrated Qur'anic Education;
- 2) form committees to plan, co-ordinate and implement the Integrated Qur'anic Education properly;
- 3) take steps to give the correct understanding concerning Integrated Qur'anic Education to the entire citizens through national seminars, briefing and courses, and media coverage.

Some of the duties and responsibilities of the committee should be to:

- i) arrange and prepare conceptual papers related to the implementation of the Integrated Qur'anic Education;
- ii) plan and coordinate any school activities which support the purported curriculum;
- iii) plan and arrange activities and practices forming part of the education curriculum such as Qur'anic recitation competition;
- iv) prepare and do checking and monitoring of the assessment system; and
- v) plan and co-ordinate other related systems especially those pertaining to the administration and management of schools involved.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Repositioning Qur'anic education and knowledge acquisition has been discussed in this paper. The following recommendations if implemented will go a long way in the repositioning of Qur'anic education in Nigeria:

1. Muslims and Government in its various capacities, should work to reposition Qur'anic education in the universal basic education and secondary education to meet the need of Muslim children for national integration and development in Nigeria. The primary objective of repositioning Qur'anic education system in Nigeria is that a generation of balanced Muslim individuals may be shaped;

where the Muslims become better Muslims and citizens along the non-Muslims and both can live harmoniously and develop the nation together.

2. The Qur'anic education system of Muslims should be integrated in the education system of the country so as to get the younger generation of Muslims with good background on morality and right values so as to enable them make meaningful contribution to the society without being corrupted and become terrorists.
3. Government should direct a policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels by promoting Qur'anic education for Muslims in Government schools.
4. Muslim parents should encourage their children to participate in all forms of Qur'anic education from tender ages, and to continue in the school curriculum at all levels so as to get a better and peaceful Muslim generation.

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**SCORECARD OF THE QUR'ĀNIC AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS'
CURRICULA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC LITERARY PRODUCTION
IN NIGERIA (11TH CENTURY – 20TH CENTURY C.E.)**

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Introduction

Curriculum has been a concept very difficult to define. Onwuka gave so many definitions upon which two were selected for this study. According to him, curriculum “consists of all situations that the school may select and consistently organize for the purpose of bringing about changes in the behaviour of pupils as a means of developing the personality of the individuals.”¹ In another words, it is a “deliberate, systematic and planned attempts made by the school to change the behaviour of members of the society in which it situates.”² With these two definitions, one can see that curriculum is not only about school subjects or class situations but consists of class and outside class situations, and it is not only about developing individuals but about changing the society. Barni and Mahdany observed that Islamic curriculum in general dwells on religious and moral goals.³ It reflects the spirit, thoughts, and attitudes of the learner. It pays attention to the development and guidance of all aspects of student’s life; intellectual, psychological, social and spiritual. It is also cautious of the sciences that will be useful for social development. What is peculiar about Islamic curriculum is that students are taught and assessed individually in accordance with the pace of each and every one, so as to cater for the need and interest of every student, as individuals differ.

Islam, knowing fully that education is the cornerstone in physical and spiritual development of human life, from early age of its history evolved two curricula of education, namely the Qur’ānic schools (or tablet-schools) which serve as elementary Arabic schools meant for beginners; hence, both Arabic and Islam were taught simultaneously. Shittu and Olaofe observed that this school is what is referred to as *Kuttab* or *madrrasah* in the Arab world, North Africa, and part of Asia, the *Pondok* in Malaysia, the *Pesantren* in Indonesia, while in Nigeria it is called *Tsangaya* or *al-Majiri* school.⁴ The other curriculum is that of the higher education for Adults, which embraces all aspects of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Kilani and Yusuf claimed that the two curricula had their roots as far back as the life time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as they began in Makkah, mainly in form of Qur’ān, faith, prayer, and morals.⁵ The revelation at that time was mainly about monotheism, praying and setting good examples. It was in Madinah, after Hijrah that the curriculum was developed to address among other things, articles of faith, pillars of Islam, morals, economic, politics, sports, health, reading and writing.

During the Rightly Guided Caliphates and Bani Umayyah periods, the scope of the curriculum was extended to cover the subject matter of school called *Kuttāb* which El-Ilory, ascribed to Umar bn Khattāb who was said to have built a *Maktab* at the site of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah and assigned Āmir bn Abdillāh El-Khuza'i to teach Muslim children how to read and write and placed him on monthly salary. Later on, he extended the same practice to other major cities of Islam. He further instructed people to teach their children swimming, horseback riding, archery, reading and memorizing easy verses and proverbs.⁶

As the spheres of Islamic influence increased during the Abbasid period and the correspondent increase in the influence of the culture of the conquered territories, a new variety of new knowledge was developed and taught in schools, during which the curriculum was sorted into core and elective subjects. The core subjects were: Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, basic *naḥw* and Arabic, reading and writing, *Fiqh* and *syair*, while, the elective subjects consisted of numeracy, advanced *naḥw*, poetry, history and Arabic texts. Generally, according to Barni and Mahdany, higher education in the Abbasid period had two majors: *naqliyah* and *aqliyah* sciences. The major of *Naqliyah* sciences consisted of *Tafsir*, ḥadīth, *fiqh* and 'uṣūl *fiqh*, *naḥw* and *sharf*, *balāghah*, Arabic language and Arabic literature. The majors of *aqliyah* sciences consisted of *mantiq*, chemistry, music, sciences, geometry, astronomy, divinity, animal science, plant science, and medicine.⁷

Introduction of the two Islamic curricula to Nigeria

Adeyemi states that the history of the teaching of Arabic throughout the Islamic world, particularly in the non-Arab world, has been the history of the spread of Islam, and that, wherever it goes, it goes along with two set of curricula mentioned above.⁸ No one can precisely say when, where, and who were involved in bringing Islam to Nigeria, but what can be said in all is that, the process was gradual. Islam did not come to Nigeria directly from the Arabia; it rather passed through some channels before it finally came to Kanem-Bornu and Hausaland. Islam came to North Africa through Egypt, a process which covered a period from 641 to 708 CE. By 10th century, Islam had already swept through the Sahara and even beyond. It was then that the Sanhaja (a Berber tribe) accepted Islam and made Awdaghost their capital. Tadmakka followed suit in the same time, and hence the two Islamic states pushed Islam in to Western Sudan. In a period between 10th and 11th centuries CE, the relationship was initially commercial within which a number of Sudanese states accepted Islam namely Gao, Tekrur, Sila, and Koja among other Old Ghana empire's vassals. By 11th century, there was a Muslim quarter in Kumbi-Sale the capital of Ghana Empire. Towards the end of the 11th century CE when Sanhaja Almoravids arrived in the area, the whole region was folded into the realm of Islam, and thus Mali and Songhai emerged as the Muslim empires. It was from these two states that Muslim clerics, traders, travelers and missionaries brought Islam to Hausa and to some extent Yorubaland. Yahya noted that Islam came to Kanem-Bornu directly from Egypt, and that Mai Hummi Jilmi accepted Islam from a group of Muslim clerics headed by Muhammad bn Mani in the 11th century CE.⁹

Bari Uthman maintained that Qur'ānic education had been introduced and circulated by a group of itinerant Fulani scholars of Tekrur, Mandingo and Wangara tribes from

Mali.¹⁰ The influence of these groups had reached to as far as Central Sudan. They traveled in a large group of families, in company of youngsters who received lessons in Qur'ānic recitation, memorization, and fundamentals of jurisprudence. They established schools of learning where ever they went. Some of these groups reached Kano in the 15th century. They are the people that brought in a huge amount of books and manuscripts of Arabic and Islamic education to Nigeria, that were then in circulation in the Muslim world.¹¹ The details of this was provided by Hodkin who explained that the Wangara group of forty under the leadership of Abdurraman Azzaity was the one who converted the dynasty of Sarki Yaji Ali of Kano (1349-1385);¹² while Adeyemi further explained that during the reign of Yaqub (1452 C.E.-1463 C.E.), the Fulani scholars brought in with them books on Islamic theology and jurisprudence.¹³ With this, one can see that the early scholars of Islam paid much attention to Qur'ānic education. In fact, a period between 11th and 14th centuries was a period when efforts were mainly geared towards introducing Islam and Arabic literacy in Nigeria. The schools of higher learning according to Yaro might have started coming up with the arrival of Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili probably in 1493 (d. 1504).¹⁴ Malumfashi had it that Almaghili was much concerned to set people on the right track. He therefore took measures to ensure the consolidation of Islamic order. He built a mosque and established an institution of learning at Gobarau in Katsina. He also did the same thing in Kano in collaboration with the Sarki Rumfa.¹⁵ According to Bivar and Hiskett, Hausaland continued to attract scholars from Sahara and North Africa, especially Timbuktu, even after Maghily; such as Ayda Ahmad al-Tazakhiti (from Tizakht near Walata d. 1529 - 30), who became *Qādi* of Katsina and Makhluḥ al-Balbali (d. after 1534), a scholar of the Northern Saharan oasis of Tabalbala. All of these Muslim scholars left behind some writings and established higher schools of learning in Hausaland.¹⁶

Several notable scholars of Borno were Fulani whose ancestors arrived in Bagirmi from Mali in the late 15th or early 16th century. Some of these scholars visited places outside Borno such as Kano and Katsina. *Fiqh*, *Tawhīd* and Arabic language were the principal fields of both study and writing.¹⁷ According to Adeyemi, the scholars organized themselves into a sort of guild, whereby a master would grant a recognized certificate (*ijazah*) to those students who satisfactorily passed the prescribed courses under him. This system continued until the coming of the British to Nigeria. It was this Arabic and Islamic education which gave cultural prestige to Islam.¹⁸

Sponsorship and Patronage of Education Schemes

The al-Majiri system in Nigeria used to be a decent and reputable scheme that produced eminent scholars and policy makers.¹⁹ It got support and patronage from all stakeholders and thus propelled the nation to a greater position. Shittu and Olaofe, further explained that, Kanem-Borno was known to be the patron of Islamic education since 11th century, a gesture which was later extended in the Sokoto Caliphate after the triumph of the Jihād led by Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817). These two empires promoted the scheme of learning and supported it with the state resources in the pre-colonial era.²⁰ Besides the authorities, the scheme was also assisted by other major stakeholders, such as the community, the parents and the pupils themselves. The entire Muslim *Ummah* regarded the scheme as its own collective responsibility.

Shittu and Olaofe, further explained that the scheme was enthusiastically supported by all stakeholders in the education enterprise.²¹ This had enabled Muslim *Ummah* to record unprecedented success in the pre-colonial time in Northern Nigeria. The curriculum of education was designed in such a way that it allowed for free tuition, free feeding, and free accommodation. The Mallams normally restricted their movements in the raining seasons to enable them work on farm together with their students. As such, they were able to sustain and maintain their schools with little income from farming, and the public donations.

Impacts of Islamic Schools' Curricula in the Pre-colonial Nigeria

The presence of the Qur'ānic and Islamic schools in Hausa and Borno communities was bound to have a great impact on the socio-political life of the people. It was also bound to bring significant changes with regard to the transmission of learning in the hitherto illiterate society. The system according to Shittu and Olaofe, had produced eminent scholars and policy makers in Nigerian history, and had moved the nation to a high level of literacy, social, political and economic reforms.²²

Socially, Islamic literacy came up with brotherhood, generosity, sexual discipline, honesty, orderliness, kindness and mutual love. It has changed the norms and values of the society and transformed the people of Nigeria in the aspects of beliefs and behaviours.²³ The prevailing practice of polygamy in the traditional system was modified by restricting it to only four, with the condition of maintaining justice among the wives. *'Idul-Fitr* and *'Idul-Kabir* celebrations came to replace traditional festivals. Almaghily had categorically addressed these issues in Kano, which reflected in his book, *The Obligation of The Princes*.

Politically, the tutors in the education system, apart from being teachers, Imams and preachers, also played the role of the elites who manned various government organs and parastatals in the pre and post-colonial era in Northern Nigeria. Ayda Ahmad al-Tazakhiti (d.1529) was invested with the dignity of *Qādi* on his arrival to Katsina. They encouraged the rulers in time to implement Islamic orders. According to Hodkin, with Almaghily's advice, Muhammadu Rumfa (1463-1499) introduced twelve reforms in Kano, including widening of the walls of the city, and it might be on his advice that horses and helmets were introduced to enhance the security of the state.²⁴ In the nineteenth century there was a social reform carried out by Shaykh Usman bn Fodio which brought the entire Northern Nigeria under the sway of scholars, who manned different spheres of government and showed exemplary leadership leaving behind a landmark in the history of Nigeria.

Economically, Qur'ānic and Islamic traditional schools' curricula had entrepreneur tendency inherent in them, in the sense that Islam encourages self-reliance and thus the Islamic missionaries/scholars were mainly traders, and it is natural that entrepreneur tendency should be inspired into their students. It is evident that traders had played a role in Islamic literacy transmission in the entire West African sub-region. Commercial towns were also the centres of learning. Hiskett observed that at the end of 16th century when Songhai fell into the hands of the Morrocans, the trade caravans shifted to Hausa and Bornu along with the scholars which made Northern cities of Nigeria major centres

of trade and learning in the 17th century.²⁵ To this, transcription (copying and re-copying of Islamic books for commercial purposes) as from the second half of the 16th century came to be the major occupation in Kano that fetched income to students. This had in turn promoted literacy and scholarship in the city during that period.²⁶ Above all, Mallams normally restricted their movements in the raining seasons to work on farms as mentioned above, and this taught the students lessons on combining education with entrepreneurship.

Intellectually, the contact of Arabs with the people of Nigeria (Kanem and Hausaland) marked new era of civilization in the history of the people. The visitation of scholars in group and individually, vis-vis their literary activities from 11th to 16th century CE, was what marked the beginning of a renaissance in Nigeria in the subsequent centuries in the like of Europe in the 13th to 16th century.²⁷ The manifestations of the renaissance started towards the end of the 15th century and reached its peak in the 17th century, mainly reflecting in the following aspects:

- (i) emergence of local literatures (prose and poetry) written in Arabic characters (*Ajami*);
- (ii) development of higher institutions of learning patronized by indigenous scholars in places like Yandoto, Katsina, Kano (in Hausaland); and Kulumbardo, Mashina, Gazarzamo (in Bornu); and
- (iii) the emergence of native Arabic scholars. Muhammad Bello enumerated a number of indigenous scholars who sprang up after Almaghily (17/18 century CE) and contributed in various fields of human endeavours, such as History, Astrology, Philosophy, Rhetoric Morphology, Lexicons, Numeric and so on. Among them were Muhammad bn al-Sabbaqh popularly known as Danmarina (d. 1655), the author of *Azhārur ruba fī akhbār bilād Yoruba*. Had this book survived, the test of history would have remained to tell us different stories about the history of Yoruba today. Others were Muhammad bin Nuh popularly known as Danmasani (d.1667), Shaykh al-Shuyukh Al-Bakr, Abu-bakr al-Barkum (popularly known as Ibn Ajurumma), Muhammad bn al-Hajj Abd al-Rahman al-Barnawi, Muhammad bn Muhammad al-Fullani al-Kashnawi (d.1741). He was a famous exponent of numerology and talismanalogy, some of his books are still published in the Arab world today; Tahir bn. Ibrahim al-Fallati (d. 1776), Ramadan bn Ahmad al-Fezzani, Umar bn Muhammad bn Abi Bikr al-Torudi, Al-Hajj Jibril bn Umar, and so many of them.²⁸ Qaribullah is of the opinion that the number of authorship before Jihād is even greater than that of Jihād period, only that most of them have not survived the test of time.²⁹

In the last quarter of the 18th century, a real revolution of Arabic-Islamic writing occurred with the Jihād of Shaykh Uthman bn. Fodio. Sheikh Uthman, his brother Shaykh Abdullahi and son Shaykh Muhammad Bello alone produced more than 300 works in both prose and poetry. His daughter, Nana Asmā’u was also a poet in Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa, whose works were collected, edited and published in a voluminous book by Boyd and Mark in 1999. Gidado b. Laima (Nana Asmā’u’s husband), the Shehu’s Wazir was an Arabist and a writer, likewise his various descendants up to Wazir Junaid bn Muhammad al-Bukhari. They wrote on *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *Tawhīd*

(theology), *Tasawwuf* (Sufism), *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis), *Ḥadīth* (prophetic traditions), *Lughah* (Arabic language), *Adab* (manners), *Wa'z* (exhortation), *Tibb* (medicine), and *Tārīkh* (history) and so on.

British Conquest and Traditional Islamic System of Education

Upon the whole strategies adopted by the Colonial Government to undermine Arabic education, none had devastating consequences as withdrawal of support the scheme enjoyed under the Sokoto and Borno empires. Shittu and Olaofe had it that scheme of Islamic education was supported by the government resources under the two caliphates of Sokoto and Kanem-Borno. The fortune of the systems changed as the British invaders withdrew the gesture, alleging that promotion of religious education was not the government priority. Even when the colonial government decided to intervene in the 30s, a new curriculum was put in place, given rise to a new system of Arabic education taught in schools and colleges.³⁰ In this regard, those who operated the old system were left to go on their own, as such, the attention of the parents, community and other stakeholders was shifted to the new system of education, which was funded with the state resources, and thus the old system crushed down.

Another strategy adopted by the Colonial Government to undermine Arabic education was the replacement of Arabic with English in running the state affairs, and regarding Arabic teachers and their pupils as illiterate, due to their deficiency in the newly introduced literacy order called Western education. This action was deliberate, which ousted scholars who had been serving as advisers, secretaries, and heads of governmental agencies, which means denying them a share in the national cake. In order to survive, both the teachers and pupils turned beggars and this marked the beginning of the *al-Majiri* dilemma being experienced today.

Of course, the demise of old system was gradual, in the sense that, those schools did not stop graduating good and reputable students throughout colonial time and even beyond. The total decay was just a recent development, probably it became apparent only after 70s. Lewis observed that once initial resistance to British control had been overcome in Northern Nigeria, agreements signed establishing the authority of new rulers and missionaries forbade their penetrate into the Emirates, atmosphere was now made free for further Muslim consolidation.³¹ On top of that, social change brought about by the colonialism, which manifested in tribal interaction and dislocation, extension of economic and political frontiers, new opportunities for trade and commerce, improved and more secure communications (railways, modern highways, new currency) migrant labour, development of administrative and commercial towns, all these ushered in to a new era of Islamic expansion.

With the arrival of new Muslim immigrants from the Middle East, India and Pakistan, with the emergence of new missionary movements and other sectarian organizations, Arabic education received renewed stimulus, though, they brought division but then welcome new blood. In view of aforementioned therefore, Prof. Froehlich said: "For West Africa in half a century of European colonization, Islam progressed more widely, and more profoundly, than in ten century of pre- colonial history. In this short space of

time, it seemed probable, that the number of Muslims in tropical Africa had at least doubled.³²

Asifatu, Abdullahi and Isah noted that despite colonial and post-colonial governments' neglect of old Islamic system of education, the system still records exceptional accomplishment in literacy and social services; such as producing Imams, authors, moral extortionists, mediators in cases of crisis and disturbances. In fact, a period between 1900 and 1970 witnessed a flourishing era of Tijaniyyah order whereby an unprecedented era of scholarship and authorship was witnessed among Madabo, Salga and Kabara Ulama in Kano city. Abbas declared that the period from 1930s to early 1970s was marked as an important period in the intellectual history of Northern Nigeria.³³ It was a period that produced a number of celebrities and scholarly erudite who wrote hundreds of treatises on different issues related to rituals, Tasawwuf (Mysticism), and social behaviours. Notable among them were: Muhammad Salga (1871-1938) Sh. Abubakar Mijinyawa (1890-1941) Sh. Abubakar Atiku (1909-1974) Sh. Waziri Junaid bn Muhammad al-Buhkary (1906-1997), Sh. Muhammad Usman Al-Imiyy, Sh. Abubakr Ghunaimy, Sh. Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory (1917-1993), Sh. Abubakar Ahmad El-Miskin (1918-2014), Sh. Ahmad Abul-fath (1923-2003), Sh. Nasru Muhammad Kabara, Sh. Ibrahim Salih al-Husainyy and so on, all who did not attend any modern school, but trained in the old school.³⁴

Recommendations:

In view of the above submission, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should take statistics of Arabic/Qur'anic schools operating in Nigeria with immediate effect, monitor their activities, and stop opening new ones without permission.
- ii. As a matter of necessity, the Government should address the issue of traditional Arabic schools with a degree of seriousness, review the recommendations of committees that worked on this issue before, with a view to implementing them.
- iii. No any meaningful reform can be achieved in the Almajiri schools without inserting entrepreneurship into its curriculum; hence, entrepreneurship programme should be incorporated into the schools.
- iv. Government should establish a board or at least a section under National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) to regulate the activities of the schools.

Conclusion

The study discovered that the two curricula of Arabic education came to Nigeria for the first time, not from the Arab world, but from the neighbouring Sudanese empires of Mali and Songhai, except for Kanem-Bornu which received Islam from the Nile valleys, and that the two curricula had transformed the life of Nigerians as from 11th century, by bringing about literacy, numeracy and social change. By the 16th century, there was a renaissance like that of the Europe in the 13th century, and that the renaissance had swept through the 17th century, leaving behind a huge amount of literary products, rival to that of the Arab world, especially in the area of Astrology, Talismanology, Numerology, Geography and History. Despite colonialism, traditional

Arabic schools continued to produce celebrities who recorded exceptional accomplishment in literacy and social services up to 1970s whose impact exists to this moment. As from around 1970, modern Arabic schools had begun to appear almost everywhere in Nigeria and the attention of parents and stakeholders shifted to them. It was from then traditional schools set for total decay. Today, it is believed as Shittu and Olaofe observed, that six out of ten *almajiri* pupils never find their way back home. Many lose their lives through street violence, ritual killing, kidnapping, disease and hunger. Those who were lucky to survive pass most of their hours of learning on the streets begging, while majority of them eventually drop out in the long run, and grow up like wild grass and lose out on all grounds educationally, morally and, above all, religiously.³⁵ In the whole, the decay of the traditional Islamic schools was not the fault of the curriculum but the government in the way it neglected their scholars and students of the system.

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QUR'ĀNIC EDUCATION AND COMPETITION (*MUSĀBAQAH*) IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

The Glorious Qur'ān as a divine law is considered as life syllabus because it contains vital information to solve social problems of human beings irrespective of their colour, language, time and space or place¹. It is also considered as the ultimate source of God by Muslims and most powerful miracle that confirms the prophethood of Muhammad. It is a divine message that narrated the history of the previous prophets and their books such as *Tawrāt* (Torah), *Injīl* (Gospel) and *Zabūr* (Psalms). The information contained in the Qur'ān revolves around the principles of creed, religious obligations, ethics, legislation and education that will make man attain real bliss. It is a great literary miracle in term of words and meaning². The Prophet was reported to have said:

Every prophet was given miracles because of which people believed but what I have been given is Divine inspiration which Allah has revealed to me so I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of other prophets on the Day of Resurrection³.

Islamically, the purpose of man's creation is to worship God and explore his environment for his benefit. This cannot be achieved without proper education of human beings. Due to this, Islam places a high value on education as the faith spread among diverse people, education becomes an important tool and channel to create a universal and cohesive social order⁴. In the middle of 9th Century, the knowledge was divided into three categories; Islamic Science, Islamic Philosophy and Natural Science. The Islamic science is emphasised in the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth and there is its interpretation by leading scholars and theologians⁵. This was buttressed and corroborated by the first five verses in the Qur'ān which centre on literacy. Allah says:

Read in the name of your Lord, who created. He created man from embryo. Read, for your Lord is the most Beneficent, who taught by the Pen. He taught man what he did not know (Q96: 1-5).

The encouragement of learning by the Qur'ān made the early Muslims to lay emphasis on practical studies, such as the application of technological expertise to

the development of irrigation system, architectural innovation, textile, leather products and others. After the 11th Century, Islamic sciences have dominated and achieved prominence. Greek knowledge was studied privately and literary arts diminished gradually. The Muslims were on scientific innovations and creative scholarships⁵.

The importance of education prompted the Prophet to make teaching an option of ransom to the captives of Badr, who did not have any means of ransom⁷. The system of education in Islamic state became undiluted learning which took place at different centres which included *Halqah* (study circle), the *Maktab* (*kuttāb*) and elementary schools. Various colleges resultantly emerged and were established. The simplest type of education was offered in the Mosque where Muslim scholars gathered for teaching and learning the Qur'ān⁸. During the period of the righteous caliphs, the number of Muslim students outrageously increased to the extent that Abbasid period reported three thousand mosques that were built in Baghdad alone in the first decade of the 10th century; as many as twelve thousand were reported in Alexandria in the 14th Century and most of these mosques were attached to schools and later became centres of learning for Muslims from all over the world. The mosque circle also varied in approach, course content, size and quality of teaching but method of instruction always emphasized on lectures and memorisation⁸.

Furthermore, elementary schools (*Maktab*) were also established during this period. It is a place where pupils learned to read and write. All these schools were later developed after the advent of Islam into centres for instruction in elementary Islamic subjects. Students were expected to memorise perfectly as possible. Some schools also included the study of poetry, arithmetic, ethics, grammar and *tawhīd* in their curriculum. The *Makātib* were highly common in the Middle East, Africa and Spain¹⁰.

The priority Islam gives education cannot be underrated and this continues to be gaining momentum in the successive Islamic government which later led to production of Muslim scholars in various disciplines and in circular system of education such as Mathematics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Geography, History, Technology and others. For instance, Jābir Ibn Hayyān wrote on Al-Chemy based on his experience. He described laboratory techniques and experimental methods that are still being used up to date. Al-Battāni (d.922) was regarded as father of Solar. He contributed table of Toledo used by astronomers to predict the direction of sun, moon and planet across the sky. Al-Dinawiri (d. 896) was regarded as the father of Botany in the Islamic World¹¹. Al-Khawārazimi (d.850) was a great mathematician who introduced the use of Zero and was derived from his name¹².

It has to be mentioned that the attitude of some parents toward Qur'ānic education and Islamic studies is not encouraging. Therefore, this study aims at examining the evolution of Qur'ānic education and the role of *Musābaqah* (Qur'ānic competition) in promoting Qur'ānic education.

Evolution of Qur'ānic Education in Nigeria

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* the "Quran is a book to tell a reader that there is more information in another part of the book."¹³ While "Education is the process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools, colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills."¹⁴ According to Ukwandu:

The Qur'anic Education is a process where parents and communities place their young children under the direct supervision and mentorship of Qur'anic teacher in order to memorise the Qur'an and gain the knowledge of religion. The mallam usually far away from their parents and communities and the students are taught the Islamic religious instructions, doctrines and values¹⁵.

It can be deduced from the above definitions that Qur'ānic school may be defined as a neighbourhood institution in a town or village often connected with a mosque, in which Muslim boys and girls between the ages of four and fourteen acquire familiarity with the Qur'ān. In view of this, an educator looks at an act with the people rather than their task which is to educate or bring out or develop potentials¹⁶.

In Arabic language, three terms are often used for education but the most common is *ta'ālīm* from the root *'alimah* which means to know, being aware, perceiving and learning. Another term is *tarbiyah* which is derived from the verb *rabbā* which means spiritual and moral growth based on the will of God. The last term is *ta'adīb* that is derived from the word *addaba* which means to be cultured and refined in social behaviour¹⁷. From all the above, it can be concluded that knowledge always connects with moral and ethics. The Muslim scholars view education as:

something more of a mirror reflecting nations' system regardless of the political, economic and ideological differences. The Islamic education reflects the teaching of Islam and its notable doctrines. For Islam, besides propagating issues and beliefs relating to creed also promotes good moral values and virtues. All these are considered for pious religious life¹⁸.

The concept and meaning of Islamic education were described by Muslim educationists in various ways which include cultivating all intellectual, emotional, physical and social aspects of personalities based on Islamic teaching and values with good life entangled with a religious flavour, providing Muslim individuals with all-encompassing preparation processes that involve all aspects of his/her personality that continues throughout his/her growing phases to be able to handle this worldly life and others, in the light of Islamic teachings and educational methods designed by educationists. Individual and social activities that seek to cultivate persons intellectually, doctrinally, spiritually, physically and ethically empower them with the knowledge, approach and proficiencies needed for sound growth that can serve both practical and spiritual life¹⁹.

Finally, Islamic education is one of the germane and purposeful education that seeks to develop and reshape the Muslim individual, society and entire nation that has been assigned as the mission of God's vicegerency on the earth so far the collapse of a

nation lies on the collapse of education²⁰. Historically, Islamic education in Africa started in centres such as *Markaz*, *Mahā'id* and *Manabi'* though Qur'ānic schools are the places in which Muslims learn their religious obligation and normally found in the mosque or private houses set for the purpose. It was also established to master the basic tenet of Islam and the Arabic script. These Qur'ānic schools were later renamed as *Madāris* or *Marākis* and *Mahā'id* where Muslim children are taught the Qur'ān and other rudimentary knowledge of Islam. Other Western subjects are also taught if they have enough teachers to handle them²¹.

The Status of Qur'ānic Education in Nigeria

Historically, Islam reached a part of Northern region called Kanem-Bornu Empire precisely in the year of 1085CE and later spread to Hausaland²². In the beginning of 14th Century, Islam flourished in the Hausaland especially Kano, Katsina and Zaria which were under the Mali empire²³. As to the Yorubaland, Islam was referred to as *Esin Imale* (Religion of Malians) because it was introduced through the Malian itinerant traders around 14th century to some scholars and this continued on a large scale in 17th Century²⁴. Scholars are not unanimous on the actual date of arrival of Islam in Yorubaland, Shaykh Adam opined that it arrived between 10th and 13th Century²⁵. Parinder opined that Islam arrived in the 18th Century²⁶. Gbadamasi traced its advent to the 17th Century²⁷. Doi placed its advent to the area to the early 17th century²⁸. In the opinion of Adam al-Alūri, Islam existed in Yorubaland between 10th and 13th century because Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu mentioned in his book, *Al-Kashaf Wal-Bayān* (d.1627) that "Yorubaland is a country where Islam is rarely found."²⁹ It could be inferred from the statement that Islam existed but there were very few people practising it at the time the book was written. This shows that Islam was introduced into Yorubaland before the seventh century³⁰. However, the penetration of Islam into the Eastern part of the country came much more later.

Right from the advent of Islam in Nigeria till date, the efforts of Nigerian scholars and Muslims in promoting Qur'ānic education and Islamic studies have been always progressing. It is observed that the experience has always been fluctuated between success and failure and the periods of Qur'ānic education from the time of Prophet Muhammad till date can be divided as follows:

- i. *Asr- Istihlāl* (The period of commencement)
- ii. *Asr-Istirshād* (The period of Instruction)
- iii. *Asr-Istiqrār* (The period of consolidation)
- iv. *Asr- Isti'hmār* (The period of Colonialism)
- v. *Asr- Istiqlāl* (The period of Independence)
- vi. *Asr - Izdiār* (The period of flourishing)

Asr- Istihlāl (The period of commencement) can be regarded as the period of Prophet Muhammad's revelation. This took place in 610 A.D, when the Prophet was visited by

Jubril who revealed the beginning of what would later become the Qur'ān. The event took place in a cave called Cave Hirā, located on the Mountain of *Jabal-Nūr* near Makkah³¹.

°Asr-Istirshād (The period of Instruction) can be regarded as the period of righteous orthodox caliphs. It started immediately after the death of the Prophet till Abū Bakr was instructed to gather the Qur'ān into a book. Although, the Prophet enlisted all possible measures to preserve the Qur'ān but he did not bind all the *Surahs* together into one volume book³². Abū Bakr appointed Zaid Ibn Thābit as a compiler of the Glorious Qur'ān. Zaid reports:

Abū Bakr sent for me at a time when the Yamāma battles had witnessed the martyrdom of numerous Companions. I found °Umar bin Khattāb with him. Abū Bakr mentioned that Umar has just come to me and said the Yamāma battles has dealt most severely with the *qurrā'* (Qur'ān reciters) and I fear it will deal with them with equal severity in other theatres of war. As a result, much of the Qur'ān will be gone. I am therefore of the opinion that you should order collection of the Qur'ān into a book. Abū Bakr continued, 'I said to °Umar 'How can we embark on what the Prophet never did? °Umar replied that it was a good deed regardless, and he did not cease replying to my scruples until Allah reconciled to the undertaking, and I became of the same mind as him. Zaid, you are young and intelligent, you used to record the revelations for the Prophet and we know nothing to your discredit. So, pursue the Qur'ān and collect it together." By Allah, had they asked me to move a mountain it could not have been weightier than what they requested of me. I asked them how could I undertake what the Prophet had never done? But Abū Bakr and °Umar insisted that it was permissible and good. They did not cease replying to my scruples until Allah reconciled me to the undertaking, the way Allah had already done with Abū Bakr and Umar³³.

°Asr-Istiqrār (The period of consolidation) started immediately at the beginning of the Qur'ān compilation till its period of authentication. It is a period when the Qur'ān was transmitted by *Tawāttur* (Continuity) or a certain verse has become established through this method. It refers to gathering information from multiple channels and comparing them so that majority agrees on one reading that gives us assurance and the reading itself requires authenticity³⁴.

°Asr- Isti°hmār (The period of Colonialism) refers to the period in which 'ulamā' were not given the utmost power to preach or spread the teachings of the Qur'ān. A member of 'ulamā' will exhaust his time to the extent that he will not have time for generating an income. The lack of monthly or regular income made the Muslim scholars to depend on goodwill messages, political class and influential patrons. This is necessary due to the development of 'ulamā' class for the Muslim communities throughout Nigeria. As a result of this, majority of 'ulamā' were easily influenced and deployed from their mystic power, literacy, religious and judicial knowledge in the service of influential members in the political class³⁵.

In the 18th Century, the 'ulamā' occupied positions of authority in the local political structures that enabled them to influence state policy and programmes. However, the relationship between the 'ulamā' and the political class did not succeed in placing Islamic education on the development agenda of the state³⁶. Therefore, some Islamic

influence could be felt in the legal and administrative structures of some Hausa states' education which still remained of the state policy³⁷. The relationship between the 'ulamā' and the political class gave Islam and Islamic education the necessary footstep in Northern Nigerian cities and towns. This occurred when scholars like Muhammad al-Maghili laid the framework for the establishment of Islamic legal and administrative system in Kano and Katsina through their alliance with political parties³⁸. Al-Maghili also established an Islamic learning centre which became prominent at Gobarau³⁹.

Consequently, the pre-colonial era period witnessed the establishment of Qur'ānic schools in Yorubaland and majority of them were attached to the Mosque under the supervision of the *Imām*. There were other private Qur'ānic schools that were established all around southwest where tuition fees were paid. It was on record that Uthmān Ibn Abu Bakr came to Ibadan in the first quarter of the 19th century from Katsina, Shaykh Abu Bakar, an indigene of Sokoto, settled in Ilorin and taught many Yoruba indigenous scholars of Arabic; and Muhammad al-Barnawi of Bida⁴⁰. Abubakre also identified Shaykh Sālih bn. Junta popularly known as Alfa Alimi, an indigene of Sokoto that firstly settled in Oyo-Ile and later travelled far and wide preaching Islam and teaching the rudimentary knowledge of Arabic language and Islamic education in different towns⁴¹.

‘Asr- Istiqlāl (The period of Independence) refers to the post-colonial status of Qur'ānic and Islamic education. It emerged after the Nigeria's independence, when efforts were made by Muslims to expand the Islamic education and western ideology as a strategy for confronting the reversion of Muslims to the Christian Religion through missionary schools. It has been reported that many Muslims changed their names before being admitted into various schools. It was also reported that the Northern region which comprised states in the present -day Northern Nigeria, sprung up with different Islamic schools. The government also established Islamic schools that were meant for teachers for training Arabic language and Islamic education components on the curricular of formal schools. However, the assassination of the then Prime Minister in 1966 affected these programmes and made the Islamic schools to be run through the state bureaucracy⁴².

With regard to Southern Nigeria, the Qur'ānic education after the British colonisation may be divided into three categories. These include the traditional 'Ulamā' (TU), Dualized 'Ulamā' (DU) and Modern Scholars of Qur'ān (MSQ). The TU are teachers of Arabic and Islamic education who are either locally trained in such Arabic and Islamic schools as were established during the colonial era and fortunately gained scholarship for studies in the Arabic speaking countries and returned to the Southern part of Nigeria to establish their schools. These people are well versed in Arabic and Islamic Knowledge. They are the people of ascetics and dedicate most of their time for teaching and preaching Islam but unfortunately, they were not recognised by the government. The learning usually takes place in mosques, residences of the Mallams and sometimes under the tree. They often read *al-Qā'idah al-Baghdādiyyah*, an Arabic text for the beginners which contains the Arabic alphabet and joining of letters along with a *juz'* of the Qur'ān. Once, the student can read the Qur'ān fluently and

organise an elaborate *Walīmat al-Qur’ān*, he will proceed to the books of *Malikiyyah* such as *ad-Durūsi aw-Waliyah*, *Matnul akhdar*, *ad-Durarul Bahiyah (Al-Ashimāwī)*, *al-Muqadimmat ‘Izziyyah*, *Matnul-Risālah*, *as-Sharhul Sagīr* till *Mukhtasar al-Khalīl*⁴³.

The second category of the Qur’ānic education in the Southern part of Nigeria after the colonial era is Dualised ‘*Ulamā’*. They are the products of schools established by TU. After their graduation, they proceeded to the western oriented colleges established either by the government or private Muslim organisations such as Ansār-ud-deen, Anwāru al-Islam and others. Some of them attended these schools and later proceeded to the various universities that offer either Arabic language and literature, or Arabic and Islamic Studies for the completion of their studies. Upon graduation, they establish Arabic schools where they teach Qur’ān and various Arabic and Islamic subjects. They combine the traditional system of Islamic learning with western epistemology. These centres are very common in our midst such as Arabic Institute of Nigeria, Elekuro, Ibadan owned by Shaykh Muritada Abdul Salam, *Ma’had al-Azhar* in Ilorin established by Shaykh Kamaldīn al-Adabī. They incorporated the English language and other western subjects to their curriculum⁴⁴.

The last category of Qur’ānic education in Southern Nigeria is modern scholars of Qur’ān (MSQ). These are Qur’ānic practitioners whose learning of the Qur’ān has been a product of neither the TU nor DU⁴⁵. They may also be regarded as those who commit the whole Qur’ān into their memory with perfection and collect the *Ijāzah* - certificate from their teachers. The word *Ijāzah* means permission to teach the psalmody of the Glorious Qur’ān. It is also the highest degree of reading the Qur’ān with perfection. The student has to recite the Qur’ān from memory from the beginning to the end observing all the psalmody rules and repeating the words that can be read in several ways to his Shaykh. This will also assist the student to correct all the details of pronunciation, which he himself recites this way to his Shaykh in order to connect to the recitation of the beloved Prophet⁴⁶. These are very popular in both Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria, such as Abbās Zakariyah Institute for Qur’anic Memorisation owned by Shaykh Abbās Zakariyah, Ali Institute for Qur’anic Memorisation and Sidi Muhammad Asrakawa Institute of Qur’anic Studies.

Aims and Objectives of *Musābaqah* (Qur’ān Competition)

1. To provide the Arabic language and Islamic value education to learners with different opportunities in order to showcase their skills and talents through the display of better performance.
2. To encourage learning of the Glorious Qur’ān and its memorisation.
3. To attract rewards from Allah.
4. To nurture youths by offering creative and youth centred activities in relation to the Qur’ān.
1. 5.To encourage exploitation of creative arts and literature through *Musābaqah* and Qur’anic Culture.
5. To provide counselling and mentoring service based on Qur’anic principles.

6. To integrate communities with geographical and cultural diversity through Qur'ān competition, seminars and workshop.
7. To improve access to Qur'ānic learning for students with learning difficulty and special needs.
8. To provide teacher's training by selecting the best performance in area of Qur'ānic knowledge and intonations.
9. To encourage and appreciate the arts of Qur'ān recitation amongst the *Ummah* (Nation).

The Juristic Analysis on the Ruling of *Musābaqah* (Qur'an Competition) in Islamic Law

The word *Musābaqah* is derived from the word *Sābaqa*, *Yusābiq* and *Musābaqah*. It literally means to compete with, be equal to or strive to surpass⁴⁷. *Musābaqah* is a borrowed word to describe the competition of the Qur'ān recitals in many regions. It is coined by the Organisers of the Malaysia's Qur'ān Competitions in the mid-1970s. It has been widely used internationally ever since then for Qur'ān competition⁴⁸. Muslims are strongly encouraged to read and recite the Qur'ān. However, reciting the Qur'ān has been modernised as it was not practiced during the time of the Prophet. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned by some organisers that the objective of holding such competition is to increase exposure to the Qur'ān and the merits of reciting and learning the Divine Message⁴⁹.

It is crystal clear that gambling is forbidden in Islam. It is the subset of *Maysir* which refers to the agreement between participants based on immoral inducement provided by entirely wishful hopes in the participants' minds that they will gain by mere chance without any consideration for the loss. In other words, it is the game of chance⁵⁰. Allah says:

O you who believe! Intoxicant and gambling, sacrificing to stones and (divination) by arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. Eschew such (abomination) that you may prosper. Satan's is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and prayer. Will you not then abstain? (Q5: 90- 91).

To some, competition and showing off seem to be completely different ideas; one is good and the other is bad and to others, these concepts are too closely related and both should be avoided. But the truth lies somewhere in the middle. The concept of competition is of two kinds in this world. The one that pushes us to try to be better than someone else no matter what we have to do. This kind of competition is very close to showing off, because one competes in this way hoping for reward from a creature. It is destructive and scary. The second type of competition is where someone sees others

doing good and it inspires him to also do good, seeking reward and pleasure. This is good and recommended⁵¹. Allah says: ‘They are eager to do righteous works; they compete in doing them’ (Q23:61)

According to some jurists, competition is allowed based on the command of Allah who says: ‘Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies’ (Q8:60). Al-Mawardi explains that the instruction of preparing for war is not yet completed without training and competition. Thus, training and competitions are definitely allowed⁵². It is on record that ‘Aisha, the mother of believers, sometimes raced with the Prophet and won till she became fatter and the Prophet won⁵³. This clearly shows that the Prophet raced with his wife because competition is permissible. It has to be mentioned that competitions are of two types; awardable and non-awardable competitions. The jurists allowed the latter without any restriction whether it involves human racing, animals or others provided it does not contradict any basis of Islamic laws⁵⁴.

Concerning the competition with awards, the jurists, Shafi^c, Maliki and Hanafi differ on the types of competition that are permissible. They unanimously agreed that awardable competition is allowed in three types only as in the statement of the Prophet. These are camel racing, horse racing and archery⁵⁵. Shafi^c also added wrestling and swimming⁵⁶. The Prophet was reported to have said on the authority of Abu Hurayrah: “There should be no prize except in archery, camel-racing and horse racing⁵⁷.”

From the above assertion, it can be inferred that awardable competitions are not allowed except the aforementioned ones. There are some scholars that allowed awardable competitions without any restriction including Qur’ān competition, such as Ibn Qayim, Abdul Rahmon Barāk and others. For instance, Ibn Qayim was asked:

Is it permissible to compete for prizes in memorising the Qur’ān, Hadīth, Fiqh and other beneficial sciences and getting questions, right? The companions of Mālik, Ahmad and Shafi^c disallowed it and our Shaykh regarded it as permissible. Ibn Abdul Barr also narrated from Shafi^c that prizes are more appropriate in wrestling and swimming. Then it is more appropriate that it should be permissible to compete in knowledge. This is similar to the case when Abu Bakr as-Siddiq made a bet with the disbelievers of Quraysh regarding the truth of what he told them. We have stated previously that there is no Shari‘ah evidence to suggest that this has been abrogated, and Abu Bakr took the wager from them after gambling had been prohibited. Religion is established by means of proof and Jihād; if betting was permissible with regard to tools of Jihād, then it is more appropriate that it should be permissible with regard to knowledge⁵⁸.

With regard to offering prizes for Qur'ān competition, though there may be some reservations about it, the most correct view is that it is not allowed because it involves showing off, boasting, causing the heart to be attached and holding competition for merely competition sake. All these need to be rectified; but if the participants can avoid all the above and purify their hearts, Qur'ān competition is allowed because actions shall be judged by their intentions. According to Jamāl Badawi:

Islam does not just look at the deed irrespective of its motives. God evaluates peoples' deeds according to the intention behind them. This meaning is referred to the Qur'ān when it talks about animals which are sacrificed during the right of pilgrimage, where it says: "It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him" (Q22: 37)⁵⁹.

Challenges faced by Qur'ānic and Islamic Education

According to *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary*, challenge is defined as "a new or difficult task that tests ability and skill or an invitation or suggestion that they should enter a competition and fight."⁶⁰ There are many challenges faced by Qur'ānic schools. These are as follows:

- 1. Lack of Unified Syllabus:** There is no coordination between the syllabus of one Qur'ānic school and others. Every school is using its self-designed syllabus according to its whims and caprices until it was recently regulated by the National Board of Arabic and Islamic Studies in order to integrate the Qur'ānic and Islamic schools especially in South West Nigeria. It has been mentioned that most of the popular Arabic and Islamic schools are not really aware of this Board after it has been in operation for long in the North. The results of this examination are also accepted in Northern Nigerian universities.
- 2. Lackadaisical Attitudes of the Parents and Students:** One of the greatest challenges faced by teachers in Qur'ānic schools is loosing of interest in the knowledge of Islamic education. Some children were forced to attend *Madrrasah* and once they confront any difficulty, they become frustrated and truant. At times, some parents also discouraged their children by seeing a *‘Ālim* (Divine Scholar) as a riffraff and waste product. This shows that many Imāms are being molested and downgraded in some communities. A story in respect of this is captured thus:

It's so painful and touching when the Imām's wife came back from the market and met her husband crying like a baby, *Subuhana-Llah*, what could happen that could bring tear from your eyes? You are the man of God, everyone knows that, you should be able to handle any kind of situation and the Imam replied that 'I am sorry this is just too big for me to bear,' the Imām replied bitterly and some minutes later, he finally spoke that "I have been the Imām of this community for almost thirty years, I lead the five daily prayers for the Muslims including the Jumu'ah Prayer while they are in various places of work, I am here busy reading and writing Islamic lectures and next Friday Jumu'ah sermon, when they are sick and it's getting out of hands they run to me for prayers and prophetic medicines for cure; when they are weak, they call unto Allah through me to strengthen them and when they go astray, they consult me to lead them to the right path. I have been busy teaching them and their children the *Dīn* of Allah, I devoted my life and time for them over my own family, they build big houses and call

me for prayer unto it before they could inhabit, they drove big cars and brought them to me for blessings. They travelled abroad for summers and holidays with their children and send five hundred naira to me and when it is time for *Walimah*, we will be begging them. On a raining Friday, the Imām cannot go out of the house to avoid being drenched by the rain, he stood helplessly inside the house waiting for rain to stop before proceeding to Jumu‘ah. Imam started receiving series of calls asking why I am not available to discharge my duties. Imām was forced to manage small umbrella. On getting to the Mosque, Imām’s cloth has been stained and drenched and met a lot of people with their families who came with their cars and all that the Imām could get from them is *e pele*. After the Jumu‘ah prayer, the Imam called for a meeting and told them that he needed a car to facilitate the *Da‘wah*. They started shaking their heads in disagreement and one of them stood up and said to the Imām that ‘Imām I don’t think you are serious; *eeti e mowon ara yin*, meaning - you don’t know your boundary.’”⁶¹

3. **Poor Attitude of Government toward Islamic Education:** The government also contributes to the downgrading of Islamic education. For instance, recently, the Federal Ministry of Education announced that in order to reduce the workload of primary and secondary pupils, they will be decreasing subjects from twenty to a maximum of ten to meet up the international standard. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education partnered with NERDC to merge Islamic Studies and Christian Studies under a compulsory subject known as Religion and National Values (RNV)⁶². The question is why these subjects? They are part of unrecognised subjects.
4. **Reviewing of Qur’ānic and Islamic Education Syllabus:** Most of the syllabi of Arabic and Islamic subjects in our institutes need to be reviewed. Some even need to be merged with another while some subjects need to be added such as *al-Qawā‘id al-Fiqhiyyah*, *Matn Lughah* and others.
5. **Lack of Funds:** One of the greatest problems faced by majority of the institutes is lack of funds. They mostly depend on proceeds from *walimah* (graduation) and goodwill of people.
6. **Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials:** Some centres for Arabic and Islamic Studies lack teaching facilities and learning materials.
7. **Lack of Competence of some Teachers:** Most of the textbooks used in our institutes are written by foreign authors and this may cause lack of competence in some subjects. For instance, Nigerians have strictly adhered to the books of Malikis but almost every centre are using the books of Hanafis to learn *Fiqh* with the chance of getting a specialist of Hanafi’s being unlikely.
8. **Inability to get Admission into Tertiary Institutions:** Another problem faced by the students of Arabic and Islamic institutes is getting admission into tertiary institutions. Most of the *thanāwiyah* students especially in South-West depend on Arabic speaking countries for admission. This might also cause a sense of discrimination when they return to Nigeria. They might not even be able to speak English language.

Role of Qur'ān Competition (*Musābaqah*) in Promoting Qur'ānic Education

It is noteworthy to examine the role of Qur'ān competition in our contemporary society. It relieves the entire Muslim communities in the country and encourages Muslim youths in recitation and memorisation of the Glorious Qur'ān. In view of this, the role of *Musābaqah* (Qur'ān competition) can be discussed as follows:

Spiritual Role

The introduction of Qur'ān competition has contributed immensely to the growth and development of Qur'ānic education. It provides more incentive for youths and Muslims in general to answer the call of Allah in terms of worship. It eradicates the indifferent attitudes towards others, prevent contempt and discord between people. However, it will be exaggerated to say that Muslims have not been reading and reciting the Glorious Qur'ān before the introduction of Qur'ān competition but not in a modern way and this provides additional opportunities to put more efforts on its memorisation. The competition has also paved way for many Muslims to commit the entire Qur'ān into memory not only for the sake of competition but encourages them to recite it during the month of Ramadan in the supererogatory prayers. Findings reveal that some mosques recite two pages of the Qur'ān in every raka'ah of their *Tarāwih* (Supererogatory prayer). It means the entire Qur'ān will be completed by the end of Ramadan. While some mosques complete the whole Qur'ān only in the last ten days of Ramadan to suit the purpose of *Laylatul Qadr* (night of majesty). Since the inception of *Musābaqah* (Qur'ān competition), all these have been achieved.⁶³

Educational Role

The introduction of Qur'ān recitation competition has exposed Muslim youths to various ways of reading. For instance, in South-West, Nigeria, most Muslims were only familiar with one type of *Qirāhah* (reading) which is *Hafs*, while in Northern Nigeria, they were only exposed to *Qirāhāt* which are *Hafs* and *Warsh*. With the advent of competition and intermingling with others locally and internationally, Muslims are more enlightened about other *Qirāhāt* such, *Duri*, *Sūsi*, *Qālūn*, *Kisā'i*, *Ibn Kathīr* and others. There is no doubt the fact that Qur'ān competition has assisted Muslims to learn more about the levels of recitation which have the possibility of being slow to being fast and be more faster; that which human ear can recognise from these are of three types: slowness in recitation, speed in recitation and moderate speed in recitation (in between)⁶⁴. The participants later learnt more about these levels to the extent that Hamlāwi, the author of *al-Burhan fī Kitābi Tajwīd*, has made this topic to stand on its own in his book. This can be summarised as follows:

1. *At-Tahqīq* (slowness without elongations). It also means ease and care in articulating and pronouncing the letters. It is slowness without elongations.
2. *Al-Hadr* (speed without merging the letters). The scholars warned against this method because of its danger of reducing the timing of the letters and inserting one into another. However, there is no problem with reciting the Qur'ān with speed so far there is no merging of some letters with another or reduction with the required timing.

3. *At-Tadwīr* : It is moderation in recitation, neither to be fast nor to be slow⁶⁵.

Economical Role

Musabaqah has helped Muslims in economic development especially during the programme when people come from different places to buy and sell at the venue. There may even be element of inflating price of commodities due to demands of some commodities. At the end of each competition, prizes are awarded to the participants, such as books, pens, cars, cloths, cash, scholarship and so on. For instance, it was announced that Hāfīz Idris from Borno won 2019 International Qur'ān competition and received scholarship from the current Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum⁶⁶.

Social Role

The formation of Qur'ān competition has made it possible for Muslims to be more civilised and exposed. It helps them to know one another locally and internationally and to visit different places that may assist the participants during the competition. For instance, the participants from Ibadan will make friends with participants from other places like Kano or Saudi.

Proliferation of Qur'anic Memorization Centres

The emergence of Qur'ān competition has paved way for more Qur'ān memorization schools to be founded. More Qur'ān centres are established day by day. It was recorded that Qur'ān was taught in a traditional way but later changed to the formal class due to the role of *Musābaqah*. In Ibadan, the most populous centre is Abbas Zakariyah Institute of Qur'ān Memorisation and Islamic Studies owned by Shaykh Abbas Zakariyah, Ali Institute of Qur'ān Memorisation and others, In Sokoto, Siddi Muhammad Asrakwa Institute of Qur'ān Memorisation and General Studies and others. The new centres have also been established in different parts of the country.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, it will be necessary at this juncture to make some recommendations; hence, the following are made:

- i. Government, proprietors of private schools and Muslim communities should make provision for adequate manpower and needed facilities to boost morale of students in studying the Qur'ān.
- ii. The Qur'ānic, Arabic and Islamic students should be well trained for future challenges and moral behaviour.
- iii. In both public and private schools, Qur'ān and Islamic education should be handled only by experts, qualified, certified, competent and morally inclined teachers who will serve as role models for students.

- iv. The Government and conscious Muslims should assist the *Huffāzz* (Memorisers) and Arabic and Islamic students by awarding scholarship up to the tertiary institution levels especially to the less privileged people.
- v. The practice of not paying for Qur’ān, Arabic and Islamic education should be totally stopped. This would allow the parents to know the value and worth of Islamic education just as it is with Western education.
- vi. The practice of not completing the syllabus of Qur’ān before *Walimāh* (Graduation) should be stopped in order not to produce mediocre students.
- vii. Parents should fully support their children to pursue Qur’ān memorisation, Arabic and Islamic education just as they do for their wards and children pursuing the Western education.
- viii. More graduates of Qur’ānic and Islamic education should be employed by governments at different levels of education.
- ix. *Musābaqah* (competition) should be fully supported by the Government to encourage the learning of the Glorious Qur’ān.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that Qur’ān competition has been widely accepted. It is organised within the Muslim communities, locally, nationally and internationally. It calls for the establishment of different centres. This encourages Muslim youth to be united and strengthens Islamic brotherhood. It also makes the youth to put in more efforts to learning the Glorious Qur’ān and *Tajwīd* in schools throughout the country. In addition to the above, Nigeria has produced many *Huffāz* (Memorisers) and majority of them have emerged winners in international competitions. This study critically examined the juristic analysis of Qur’ān competition and the classifications of Qur’ānic education after the British colonisation into Traditional *Ulamā^c* (TU), Dualized *Ulamā^c* (DU) and Modern Scholars of Qur’ān (MSQ). The research revealed that Qur’ān competition has impacted spiritually, educationally and economically to the life of Muslims across the globe

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THE ROLE OF CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN QUR'ĀNIC STUDIES OF YOBE STATE UNIVERSITY IN REPOSITIONING QUR'ĀNIC EDUCATION

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Introduction

Historically, the old Borno (which comprises Borno and Yobe States) is considered as one of the greatest centres of Qur'ānic education in Africa, which made a remarkable role in disseminating Qur'ānic recitation, memorisation and commentary within its environs and beyond.¹ As such, several prominent Qur'ān scholars in Nigeria graduated from this region, to the extent that it may be rare to find a famous Qur'ān reciter who did not directly or indirectly study from old Borno.

Taking the above fact into consideration, the Yobe State University with the support of Yobe State Government and other concerned intellectuals in the State established the Centre for Research in Qur'ānic Studies, in 2014 in order to maintain the aforesaid leading position in Qur'ānic education and establish sustainable and developed Qur'ānic education system, which will suit modern development and technological advancement. In pursuance of its short term objectives, the Centre which was first of its kind not only in Yobe State, but also in the entire North East region has developed specialised educational academic programmes in the Glorious Qur'ān and its sciences, primarily aiming at providing educational opportunities for those who memorised the Glorious Qur'ān through *Tsangaya* System, and have no any background of formal education, so they can contribute to community building and become a source of happiness and prosperity to the society, instead of falling victims to deviant ideologies. It is against this backdrop that this study will highlight and assess the role of the Centre for Research in Qur'ānic Studies in repositioning Qur'ānic education to its three-year Proficient Certificate in Qur'ānic Science (PCQS) programme.

An Overview on the Current Status of Qur'ānic Education in Nigeria

The history of the establishment of the Qur'ānic education dates back to the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), through whom Qur'ān was revealed to mankind and enjoined Muslims to read and study it.² Like other predominantly Muslim countries, Nigeria has had a strong Qur'ānic system of education since Islam was introduced to the country by Arab Muslim traders several centuries ago. It had been the responsibilities of government, wealthy individuals and the entire community to take care of these schools in pre-colonial era.³ For instance, in Borno tradition, each and every average household should send food to a particular Qur'ānic school for the sake of Allah. As well, the *Tsangaya* school students actively engage in farming activities to supplement the efforts of the community.⁴

It has been an undeniable historic fact that this educational system was the one that produced all manners of the people required by the State whether they were the political leaders, the judges, the teachers, the public servants, the traders or the artisans. According to Galadanci,⁵ when the colonial masters came to Nigeria at the beginning of the 20th century, they found this educational system - particularly in the Muslim North - solidly in place with its various levels catering for the needs of children, youth and adults, but they eventually imposed the Western Christian system all over the country. Since then, there has been a long-drawn battle between the two systems of education which eventually relegated the initial system close to collapse. Tijjani,⁶ observed that this initial system produced almost all the leaders that were in the forefront of founding this great nation Nigeria. From late Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to late Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello to Late Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, all were products of this Qur'ānic education system.

Prior to Nigerian independence, the colonial rulers made immeasurable efforts to undermine the Qur'ānic educational system by stopping all forms of state support to the Qur'ānic educational system and portraying it as an inferior to the Western educational system. Similarly, the different tiers of government that initially reorganized the Qur'ānic educational system as source of manpower disowned them. Hence, graduates of Qur'ānic education were no longer considered to occupy any meaningful position in the government.⁷

These factors virtually make this noble system deviates from its original course to a system that exposes children to be hardened and become enemies of the society which could be an easy target for radicalized groups with deviant ideologies and extremist views as is evident in the way a large number of *huffāz* (memorisers of the Qur'ān) got trapped in the movement of the terrorist network of Boko Haram due to the reasons of joblessness, poverty and lack of adequate protective knowledge among others.⁸

An Overview of the Centre for Research in Qur'ānic Studies

The Centre for Research in Qur'ānic Studies was established in 2014, with the aim of enhancing Qur'ānic studies and other related sciences in the region and beyond. The vision of the Centre is to be a leading advanced digital academic and research Centre specialized in the studies of the Glorious Qur'ān, its heritage and calligraphy in Africa Sub-Saharan. Its mission is to create an advanced suitable academic and research environment aiming at serving the Muslim's society in general and those who are interested in Qur'ānic heritage in particular.

Objectives of the Centre

The objectives of the Centre are:

- i. To strengthen the community's attachment to the Qur'ān, its sciences and guidance through sensitization and directive.
- ii. To formalize and develop the famous Qur'ānic calligraphy in West Africa through innovative and professional manner.
- iii. To train those who have memorised Qur'ān through Tsangayas and strengthen academically, their knowledge in the sciences related to the Glorious Qur'ān.

- iv. To prepare academic and professional training programmes and curriculums, and to provide the educational and professional certificates.
- v. To conduct the Qur'ānic researches and studies in order to show various sciences and knowledge in a way that contributes to increase the community awareness of the Qur'ān.
- vi. To organize national and international conferences, symposiums and workshops in Qur'ānic studies in collaboration with other internal and/or external related centres and institutions.
- vii. To organize national and international Qur'ānic competitions (in terms of memorization, *Tajwīd*, *Tafsīr*/interpretation and Qur'ānic calligraphy/hand writing") in collaboration with the appropriate institutions.
- viii. To ensure the cooperation and collaboration with other Qur'ānic Boards, institutions and centres within and outside Nigeria.
- ix. To provide advisory and professional consultancy to the public and private sectors.
- x. To contribute awards which shall be presented annually to those who contributed to the development of Islamic Studies in general, and Qur'ānic education in particular in the State.
- xi. To establish B. A., Master's and Ph.D. programs in Qura'ā and its related sciences.
- xii. To build the database in Qur'ānic heritage and related sciences in African Sub-Saharan.⁹

Organizational Structure of the Centre

The Centre is headed by a Director who is answerable to the Vice Chancellor via the advisory board of the Centre. Besides, the Deputy Director and Administrative Secretary, the Centre also has three departments as follows:

1- Department of Academic and Technical Support

This Department is to be headed by a head who is answerable to the Director and has the following functions:

- i. To establish the curricula for the level of Diploma, Degree, Postgraduate and other Certificates in Qur'ānic and other relevant disciplines which will be provided by the Centre.
- ii. To prepare the training, educational and other developmental programs with a view to preparing teachers, imams and preachers.
- iii. To award Certificates in Qur'ānic and other relevant disciplines at the Diploma, Degree and Postgraduate levels.
- iv. To organize and conduct teaching and various training programmes.
- v. To design and monitor a special web page for the Centre which will be linked to the YSU main website.
- vi. To open and monitor other accounts on social sites such as Facebook, Twitter,

Linked In, Google Plus etc.

- vii. To digitalize and automate all programmes and various activities in the Centre.

2- Department of Research and Publication

This Department is also to be headed by a head who is answerable to the Director and has the following functions:

- i. To collect manuscripts related to the Holy Qur'ān and its various studies existing in private hands and institutions within and outside Nigeria.
- ii. To edit and publish the collected manuscripts for the benefit of the community and all Muslim Ummah around the Muslim word.
- iii. To conduct researches and other specialized studies in the Qur'ān, which will go a long way in developing the community and enhancing its awareness socially, economically, politically and administratively.
- iv. To create new approach in the studies of the Holy Qur'ān and relate it to various scientific knowledge such as medicine, technology among others.
- v. To establish, coordinate and publish a scientific academic refereed journal in Qur'ānic research and studies to be named: *Al-Tadabbur* (Meditation).
- vi. To translate the Centre's publications into different local and international languages.
- vii. To take care of the Centre's publications in terms of documentation, archives as well as to reproduce same for sale.
- viii. To monitor the book exchange programmes with other Centres and institutions of similar character within and outside Nigeria.
- ix. To establish a specialized digital library in Qur'ān, its heritage and various related disciplines.

3- Department of Linkages and Community Development Services

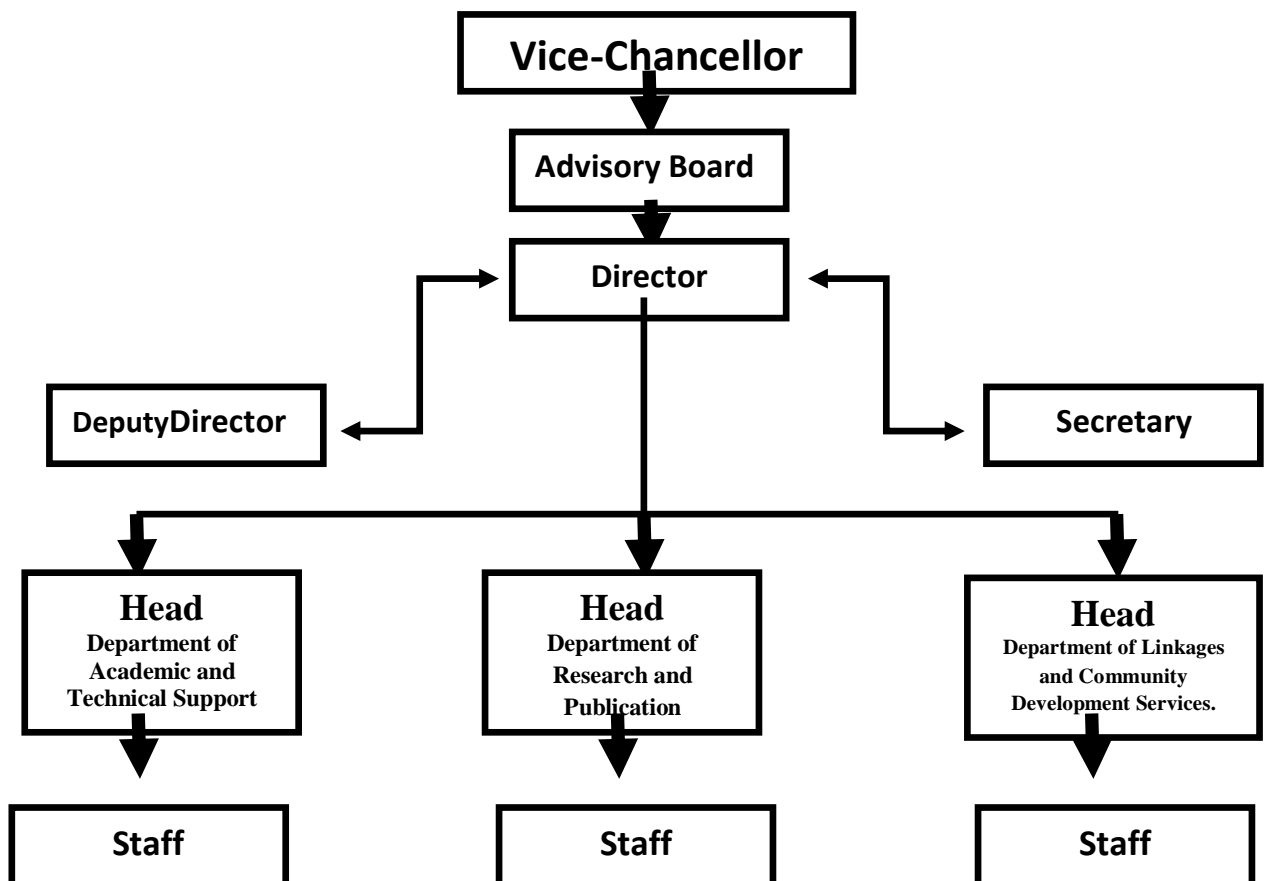
This Department is also to be headed by a head who is answerable to the Director and has the following functions:

- i. To organize local, national and international Qur'ān competition (in Qur'ān memorization, *Tajwīd* and *Tafsīr* (interpretation) in collaboration with other related institutions within and outside Nigeria.
- ii. To organize local, national and international Qur'ānic calligraphy (hand writing) competition in collaboration with other related institutions within and outside Nigeria.
- iii. To organize national and international conferences, summits, workshops and seminars in collaboration with other related institutions within and outside Nigeria with a view to enhancing capacity building and creating awareness.
- iv. To organize advanced and professional trainings in Qur'ānic Moroccan calligraphy.
- v. To provide short courses in order to prepare Qur'ānic teachers, preachers and Imams.

- vi. To provide short courses in Arabic and English languages as second language.
- vii. To establish professional courses and award certificates to the male and female Tsangaya students.
- viii. To provide professional guidance and counselling/consultancy services from Islamic perspective to individuals, Non-Governmental Organizations, private and public organizations and others.
- ix. To establish collaborative partnership with other relevant institutions within and outside Nigeria.
- x. To enlighten the general public on the objectives and functions of the Centre with a view to persuading them for full involvement in all the activities of the Centre.¹⁰

It is worthy to mention that there will be a number of units under each department according to needs.

Organizational Structure of the Centre



Source: CRQS Archives

Achievements of the Centre

Within five years of its establishment, the Centre has recorded tremendous achievements, which include among others:

- i. Establishing cordial relationship with sister centres with common mission and vision, such as: Centre for Islamic Studies, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, Centre for Qur'ānic Studies, Bayero University, Kano and Centre for Tran-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri, etc.
- ii. Advocacy and familiarization visit to some prominent philanthropists as well as some concerned elder state men such as Khadimul Qur'ān, late Sheikh Khalifah Ishaqa Rabi'u, Alhaji Aminu Dantata, Chairman, Dantata Group of Companies and Sheikh Shariff Ibrahim Saleh Alhusainy, Grand Mufti of Nigeria.
- iii. Organizing a sensitization workshop themed: "Towards Establishing Sustainable and Developed Qur'ānic Education System in Yobe State".
- iv. Commencement of Proficient Certificate in Qur'ānic Science Programme, for the memorizers of the Glorious Qur'ān through Tsangaya system.
- v. Organizing International Conference on Islamic work, Peace and Social Security in collaboration with NUSRET Education and Cultural Co. which was attended by participants from Turkey, India, Egypt, Iraq Jordan, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Guinea Conakry, and Niger Republic.
- vi. Release of first and second editions of *Attadabbur* Journal of Qur'ānic Studies in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
- vii. Organizing capacity building seminar for *Mufassirun* of Borno and Yobe States in collaboration with Almuneer International College.

Repositioning Qur'ānic Education through Proficient Certificate in Qur'ānic Science (PCQS) Programme

Having identified marginalization of those who memorized the Glorious Qur'ān through Tsangaya System as one of the key factors that led a reasonable number of them to fall victims to deviant ideologies and extremist views, the Centre has developed specialized educational academic programmes in the Glorious Qur'ān and its sciences, primarily aiming at providing educational opportunities for memorizers of the Glorious Qur'ān through Tsangaya System, and who have no any background of formal education; so they can contribute to community building and become a source of happiness and prosperity to the society.

The Proficient Certificate in Qur'ānic Science (PCQS) Programme is a three year programme designed for intensified reading and writing of Arabic and English languages as well as the basics of *Tajwīd* and Qur'ānic recitation, through which students will be qualified to sit for the examinations of higher Islamic schools as well as to obtain Proficient Certificate in Qur'ānic Science awarded by the Centre.

Objectives of the Programme

The programme was designed with a view of achieving the following Objectives:

- i. Preparing memorizers of the Glorious Qur'ān (*Huffāz* through Tsangaya System) in

terms of communicative and academic skills in order to acquire knowledge and science that will enable them to obtain accredited and valid certificates equivalent to Nigerian senior school certificates.

- ii. Training memorizers of the Glorious Qur'ān (*Huffāz* through Tsangaya System) and promoting their standard of knowledge academically, with relevant Qur'ānic Sciences, in order to obtain certificate in Qur'ānic Science.
- iii. Contributing towards the spread of Arabic Language and Qur'ānic Studies in the society.
- iv. Coaching memorizers of the Glorious Qur'ān towards rising to the responsibility of teaching the Glorious Qur'ān at Qur'ānic memorization schools, leading prayer and Da'wah activities.

The Societal Need towards the Programme

Taking into consideration the accelerating number of the *huffāz* in Muslim societies and their urge towards being equipped with Qur'ānic and Islamic knowledge and language skills; there is high need of certificates in Qur'ānic sciences; this can be summarized below:

- i. The need for the memorizers of the Glorious Qur'ān (*Huffāz* through Tsangaya System) to obtain certificates that will qualify them to take up various employments in governmental and private establishments so that they will become more beneficial to themselves and their community.
- ii. The need of the society towards the services of skillful Qur'ānic memorizers who will rise to the Islamic obligation of teaching, da'wah activities, leading prayer and spread the tenet of Islamic tolerance.
- iii. The need of the Qur'ānic memorizers (*Huffāz* through Tsangaya System) towards understanding the meaning of the Qur'ān and reflection over it in order to work according to its injunction, and to avoid falling victims to deviant ideologies and extremist views.
- iv. The need of Qur'ānic memorizers (*Huffāz* through Tsangaya System) towards improving Qur'ānic recitation and knowing the basics of *Tafsīr*, the Science of *Qirā'at*, knowledge of *Sharī'ah* and learning the Arabic and English Languages.¹¹

Benefits/ Learning Outcomes of the Programme

- a. Acquiring certificate in Qur'ānic Science awarded by the Centre which will enable the students to work with governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- b. Acquiring Senior Arabic and Islamic Secondary School Certificate (SISE) which will qualify the students to enroll into diploma or degree programmes in Qur'ānic Sciences, Islamic Studies or Arabic language.
- c. Improving their recitation of Qur'ān and learning what will assist them in understanding its meanings, ways of interpretation, the Science of Recitation (*Qirā'at*) in both forms of *Warsh* and *Hafs*.

- d. Learning the basics and foundations of the two languages – Arabic and English which will enable them to read, write and communicate in the two languages.
- e. Producing morally sound, skillful and knowledgeable graduates that can shoulder the herculean tasks of leading prayer, da‘wah activities and teaching of the Glorious Qur’ān at schools and other institutions.

The Role of PCQS in Repositioning Qur’ānic Education in Yobe State

Having secured the approval of Yobe State University Senate on 17th September, 2016 for the take-up of Proficient Certificate in Qur’ānic Science (PCQS) program, the Centre wrote a letter and paid a courtesy visit to the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS), Zaria on 24th November, 2016 seeking for the support and partnership of the Board towards actualization of this mission, through establishment of a special examination centre that will enable the students to sit for the Senior Islamic Studies Certificate Examination at the end of their three year programme. After studying the proposal of the programme, the Board approved in principles the commencement of the programme with effect from 2016/2017 academic session. Subsequently, the Centre announced for the commencement of the programme where more than 300 applicants were recorded, but only 50 candidates were successfully admitted due to limited infrastructure and capabilities. Currently the pioneer set of the programme are about to graduate having sat for 2019 SISE examination at the NBAIS approved special Centre; and written the final PCQS examination.

It is worthy of note to mention that more than 80% of the candidates got minimum admission requirement in Nigerian Universities. Therefore, some of the students that luckily sat for 2019 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and scored the required points have already been offered admissions by Yobe State University to study B. A. Arabic, B. A. Islamic Studies, B. A. Ed. Arabic and B. A. Ed. Islamic Studies according to their respective departmental choices. Similarly, the Centre is currently discussing with the Establishment Department of the State civil service to get equivalent consideration for the PCQS in the state service; so that holders of this certificate could be recognized for employment.

Conclusion

Over the years, several attempts were made to overhaul Qur’ānic education system by both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to meet education standards while retaining their faith-based tradition. These attempts largely centre on integration by incorporating core subjects such as literacy and mathematics, along with vocational training, into the Qur’ānic curriculum. It is observed that the main target of such integration programmes is the upcoming Tsangaya schools’ children with little or no concern for those that have already undergone the system and graduated from it. It is against this background that the PCQS programme was introduced in order to complement previous efforts put in place to transform Qur’ānic education system in Nigeria. The programme which is first of its type in the history of Nigerian universities recorded many successes within a short period of its establishment. In essence, many colleges and centres with similar mission and vision, such as Annur International

College, Maiduguri and Yobe Islamic Centre, Damaturu sought to partner with the Centre for research in Qur'anic studies of Yobe State University, Damaturu to establish similar programme.

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REPOSITIONING RELIGIOUS STUDIES EDUCATION AS A CAREER: THE MISCONCEIVED AND A STEP FORWARD

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Introduction

It is not an overstatement that one of the fundamental decisions youths have to make in life is choosing a career. The decisions are influenced by multiple factors including personality interest, cultural identity, globalisation, socialisation, role model, social support and available resources such as information and finance. Hewitt (2010) opined that most people are influenced by the careers their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, and some choose to follow their passion regardless of their unique interests, while others choose the career that give high income. Religious belief is another factor that influences the choice of career.

Religious studies education is one of the least desired courses of study in Nigeria.¹ This is because (though not always), many students believed that studying religious studies education is a road to become a cleric or religious studies classroom teachers. Others believe that studying the course in the higher institution is a no brighter future, and teaching in Nigeria is the poorest profession. A few others treated those who choose religious studies education as a career with disdain and quite a number of successful Islamists and Christianists today also had low estimation for themselves and felt inferior to their peers who choose other fields, they believe to be profitable.

It is clear that contrary to the above opinion, there are many kinds of opportunities available to graduates of religious studies education. One of such is that graduates of religious studies education have been recruited as school administrators such as school heads/principals. Apart from serving as a school administrator, they are recruited as subject officers in examination bodies like the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO). In addition, religious studies educators who seek advanced knowledge and skills in religious studies education are appropriate and qualified for teaching in relevant higher educational institutions which produce religious studies teachers (lecturers). These professionals, plan curricula, lecture students, promote critical thinking through research and examine students. Most importantly, they impart the importance of religious studies education.

The essence of religious studies education in any society is to make an individual religious and morally upright in order to be useful and acceptable member of the society.² The exclusion of religious studies education as a core subject would place a big question mark on how good morals could be inculcated in the society. This is because, understanding the culture and faith of the people is one of the greatest needs to provide a more sensitive awareness to the people. There is no gainsaying that Nigeria is a country with people of different races, cultures and creeds intermingling more than ever before. This diversity should not constitute a barrier; rather it should be a source of enrichment and can only be so if we equip ourselves with the knowledge of religious studies education.

The changing status of religious studies education in the curriculum has affected its registration for it at the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO); and choosing it as a course of study in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) conducted by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB).³ The statistical and graphical details of such drop have been documented. Consequently, a ten-year (2007-2016) statistics of registration and actual sitting for Islamic Studies at the May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) conducted by WAEC in Nigeria is provided in the table below:

Year	Total Entry	Total Sat
2007	220797	209096
2008	231457	217626
2009	270644	256305
2010	284492	268181
2011	343136	325840
2012	410611	388354
2013	423766	400253
2014	416671	395238
2015	359454	346728
2016	288564	281229

Source: Figures obtained from the office of branch controller, West African Examination Council (WAEC), Ilorin

From the table above, the following observations can be made. One, the total number of candidates that sat for Islamic Studies each year was less than the number of those who registered for the subject. Two, there was a steady increase in the number of total entry and total sat from 2007-2013 and three, from 2014-2016, there was a drop in total entry and total sat. The drop in the researchers' opinion may not have been connected with the changing status of Islamic Studies referred to earlier but the wrong notion of students and some stakeholders about religious studies education.

The moral fabric of our society has indeed taken to low level and we urgently need to revive this. Coupled with this, is the low preference of our youth to study Arabic and Islamic Studies, which will not only build their future but enhance their spiritual attainment in this world and in the hereafter. An illustration to the above statement is by giving the statistical analysis of the admission exercises in Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye. The uploading of candidate admission exercise to read Islamic Studies, Music, French, Performing Art, just to mention a few. Only nine (9) candidates paid acceptance fee to read Islamic Studies and seven (7) candidates paid for school fee. Compared with other programmes like Music where one hundred and thirty-seven (137) candidates paid for acceptance fee and ninety-three paid school fee. French that is comparable with Arabic, one hundred and twenty-six (126) candidates paid for acceptance fee and one hundred and ten (110) paid school fee. Lastly, one hundred and twenty (120) candidates paid acceptance fee to study Performing Arts, while ninety-nine (99) paid the school fee. This low enrolment in Islamic Studies is apparently due to many factors but one of the key factors that must be addressed is the peculiarity of the admission requirement that candidate must have read Islamic Studies in secondary school before getting admitted into the University.

Professor M. O. Opeloye in his remarks at the 37th Annual National Conference held at Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye stated that recognition of the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) is the solution to scarcity or low enrolment of students into Arabic and Islamic Studies. He further stated that students are in various Madrasahs (Arabic schools), who if they have the opportunity to be admitted through NBAIS, are ready to study Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities and Colleges of Education. He urged the Vice-Chancellor of the Olabisi Onabanjo University, other vice-chancellors present at the occasion and provosts of colleges of education to admit students with NBAIS in addition to other external examination bodies like West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) because NBAIS has also been given a recognition by the Federal Government to conduct examination for secondary school students just like the WAEC and NECO.⁴

These sorry conditions of the subject have been faced with problems connected with government, teachers, students and parents.⁵ Arikewuyo submitted that most of our secondary schools lack infrastructures and learning resources, such as classrooms, chairs, libraries and instructional materials, (including textbooks), etc. Some students are not showing sufficient enthusiasm for the course while a good number of Islamic Studies teachers are unprepared academically, to handle the course matter and many of them do not make maximum use of the few instructional materials at their disposal.⁶ According to Imam,⁷ the course have been worsened by insufficient teaching staff, infrastructural and instructional materials which earned most of the departments offering the course at the tertiary institution level, interim accreditation status while some of the defects have been remedied, this resulting in full accreditation in some universities as shown in the 2016 report released by the National Universities Commission (NUC).

Overview of Religious Studies Education in Nigeria

Religion has a strong, motivating and controlling influence in human existence and his relationship to his environment, both the visible and invisible.⁸ The two dominant religions in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity; however, it has been observed that some people in Nigeria accept traditional religion as a faith and tend to abide by its principles. These people participate directly or indirectly in traditional religious festivals despite the influence of modern society occasioned by foreign religions (Islam and Christianity) and Westernisation in Nigeria. Religious studies education is defined as the process designed to induct each new generation into the attitudes, beliefs as well as the practices of religion, to promote religion and at the same time, provide for the individual a unifying centre for his life.⁹ It is part of what makes people to behave and act righteously as a divine command from the spiritual being.

It could be said with precision that Christian Religious Studies (CRS) was introduced into Nigerian educational system with the inception of western education, and the first curriculum was the Holy Bible. The domineering role of the Bible as the CRS curriculum remained till early fifties. Generally, the use of the Bible as the only curriculum for CRS terminated with the establishment of the WAEC in 1952 and its intervention few years later when the body introduced its own syllabus to its operation in the conduct of its examinations. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the first set of students to be presented for WAEC examination in CRS was in the early 50's and that was under 7-5-2-3 system of education which remained operational till 1972.¹⁰

As for Islamic Studies, the story is not much different. Islamic Studies, which some interchange with Islamic Education, began with the introduction of Islam as a religion in the 11th century via Kanem-Borno Empire. It was the ruling Kanem that first embraced Islam and later taught the rudiments of practices of the new faith. He subsequently established a Qur'ānic centre in his palace to bring up his children and those of his willing subjects in the art and act of reading the Glorious Book.¹¹ From this point, it was established that the first reference book or syllabus is the Qur'ān when the Christian Missionaries came to Nigeria to propagate their religion through the introduction of western education, some communities, especially, in the North did not accept hook and sinker. The acceptance was premised on the assurance of the Missionaries to include Islamic religious studies in the syllabus. But even when this was done, it was discovered that the whole content of it was nothing but Qur'ān. So, both at inception and when it was officially included in the system, Qur'ān was the syllabus. The situation remained like this for long. However, Islamic Studies was introduced at the secondary school level in 1953, then, it was seen as the same with Arabic. The policy makers then did not differentiate between the two, but Qur'ān was no longer the only reference book, a book called '*Iziyyah*' which was written purely in Arabic language was used.¹²

The Nigeria educational system has undergone several reforms and reviews since independence. Currently, a 9-3-4 system is operated connoting a 9year basic education, including the primary and junior secondary education; a 3year senior secondary education; and a 4year tertiary education. Religious Studies Education has been a subject in the school curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. At both the primary and secondary levels, the subject is split into two: Christian Studies

and Islamic Studies. The African Traditional Religion is left out, despite its pervasive influence on both Christianity and Islam as practiced in Nigeria.¹³

There was a time when it was called Religious Knowledge (RK). At that time, it was jointly used for the Christian and Muslim components of the subject. It was later changed and separated to become Christian Religious Knowledge and Islamic Religious Knowledge. Still uncomfortable with the new name, was further changed to Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and Islamic Religious Studies (IRS). At the present time, the subject is referred to as Christian Studies and Islamic Studies. At the inception of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, Islamic Studies was a core subject at the Junior Secondary School level, but elective at the Senior Secondary School. In the 1998 edition of the National Policy on Education, the subject lost this status and became elective at both levels.¹⁴ However, with the publication of another policy in 2004, the subject became elective at the junior secondary level and a core subject at the senior secondary level.¹⁵ With the revised edition of National Policy on Education (2013), both Islamic Studies and Christian Religious Studies became compulsory only at the junior and elective at the senior secondary in Nigeria.

However, despite its impact to Nigeria educational system, the changing status of Islamic Studies in the educational system and merging of religious studies with other so-called related disciplines to become “Religion and National Values” at the junior secondary school level have compounded the problems of teaching-learning of Islamic Studies and aided eroding of its values in the lives of Muslim students.

Concept of Career Education and Guidance

Thousands of out-of-school youth and adults have been enrolled in a wide variety of manpower programme during the last decade. Still the unemployment rate in the society has not been markedly reduced. In addition to being unemployed, they are not seeking career education and guidance in order to know the right work for them. Career is the totality of work one does in his/her lifetime while education is the totality of experiences through which one learns. Based on these two definitions, career education is the totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his/her living. Akinade¹⁶ defined guidance as a process of helping an individual, become fully aware of his/herself and the ways in which he/she is responding to the influences of his/her environment.

In senior secondary school, the need for guidance is in three parts: educational, vocational, and personal. Educationally, guidance services will help students to form effective study habits, make good grades, select subject for school certificate examination, ameliorate examination anxieties, reduce examination malpractices and so on. Vocationally, guidance services are needed in order to make appropriate career choice that match their talents, know the relevant entry requirements for each job, know the hazards of different jobs. Personally, guidance services are needed in senior secondary school to help our youths overcome their private problems such as family problem, quest for wealth, bullying, interpersonal relationship, drug abuse, sexual difficulties, cultism, alcoholism, lying, raping among others.¹⁷

Career education and guidance helps the youth to make effective transitions from secondary school to further education, training or employment. It supports:

- a. Students' interest, strengths and aspiration
- b. Students' achievement
- c. Students' at risk of poor outcomes
- d. Students' making informed decisions about their subject choices and pathways.

Since career education and guidance aims at the total development of individual, the inculcation of religious values through guidance will go a long way in curbing irrational behaviours among students, knowing that their daily actions done in the spirit of religion are rewarded and help them to live in harmony among other members of the community.

Negative Attitudes of Studying Religious Studies Education as a Career

It is not an overstatement that Religious Studies Education is generally misconceived among students, teachers, parents, religious leaders, school authorities, Nigerians and the world at large. In most of the schools where Religious Studies is not taught, the excuse usually given is dearth of teachers to teach it. Where teachers are available, they are often requested to teach subjects other than Religious Studies. When teachers of Religious Studies agree to the term, they were retained, otherwise they were rejected. To some schools, being a Christian or a Muslim automatically confers on one to teach religious studies education in school, especially, if the person can put on a cross or turban, as the case may be. Most of our religious studies teachers, especially, Islamic Studies' teachers do not possess the requisite education to do the job. Ironically, some of them think that the ability to merely read simple Arabic text is enough, while some others are contented only with education received in colleges of education or first degree, which they did not take seriously while they were there in the first instance.

As a student of Religious Studies Education, one is often asked by relatives and students alike: why study religious studies education and the relevance of it in the society? In the same vein, the negative reaction of people about studying religious education has been reported by an Arabic and Islamic Studies professor whose teachers' thought was to become a medical doctor, an engineer or a lawyer. None of them dreamt of this Professor, Ganiy Salami, becoming an Arabic and Islamic teacher. When later one of them got to know that he was into Arabic and Islamic Studies, he could not control his emotion and said: "*Ganiy, ki ni o fe fi Arabic se ni Nigeria?*"¹⁸ meaning: "Ganiy, what do you want to do with studying Arabic in Nigeria?"

Another negative attitudes among the youth is that graduates of Religious Studies work in places where they are not likely to "control money" or power. The desire for money and power is a self-centered crave pervading the Nigerian society. The youth largely, have moved away from the Supreme Being, searching for wealth because of their belief in material wealth. Many have been drifted away from the path of rectitude, nobility, honour and virtue because of their concern on worldly materials. This is why many of our youth today prefer studying courses like, Accounting, Law, Medicine, Banking and Finance, etc. The desire for these courses is that at the peak of their career, they receive fat salaries and become popular in the society. Contrary to this perception, high

morality through religious studies education should be accorded a dignified position both in the public and private life. If we do this, the society will change for better, and we will all live peacefully without fearing any form of injustice, oppression, aggression, cheating and tyranny from any quarter.

The government's policy of rewarding incentives to science and language teachers has demoralized the humanities' teachers. Inadequate teaching resources or even lack of it makes the teaching-learning of religious studies education difficult for teachers. In most schools, those students considered to be bright are advised by the school administration and science teachers to take sciences and leave humanities for the dull students. This perhaps has discouraged students from taking religious studies as a career.

Furthermore, many of our religious leaders who are rich and powerful could have earned more students for studying religious studies education. It should be noted that they are also deeply involved in the pursuit of the vanities of this world and fail to impart the correct teachings of their religion to students and their children. In fact, majority of the rich and powerful clergies believe that one does not need to study religious studies education before one can be an expert forgetting that one of the aims and objectives of studying religious studies education at the advanced level is to develop competent researchers in educational theory and practice for the Nigeria education system. Considering, the number of children of some religious leaders, none of them do study religious studies education as a career.

Behind all the above misconception, is the view that one cannot do much with a degree or higher advanced knowledge and skills in religious studies education, unless one wants to become a cleric or a classroom teacher. Quite a number of successful scholars of Religious Studies Education today in Nigeria did not know they could make any meaningful livelihood through taking a career in Religious Studies Education. They felt inferior to their peers who choose other fields they believe to be profitable.

Resourcefulness of Religious Studies Education

There is no gain-saying that the religious studies educators are already there, but they are not yet there until they are really there because there are thousands of religious studies teachers who are pseudo-beggars outside there. In the mundane sphere, Religious Studies graduates have several job opportunities. One of such is teaching. There is no level of education system in Nigeria that does not require the services of religious studies education teachers. Thus, teachers of religious studies education are found in all levels of education with a few of them heading school administration such as Headmasters, Principals, Provosts, and Vice-Chancellors.²⁰ In addition, religious studies educators who seek advanced knowledge and skills in religious studies education are appropriate and qualified for teaching in relevant higher educational institutions which produce religious studies teachers (lecturers) while as high as (Ph.D.) is required for those students who choose to make religion the centre of a professional career, either as the leader of a religious community or as an academic specialist.

With a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies Education, many graduates go on to study law, business, etc. Because of the all-round development training in religious studies, they also gain a sense of ethics that will not be compromised by immediate personal

gain, making them ideal candidate to work in many sectors such as management and business organization, government organization, public and private services, media, law etc.

Graduates of religious studies education are equally recruited as subject officers in examination bodies like WAEC and NECO. In addition to being employees of private and public institutions, a few of them have established schools to promote teaching-learning of religious studies.²¹ As public servants, some religious studies graduates dedicate their career to helping others. They help struggling families and individuals in their communities and find the resources they need to improve their lives.

Furthermore, there are other particular career options that might be specially well suited to graduates of religious studies. These include: History, Law, Politics, Human Resources, etc. Historian that focuses on religion would make knowing every aspect of the world's religion history in his/her job. These professionals study about the world's religions and how they have changed over the centuries. It is clear that contrary to the numerous negative attitudes to religious studies education, a few of which were highlighted, opportunities of various types and magnitude are available to graduates of religious studies.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing discussion, it will not be out of place to conclude the above submission that Religious Studies Education is one of the least desired courses of study in Nigeria. It is clear that those who study religious studies education have experienced one form of mockery or the other. Quite a number of successful Islamists and Christianists today also had low estimation for themselves and felt inferior to their peers who choose other fields they believe to be profitable. Many youths have been drifted away from the path of rectitude, nobility, honour and virtue because of their concern on worldly materials. This is why many of our youth today prefer studying courses like, Accounting, Law, Medicine, Banking and Finance, etc. However, there are many kinds of opportunities available to graduates of religious studies education.

Recommendations

Based on the submission and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made:

- i. High morality through the study of religious studies education can be accorded a dignified position in both the public and private life of the people. Therefore, there is the need for youth to reorder their priority and have a rethinking about expectations in life. If they can do this, the society will be peaceful, while life will be more meaningful.
- ii. There is the need for teachers to create a positive and friendly rapport with the students, contribute meaningfully among their colleagues, as this can help in increasing student motivation to take religious studies as a career.
- iii. A larger percentage of youth focus on himself or herself, to get more money than others and more powers than others at the expense of anything, anybody

- and everybody. There is a need for schools to offer career education and guidance on subject selection and career choice as this would help the students to lay less emphasis on material wealth, solve the problem facing the society such as injustice, oppression, aggression, cheating, fraud, tyranny, among others through proper guidance.
- iv. There is the need for the government to devise ways to overcome challenges facing the teaching-learning of religious studies education.
 - v. Government should employ qualified and experience teachers
 - vi. Adequate teaching resources should be provided for religious studies teachers
 - vii. Government should reward incentives to humanities teachers including religious studies teacher.
 - viii. Parents as the first school of the child need to create a broader and more informed perception on the role of religious studies education and its resourcefulness.
 - ix. Students need to show sufficient enthusiasm for religious studies

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INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES OF THE NUPE PEOPLE ON THE QUR'ĀN AND ISLAMIYYAH SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE

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Introduction

This study covers the influence of the socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people. Socio-cultural practices generally encompass all the practices that are developed around the society relating to the arts, knowledge, values, attitudes, ideas, and social behaviour of a particular people or group in a given culture. Nupe tradition encompasses the concept of a Supreme God, while some Nupe traditions also feature other traditional practices and cultural expression in various superstitious beliefs with regard to unusual phenomena, masquerades and magicians perpetuated by herbalism and soothsaying, which some may involve human sacrifice and divination.

All such beliefs and practices are contrary to Islamic teachings of One God, who is Unique and without partners and who Muslim should worship without intermediary. Belief system has its outward forms in people's ceremonies, festivals, art and general way of life. However, the efforts of the Nupe Muslim scholars have led to the establishment of Qur'ānic schools in their areas where Muslims were taught the knowledge of al-Qur'ān. This achievement is further strengthened by the activities of Muslim organizations in their area and progress is being witnessed daily in the area of Islamization.¹

These practices perpetuated by the society, seems to be some problems and challenges that influence the activities of Qur'ān schools. Also, there is significant effect on the academic attainment as well as teaching in Qur'ānic schools. The study attempts to find out the challenges and problems on how the activities of Qur'ānic schools have been affected by socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people

An Overview of Islamic Education

Islamic concept of education can be understood from its aims and objectives. The true aim of Islamic education, according to the consensus of Muslim scholars is to facilitate the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses.² Islamic education can be seen as the sum total process of acquiring Islamic knowledge (*'ilm*) by learning through divine knowledge leading man out of darkness (ignorance) to light and become self-realistic being to his creator. However, education is not merely concerned with the knowledge but rather the practical application of knowledge gained based on the experience.³ Islamic education, which trains the sensibility of every individual in such a manner that their attitude to life, actions, decisions and approach to all kinds of knowledge, is governed by the spiritual values of Islam. Muslims are trained, and mentally so disciplined, that they acquired knowledge not merely to satisfy an intellectual curiosity or just for material worldly benefit, but to develop as rational, righteous beings and bring about the spiritual, moral and physical welfare of the Muslim's way of life. It is obvious that this type of education would not be imparted easily in any society which has lost its religious moorings.

Sources of Islamic Education

With the fact that every kind of knowledge has its own sources where it taps its information, the Islamic sources of knowledge are primarily from the Glorious Qur'ān (divine book), Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the consensus of the learned scholars among the Muslim Ummah.⁴ These sources focus on knowledge (*'ilm*) that has essential elements which will teach one the concept of the knowledge about Allah (*'ilm al-ma'rifah*), the concept of religion (*Dīn*), the ways and acts of worship (*Ibādah*), the concept of man (*insān*) and the personality a man has on earth, the concept of justice (*'adl*), how to establish equity among mankind i.e. one should be impartial on the treatment of all matters, the concept of excellent action (*Tama'ma al-amal*), how to instill the quality of goodness in oneself, and how man is used to adopt to any situation he or she may encounter.

According to the consensus of Muslim scholars in the past and the present, Glorious Qur'ān is the immutable source of the fundamental tenets of Islam. It is also the perennial fundament for Islamic system of legislation and of social and economic organization. It is the basis of both moral and general education.

History of Islamic Education in Nupeland

Islam and Islamic education were brought to Nupeland through the effort of the Sūfī scholars who made it a duty to travel from place to place in order to preach and teach the Qur'ān. They traveled through the trade routes established by the trans-Sahara trade routes to Hausaland. These traders made settlement along these routes where they built *Masjid* (Mosque) which were used as schools to teach Qur'ān to children and some adults.⁵ These schools later grew in size and popularity. It produced many scholars who also established schools in other parts of Nupeland. Few of the notable schools in Nupeland are:

- i. Mubashirina bil-Jannati Islamic Training School, Agaie.

- ii. Centre for Qur'ānic Memorization, Bida.
- iii. Bima AbdulRahman Islamic School, Enagi.
- iv. Lemu Model Qur'ānic School, Gbako.
- v. Imam Abdullahi Institute for Qur'ānic Memorization, Katcha.
- vi. Yamman-Bida Madarasatu Islamiyyah, Bani Road Lapai.
- vii. Madarasatu Ta'limu al-Qur'ān wal-Ilmu, Gaba,
- viii. Lavun. Madarasatu Tanbihul Islamic School, Mokwa.

Since the dawn of Islam until this day, many successive generations in Nupeland have been nurtured and taught under the aegis of the Glorious Qur'ān. As from the tender years, the Muslim child in Nupeland begins his education by knowing how to read, then to understand and to commit to memory the whole text of Qur'ān. All other facets of the curricula of the Islamic education are based upon the acknowledgement of the Qur'ān as the core, pivot and gateway of learning. Al-Attas⁶ observes that learning and education are really holy commitment for all Muslims. The Islamic community is collectively duty bound to give a major part of its attention to education so that a good number of members would become versed in all areas of Islamic education. Allah would take whole Muslim community to task for extreme negligence if there were insufficient learned men available to serve its people. To address this, all Muslim children and adults embraces Islamic education in Nupeland, since without Islamic education they cannot worship Allah properly, as Islamic rites are said in Arabic but not in mother tongue. For this reason, both the parents acted as teachers to their wards on matters such as religion, language, culture and social customs. Followed by introducing them into Qur'ānic schools corresponding to elementary schools were to enable the child to read and write the Qur'ān and to master the language (*Arabic*) as well as to learn other subjects such as poetry, rhetoric, arithmetic and proverbs.⁷ These schools formed the preparatory stage for higher studies where the students could then proceed to *'ilm* schools. In fact, the success of these Qur'ānic schools has been found to be greater than expected. Moreover, the existence of such schools is a proof that the culture of Islam is a living and self-renovating culture.

Qur'ānic, *'Ilm* and Islamiyyah School Education System in Nupeland

The Qur'ānic, *'Ilm* and Islamiyyah schools are voluntary institutions established by the Muslims to educate the young and the old about the Qur'ān, the Hadīth, Fiqh and other disciplines of Islamic religion. It is the belief that Islam cannot be understood without the Qur'ān, which is the message given to the Prophet. Therefore, the foundation of Islamic education is laid through the Qur'ān and Hadīth.⁸

Qur'ānic schools are institutions where lessons on Qur'ān take place. The system of Qur'ān lessons taking place in such institutions designed mainly for that has been on since the emergence of Islam as a religion and a way of life in Nigeria. These schools are popularly called "*Makarantan Allo*" (Slate schools).⁹ Children are sent to these schools at a very early age sometimes at three or four years. Sometimes, the children from villages are handed over to the care of teachers who live in a different town or even to Mallams who have no fixed abodes at all, combining trading with their

education work. Also, in some Qur'ānic schools, there was night session attended by children including female students to receive instructions. The children are first taught Arabic alphabet *Huruf al-Hijāiyyah* before they are taught how to read Qur'ān, in a loud voice, read and write out the Arabic lessons. Sometime reading is done by rote usually taught by *Mallams* or *Ulamas* who have either memorized the Qur'ān in its entirety, thereby becoming a memorizer (*Hāfis*) who has undergone some Qur'ānic education to a greater level. The primary function of these schools is to contribute to the upbringing of Muslim children by training them in the reading and memorization of the Qur'ān.¹⁰ Here, the students and their teachers, or often the students by themselves, sit with rapt attention and great concentration reciting Qur'ān in Arabic or copying from it.¹¹

Abdurrahman and Canham¹² wrote that, these are traditional schools popularly called schools of the Qur'ān (*Makarantun Alkurani*) or be regarded as slate schools *Makarantun Allo*. Qur'ānic schools are mostly held twice daily. Children attend classes in the morning from 8.00.a.m to 12.00.p.m and afternoon from 2.30.p.m. to 5.30.p.m. and this is from Monday to Sunday except Thursday and Friday when they attended briefly for revision of what they have learnt previously (Takara).

The main content of the Qur'ānic school education; is to study the Qur'ān in Arabic, which is to be committed to memory, chapter by chapter. In the process, the children learn the prayer (*salāt* or *duā'*) which are said in Arabic, and also learn the code and ethics of Islam. Bala, in Taiwo¹³ gave a graphic description of the methods of the teaching and learning Qur'ānic education. The course begins with the learning by heart of the first chapter (*surah al-fātihah*) of the Glorious Qur'ān by rote. Then followed by the learning of the Arabic alphabet (*huruf al-hajāiyyah*). Each child has a wooden board on which the teacher (*mallam*) has written the chapter; he then recites the chapter until it is well memorized before proceeding to the next chapter. There, he (*mallam*) sits with a cane at hand and children seated in a semi-circle or in groups before him, each child repeating some chapters under the fear of cane. The teacher (*mallam*) is assisted by his older and brighter children who listen to the others to check their mistakes and correct them by the use of a cane. A ritual of a feast (*walimah*) follows as a mark of achievement. The process is repeated with the other chapters until the sixty chapters of the Glorious Qur'ān are covered. As the years roll on, they go on learning, and it takes them ten (10) or twelve (12) years to master the Glorious Qur'an alone.

The age-range of the school children was very wide. Both boys and girls could start attending school at about the age of five, but there was no maximum age of admittance. The girls would usually spend about two or three years in the Qur'ānic school. They would then be withdrawn about the age of eleven years to prepare them for marriage at the early age, traditionally in Hausa society, Nupe inclusive, but could continue studies afterwards. The boys would stay on longer, ideally of course, until they had learned the Qur'ān by heart. Many, particularly in the villages, would drop out before achieving this, not so much because of lack of ability or incentive as their services were required on their fathers' farms.¹⁴ Qur'ānic schools catered for both male and female Muslim children. Many of the girls often fell away after a few years partly because they had to get married, but essentially because Islam did not lay much premium on any advanced religious education for the women folk. On graduating from Qur'ānic schools, female

children may proceed to the secondary level of Islamic education called *‘Ilm* School even after her marriage.¹⁵

Problems Associated with Qur’ānic Schools

Ndayelechi,¹⁶ Abdurrahma and Canham,¹⁷ observed the followings as the problems associated with Qur’ānic schools:

- i. Teachers’ allowances/fees in Qur’ānic schools: In Islamic tradition, teaching was a voluntary work.
- ii. Hostel accommodation in Qur’ānic Schools: In the greater part of Northern Nigeria, thousands of these children who fall within the range of six to nine years of age are permanently attached to their teachers (*mallams*) all the time and completely separated from their parents with no provision of basic necessities.
- iii. Recess and Feeding in Qur’ānic Schools: The feeding periods give us another true picture of the worth of these pupils in question. This picture seems to be one of the most prominent issues in the North.
- iv. Open Day Visit in Qur’ānic Schools: In Qur’ānic schools, everyday seems to be open day, but visits from parents of these pupils were rare.
- v. Unemployment after Graduation from Qur’ānic Schools: Ndayyelechi,¹⁸ concluded that, employment these days has become a great problem in the country in the sense that even those who are opportune to have university education are still on the streets roaming with their hope hanging somewhere in the ward rope of the politicians.
- vi. The practices of socio-cultural such as witchcraft (Nupe, *egha or eshe*), soothsaying (*ebassan*), magicians (*eyyanma*) perpetuated by herbalism (*chigbejin*) and masquerades (*ndakogboya*). Adorn among others like: styles of dressing, body designed and hair dressing. Cultural entertainments like: local singing (*eninko*) and dancing (*eyan-yan*).

The Operation of Qur’ānic Schools in Northern Nigeria

In Northern Nigeria, Islamiyyah schools are unlikely to replace Qur’ānic and traditional schools. They have represented a pathway for Muslim schooling to obtain sustenance, recognition and support from government at the local and international levels. In the Muslim area of the country, Islamic education had been well established in the pre-colonial period. Islam was first introduced to Bornu during the eleventh century and by the fourteenth century, it had spread to Hausaland. At an early age of about five years, the young Muslim children were sent to the Qur’ānic schools managed by some Mallams. The student and teacher ratio in the Qur’ānic schools could be very high and that a single Mallam could have as many as forty pupils, though attendance of pupils could be irregular. Teachers are not drawn to salaries from the conduct of Qur’ānic schools but relied heavily on various gifts and alms sent to them by the parents of their pupils. Apart from gifts and alms, Mallams normally had their own vocations such as farming, weaving and so on, to support themselves. Although, the daily sessions of the schools could vary according to a particular secondary vocation of the teacher,

generally, there were two sessions daily. The first began in the morning and continued till about the time of the afternoon prayer. The second session opened after lunch and lasted until about 6:30 p.m. when it would be time for prayers. In some places, the pupils would return to a short evening session.¹⁹

The Analysis and Interpretation on Influence of the Socio-cultural Practices of the Nupe People on the Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah Schools in Niger State

The analysis and interpretation of results of the data obtained from the study are made here. The entire questionnaire administered on the respondents was retrieved and analyzed with the use of both descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 16 was use in analyzing the data of these findings. Thus, the analysis is presented on the effects and the extent of the effects on the socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people on the development of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools in Niger State. What are the effects of socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people on the development of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools in Niger state? To answer this research question, the responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Table 1 shows the summary of the analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Mean Responses on influence of socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people on the development of Qur’anic and Islamiyyah schools in Niger State

S/N	Items	Mean	Std.
1	Influence from peer group	3.81	.407
2	Engaged the Qur’ānic schools’ pupils in hawking about	3.99	2.094
3	Street or house to house begging of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools’ pupils	3.86	.365
4	Following bean-cake (Kose) hawkers	3.74	.525
5	Attending traditional ceremonies during school session	3.82	.433
	Aggregate mean	3.84	

Table 1 indicates that mean responses in each of the items (1 to 5) are above the decision mean of 2.5. The highest mean response is 3.99, while the lowest is 3.74. This implies that the respondents accepted all the statements as true. This is confirmed by the aggregate mean score of 3.84 which is above the decision mean. It also indicates that the influence from peer group, engaged the Qur’ānic schools’ pupils in hawking about, street or house to house begging of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools’ pupils including rooming about, following bean-cake (Kose) hawkers and attending traditional ceremonies during school session are some of the effects of socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people on the development of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools in Niger State.

Table 2: Summary of Mean Responses on the extent to which socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people affected the performance of the Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah learners in Niger state

S/N	Items	Mean	Std.
1	Unnecessary withdrawal of female child from school for marriage by the guardian affects social life of the learners	3.84	.443
2	Missing of the school activities as a result of absent from school unnecessarily causes serious depression to the leaners	3.84	.371
3	Lack of other Islamic Science materials affect learners' attitude to learn	3.45	.539
4	Psychological disorientation is caused to a child as a result of bullying.	3.51	.531
5	Too much attention to miming of local songs among the students causes obstruction to the learners during memorization	3.87	.357
	Aggregate mean	3.70	

Table 2 indicates that mean responses in each of the items (1 to 5) is above the decision mean of 2.5. The highest mean response is 3.87, while the lowest is 3.45. This implies that the respondents accepted all the statements as true. This is confirmed by the aggregate mean score of 3.5 which is above the decision mean. This also points out the fact that unnecessary withdrawal of female child from school for marriage by the guardian affects social life of the learners; missing of the school activities as a result of absent from school unnecessarily causes serious depression to the leaners; lack of other Islamic Science materials affects learners' attitude to learn; serious bullying in the school causes psychological disorientation to the children and too much attention to miming of local songs among the students which causes obstruction to the learners during memorization, altogether affect learners' performance in the Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools in Nupeland of Niger State.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the study reveals that the influence of peer group made the Qur’ānic schools’ pupils to engage in hawking about the street for house to house begging. Therefore, involvement of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools’ pupils in rooming about, following bean-cake (Kose) hawkers and attending traditional ceremonies during school session are some of the factors that affect socio-cultural practices of the Nupe people on the development of Qur’ānic and Islamiyyah schools in Niger State. The study also points out that unnecessary withdrawal of female child from school for marriage by the guardian affects social life of the learners while missing of the school activities as a result of absence from school unnecessarily causes serious depression to the leaners. Also, lack of other Islamic Science materials affects learners' attitude to learning and serious bullying in school causes psychological disorientation to the children. Moreso, too much attention to miming of local songs among the students

which causes obstruction to the learners during memorization affects learners' performance in the Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools in Nupeland of Niger State

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendation:

- i. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid those bad influences from the peer group.
- ii. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid engagement of the Qur'ānic schools' pupils in hawking about.
- iii. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid street or house to house begging of Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools' pupils.
- iv. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid following bean-cake (Kose) hawkers by the pupils.
- v. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to stop pupils of Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools from attending traditional ceremonies during school session.
- vi. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid withdrawal of female children from school for marriage by the guardians.
- vii. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid missing of the school activities by the pupils of Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools as a result of unnecessarily absence from school.
- viii. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid serious bullying of pupils of Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools.
- ix. The government, non-governmental organizations, Islamic scholars and Islamic organizations should give their maximum effort in order to avoid too much attention to miming of local songs among the students.
- x. The government should take over the administration of the Islamiyyah and Qur'ānic school.

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DEVELOPMENT OF QUR'ĀNIC SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Introduction

The first Muslim school was established in the house of Arqam Bin Abil Arqam in Makkah by the Prophet of Islam. It was an adult education centre which later developed into a higher institution of learning in the Prophet's *Masjid* (Mosque) in Madinah al-Munawwarah.¹ It was basically a place of worship and a centre for dissemination of knowledge. The basic method employed at that cent was the recitation and memorisation of the verses of the Glorious Qur'ān. After the battle of Badr, when the Muslim forces emerged victorious, many non-Muslims were captured as war captives. Among them are those who could read and write, and therefore the Prophet instructed them to teach Muslim children how to read and write as a means of regaining their freedom. This was done in order to help the Muslims to acquire the basic knowledge of Islam. Another form of school of Qur'ānic studies also evolved during the Prophet's life-time. This was the Suffah, in the *Masjid* of the Prophet. In this respect, some companions devoted their time in that place for studying the Glorious Qur'ān and Hadīth of the Prophet. These groups of companions were called *Ahl As-suffah*. Abu-Hurairah, one of the great Hadīth reporters was a product of this School.

However, looking at the meaning of Islamic education, it is asserted that "Islamic education can be defined as an educational theory and practice that has arisen from the foundation of Islam and Islamic value. The beneficiaries of education are not exclusively the society of believers (i.e. Muslims), but all the believers in one God and all of those who believe that what is beyond this world matters."²

It is to be stated at this juncture that what motivated this researcher to undertake this study is that various efforts, attempts, initiatives and interventions were made with ambitions to improve the standard of traditional Qur'ānic schools in Nigeria. In addition to these, the Federal Government of Nigeria has started reconsidering its role in the scheme to support Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah schools. Some state governments in their parts are already considering measures by which Qur'ānic and Islamiyyah schools with necessary adjustment of curricular could be incorporated into primary school system. Currently, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are interested in supporting the programme of integration in Islamic schools.

Therefore, the study will be significant to teachers in the Qur'ānic schools across the nation because of the newly introduced teaching methods, facilities, and infrastructures to the system. It would also be significant to people who have interest in running

Qur'ānic schools programmes in future. The Qur'ānic school system when modernized will be functional enough to achieve harmonious and comprehensive interaction of socio-economic and educational pursuits with a public and private morality in a popular ideological framework.

Origin of Qur'ānic Schools

During the time of the orthodox caliphs, there was the practice of teaching few verses of the Glorious Qur'ān to the children. This was in line with the directive given by Umar bin Khattab in 15th year after Hijrah to the teachers at that time; that at every session, a child must be taught at list five verses of the Glorious Qur'ān.³ This would provide easy understanding for the pupils and perhaps make it easy for them to memorize the Glorious Qur'ān. The place of instruction as earlier mentioned used to be the *Masjid*, where there were separate places for both sexes. Women sometimes had the responsibility of educating girls, although Aishah, the wife of holy Prophet was reported to have taught not only children but also adults, with no distinction of sexes. The curriculum was the Glorious Qur'ān and Hadīth. With the expansion of the Muslim Ummah and the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty, children of the rich people and the high-class rulers were handed over to the care of private schools and personal tutors in the leaders' residences. An example of this was the Qur'ānic School established by the Caliph Harūn Al-Rashid in his residence, where he appointed a tutor to teach his children the Glorious Qur'ān. The curriculum beside the Qur'ān comprised Arabic language, literature, physical and health education and moral training. Other children get their education in the school organized in the *Masjid* for training on the Qur'ān and other disciplines, which include: Hadīth, Fiqh, Islamic history and Arabic language.⁴

Bin Sahnun who was one of the greatest scholars of the Abbasid period, propounded an educational theory for the Qur'ānic school proprietors. He considered teaching as a craft and therefore laid down some rules of conduct for teachers that they must treat their pupils equally and they must not inflict punishment while on temper.⁵ He further emphasized the need to adopt instructions in school, based on age and capabilities of the learners. He pointed out that the proficiency in one branch of knowledge can transfer general skills to another, provided the student has fully grasped the essential principles involved. Bin Sahnun recommended that it was better for Muslim children to start studying the Qur'ān after they have obtained basic literacy in Arabic language and poetry. This was adopted in many Qur'ānic schools of that time.⁶

Historical Origin of Arabic/Islamic Education in Nigeria

According to Alkali and Fafunwa in their contributions to the development of Qur'ānic schools from their respective books of studies, they asserted that Arabic is in many respects, the classical language of West Africa and in the non-Arabic speaking Muslim countries. According to them, Arabic is studied because it is the language of the Qur'ān and therefore, it has great spiritual value. Indeed, the history of teaching Arabic is known throughout the Islamic world, particularly in the non-Arab countries, where it led to the spread of Islamic system of teaching.⁷

This is one of the reasons why the elementary Arabic schools in Nigeria are called Qur'ānic schools, as both Arabic and Islam are taught simultaneously in the early years

of 9th century. When a pupil begins to read the Arabic alphabets, he does so with an intention to read the Qur'ān. Thus, two types of Qur'ānic schools developed in Hausa lands 'Makarantar Allo' or "Slate – schools" and Makarantar "Ilmi" or the higher school. The first school meant for beginners, while the higher school embraces all aspects of Islamic studies.⁸

The system of teaching and learning the Qur'ān and Arabic language started in Northern Nigeria in the 16th century where the teachers in the early stage depended for their living on charity or to be precise on "*sadaqah*" which is prescribed as – *Fi Sabil-Allah*, (in the way of Allah).⁹ This noble principle, which was successfully applied in the early stage of the development of Islamic education in 19th century, reduced the status of a teacher (*Mu'allim*) to that of a mere beggar; he came to occupy socially a rather low status. He had to wander from place to place looking for charitable Muslims to patronize him and give him food and shelter. Whenever his efforts were not sufficient to procure the basic necessities of life, he had to send his pupils from door to door asking for charity. They were considered to be *al-Muhājirūn* (emigrants) who had left their homes in search of knowledge. Even today, a pupil (undergoing training) in the traditional way of education is called *Almajiriin* Hausa, which is a corrupt word from *al-Muhājirūn*.¹⁰

According to Fafunwa,¹¹ the Southern part of Nigeria, particularly Yorubaland, was known to Muslims long before Islam actually reached there. He said that Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu had mentioned Yorubaland as a country where unbelief predominates and Islam was rarely found. Since Ahmad Baba died in 1627, as he said, "we can safely assume that the Yoruba country was known to Muslims in the seventeenth century or earlier. Samuel Johnson in his *History of the Yoruba*, suggests that Islam came to Yorubaland towards the close of the eighteenth century: "That is to say, Islam had certainly reached Southern Nigeria long before the Jihad of Othman Dan Fodiyo in 1804. It is important to note that whenever Islam spread, the rudimentary knowledge of the Qur'ān, the Hadith and the Shari'ah (Canon law of Islam) also began to be taught to the followers of the religion of Islam. By 1830, some learned scholars of Islam came to Yorubaland from North through Ilorin. We heard about scholars like Ahmad Qifu and Othman bin Abu Bakr who came to Ibadan during the reign of Oluyedun within the first few years of the foundation of Ibadan town. He was a learned scholar who hailed from Katsina, a seat of Islamic learning at that time, and had settled down to teach and preach Islam in the Southern Nigeria, either at Ijebu-Ode, Abeokuta or Ibadan.¹²

Historical Development of Qur'ānic Schools in Nigeria

Abu-Bakr notes that the schools for learning are divided into two sections: The first one is the school in which the pupils are learning Qur'ānic recitation only. The second one is the school in which the pupils are learning recitation as well as memorization of the Glorious Qur'ān. The first school is just an elementary stage. These schools can be found in many areas in towns and villages; they are usually called Makarantar – Allo.¹³

There were several founders, contributors and developers of Qur'ānic schools in the annals of Nigerian Islamic education; among them are:

- i. The first *Ma'ahad* of Sokoto (1804): It founded by Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo himself.¹⁴
- ii. *Ma'ahad* of the first Waziri of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo (1805): He was Sheikh Muhammad Gidado. It is one of the biggest colleges which helped in training large number of students from many cities and towns of Northern Nigeria.¹⁵ It was one of the *Ma'āhid* that existed in the life time of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo. Large number of companions of Sheikh Usman attended this school. The College's methodology of teaching and learning was that its students concentrated in learning Qur'ān, Hadith, Theology and Politics. Some of the flag bearers of Sheikh Usman such as Mamman Kankiya and his son Sambo were the graduates of this College.¹⁶
- iii. *Ma'ahad* al-Ustadh Sheikh Mustapha (1815): He was one of the companions of Sheikh Usman. Sheikh Mustapha was not only a companion of Sheikh Usman, but his personal secretary and one of his scribes. His son Hassan continued with the College after the death of his father. Abdurrahman who was the son of Hassan continued with the College after the death of his father. He was a learned person and used to teach his students - 'Fiqh', 'Luggah', 'Adab', etc. from morning to evening.¹⁷
- iv. *Ma'ahad* Sheikh Ishaq (1820): He was popularly known as 'Anifan'. He was very intelligent and knowledgeable. After his death, his son Usman had continued with the College. He was like his father that he never gets tired imparting knowledge to others. Some number of subjects such as - 'Nahw', 'Sarf', 'Arūd' etc. were taught in this College.
- v. *Ma'ahad* Sheikh Mustapha the second (1830): He was nick- named- Mallam Tafa. He was one of the companions of Sheikh Usman, and was intelligent and knowledgeable. He was given a hand of marriage to the daughter of Sheikh Usman - Khadijah. Mallam Tafa had a son with Khadijah who was named Abdul Kadir. Like his father he was an '*Ālim* and *Mutafannin*'. He continued with the *Ma'ahad* after the death of his father. He wrote a book of history with the title "*Bilad Sudan*." He also wrote some long verses of poems and prose which his pupils made good references to.¹⁸
- vi. *Ma'ahad* of Gwandu (1805): The colleges in Gwandu had existed almost at the same time with those colleges in Sokoto simply because, Gwandu was the second capital of Sokoto Caliphate after the death of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo who left a will for dividing the Sokoto Caliphate into two political zones to be headed by his son, Muhammad Bello and his brother, Sheikh Abdullahi Fodiyo in Sokoto and Gwandu respectively. Other number of colleges had also existed in Gwandu and trained some large number of students in various courses of Islamic Studies.¹⁹
- vii. *Ma'ahad* Imam Muhammad Mudi' (1807): He was a student of Sheikh Abdullahi; he was very intelligent and knowledgeable. He continued with the school of Sheikh Abdullahi after his death (Sheikh Abdullahi Fodiyo) and taught large number of students, various courses of Islamic Studies.²⁰

- viii. *Ma'ahad* Muhammad Bukhari (1810). He was also one of the students of Sheikh Abdullahi. The latter ordered some of his students to join this College because of the efforts of the founder imparting knowledge to others. However, the College ceased to exist shortly after the death of the founder.²¹
- ix. *Ma'ahad* Alhaji Sa'id (1815): He was very pious and knowledgeable. He was one of the popular students of Sheikh Abdullahi. He had four sons – Ahmad, Muhammad, Usman and Ali. Each became a pious and 'Ālim who contributed immensely in the training of people in the caliphate.²²
- x. *Ma'ahad* Moddibo Kushandi (1835). He was one of the greatest scholars of Gwandu Caliphate. He had three sons - Usman, Ahmad and Babu; and each one of them founded a school after the death of their father.²³
- xi. *Ma'ahad* Ahmad An-Nufuwi (1900): He founded school towards the end of the twentieth century. Three of his sons upgraded the College after his death, and large number of students have fully benefited with their contributions in training some courses of Islamic Studies.²⁴
- xii. *Ma'ahad* of Kano (1500): The extension for the propagation of Islam had gained its ground shortly after the arrival of Sheikh Maghili to Kano, at the end of fifteenth century, during the reign of Emir of Kano Muhammad Rumfa. Sheikh Maghili had never founded a college to serve for teaching Islamic or Arabic subject, because by that time Islam had already reached the North and spread into Kano area through the activities and propagation of Ghana and Songhai Empires' leaders, who were already Muslims and had proceeded up to Kano for Islamic crusading and propagation. With this, large number of people embraced Islam and learned much from the leaders of these two Empires. Thus, colleges for teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies were founded in Kano, Sokoto and Gwandu respectively, in the middle of nineteenth century.²⁵ The *Ma'ahad* of Kano includes:
 - a. *Ma'ahad* Kabara (1587): The life history of this College is connected with the life history of Sheikh Umar Bin Mukhtar, who came to Kano in the year 1787 from the Northern Sudan, after visiting some towns on his way in quest of knowledge. However, he later withdrew this idea and became an active Sufi, conducting his *Ibādah* in the forest or jungle, out of sight of the other people.²⁶
 - b. *Ma'ahad -Annā'ib* (1808): This College was founded by the Emir of Kano, Suleiman, when he appointed the Imam of his mosque to train the people on how to practice their religion on his behalf. The Imam, known as Adam, was a knowledgeable and well-versed scholar; therefore, a large number of students and pupils were trained in this College. Amongst the students were: Wali Suleiman and Wali Abu-Bakr.²⁷ Imam Adam appointed his brother Talha to serve as his deputy in the *Ma'ahad*. Therefore, Talha continued with the College after the death of his brother. They taught Theology, *Fiqh*, *Tawhid* and Qur'ān in this College.²⁸
 - c. *Ma'ahad* Madabo (1951): This College had existed towards the middle end of nineteenth century. The name of the founder of the College was Shehu Umar

Ba'ajume, who specialized in teaching *Mukhtasar al-Khalil bin Ishaq'* and some other books of *Fiqh*. Sheikh Ba'ajume appointed his sons - Sheikh Abdurrahman *al-Suyuti* and Sheikh Abdullah to continue with the College. These two sons of the latter were knowledgeable and well versed like their father.²⁹ This *Ma'ahad* was popularly known in teaching *an-Nahw*, *as-Sarf*, and other Arabic related subjects. Sheikh Abdurrahman Umar Ba'ajume was blessed with two sons like his father. Each one of them founded another school from this *Ma'ahad* for training people. These two sons of Abdurrahman are: Sheikh Umar and Sheikh Adam, and after the death of the first one, i.e. Umar, his son Ibrahim continued with the College.³⁰

- d. *Ma'ahad Tafsi'r* (1961): For al-Hajj Nassir and Sheikh Mai-Zaure who was reading some *āyāt* from the Glorious Qur'ān and the latter, i.e. Alhaji Nassir was translating and explaining in Hausa language for the benefit of the audience around. After the death of the two Sheikhs, the son of Alhaji Nassir, Abdulwahab continued with the *Tafsir* after Sheikh Siddiq and Sheikh Madni, who was also the son of Alhaji Nasir continued with the Qur'ānic Exegesis after sheikh Abdulwahab.³¹
 - e. *Ma'ahad* Chiromawa (1966): This College was founded by Sheikh Yunus for teaching Hadīth. He appointed his son Abu-Bakr to continue with the College after his death. His son, Hassan who was nick-named *Babbaku* continued with the *Ma'ahad*. His son, Abdul Kareem took the mantle after his father and continued with the college. Abdul Kareem was well versed in Hadith science, and other related subjects. However, he did not stay long, and the College stopped operating after his death.³²
 - f. *Ma'ahad* Imam Abi Muhammad (1962): Abdullah bin Jibreel bin Muhammad who was nick-named 'Bagwandu' got his knowledge at Gwandu. He later returned to his home-town, Zaria and opened the new college there. It was said that he was the one who brought and introduced the knowledge of *Nahw* and *Sarf'* to Zaria. Just like Sheikh Ridwan who introduced and brought the knowledge of *Fiqh* to Zaria. He later went to Kano and opened another college.³³
- xiii. *Ma'ahad* of Katsina 1702):
- In Katsina, there was also a number of *Ma'āhid* that existed for the development of Islamic education. These included:
- a. *Ma'ahad al-Hambali* (1920): It was founded by Muhammad Gigama who hailed from Mali to Northern Nigeria for Islamic propagation.³⁴ Others were:
 - b. *Ma'ahad Darma*: Founded by Sheikh Abu-Bakr who used to teach *Fiqh* and *Luggah* and other related courses.
 - c. *Ma'ahad Suq-al-Qādimah* (1961): The founders of this College had the assumption that their fore-fathers had come from Egypt, and the one

who reached Katsina amongst their fore-fathers was Usman bin Yahya bin Muhammad al-Bakariy, who founded this College.

- d. *Ma'ahad Bafogaye* (1969): The founders of this College were from a village known as Fago. The one who extended this College was Alhaji Abu-Bakr, who came to Katsina from that village, and founded this College for teaching, learning and training in Islamic studies subjects.³⁵

Many other *Ma'ahid* also existed in Zaria, Bauchi, Katagum, Hadejia, Adamawa, Bidda, Ilorin, Ibadan to sample and mention but a few with the same methodology, curricula and contents of subjects taught, for the benefit of multitude number of Muslims across the Northern and Southwestern Nigeria.

The method for learning in these colleges is that the pupil or student will start from learning simple subjects of Islamic Studies, then he continues to learn other books of *Luggah, Nahw, Hisāb, Tafsīr, Hadīth, Sarf, Balaghah, Tarikh, Mantiq, and al-'Ārud*. The pupil has to know and master all of the above-mentioned subjects usually from one teacher that is '*Mutafannin*'. The pupil will proceed from this stage to the next, to the extent of knowing other subjects such as *Tawhid, 'Adab*, Theology and other important Islamic subjects from the teachers who specialized in it.³⁶

The relationship between the *Ma'ahid* or colleges that this researcher mentioned is that they are the fountain stones of the Qur'ānic schools and education that emanated right from the time of Sheikh Usman bin Fodio³⁷ up to the present time and it is the same traditional Qur'ānic school system of education. The major challenge faced by these schools is that they usually do not have any building structure; they are usually furnished with spread mats in the house of the teacher or in a *Masjid*. There is no defined time for graduation and the pupil can withdraw at any time he wishes; no specific method of learning and even the curriculum or the syllabus differs from one school to another.³⁸ However, governments of all the three tiers did not show interest in changing and reshuffling the nature, scope and appearance of these schools and colleges so that a standard policy will be provided to enable them go with changing times.

Challenges of Qur'ānic Schools in Nigeria

Several challenges are faced during the development of Qur'ānic schools in Nigeria. These challenges can be categorized as internal within the country and external outside. These can be itemized as:

- i. Lack of governmental concern for traditional Qur'ānic schools (Makarantun-Allo) at the initial stage of integration of programme.
- ii. Proprietors, that is, *Alarammas* are not invited and co-opted in any decision making by the implementation committee of the Qur'ānic schools' integration, set up by the government.
- iii. Graduate of Integrated Qur'ānic schools are not enjoying the white-color job like their counter parts in the conventional schools.
- iv. Some of the *Alarammas* are still found wanting and refuse to co-operate with the government policy for integrating their schools, because they refuse

to accept the introduction of western education subjects in their traditional schools.

- v. The fundamental inter-disciplinary problems of placing concepts and ideas into a content within the whole, that is, the problem of dualism, or else the problem of integrating Western education into Islamic education.
- vi. It is found that most of the traditional Qur'ānic schools are run according to the directions of the proprietor who is usually a senior teacher of the school.
- vii. As a result, instructions differ from school to school, and there is no uniform curriculum or prescribed qualification for its teachers.
- viii. In most of the traditional Qur'ānic schools, teachers are not regularly employed. Former pupils are appointed as teachers at extremely low wages.
- ix. Since the traditional Qur'anic school is a one-man affair, the proprietor is in a position to appoint or dismiss any teacher with or without any reason.
- x. Since the Ministry of Education has no control over the traditional Qur'ānic schools, they are not supervised by experts in the field.³⁹

Prospects of Qur'ānic Schools in Nigeria

- i. All the three tiers of government, that is, Federal, State and Local Governments as well as other non-governmental organizations are found to be involved in supporting the programme of traditional Qur'ānic school Integration.
- ii. The Federal Government of Nigeria is found to have interest in the intervention for the Almajiri Education Scheme in order to mainstream the large number of ten million Almajiri into a Universal Basic Education Programme. This in turn is anticipated to address the menaces of Almajiri itinerants roaming the street begging.⁴⁰
- iii. The *Alarammas* and other local Mallams of traditional Qur'ānic, Tsangaya and Islamiyyah schools have fully supported the idea of introducing some conventional school subjects of English, Vernacular, Mathematics, Social Studies and Computer Sciences (to be taught) in the Integrated Qur'ānic Schools.
- iv. The harmonization of the various traditional Qur'ānic school curricula and the designation of the new harmonized curriculum to be used by the integrated Qur'anic schools is unanimously accepted by proprietors, teachers as well as the pupils/students of the traditional Qur'ānic/ Islamiyyah schools.
- v. The state government through the SUBEB has shouldered the responsibilities of feeding, uniform, cleanliness and health assistance as well as electricity supply. Each pupil has ₦150 feeding allowance for 3 square meals and ₦30 for health and general cleanliness. For Boarding, they use to have 3 square meals, while for day they have only one square meal at break-fast time and they also enjoy ₦30 for cleanliness and health care. Similarly, both boarding and day Almajiri education pupils have ₦3000 allowances for uniform and house ware, such as shoes and socks.⁴¹

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing explanations, discussions and analysis on the plight and conditions of Qur'ānic/Islamiyyah schools in Nigeria, the following measures are hereby recommended:

- (a) Governments at all levels, stakeholders, private sectors and leading educationists should support the integration of Qur'ānic studies, so that the continuous of building knowledge and other sciences should be maintained.
- (b) Public enlightenment is required in order to sensitize and convince the general public as well as the proprietors and teachers of the Qur'ānic schools on the importance of the introduction of modern disciplines in the Qur'ānic schools. Hausa drama and radio programme can be sponsored for this purpose.
- (c) The Qur'ānic schools involved in the integration projects should receive assistance from the government in form of textbooks and other teaching facilities for the modern disciplines and the teachers should teach the prescribed disciplines.
- (d) Government should establish at least one model integrated Qur'ānic school in the local government area of the states involved in the integration projects to serve as a model school.
- (e) Proprietors and teachers of the integrated model Qur'ānic schools need to be trained on basic teaching methods, administrative skills, school management and child management.
- (f) Routine inspection, monitoring and evaluation is required to ensure the success of the integration project.
- (g) Vocational education that provides skills related to occupations like carpentry, welding, farming, etc. should be introduced for adolescents and adults attending the Qur'ānic schools.

Conclusion

Islam is practised by the majority as rites with little understanding of the underlying worldview that institutions teaching the classical Islamic sciences usually have poorest facilities. The teachers are usually poorly paid. The graduates have few opportunities in the job market. The brightest students are sometimes advised by their parents and friends not to enter these institutions because they will have no future.

The objectives of the development of Qur'ān schools in Nigeria need a research that will extend frontiers of human knowledge and its application through ages. In addition to the above, this study is conducted as a contribution to human knowledge with a view to offering some suggestions which could be used in running the whole programme of Qur'ānic school system in line with the dynamic system of western education. It will also add a new dimension to the existing programme of studies on the Qur'ānic school system. The people will also understand the present situation and condition of Almajiri i.e. the Qur'ānic school students in the society.

Despite the facts that the conventional schools are better off in terms of funding management facilities and prospects, yet it is well known that they are facing serious problems with unending strikes and falling standard of education.

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QUR'ĀNIC LEARNING IN OSOGBO: PAST, PRESENT AND FURUTE

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Introduction

Osogbo is a city of approximately 649,600 people, which was 0.357% of the total population of Nigeria¹. It is located in the heart of the Southwestern part of Nigeria. It is the Capital of Osun State as it happens to be the Headquarters of both Osogbo Local Government Area (situated at Oke-Baale Area of the City) and Olorunda Local Government Area (situated at Igbona Area of the City).² The town has three LCDA, namely: Osogbo South, Osogbo West and Olorunda North out of the existing two Local Governments Areas³. It is about 88 kilometers by road North-East of Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State. It is also 100 kilometers by road South of Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State and 115 kilometers North West of Akure, the capital city of Ondo State. Osogbo shares boundary with Ikirun, Ilesa, Ibokun, Ede, Egbedore and Iragbiji towns. Because of its central nature, it is easily accessible from any part of the State. It is about 48km from Ile-Ife, 32km from Ilesa, 46km from Iwo, 48km from Ikire and 46km from Ila-Orangun.⁴ It is situated on the Latitude 7° 46' North and Longitude 4° 34' East with an area of 47km sq,⁵ The City is also the Headquarters of Osun Central Senatorial District of Osun State.⁶

According to Shaykh Adam Abdullahi 'Al-'Iluri, as cited by Busari, the establishment of Qur'ānic schools (for the children) and 'ilm (Advanced Islamic) school (for the adults) always occurred immediately after the penetration of Islam into any land.⁷ He stated that the first Qur'ānic school in Osogbo was traced to Shaykh Uthman who brought Islam to the town and who was the first Chief Imam and equally the first founder/teacher of a Qur'ānic school at *Idi-Ako* area in Osogbo. Thereafter, the number of Qur'ānic schools started increasing as the scholars from Ilorin, Ibadan and some Northern parts of the country arrived into the town.⁹

After a short while, some Osogbo indigenes such as Shaykh Haruna Matanmi took Qur'ānic teaching from the non-indigenous '*Ulamā*' before he left for Ibadan. It was recorded that Qur'ānic learning started in Osogbo in the 19th century when Islam was brought to the city. These Qur'ānic schools catered for both male and female Muslim children.⁹

What is Learning?

Learning is the process of acquiring new, or modifying existing knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences.¹⁰ It also means the act, process or experience of gaining

knowledge or skill that brings change in behaviour resulted from reinforced practice or experience.¹¹ Islam attaches great importance to learning; hence, this is the reason why one of the attributes of Allah is 'Al-'*Ā*lim - the Possessor of Knowledge¹². Also, the first five verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad centre on knowledge and start with the word 'Iqra' which means read or recite. This implies that seeking of knowledge is required of man. The revelation goes thus:

Proclaim (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood; Proclaim! And thy Lord is most bountiful, He taught (The use of) the pen, taught man that which he knew not (Q96:1-5).

In an attempt to define learning, Shaykh Adam Abdullahi 'Al-'Iluri mentions that the word *ad- darsu* implies *at- ta'lim* which means learning and it is mentioned six times in the Glorious Qur'ān which shows the importance of knowledge in Islam.¹³ These are the following areas:

- i. Qur'ān Chapter 3 verse 79 سورة ال عمران اية ٧٩

...بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ

For ye have taught the Book and ye have studied it earnestly.
- ii. Qur'ān Chapter 34 verse 44 سورة سا ٣٤ اية ٤

وَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ كُتُبٍ يَدْرُسُونَهَا وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ

But we had not given them Books which they could study, nor sent apostles, to them before thee as warners.
- iii. Qur'ān Chapter 6 verse 105 سورة الأنعام ٦ اية ١٠٥

وَكَذَلِكَ نَصْرِفُ الْأَيَاتِ وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

Thus, We explain variously the verses so that they may say: "you have studied" and that We may make the matter clear for a people who have knowledge.
- iv. Qur'ān Chapter 7 verse 169 سورة الأعراف ٧ اية ١٦٩

... "وَدْرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ"

... And they study what is in the Book.
- v. Qur'ān Chapter 68 verse 37 سورة القلم ٦٨ اية ٣٧

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ

Or have ye a Book through which ye learn?
- vi. Qur'ān Chapter 6 verse 156 سورة الانعام ٦ اية ١٥٦

... وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

And for our part, we remained unacquainted with all that they learned by assiduous study

Moreover, there are some prophetic sayings that lay emphasis on the importance of learning, particularly, the study of Qur'ān. One of them is the one that is reported in Bukhari tradition which says:

"خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ"

The best among you, is he who learn the Qur'an and impact it to others.¹⁴

Qur'ānic Learning in Osogbo in the Past

The beginning of Arabic school in Osogbo was traced to the first Chief Imām of the town whose name was Uthman Ibrahim. He established the first Qur'ānic school in his residence at Idi-Ako in 1850s as it was suggested.¹⁵ It was even narrated by one of the Islamic scholars in Osogbo that the first copy of the Glorious Qur'ān hand-written by Imam Uthman is still available at Idi-Ako up till today.¹⁶ Among the first set of Qur'ānic education under the tutelage of Shaykh Uthman Ibrahim were: Busayri Abubakar, (Alarolese's compound), Ali Ara (Amugilese's compound), Abdur Rahman (Ansere's compound) Uthman (Obatedo's compound) to mention but a few.¹⁷ There was another person among the first set whose name was Harun, son of Matanmi I, who left Osogbo for Ibadan in search of more knowledge and settled at Oke-Gege in Ibadan. He became a prominent scholar as well as the 9th Chief Imām of Ibadan.¹⁸

Abubakr mentioned that early method of learning in the Qur'ānic school was of two types; first type was that the children will be reading the Qur'ān only without memorization while the second method was learning and reading with memorization. Also, the writing on slate (*Walaha*) commenced from five years and above.¹⁹ Likewise, in early beginning of Qur'ānic learning in Osogbo, learning took place in crude form – writing on slates (*Walaha*) and cleaning it off with water after memorization so that another lesson can be written for the pupils. When reading on slates was perfectly mastered, students would be introduced to Qur'ānic reading from sheets of papers in which the Qur'ān chapter and verses had been hand written. This is how the student will be graduated from one stage to another until he finishes the reading of the whole Qur'ān and other aspects of knowledge of Islam.²⁰

As earlier mentioned, the features of Qur'ānic learning in Osogbo can be categorized into two: (i) the heathen period (ii) modern period. The heathen period can be related to the saying of Ibn al- Hajj as reiterated by Shaykh Adam Abdullah which says: “places of learning is not more than three; house, school and mosque”²¹ By this, the first feature was the first Qur'ānic learning centre in the town that was established in the proprietor's residence who was Shaykh Uthman Ibrahim, the first Chief Imam of the town.²² Others were: pupils were in semi-circle form around the teacher who holds a long cane to beat the misbehaved ones among them; writing materials were slates (*walaha*) and stick; and graduation ceremony (*walimatul Qur'ān*) was organized at the end of learning the recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān for the pupils and students. It is to

be mentioned that Shaykh Abubakah Busayri (the second Chief Imam of Osogbo) was the first graduand of Qur'ānic learning in Osogbo.²³

Furthermore, Makinde buttresses the point by stating that learning took place in crude form – writing on slates (*wadaha*) and cleaning it off with water after memorization so that another lesson can be written for the pupil. When reading on slates was perfectly mastered, students would be introduced to Qur'ānic reading from sheets of papers in which the Qur'ān chapters and verses had been hand written. Students graduated from one stage to another until they were finally taught the reading of the whole Qur'ān and some other things.²⁴

Qur'ānic Education in Osogbo Presently

Modern period involves division of levels of learning, arrangement of classrooms and designed curriculum and syllabus of each subjects. The features of Qur'ānic learning centres in Osogbo have been upgraded to become standard Arabic and Islamic schools. The features include improvement and modernization in terms of building of classrooms for the schools like that of the government schools with syllabi, time-table, prescribed Arabic textbooks, rules and regulations, staffing, admission policy and standard examination.²⁵

Osogbo has never witnessed resurgent period in the history of Arabic school until 1962 when the first Modern Arabic School was established by Shaykh Yusuf Ashiru popularly known as Y. A. Imam Abajaoro. He named the school as *Madrasatul Ta^clim lughatil ^cArabiyyah wal Qur'aniyyah* and he later changed the name to *Madrasatul Mubarakah* al –Hajj Yusuf Abajaoro in 1967.²⁶ At early stage, the school was operated between Monday and Friday, from 4:00pm to 6:00pm with a ten-minute recess in-between the time. There were provisions of benches, desks and chalks while pupils and students have their writing materials as well as common uniform. Apart from Qur'ānic recitation, there were other elementary subjects being offered to modernize the school such as writing (*al – khatt*) dictation (*al-implā'u*) and Arabic conversation (*Lughatul ^carabiyyah*).²⁷ Presently, more than fifteen modern Qur'ānic and Islamic schools are in existence and they are functioning smoothly in Osogbo. Products of these Arabic schools who have acquired higher education are currently engaged in various spheres of human endeavours such as academics, politics, administration etc.

Academic Affairs

In the academic sphere, some products of these Qur'ānic schools have proceeded in their studies and pursued Western education up to higher levels. Therefore, this has enhanced them the opportunities of occupying different positions in various places of work, either under government or private establishments. Some of them specialized in Arabic and Islamic Studies in continuation of what they have acquired in their various Arabic schools while others digressed without discarding the knowledge of Arabic and Islamic Studies which they have acquired before. Rather, their knowledge in Arabic and Islamic Studies have positive influence on them.²⁸

Political Affairs

According to Adeyemi, the political impact of Arabic on human life was indispensable, especially during the 'Abbasid period when Arabic continued to be the official language of the empire in place of provincial languages. It was done to unite the Persians and the whole empire politically, irrespective of the tribes under it.²⁹ Products of these Qur'anic schools who have the opportunity to further their studies and who are currently specialists in other fields of human endeavours were able to get political posts. An example is the Senator of Osun Central Senatorial District of Osun State, Senator Ajibola Bashir.³⁰

Economic Activities

- i. Sale of Religious Books: It is noted that prior knowledge acquired from the modern Arabic and Islamic schools serves as an opportunity to some of the products of the schools who specialize in business through buying and selling Arabic books and religious materials. By this, such people are able to get their daily means of life.
- ii. Clerics who have taken to Priesthood: There are some products of these Qur'anic schools who did not further their education to higher level. However, some further a little bit making them to become Imams in their various endeavours while some become missionaries of various Islamic Organizations like Nasrullah al-fath (NASFAT), Al Fathu Qareeb (QAREEB), Ansar-ud-deen Society (ADS) etc. Some of these people combine *Jalb* with their positions in order to sustain their life.³¹

Social Sphere

(i.) Education

Adeyemi observes that the specialists in Arabic language have contributed knowledge in various ways by translating books of various fields of study from different languages into Arabic and vice versa with a view to advancing the knowledge of individuals and the generality of people. This can be felt through the great impact of Caliph al- Ma'mun who was himself a scholar in law, theology, philosophy, rhetoric and sciences. He founded the House of Wisdom (Baytul-Hikmah) which served as a centre for research where translation of works from Greek /Persian/Sanskrit were made into Arabic and vice versa. Also, Caliph al- Hakam of Spain had 400,000 books in his library, while al-Azhar University still operates in this direction.³² Therefore, the effect of this is that the products from these modern Qur'anic schools are functioning educationally in Osogbo through establishment of many Qur'anic centers.³³

(ii) Dressing Code

Islam has a dress code for both men and women. Its purpose is to protect the society as a whole and promote modest dressing and behaviour. It creates a barrier between the sexes and allows them to conduct their lives with modesty dignity and respect.³⁴ In view of this, the modern Arabic and Islamic schools have contributed a lot in the teaching and displaying of dressing code in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Instances can be seen in the uniform of students (both male and female) of the Qur'anic and Islamic schools in Osogbo.³⁵

Challenges of Qur'ānic Schools in Osogbo

Findings of this study revealed that like their counterparts in other parts of the world, Qur'ānic schools in Osogbo cannot be said to be operating without any challenge. There are a lot of challenges that they face. Some of the challenges are enumerated and briefly discussed below:

- i. **Low Registration:** This study discovered that the registered population of the pupils and students in each of the Qur'ānic and Islamic schools is low compared with the population of Muslims in the town and particularly around each of the schools. However, the reason for the low registration was attached to the negligence of the Muslim parents who did not attach value to Arabic and Islamic education.
- ii. **Ununified Programme:** Despite the fact that there is a body called United Arabic and Islamic Schools (*Ithādul Madāris*) which functions at both local and state levels, yet the curriculum and syllabus of the Qur'ānic and Islamic Schools in the town as well as across the State are not the same. The difference is so glaring to an extent that their time of resumption and closing for a holiday is not the same, compared with the conventional schools being controlled by the government. An example that can be cited here is that while some modern Qur'ānic and Islamic schools are operating semester system, some others are using system of term. Moreso, while the use of terms is common, there is also a difference in system of operation.
- iii. **Lack of Funds:** Insufficient funds for schools in the town is another major discovery that hinders their progress. Each school relies on the tuition fees received from their students which is irregular. The other means through which funds are generated is during the annual graduation ceremony (*haflah*). The result of this problem is inability to re-habilitate the schools as at when due. Hence, they lack the opportunity of fencing the schools, furnishing the classrooms as well as provision of self-owned hostels.
- iv. **Insecurity in the Country:** This study discovered from its findings that the problem of insecurity hindered some opportunities for some Qur'ānic schools. For example, one of the schools in the city lost the opportunity of getting two Arabs from Saudi Arabia in every two years due to the insecurity in the country. This school is Zumratus Salahina Arabic and Islamic School, Osogbo.
- v. **Time Constraint:** This is another vital challenge that was revealed by this study. It is the tradition of the Osun State Government to embark on environmental sanitation on every first and last Saturday of every month between 8:00am and 10:00am. This therefore affects the resumption of students to school on the days since many of them would be late and advance the environmental sanitation as the reason for it. The proprietors see this as a serious problem because it affects the period of learning in the weekend. It was also discovered that during the week days i.e. between Monday and Wednesday, the students of Arabic who attend conventional schools in the morning also find it difficult to be punctual in their Arabic schools because the conventional schools close very lately and this greatly affects the evening Arabic classes.

- vi. **Lack of Proper Record Keeping:** This is another vital challenge this study discovered. It was found that most of the Arabic and Islamic schools have not been keeping their records properly. All the school records such as admission register, diary, visitors' book, punishment book, log book, stock book and others are either not made available or not well kept. Only attendance register is available in most of these schools.
- vii. **Lack of Opportunity for Further Studies:** This study also discovered that unlike before, when some of the alumni of these Arabic and Islamic schools are not ready to further their education by going to conventional schools to receive Western education in order to have balanced knowledge, the situation has changed. Many of the graduands of these schools now show keen interest in Western education while some did not show interest. Hence, these set of people go to learn craft works.

However, regardless of the challenges mentioned above, it will be necessary to state that many these modern Qur'ānic schools have made great impact on the development of Arabic and Islamic Studies in particular and the religion of Islam in general in the city of Osogbo.³⁶

The Future of Qur'ānic Education in Osogbo

The future of the Qur'ānic education in Osogbo depends on finding solutions to the above-mentioned challenges. It needs to be stated that the challenges inhibit the progress of the Qur'ānic schools in the city but the future of the schools is bright if efforts can be made to solve the problems encountered by them. It is as a result of this that the study makes the following recommendations:

- i. The proprietors of Qur'ānic and Islamic schools are advised to employ qualified Arabic teachers who are university graduates so as to produce good products instead of making use of Senior Secondary Arabic School Certificate (*Ath-thanawi*) holders
- ii. Proper records should be kept by these Arabic schools in order to promote standard and compete with conventional schools
- iii. The products of the Qur'ānic and Islamic schools are advised to acquire Western education and further their studies into the university so as to be relevant in the society and have the opportunity of getting government jobs or appointments.
- iv. Muslim parents should see acquiring Qur'ānic and Islamic education by the children as a religious obligation; hence, they should support their children, morally and financially in the course of pursuing Islamic education.
- v. Government should give a deserved recognition to Qur'ānic and Islamic schools and come to their aid as may be required. The assistant from the government may include giving teaching employment to the products of these schools. This is necessary because what Osun State Government did in 2005 by employing 250 Arabic teachers into teaching service of the State, taking into consideration those with Arabic Certificate, helped in no small measure in assisting the course of Arabic and Islamic education in the State. Unfortunately, since that time, no

further action has been taken by the government when in actual fact there are many graduates of Arabic and Islamic education from Nigerian universities that are unemployed.³⁷

- vi. All the proprietors of Arabic and Islamic schools should cooperate and be united in pursuing the goals of Arabic and Islamic education in the state. This can be achieved and maintained through the membership and participation in the newly introduced Association called Osun State Association of Arabic Language and Islamic Schools (*Ithādul Madāris ‘Arabiyyah wal ‘Islamiyyah fīl Wilāyyati Osun*). The Association stands for the unity of all the Arabic and Islamic Schools in the State and its aims include: uniting and bridging the gap between the proprietors; enhancing the speaking of Arabic language and the spread of Islamic culture; moderating Islamic propagation methodology; molding an individual character in society and providing and promoting brighter future for the learners of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the society.³⁸

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is understood that Qur’ānic education has been part of Islam in Osogbo since the emergence of the religion in the city. This is so because the history of Qur’ānic school was traced to the first Chief Imām of the town whose name was Shaykh Uthman Ibrahim. He established the first Qur’ānic centre in his residence at Idi-Ako in 1850. The resurgent period in the history of Qur’ānic education came in 1962 when the first modern Qur’ānic school was established by Shaykh Yusuf Ashiru popularly known as Y. A. Imām Abajaoro, who named the school Madrasatul Ta’lim Lughatul ‘Arabiyyah wal Qur’āniyyah initially but later changed the name to Madrasatul Mubarakah al-Hajj Yusuf Abajaoro in 1967. Presently, there are more than fifteen modern Qur’ānic schools that are in existence and functioning smoothly in Osogbo. The products of these schools are seen to have attained various positions in life and are doing well in their various chosen professions. This study has, however, identified some challenges facing these Qur’ānic schools and made some recommendations that can help in solving the problems. It is hoped that if these recommendations are carefully looked into and implemented, the future of Arabic/ Qur’ānic schools in Osogbo will be very bright.

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SITUATIONS OF THE AL-MAJIRI SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: MATTERS ARISING

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Introduction

Islam regards knowledge as the pedestal of civilization and foundation of human development in both physical and spiritual realms. Significance of knowledge acquisition was evidently demonstrated when Allah instructed Prophet Muhammad to seek knowledge before entrusting him with His Message to the entire mankind.

Read! In the name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen, Has taught man that which he knew not. (Qur'ān 96:1-5).

Being the vicegerents of Allah on earth, mankind and most especially Muslims have been enjoined to acquire knowledge for proper understanding of their religion, as well as for adequate preparation for challenges of existence. "The search for knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim." Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said: "Wisdom (knowledge) is the lost property of the believer, wherever he sees it, he picks it up." As a way of demonstrating the gulf between knowledge and ignorance, the Qur'an asks a rhetorical question: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" (Qur'ān 39:9). Abu Amamah, a companion of the Prophet also mentioned that: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "Read the Qur'ān, for it will come as an intercessor for its reciters on the Day of Resurrection." Aside the call for acquisition of knowledge, the Prophet equally mandated the believers to disseminate whatever they have acquired for the benefit of mankind. "The best amongst you are those who learn the Qur'ān and teach it to others." In order to answer this clarion call, Muslims across the world, from one generation to another put in their best to educate themselves and disseminate the knowledge they acquired. Their efforts in this regard gave birth to the *Kuttāb* or *Madrasah* in the Arab world, North Africa, and part of Asia, the *Pondok* in Malaysia, the *Pesantren* in Indonesia, the *Tsangaya* or *al-Majiri* in Nigeria and other numerous systems in other parts of the Islamic world.

The al-Majiri system in Northern Nigeria, which forms the nucleus of our discussion in this study, was said to have begun around 11th century in Kanem-Borno and was later

replicated in the Sokoto Caliphate after the triumph of the Jihad led by Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817). These two empires promoted the scheme and supported it with the state resources. Besides authorities' recognition and promotion, the scheme also enjoyed the support of other major stakeholders, such as the community, the parents and the pupils themselves. In other words, the stakeholders regarded the scheme as their own collective project, which must not be left to "whom it may concern". The products of the system, in addition to their role as teachers, Imams and preachers, formed the crop of elites that manned various government organs and parastatals in the pre- and post-colonial eras in Northern Nigeria. Similarly, they played significant roles during the Indirect Rule introduced by the colonial authorities in the region, as the *Ajami* (writing and reading of Hausa language in Arabic Script) was widely used throughout the region. The British were left with no option but to recruit them as clerks and office attendants in the heyday of colonial activities in the area.

The fortune of the al-Majiri system however took a nosedive as the British invaders relegated it to the background by starving it to a comatose state, alleging that promotion of religious education was not the government's priority, though the same state funds were later used to propagate Christianity in the land (1903). As such, demonization of the scheme was predicated upon the double standard exhibited by the British "conquerors." Since the state funds were no longer there to finance the scheme, the whole project crumbled and its admirers and sympathizers became helpless. The teachers and their pupils were later regarded as a bunch of illiterates, due to their deficiency in the newly introduced literacy order called *karatun boko*, Western education. In order to make ends meet, both the teachers and pupils of the al-Majiri scheme now turned beggars, which formed the origin of the al-Majiri dilemma today. It would be an unfair and otiose statement to assert that the government of the day has done nothing to return the scheme to its lost glory. Through various organs, such as the National Programme for Nomadic and The National Council for the Welfare of Destitute (NCWD), the authorities have fashioned out ways by which the over 10 million indigent children can be rehabilitated and provided with formal education. However, a lot needs to be done as the present state of affairs, especially with regard to the al-Majiri system which remains a smear on the face of the authorities and the generality of Nigerians.

Evolution of the Al-Majiri System

The basis for the al-Majiri system of education is entrenched in the Islamic tradition of prioritizing knowledge over any other things admired by the believers. As such, it is believed that once a person is knowledgeable, any other things he wishes to acquire in life become easier. That is why many Muslim scholars left the comfort of their homes and places of birth to other parts of the world in search of knowledge. They put themselves in such disquieting situations in order to benefit themselves, their immediate community and humanity as a whole. This assertion is apparent in the meaning of the word al-Majiri, which is a derivative of the Arabic terminology *al-Muhajir* (the traveller or migrant). The expression is customarily used in depicting someone who migrates for a precious purpose. Popularity of the lingo is dated back to the heydays of Islam when the Prophet and his Companions migrated from Makkah to

Yathrib, later known as al-Madinah. Similarly, Allah uses the expression in various verses of the Qur'ān while referring to the believers; "And the first to embrace Islam of the *Muhājirūn* (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansār (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the *Muhājirūn*) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him..." (Qur'ān 9:100). He also says in another verse: "Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the *Muhājirūn* and the Ansār who followed Him (Prophet Muhammad) in the time of distress (Tabuk expedition, etc.), after the hearts of a party of them had nearly deviated (from the Right Path), but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of kindness, Most Merciful" (Qur'ān 9:117).

In Northern Nigeria, al-Majiri is particularly used to refer to school-age children who leave the comfort of their homes and parental care to seek knowledge in nearby towns and cities. The efforts exerted in expeditions for knowledge by many famous Muslim scholars in the ilk of al-Imam as-Shafi' (767CE-820CE) and Ibn Khaldun (1332CE-1406CE), etc. could be akin to this system. As earlier mentioned, the scheme was enthusiastically supported by all stakeholders in the education enterprise, which enabled it to record unprecedented success in the pre-colonial epoch in Northern Nigeria. In addition to free tuition, the Mallam (teacher) provides for the pupils whose population may be as much as the teacher can accommodate. He also provides feeding and lodging for his wards free of charge with the support of the community and some well-meaning members of the society. The culture of generosity and being one's brother's keeper that were held in high esteem in those days actually assisted the al-Majiri system. With meagre income, support from farming and the public, the Mallams were able to sustain and maintain their schools. The arrival of the British colonial masters however stole this away from the scheme, its supporters and admirers. Those who operated the system afterwards were doing so on their own. The attention of the parents, community and other stakeholders was shifted to the trending Western system of education, which is funded with the state resources. Those who patronise the al-Majiri schools today deny themselves Western system of education.

The Al-Majiri System in Recent Times

Unlike pre-colonial Nigeria, when the al-Majiri system of education flourished and recorded exceptional accomplishment in literacy and social services, the system is today faced with a myriad of challenges with glaring abnormalities. Since the live wires that used to be sources of funding and morale booster for the scheme have been cut, the proprietors of Makaranta Alo (local Madrasah) and their pupils were left "to whom it may concern". Findings revealed that 6 out of 10 of the al-Majiri pupils never find their way back home. Many lose their lives through street violence, ritual killing, kidnapping, disease and hunger. Those who are able to survive the harsh condition they are subjected to exhaust most of the profitable hours of learning on the streets in the name of eking out a living, while majority of them eventually drop out in the long run. Instead of being brought up, they grow up like wild grass and lose out on all grounds; educationally, morally and, above all, religiously. It is on record that the current insurgency in Nigeria and neighbouring countries handily recruit their foot soldiers from the al-Majiri schools after brainwashing them that the Western system of

education is a sin. Through this loophole, the future workforce of the nation that is supposed to man various sectors of the economy slowly but steadily and gullibly wastes away. Those who prefer a “dignified” means of livelihood among them end up as *maigadi* (security guards), housekeepers, bus drivers, conductors, etc. The lazy ones who are comfortable with the life on the street continue to beg throughout their lives. The luxury loving ones usually end up as political yobbos and live on handouts from unscrupulous politicians. One may argue that it is inconceivable to expect that everybody would be at the helm. From among those who are privileged to have formal education, some would be leaders, while others would be the led. In response to this, Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said in a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah:

A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in everyone, (but) cherish that which gives you benefit (in the Hereafter) and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart, and if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don't say: If I had not done that, it would not have happened so and so, but say: Allah did what He had ordained to do, and “if” opens the (gate) for the Satan.

Going by the spirit of the above hadith, Islam discourages the believers from condemning themselves to the low ebb of affairs right from the onset. One has to aim high and work towards achieving his goals. But if after exerting all necessary efforts towards achieving one's lawful desires and it turns out the other way, one must succumb to destiny.

The word, al-Majiri, which used to command respect, sympathy and solidarity, nowadays generates obnoxious feeling in the public domain. What quickly comes to the mind of many people whenever the word is uttered is the image of malnourished and destitute school age-street children, who constitute public nuisance and security threat to the society. In addition to child labour, child abuse, and a vague future, the al-Majiri pupils today are being linked to the insurgency in the country due to their vulnerability to crime. While justifying this assertion, some analysts argue that a person who solely relies on begging for survival; who is enduring instead of enjoying the preamble of his life as a result of societal negligence; and who does not know where his next meal will come from, can easily fall prey to terrorists' biddings through a peanut bait. As such, the al-Majiri system in its current state is akin to a societal time bomb waiting to be remotely detonated.

Operability and Sustainability of the Al-Majiri System Today

Many challenges militating against the al-Majiri scheme in contemporary times could be regarded as spanners in the wheel of its progress. Those who were operating the scheme during its heyday were doing so in response to the clarion call made by the Prophet that “the best amongst you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it to others.” The Prophet reiterated this call in the occasion of his farewell sermon in which he was reported to have said that those who were present should disseminate his message to those who were absent. By engaging in this noble task, the society in turn encouraged them as a way of contributing their own quota to the wellbeing of the

educators on the one hand, and, as an avenue for expressing their gratitude to the instructors on the other. In order to supplement the token the society was offering them to support their families, the Mallams (teachers) on their part had other sources of livelihood such as farming, fishing, trading, etc. In other words, they valued dignity of labour and ensured that their reputation was not tarnished. The pupils of those days were equally exceptional in their commitment to learning. They maximised their chances of being the best they could be by burning the midnight oil.

Unfortunately, majority of those operating the system today lack prudence. They want to live flamboyantly at the expense of their pupils and the society. The departure of the al-Majiri operators from the traditional life of dedication to their calling to a life of greed and over-ambitiousness, the negligence of the parents and the society of their responsibilities in the hands of caregivers, the lackadaisical attitude of the current crop of pupils who value street life more than education are some of the indicators that make it difficult if not impossible to successfully operate the al-Majiri system of education nowadays. Therefore, the above scenarios suggest that the al-Majiri system might have outlived its relevance, as the problems of the scheme have been compounded by the fact that the Mallams are not remunerated, the pupils are not certificated, and no specific duration is set for completion of the programme. All these aberrations and many more are major deficiencies that constitute a debacle in the smooth running of the scheme, which make its operability and sustainability a mirage in today's world.

Government Integration Programme

Based on the National Policy on Education and transformation agenda of Goodluck Jonathan's administration when he was the President, the Federal Authority took special interest in integrating the al-Majiri system into the main stream educational system in the country. This was formally signed into law and presented to the National Economic Council in July 2013. On the occasion, the then Minister of State for Education, Nyesom Wike reiterated that the authority had set up the National Committee on Implementation of Al-Majiri Education Programme to ensure that the pupils are provided with opportunities to access Basic Education. The Programme, according to him, would also involve acquisition of various skills to enable them participate more positively in the development of their immediate environment and the nation at large. This development is an indication that the Federal Authority has not turned a blind eye to the menace of the al-Majiri system. Similarly, a visit by the author to some al-Majiri facilities in Niger and Nasarawa States revealed that the authorities are really committed to the integration of the al-Majiri pupils into the nation's educational system. Quadri also acknowledges government's intervention through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Universal Basic Education Commission, which culminated in the provision of day and boarding facilities for the pupils and their teachers. In addition, an in-depth survey carried out by the Leadership Newspaper, one of the leading dailies in the country revealed that the Federal Government has intervened in ameliorating the plight of these children. Classroom blocks are being constructed across the Northern parts of the country where the system is being practiced. For smooth implementation of the programme, the Federal Authority sometimes collaborates with the state authorities by providing infrastructures while the states take care of staffing and pupils' enrolment. Among the benefiting states in this

intervention are Niger, Jigawa, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi and Katsina. While commending the government's efforts in providing enabling environment and necessary facilities for the al-Majiri pupils to be properly educated, Quadri reiterates that for this gesture to have meaningful impact on the lives of the pupils, it must be properly maintained and sustained by the authorities. In the same vein, he warns that parents must take the destiny of their children in the own hands by ensuring that they are immunized against deadly diseases such as polio to complement government's efforts in eradicating street begging.

Having acknowledged the involvement of the authorities in finding a lasting solution to the problem, a lot needs to be done as some of the infrastructures in some states are lying fallow and unattended to. After the euphoria of groundbreaking and commissioning ceremonies, some state governments starve the scheme and allow it to die a "natural death".

Conclusion

The study maintains that in order to avert greater catastrophe more than what is being experienced in Nigeria today as a result of laxity on the part of the major stakeholders in the education sector, all hands must be on deck. Bastardisation of the al-Majiri system by its contemporary operators, pupils and the society encourages child abuse, and, above all, portrays Islam in bad light to the outside world. The current system should be abolished as it puts the future of the younger generation in jeopardy. The government integration scheme is a welcome development provided it is sustained by successive governments. In order to avoid abandonment, which customarily characterizes some of such interventions, the programme should be adequately funded and backed up by necessary laws at the federal and state levels so as to compel succeeding authorities to make adequate budgeting for its funding.

Recommendations

In order to change the status quo with regard to the al-Majiri situation in Nigeria today, all stakeholders must work together to put a stop to the embarrassing situation. Muslim scholars and leaders in the affected areas should encourage Muslim parents to accord upbringing and education of their children adequate attention. They should be educated that contrary to what some misinformed elements among the Muslim community harbour in their minds, Western education is not a sin and Islam challenges Muslims to seek any form of knowledge, so long as it does not contravene the teaching of Allah and His Prophet. Caution should also be exercised before entrusting their children to relatives and caregivers. In a situation where sending the children out to live with a relative or caregiver is inevitable, the guardian should be adequately supported, especially when he is not economically buoyant. Unscheduled visit should be occasionally embarked upon to have first-hand assessment of how the children are being catered for. These measures are envisaged to forestall child labour, child abuse, hawking and street begging. The authorities on their part should live up to expectations by providing social amenities in the rural areas to dampen down rural urban migration. In the same vein, enabling environment should be created for middle and lower classes

of the society to lead a better life devoid of humiliation and dehumanization in the hands of the elites and the well-to-do in the society.

Owing to the above analysis of the anatomy of the al-Majiri system of education and its intrinsic problems, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- i. As earlier asserted, the key players in the education sector should key into the authority's intervention of giving the al-Majiri pupils a second chance.
- ii. Competent and qualified Muslim teachers should be employed in government owned institutions to allay the concern of some Muslim parents who are afraid of losing their children to Western ideology.
- iii. The Northern Governors Forum should properly scrutinize the activities of the mushrooming glorified al-Majiri schools in the name of private schools in their states.
- iv. In order to secure a befitting future for the Nigerian children, quality should not be sacrificed on the altar of quantity at all levels of the nation's educational institutions.
- v. The search light of future studies should be beamed at rehabilitating the "area boys" in the southern part of the country.

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TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRICULUM FOR INTEGRATED *ALMAJIRI* SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Introduction

According to Pogo and Ahmad,¹ the *Almajiri* education started in the 11th Century under the Kanem Borno Empire, majorly before the advents of the British Colonial Power. The system got its financial backing from the state, parents, emirs, Zakat contribution and *Waqaf* proceeds. Based on this system, which is founded upon the teachings of Qur'ān and Hadīth, the then Northern Nigeria was largely educated with a complete way of life, governance, customs, traditional craft, trade, and even the mode of dressing. *Almajiri* education system was valuable, effective and productive as it produced judges, clerks, teachers, etc. and laid an elaborate system of administration in Northern Nigeria. They provided the colonial administration with the needed staff. The first set of colonial staff in Northern Nigeria was provided by the *Almajiri* schools and this went on for years. In fact, the *Almajiri* system was a civilising agent second to none before they were gradually replaced, phased out and indeed abandoned.²

Moreover, the invasion of the Northern part of Nigeria by the British constituted one of the factors that led to the collapse of the organised *Almajiri* system of education. The British also refused to recognise the *Almajiri* education system as an important education system and deliberately abolished its state funding arguing that, they were mere religious schools.³ The collapse however made the responsibilities of training *Almajiri* to be overtaken by the local scholars who deemed it a moral and religious duty to educate these pupils for the sake of Allah. Thus, this led to the decline in the organised *Almajiri* education and consequently gave birth to the proliferation of unorganised *Almajiri* schools. In the later *Almajiri* schools, pupils are not properly catered for and that had resulted in various socio-economic problems.⁴ Consequently, the *Almajiri* pupils turned to begging and engaged in hard labour and menial jobs for survival. Further to this, some of the *Almajiri* pupils became synonymous with all sorts of criminal acts and social menace in the society.⁵

Part of the efforts of the Nigerian government towards ensuring equality in access to education by all citizens gave rise to modern *Almajiri* education. Jekayinfa and Kolawole⁶ observed that, for the nation to realise her educational objectives, there should be a removal of the imbalance in intra-state and inter-state education, a need to

give greater attraction to the education of girls and women and an offer of equal educational opportunities to all citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, ethnicity, etc.

Curriculum implies an organised body of knowledge and experiences which learners are exposed to under the auspices of a school. The term 'curriculum' enjoys myriads of definitions based on the perspectives of different scholars. As a concept, curriculum serves human society and tries to remedy its problems. Due to the dynamic nature of human needs and aspirations which the curriculum serves, the concept of curriculum also keeps changing. Different people at different times have had divergent views of what the school curriculum is, and what it should contain.

However, each of the steps in curriculum development is guided by certain criteria to ensure its workability and feasibility. These criteria include: adequacy, appropriateness, consistency, unambiguity, behavioural interpretation and feasibility⁷. Goal setting (aims, goals and objectives) and content selection are the major stages of the four basic stages in curriculum planning. While goal-setting answers why we teach and learn, content selection answers what we teach and learn. He also affirmed that the major problems militating against Nigerian educational system come from faulty goal-setting and unrealistic content selection⁸.

According to the National Policy on Education (NPE),⁹ the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcating the following values:

- a. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;
- b. Faith in man's ability to make rational decision;
- c. Moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relations;
- d. Shared responsibilities for the common goal of the society;
- e. Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and
- f. Acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

In planning, developing and evaluating any curriculum, it is of crucial importance to have objectives in clearly stated terms, for it facilitates other processes of curriculum planning and development. Ibrahim, Alhassan and Abdur-Raheem¹⁰ stated the following as some general rules in formulating instructional objectives:

- i. It should focus on one and only one aspect of observable behaviour (be singular, one thing or issue at a time).
- ii. It should indicate the desired product, not merely a direction of change or a teacher activity (the expected behaviour).
- iii. Use definite terms such as "student should be able to explain", "list", "name", "select", "define", "compose", "construct", "identify", "differentiate", "discuss", "demonstrate", rather than terms such as "to term" "to know" and "to understand", which are general and open to different interpretations.
- iv. It should be observable, measurable and achievable.

Olajide¹¹ was of the view that high level curriculum planning committees often specify the aims which guide an educational programme, whereas teams of teachers are

responsible for formulating goals which are consistent with these aims and feasible with the resources and time allocated to different parts of the educational programme. Bilbao, Lucido, Iringan and Javier¹² noted that validity refers to the authenticity of the subject matter or content selected to make sure that the topics are not obsolete. Subject matter should be checked or verified at regular intervals to determine if the content that was originally valid continues to be. According to Ajidagba,¹³ the main thrusts of validity are currency/recency and authenticity. For a curriculum to be valid, it should have direct bearing with the set aims, goals and objectives.

In addition, the curriculum content needs to be relevant to the learners by having meaningful impact on their present and future life. This is otherwise referred to as a criterion of relevance.¹⁴ Good curriculum content should engender prowess or expertise in its field. Content is relevant if it contributes to the child's understanding of self and his environment.¹⁵

Another criterion that must be met in the process of curriculum development is suitability. This is otherwise known as a criterion of appropriateness. It implies that the selected learning experiences need to be suitable to the needs, interests and aspirations of the learners.¹⁶

In an attempt to improve the teaching and learning of moral and religious education, government ensures, through the various ministries of education, the production of suitable curriculum and training of teachers for the subject. This is because the curriculum could not be implemented without the teacher and his/her teaching methods, which are parts of the crucial factors in the teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Knowledge¹⁷.

Teachers are important factors to be reckoned with in the implementation of educational curricula at all levels. The ultimate realisation of the aims of education depends on the teacher who translates the curriculum into action, as well as guides, stimulates and inspires the students to achieve the desirable outcomes.¹⁸ Ibrahim and Alhassan¹⁹ explained that the role of teachers in the curriculum implementation of school programmes is pivotal. They concluded that teachers should maintain a high standard code of conduct and discipline so that the goal of education would be met.

Of all stakeholders involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of a curriculum, the teacher is the most important. No purpose-driven education can achieve national goals and objectives without quality teachers. The teacher's role lies at the heart of the intellectual and social life of the society. It is through him/her that each generation comes to interact with this societal heritage to produce new knowledge as well as learn to deal with changes therein.²⁰ Nageri²¹ also stated that teachers are the first resource to be considered when it comes to the teaching and learning. Muhammad²² was also of the same view that teachers are the most important stakeholders in the implementation of the curriculum.

There are different categories of teachers teaching in Nigerian Basic Schools in terms of qualification. These are teachers with B. A. (Ed.), B. A, NCE or B. A. plus PGDE. It is, however, important to note that most of the teachers expected in the upper basic schools are those graduate teachers with teaching qualifications such as the NCE.

Awoyemi ²³ posited that the trained and qualified personnel are very essential for the delivery of quality education. Qualification is an important factor in the teaching and learning of any subject. Consequently, a number of researchers have revealed positive correlations between teachers' qualification and students' performance in school.

Teachers' qualifications have great influence on the assessment of the curriculum. This is because some researchers have stated that qualified teachers outperformed unqualified teachers. This assertion corroborates those of Awoyemi²⁴ and Okunloye ²⁵ that the knowledge of the contents of a curriculum is strongly bound with the overall orientation of the content; and this can be achieved by the use of qualified teachers.

Similarly, a teacher's experience will help him/her to adapt and cope with changes in the educational programme, as he/she would be in a better position to understand the curriculum and guide learners towards the desired goals. Experience is obtained through continuous and active participation of the teacher in the teaching/learning process over a period of time. This could therefore assist the teacher in the teaching/learning process. It could also assist the teacher in assessing the curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

Many writers, authors and researchers have written on the issue of *Almajiri* education in Nigeria. For instance, Abdulqadir ²⁶ wrote on the "*Almajiri* System of Education in Nigeria Today". Humbe ²⁷ discussed "The Integrated *Almajiri* Education: The New face of Youth Empowerment". Yushau et al. ²⁸ studied "Problems and Prospects of Integrated *Almajiri* Education in Northern Nigeria". Okugbeni ²⁹ investigated the "Basic Education and the Rights of the *Almajiri* Child: The Rhetoric of Universalism in Nigeria". Elechi and Yekorogha ³⁰ wrote on the "*Almajiri* Model Schools in Nigeria: Matters Arising". Taiwo ³¹ worked on "Transforming the *Almajiri* Education for the Benefit of the Nigerian Society", while Okonkwo and Alhaji ³² wrote on "Contemporary Issues in Nomadic, Minority and *Almajiri* Education: Problems and Prospects". It could be noticed that none of the previous researchers and writers dealt with the teachers' assessment of curriculum for integrated *Almajiri* schools in Northern Nigeria. This was the gap which the present study filled and which therefore constituted the problem of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the teachers' assessment of the curriculum for integrated *Almajiri* schools in Northern Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

- a) Teachers' assessment of the adequacy of the objectives of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum;
- b) Teachers' assessment of the adequacy of the *Almajiri* education curriculum content for achieving the stated objectives;
- c) Teachers' assessment of adequacy of the selected learning experiences of *Almajiri* education curriculum;
- d) Teachers' assessment of adequacy of the quality and quantity of teachers for effective implementation of the *Almajiri* education curriculum.

- e) Differences in the assessment of the *Almajiri* education curriculum based on teachers' qualification; and
- f) Differences in the assessment of the *Almajiri* education curriculum based on teachers' experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

- a) What is the teachers' assessment of the adequacy of objectives of *Almajiri* education curriculum?
- b) What is the teachers' assessment of the adequacy of the curriculum content of the *Almajiri* education for achieving the stated objectives?
- c) What is the teachers' assessment of the suitability of the selected learning experiences of *Almajiri* education curriculum for the educational level of learners for achieving the stated objectives?
- d) What is the teachers' assessment of adequacy of the quality and quantity of teachers for effective implementation of the *Almajiri* education curriculum?

Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. The population for this study included all the *Almajiri* schools' teachers and pupils in Northern Nigeria. The target population comprised 150 teachers. The sample for the study were the teachers in *Almajiri* schools in the 19 Northern states of Nigeria where the programme has fully been implemented. The stratified sampling technique was adopted to select 10 *Almajiri* schools from each of North West, North East and North Central geographical zones. Precisely, 5 teachers were sampled from each of the selected schools. This implied that the study sample was made up of 150 teachers. The data for this study were collected using a 23-item questionnaire and a 50-item checklist. The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

The results of the analyses are presented as follows:

Research Question One: Are the objectives of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum in Northern Nigeria adequate?

Table 3: Adequacy of Objectives of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum in Northern Nigeria

Grading		Frequency	Percentage
Very Adequate	77-94.25	17	11.3
Adequate	59-76.25	100	66.7
Inadequate	41-58.25	33	22.0
Very inadequate	23-40.25	-	-
Total		150	100

Table 3 indicates that, out of 150 sampled respondents, 17 (11.3%) respondents strongly agreed that “the objectives of the *Almajiri* education curriculum are very adequate” while 100 (66.7%) of them as well agreed that “objectives *Almajir* Education Curriculum” are adequate. In the same vein, 33 (22.0%) of these sampled respondents totally disagreed with this submission. It could therefore be inferred from the analysis that “the objectives of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum” were very adequate for the stated objectives.

Research Question Two: Is the curriculum content of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum adequate for achieving the stated objectives?

Table 4: Adequacy of Content of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum for Achieving the Stated Objectives

Grading		Frequency	Percentage
Very Adequate	29-35	38	25.4
Adequate	22-28	86	57.3
Inadequate	15-21	26	17.3
Very inadequate	8-14	-	-
Total		150	100

Table 4 reveals that out of 150 sampled respondents, 38 (25.4%) respondents strongly agreed that “content of the curriculum of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum” were adequate and 86 (57.3%) as well agreed with this submission while only 26 (17.3) of them disagreed that “content of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum” were adequate for the stated objectives. It could therefore be inferred from the analysis that “content of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum” were adequate for the stated objectives.

Research Question Three: Are the selected learning experiences of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum suitable for the educational level of learners?

Table 5: Suitability of the Selected Learning Experiences in the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum for the Educational Level of Learners

Grading		Frequency	Percentage
Suitable	16-21	112	74.7
Not Suitable	10-15	38	25.3
Total		150	100

Table 5 reveals that, out of 150 sampled respondents, 112 (74.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that “selected learning experiences in *Almajiri* Education Curriculum for the Educational level of learner” are suitable while only 38 (25.3%) of them agreed that “selected learning experiences in *Almajiri* Education Curriculum for the Educational level of learner” are not suitable. It could therefore be inferred from the analysis that selected learning experiences in *Almajiri* Education Curriculum for the Educational level of learner suitable for the stated objectives.

Research Question Four: Is the quality and quantity of teachers for effective implementation of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum adequate?

Table 6: Adequacy of Quality and Quantity of Teachers for Effective Implementation of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum

Grading		Frequency	Percentage
Adequate	16-21	5	3.3
Inadequate	10-15	145	96.7
Total		150	100

Table 6 reveals that out of 150 sampled respondents, only 5 (3.3%) respondents strongly agreed that “quality and quantity of available teachers” are adequate while 145 (96.7%) absolutely agreed that “the quality and quantity of available teachers for the implementation of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum” are not adequate for the needs of the students. It could therefore be inferred from the analysis that “the quality and quantity of teachers for implementation of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum” were not adequate.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that the objectives and content of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum are adequate for the needs of the students. Also, the selected learning experiences, recommended methods and knowledge acquired are adequate. It could be deduced from the above findings that the originator of modern *Almajiri* education abided by the principles of curriculum planning and development during the planning stage of the curriculum. Going by the findings on the adequacy of the content and learning experiences, it can be established that, to some remarkable extent, the curriculum caters for the needs of the target audience and it is capable of bringing about desired changes in the target users.

These findings are however consistent with the submission of Adeoye³³ who noted that objectives form the important bases for curriculum evaluation. Without the knowledge of the objectives of an educational programme, it is impossible for anyone to determine how adequate or otherwise that programme is. Moreover, the findings of this study corroborate the submission of Yushau, Tsafe, Babangida and Lawal³⁴ and Okonkwo and Alhaji³⁵ who established that what has prompted the Federal Government to launch the new *Almajiri* education system was a bid to better the lot of the *Almajiris* and establish *Almajiri* schools where they would obtain western as well as Qur’ānic education so that they would be removed from the streets.

In addition, the findings substantiate the claim by Okonkwo and Alhaji³⁶ that *Almajiri* education programme would afford the beneficiaries the opportunities of receiving structured Islamic education and modern Western education in the form of practical skills needed to compete in today’s world. Moreover, it is found in this study that the quantity and quality of teachers for implementation of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum are not adequate. This is alarming and disheartening as Oliva,³⁷ AbdulGhaniy,³⁸ Megba and Pratibba³⁹ and AbdulHameed⁴⁰ have reiterated the essence of good, enough and qualitative teachers for the effective and successful implementation of any given curriculum. However, it is contrary to the objectives of *Almajiri* education evaluated to

have inadequate quality and quantity of teachers as the situation can lead to negative effects on the programme.

Conclusion

It could be concluded from the findings of this study that the introduction of modern *Almajiri* education is part of the efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria to come up with inclusive educational programmes for all. The Federal Government, at the inception, also came up with the achievable educational programmes for *Almajiris*. This is inherent in the objectives, content and learning experiences of UBE curriculum for integrated *Almajiri* schools that have been evaluated by the teachers to be adequate. As revealed in the study, the content and learning experiences would be realised when the desired changes are properly implemented. In addition, the quantity and quality of teachers are found not to be adequate. However, the above phenomenon could be inferred to constitute the factors that can inhibit the successful implementation of curriculum for Integrated *Almajiri* schools. This could be seen from the outcomes of this study as it shows that the general academic performance level of the sampled learners is not encouraging.

Finally, the study concludes that teachers' qualifications and experience go a long way in determining their evaluation of the adequacy of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward for appropriate action:

- a. More and enough qualified teachers should be employed in integrated *Almajiri* schools, while teachers on ground should be motivated and adequately catered for in order to create an enabling atmosphere for them for the purpose of discharging their professional assignments.
- b. The government, policy makers and curriculum developers should device means of supervising and monitoring *Almajiri* schools in order to ensure the effective implementation of *Almajiri* Education Curriculum.
- c. Regular workshops should be organised for teachers in integrated *Almajiri* schools so as to boost their pedagogical and professional practices and also update their knowledge for the successful implementation of the *Almajiri* Education Curriculum and the effective realisation of the desired objectives of the programme.

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NEGLIGENCE OF ISLAMIC CHILD RIGHTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR QUR'ĀNIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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Introduction

Some children are maltreated in Nigeria while several Muslim children are victims of the scenario. Some parents leave the upbringing of their children to those who abuse and exploit them for their own advantage. While 1989 United Nations' Convention on Child Rights accords children the rights to survival, protection and development,¹ some Muslim children are being given plates to go out and beg for remnants of food and are deprived of both conventional and sound Islamic education. Abdul-Raheem disclosed that many Muslim children, particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria, are always sent out by their Arabic teachers to practise beggary.² According to Quadri, these Muslim children known as *al-majiris* rely on street begging for their survival because their parents do not care for their sustenance as they eat from anywhere including dustbins while aggressively search for food.³

Moreso, the right of Muslim children to have sound knowledge of their religion is being eroded as they are made to fully concentrate on secular education or engage in the service of their parents and guardians at the detriment of the children's acquisition of Islamic education. In this regard, this study attempts to examine the relevance of Islamic child rights to the proper nurturing of children and the implications of their neglect for the efficacy of acquisition of Qur'ānic education. It intends to point out causes of the neglect of the proper nurturing of some Muslim children in Nigeria and proffers panacea to the predicaments militating against the proper nurturing.

Tips from 1989 UN Convention on Child Rights

It is pertinent to note the core principles of the 1989 UN Convention on Child Rights to survival, protection and development.

- Article 1 of the convention defines the child as any human being under the age of eighteen.
- Article 6 states that every child has the right to life.
- Article 5 of the convention stipulates that child has the right to be given guidance by his/her parent and family.
- Article 7 states that child has the right to have a name and nationality.
- Article 28 declares that child has the right to education.
- Article 29 states that child has the right to education which develops his personality.

- Article number 12 of the convention calls on government to develop guidelines to protect the children from harmful material. Children are to be protected from harmful influence, abuse, sexual and other forms of exploitation including pornography.
- Article 19 states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 33 stipulates that children have the right to be protected from dangerous drugs.⁴

Concept of Islamic Child Rights

Having wet-dream is unanimously stipulated by the jurists as a sign of becoming adulthood.⁵ This position is in accordance with Qur’ān 24:59 and a Hadith saying “Pen is raised up from the three; from the sleeping until he is awake, from a juvenile until he has wet-dream, and from an insane until he is sensible.”⁴ However, the Jurists hold divergent views on the age limit for childhood. The maximum ages for the end of childhood as stipulated by Abu Hanifah and some other jurists are eighteen years for male and seventeen years for female.⁵ Thus, a child is a juvenile that is below eighteen years of age. In Islamic legal system, hard legal penalty cannot be executed on such a child rather than *Ta’zīr* (light punishment).

Islam is very concerned about the physical, social and spiritual wellbeing of children. This is the reason why children must enjoy some rights stipulated as responsibilities of family in particular and society in general. Some of the rights as pointed out by Al-Zuhayly are as follows:⁶

1. *Right to be affiliated to his/her biological father:* the father should neither deny nor forsake his child. (Qur’ān 33:Ⓞ). According to the majority of jurists, a husband that has intercourse with his wife must not deny her baby, even if an adulterer claims it.⁷ Parents must protect the right of child to free him from being dishonoured as a bastard.
2. *Right to breastfeeding:* According to Qur’ān 2:233, the breastfeeding of baby is a responsibility of both parents; the mother shall breastfeed while the father provides the cost or maintenance for the mother. The jurists unanimously posited that if the father fails or is not available to provide the cost for the breastfeeding, the mother must breastfeed her baby for his survival.⁸
3. *Right to guardianship and protection:* Child must be catered for to eat, bath, wear a neat dress, sleep, learn and rest at appropriate time. This is a responsibility of mother or any other custodian and father who shall bear the cost. (Qur’ān 2:233) Likewise, Allah says: “Do not kill your children in fear of poverty” (Qur’ān 17:31). This verse implies that a child must be protected from being killed directly or indirectly. During the period of *Jahiliyyah*, some Arabs used to bury the female children for fear of poverty or inability to maintain them. The abandonment of children without caring for their needs, amounts to their killing indirectly.
4. *Right to support and care:* Based on Qur’ān 4:6, scholars opine that parents and guardians must take care of juvenile child security, health, moral training, nurture,

property, means of livelihood and marriage until the male child becomes adult and can independently oversee his affairs by himself, and the female child marries.

5. *Right to maintenance*: As a valuable gift from Allah, a child must be catered for with provision of food, clothes and health care which secure him from hunger and ailments. To this effect, The Prophet makes the maintenance of the child his unavoidable right. According to the Prophet, the child could demand his right from his father by saying:

وَيَقُولُ الْإِبْنُ أَطْعِمْنِي إِلَىٰ مَنْ تَدَعُنِي

“... And the child shall say: Provide food for me, whom do you want to forsake me for?”⁹

The Hadith cited above indicates that it is a responsibility of the father to feed and clothe his child, particularly when the child is unable to search for livelihood for himself.

Other child rights in Islam include:

- Child right to the father's right choice of good mother: A man must make a right choice of good marital partner who shall have positive impact on their children.
- Child right to good name: Child must be given a good name after the birth (Qur'ān 49:13). It was reported by Abu Dawud from Abi al-Dardā' that the Prophet said: “You shall be called on the Day of Resurrection with your names and the names of your fathers, thus, bear good names”.¹⁰
- Child right to religious education and practice: A Muslim child must not be prevented from acquiring knowledge of his/her religion as illustrated by Luqman in Qur'ān 31:13-19. Moreso, A Muslim child should be allowed and encouraged to participate in observance of *Salāt*, Fasting and socio-religious activities of Islam, such as *Īd* feasts. The Prophet says: “Command your children to observe *Salāt* when they reach seven years old ...”¹¹
- Child right to proper nurture: The Prophet says: “... A man is a care taker over his family, and he shall be called upon to account for his nurture...”¹² The Hadith indicates that child must be properly nurtured. Also, the Prophet demonstrated this tradition as he properly nurtured his children including his house boys, such as Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Anas Ibn Malik.¹³
- Child right to freedom from abuse: Parents and guardians must be kind to their wards and avoid sending them to those who abuse and exploit them for their own advantage at the detriment of the children's education, religiosity and social development. Allah says: “Say; have mercy for the both (parents) as they have nurtured me at my tender age.” (Qur'ān 17:24) The verse indicates that parents and guardians are expected to be kind to their wards and give them proper nurture at childhood.

Some Muslim parents leave the upbringing of their children to those who abuse and exploit them for their own advantage. The children become victims of child trafficking

and thereby sent to non-Muslims and uninformed Muslims who will exploit the wards and not bother with their proper nurture.¹⁴ Thus, they disregard their wards' acquisition of proper education by usurping all the wards' time for their own benefit only.

Trends of Development of Qur'ānic Education for Muslim Children

The history of Qur'ānic education in Nigeria has been the same with the history of Islam in the country. In the Northern parts as well as in South-western parts of Nigeria, Qur'ānic education is said to have gained a firm root ever before the emergence of Europeans with their religion and educational system.¹⁵ Shaykh Lukman confirms that almost every mosque and quarter in Yorubaland where Muslims dwell had Qur'ānic school called *Ile-Kewu* where Muslim children were taught how to read the Qur'ānic text. He also stressed that Qur'ānic education had been in vogue in the Northern parts of Nigeria, and that Lord Lugard confirmed 20,000 Qur'ānic schools called *Makaranta* with 250,000 pupils found in the Northern provinces during the Lugard regime.¹⁶ However, the schools were not formally organised as the modern ones.¹⁷

In the course of time, eclectic model was adopted by some Islamic scholars whereby some features of secular oriented schools were incorporated in the traditional Qur'ānic education system. These include formal setting, organised syllabus, school uniform, annual promotion of students from one class to another, evaluation and certification.¹⁸ The eclectic model was introduced to Qur'ānic schools in order to make them relevant to contemporary challenges facing the schools as a result of the introduction of secular oriented schools which motivated Muslim children and their parents. Shaykh Adam confirms that Muslim children became excited because of the importance attached to western oriented schools by the colonial government. The holders of certificates of the western schools were given high positions in the state affairs and offices.¹⁹

Despite the fact that the colonial masters made all efforts to make Christianity stronger and hinder the spread of Islam and its education in Nigeria, their efforts proved abortive as some conscious Muslim scholars and Islamic organisations established Qur'ānic education schools in form of the secular oriented schools. Shaykh Taju al- Adab (died 1922) and Shaykh Abdul- Kareem al-Tarābilisy (died 1926) in Kano were among early scholars who established modern Qur'ānic schools which, though, had no special buildings.²⁰ The first Qur'ānic school specifically built on the modern structure was the school of Islamic Law which was established in collaboration with leaders of Northern Nigeria in 1934 in Kano with the aim of producing Shari'ah Judges.²¹

In this regard, Qur'ānic education system develops into several dimensions till the present day in Nigeria. Thus, the following five types of Qur'ānic education system which operated in the country include:

- i. Conventional Basic and Senior Secondary Schools in which two or three periods are allocated for Qur'ānic education in the weekly time table.
- ii. Islamiyyah integrated schools: It is a type of school in which some secular subjects are incorporated into the Qur'ānic education schools to make their products admitted into the universities directly. The schools are now under the supervision of National Board of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS)

- iii. *Madāris*: It is pure Islamiyyah schools in which only Arabic and Islamic Studies are taught.
- iv. Traditional Qur'ānic schools (both elementary and higher ones): It is a type of school where children are taught how to read Qur'ānic text while some of those who have graduated proceed to learn other branches of Qur'ānic education, such as *Tafsīr* (Exegesis of Qur'ān), Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), *Tawhīd* (Islamic Monotheism), *Ta'rikh* Islamic History, Arabic language and Literature among others.
- v. *Tahfīz-l'-Qur'ān* school: It is a school for memorization of the Qur'ān. Students enrolled in this type of school are trained to memorize the whole of the Qur'ān or parts of it.

Moreso, Kudos to the efforts of some Nigerians on the enrolment of products of the modern Qur'ānic schools into Diploma and Certificate courses which enable them to seek admission into universities for the Degree programmes. The universities that adopted this method include: University of Ibadan, University of Maiduguri, Bayero University Kano, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto.²²

Factors Responsible for Violation of Islamic Child Rights in Nigeria

Islamic child rights are breached in Nigeria due to some deficiencies on the part of the parents. These hindrances include: ignorance, poverty and insensitiveness of some vulnerable parents to family planning.

Ignorance:

Parents of some Muslim children do not realise that caring for the proper nurturing of their children is incumbent on them. They are not conscious of their responsibility towards taking care of child education, health, clothing and feeding till the child has ability to provide all these needs for himself. All what they do is to give birth to the child, breastfeed him and send him out at tender age like animals to search for his needs by himself. Thus, the children, particularly male ones are treated as abandoned domestic animals which search for their food by themselves. The parents are ignorantly insensitive to their parental responsibilities claiming that the care of their children has been entrusted to Allah, the Sustainer. This habit is un-Islamic as it violates the child right to proper nurture confirmed in the tradition of the Prophet cited above. Allah says: "Say; have mercy for the both (parents) as they have nurtured me at my tender age." (Qur'ān 17:24) The verse indicates that parents and guardians are expected to give their wards proper nurture at childhood.

Moreso, many physically challenged Muslims among Northern Nigerians use their children as a guide at their tender age while begging for alms on the street. The precious time of the children are thereby usurped for street begging at the detriment of their future life. The family of the physically challenged does not provide help for them to be trained on having a job. Thus, they become street beggars throughout their life and even transfer the habit of beggary to their guide.

Poverty

Poverty arises when a person cannot provide basic needs for himself and his family, such as adequate food, clothing, housing, clean water, education and health services.²³ According to National Bureau of Statistics, 112.519 million Nigerians live in poverty.²⁴ This means that two thirds of Nigerian population are poor. It is confirmed that majority of the poor in Nigeria are found among Muslims of the North.²⁵ Poor economic situation of some Muslim parents make them unable to provide basic needs for their children. This predicament leads them to send their children to those custodians most of who will not cater for the welfare as well as education of their wards. Some Muslim children are sent to non-Muslims and uninformed Muslims who will exploit their wards and not border with their proper nurture. Thus, they disregard their wards' acquisition of Qur'ānic education with usurping all the wards' time for their own benefit only.

Insensitiveness of Parents to Islamic Family Planning

Family planning in Islam can be defined as a way of controlling child-birth by individuals on account of legitimate reasons. It includes the restriction to a number of women a man can marry in accordance with his ability to deal justly between them (Qur'ān 4:4). Moreso, Sayyis Sabiq asserted that child-birth control is advisable in some situations where there is a fear that having more children will prevent a very poor parent from giving his children proper care, or if having more children can affect the health or take life of mother or existing child, and if having more children can force parents to find unlawful means of livelihood for their children.²⁶ Allah says: "Allah does not want to force any hardship upon you" (Qur'ān 2:285). It was narrated from Jabir who said: "We used to withdraw the drop of semen during sexual intercourse (practice of *'Azl*), and this came to the hearing of the Prophet, and he did not restrain us."²⁷ In this regard, some scholars equated *'Azl* (withdrawal system) with the use of contraceptive pills and devices to prevent pregnancy.²⁸

In this contemporary period, there are some Muslims who have children that they cannot afford to maintain. Such children eventually end up in street begging²⁹ or become exploited at the hands of evil guardians. This scenario makes Islamic family planning essential for the poor. But as a result of insensitiveness of some poor parents to Islamic family planning, they have more children of which they cannot cater for their adequate feeding, proper Qur'ānic education, clothing and other basic needs.

Implications of Negligence of Islamic Child Rights for Qur'ānic Education System

1. Poor Background of Muslim Children in Qur'ānic Education:

In some quarters, most of the children's times are usurped for beggary rather than for learning quality Qur'ānic education. According to Quadri, "The case of the *almajiri* as well as their teachers lies squarely on parents."³⁰ It should be noted that the jurists unanimously posited that the father is responsible for welfare of children right from childhood till when they are capable of taking care of themselves.³¹ The violation of this child's right leads to street begging in which some victim children indulge in. It should be noted that quality Qur'ānic education cannot be attained in this situation.

Moreso, some parents do not border to give their children opportunity of acquiring Qur'ānic education at elementary Arabic school. This situation makes such children have poor background in the religious education. Thus, if not because of efforts of individual Muslims and Islamic organizations towards the protection of right of Muslim children to learn Qur'ānic education in conventional schools, many of Muslim students would have been ignorant of Islamic teachings. In the same vein, Islam and its education would have been a mere history in several uninformed families which are not insensitive to the religious education for their children.

2. *Rendering the Maltreated Muslim Children Nuisance to Society:*

The practice of beggary by students of Qur'ānic education is contempt to them as apparent in some parts of Northern Nigeria. The students of secular education are regarded as illustrious children that are catered for with provision of nourishing food, tidy clothes, learning materials and considerable remuneration for their teachers, while students of Qur'ānic education are deprived of these rights by their parents. Thus, the habit of beggary by the students degrades them and the system of education they adopt.

Equally, most of the affected children become troublesome to the society as a result of their parents' negligence of the Islamic child rights.

3. *Proliferation of Ignorant Worshippers in the Society:*

Considering the fact that Qur'ānic education is the bedrock of Islam, its existence in the hearts and at the hands of Muslims is the main pillar on which Islam stands. Shaykh Adam posited that removal of the language of the Qur'ān and Islamic education from the heart of West African Muslims is a well-planned strategy of the British and French people.³² He further argued that majority of Muslims have nothing to do rather than to focus on English and French languages which have been made necessity for all and sundry.³³

In this regard, Muslim children that have been denied the right to learn Qur'ānic education effectively become ignorant adult about Islamic teachings. It should be noted that those Muslim adults who cannot recite the text of the Qur'ān neither point out the teachings of Islam on their daily life, had lost opportunity to effectively learn Qur'ānic education in their tender age. This situation is the resultant effect of parent insensitivity to their responsibility on child upbringing and religious education for their children. There is absolutely difference between those who effectively acquired Qur'ānic education and those who were denied the opportunity to learn it. Allah says: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" (Qur'ān 39:9).

Conclusion

Attempt has been made in this article to expound the Islamic child rights and the consequence of their neglect on the acquisition of Qur'ānic education in contemporary Nigeria. It has been pointed out that some Muslim children have been deprived of quality Qur'ānic education by their parents through the breaching of Islamic child rights. The resultant effects are; having poor background in Qur'ānic education, rendering the victim Muslim children nuisance to society and proliferation of ignorant worshippers.

In view of the causes and resultant effects of the violation of Islamic child rights as indicated above, the below recommendations are imperative to consider for the repositioning of Qur'ānic education system in contemporary Nigeria.

- i. Right choice of guardians or custodians for child should be carefully made to protect Islamic child rights and avoid the child abuse which prevents the wards from having quality Qur'an education and renders them nuisance to society.
- ii. Enlightenment on the parent responsibilities towards child upbringing and acquisition of quality Qur'ān education should be intensified by Islamic scholars in both urban and rural areas.
- iii. Islamic family planning should be adopted by the poor in order to check the abuse of their children whom they cannot maintain.
- iv. Priority should be given by the parents in the payment of remuneration for the teaching service rendered by Qur'ānic education teachers or schools.
- v. Governments of Northern states of Nigeria should, as a matter of urgency, incorporate traditional Qur'ānic schools attended by *almajiris* (beggars) into their education system, and pay remuneration for their teachers.
- vi. Islamic organisations and rich Muslims should, in the cause of Allah, assist Qur'ānic education schools by provision of learning materials and remuneration for their teachers to boost Qur'ānic education.
- vii. Institution of *Zakat* and *Waqf* should be established and patronized by rich individuals and Islamic organizations, and channeled towards the taking care of Qur'ānic schools and improving the economic situation of the poor Muslims

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EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLUSION IN QUR'ĀNIC SCHOOLS: A VITAL TOOL IN CHECKING PERENNIAL BEGGARY AMONG ALMAJIRIS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Every society has a way of living and its culture forms a significant part of this way of living. Northern region of Nigeria which is a home to numerous social and political entities have an established culture since time immemorial; this culture was predominantly Islamic in nature. Muslims have been enjoined to acquire knowledge for proper understanding of their religion as well as for adequate preparation for challenges of existence.

It is in line with this and in order to answer this clarion call, that Muslim scholars use to leave the comfort of their homes and places of birth to other parts of the world in search of knowledge, and also many Muslims across the world from one generation to another, put in their best to educate themselves and disseminate the knowledge they have acquired. This effort gave birth to both *Kuttāb* or *Madrasah* in the Arab world, the *Pesentren* in Indonesia, *Tsangayaor al-Majiri* in Nigeria.¹ The *al-Majiri* system of education goes beyond student-teacher relationship; it is an education system with additional responsibility of being the custodians of history and knowledge, propelled development of the people and society at large.²

However, it is disheartening that a system of education that was responsible for the literacy of millions of Nigerian children for over a span of ten centuries and which produced prominent sets of administrative staff for the colonial masters and prominent Islamic scholars, the likes of Sir Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Aminu Kano, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, Abubakar Imam Kagara, Sa'ad Zungur, Shehu Musa of Bida, Shiekh Dahiru Usman Bauchi, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, Sheikh Ja'afar Adam, Kala Rawi and so on; have become a shadow of itself and as conventionally seen in Nigeria, have become an eyesore to governments and to the communities where the *al-Majiris* resides, this cannot be without reason(s).³

Education and Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Education is the right of every child, a key to transforming his or her life and making him or her a responsible member of the society. Therefore, without education children are denied opportunity to develop their full potentials and play productive roles in the

society.⁹ The National Policy on Education (FRN 18), recognizes the place of entrepreneurship in the future of Nigerian youths by noting in section 2, sub-section 13(a) that, one of the goals of basic education is to “provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurs, wealth generation, and educational advancement. Similarly, it is in view of this development that, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is structured to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
- (ii) Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- (iii) Serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- (iv) Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
- (v) Reduce high rule of poverty.
- (vi) Create employment generation.
- (vii) Reduction in rural – urban migration.
- (viii) Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
- (ix) Inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
- (x) Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy¹⁰.

Indeed, though there are spotlights of entrepreneurship education in primary schools for example, pre-vocational studies in economics and agriculture, in Junior Secondary Schools: -Business Studies, in Senior Secondary Schools: - Business Studies and Trade plus Entrepreneurship for those offering sciences while at the Tertiary Institutions, entrepreneurship courses introduced is not clearly stated. Nevertheless, in most recent terms, there are moves by the governments through the Federal Ministry of Education to make entrepreneurship education one of the compulsory general studies for students in the universities across the country. This is to inculcate in the youths the spirit of self-reliance, to address issues of unemployment and under-employment and also ensure entrepreneurial human capacity.

It is on record that, Nigeria’s educational system yearly turns out graduates from the various universities, polytechnics and mono-technics that have not guaranteed self-reliance but had to depend solely on white collar jobs for sustenance. The graduates possessed the theoretical knowledge but are bereft of requisite skills to make them self-reliant. This is in concord with the observation of Ojeifo that ‘our educational institutions remained factories for producing white collar jobbers with no special professional nor entrepreneurial skills envisaged in the education system. This means that, there has been complete absence of enterprise education in the educational system.¹¹

UNESCO defined inclusive education as the type of education that responds to educational underachievement and diminished social opportunities of vulnerable

student or group identities for instance, the girl child, children displaced by conflict or natural disasters, children from minority ethnic, religious or tribal groups, children living in poverty, traveler children, and children with disabilities¹².

It is disheartening therefore to see the *Almajiris* from the Qur'ānic schools who were for centuries thought to be pious pupils/students in search of knowledge throughout Nigeria to have become a social problem in the society; begging for food that took most of their time instead of learning. Are these *Almajiris* not Nigerian Children? Do they not have right to be educated both religiously and secularly? Nigerian *Almajiris* have been denied every single right enshrined in the Child Rights Convention.¹³

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

In the Federal Republic of Nigeria schedule, it is stressed that, the efforts of the Federal Government towards entrepreneurship can be seen in the establishment of the following skills-specific enterprises:

- National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- Industrial Attachment or Student Industrial Working Experience Scheme (SIWES)
- Vocational and technical training
- Agricultural training
- Information and Communication Technology Training (ICT training). This perhaps was what triggered the erstwhile Jonathan administration to set up a committee on *Almajiri* schools in Northern Nigeria tagged 'National Committee on Implementation of *Almajiri* Education Programme (as there were about 9.5 Million *Almajiris* according to the Committee on Madrasah, 2010 and hence, in order to ameliorate the situation, #5 Billion was earmarked to build both Boarding and Day *Almajiri* integrated model schools references to structural construction, equipment, furnishing and provision of books³⁴ .

It is however disheartening and appalling that with all these attitudes by the Nigerian governments in salvaging the plights of *Almajiris* especially in Northern Nigeria, there is still much to be desired. Taking a cursory look at the erstwhile administration (Goodluck Jonathan's) in salvaging the dwindling traditional Islamic schools, how effective was the establishment?

It is our believe that infrastructural facilities and other subsidiaries should not have been the only tools in checkmating the menace, rather, the issue should have been handled wholesomely. This could be achieved through entrepreneurship-approach, for instance, the governments engaging the private sectors, the NGOS and the wealthy Nigerians at home and abroad in having a joint collaboration in terms of investing in the education of the *Almajiris* by providing the vocational, technical and ICT wherewithal, so as to enable learning and implementation process take place. However, this should not in any way obstruct the traditional schooling system. This, it is believed would produce desired goals in the sense that, it has correlation with their historical past.

In essence, investing in the education especially entrepreneurial education of the *Almajiris* in Nigeria should not be seen as a privilege but rather a right. This is because, in the first place, the 9.5 Million *Almajiris* by the constitution are Nigerians that have to be educated and provided for. Secondly, if this quantum number is entrepreneurship-driven, it would not only serve as self-employment calyx but also an avenue for economic development for Nigeria which can bring peace and security in Nigeria. On the other hand, neglecting these number would amount to breeding insecurity reserves in the various sections of the Nigerian society.

The Qur'ānic Schools

The traditional Islamic education usually referred to as Qur'ānic school is said to have begun around 11th century in Kanem-Borno and was replicated in the Sokoto Caliphate especially during the time of Sheikh Usman Danfodio (1754-1817).¹⁴ Originally, the Qur'ānic schools were called *Tsangaya* and was an organized and comprehensive system for Islamic principles, values, jurisprudence and theology. The *Tsangaya* houses the *Kolo* (primary schools), the *Titipiri* (secondary schools) and the *Gardi* (tertiary level)¹⁵.

The Qur'ānic school whose students are symbolically referred to as *Almajiri*, are the type of schools where emphasis was given to the teaching of the recitation and memorization of the Qur'ān as well as the understanding and implementation of its teachings. Particular attention was given to the teaching of children as parents enrolled their young children in these schools so that they could get introduced to the teachings of Islam at the early age.¹⁶

Almajiri originated from the Arabic word “*Al-muhājirūn*” that is “a person who migrates from his home to other place or to a popular teacher in search for Islamic knowledge.” This terminology is symbolic of the *Hijrah* (Migration of Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Madinah as those who immigrated together with the Prophet were referred to as *Al-muhājirūn*. As time goes on, this religious connotation, came to be applied to the *Tsangaya* pupils/students as *Almajiri* or *Almajirai* (plural of *Almajiri*).

In the pre-colonial (especially during Usman Danfodio's time) and post-colonial times, in Northern Nigeria, *Almajiri* referred to school-aged children who left the comfort of their homes and parental care to seek for knowledge in nearby towns and cities. Though conventionally, the perception of some Nigerian on the term and person(s) of who the *Almajiris*, have dramatically changed in view of time dynamics. Maigari and Bambale¹⁷ stated that, in Nigeria *Almajiri* is perceived to be:

- i- Any person irrespective of gender, who begs for assistance on the street or from house to house as a result of some deformity or disability.
- ii- A person who at inception in life is rejected and abandoned by his family.

Nevertheless, it has been documented that, even before the arrival of the colonial masters in Northern Nigeria, there were about 20,000 or 25,000 *Tsangaya* schools scattered all over Northern Nigeria with a total pupil population of 218,618 well organized and comprehensively administered.¹⁸ Qur'ānic schools go beyond student-

teacher relationship. It was an education system with additional responsibility of being the custodians of history and knowledge, propelled development of the people and society at large.

The system was under the control of the Emirs of the traditional government which was centralized, guided and catered for the welfare and general wellbeing of both the *Mallams* and the students. The immediate communities also extend their own contributions while the students on their part, acquire vocational training and occupational skills and offered services like, laundering, gardening, weaving, leather tanning, shoe and bags making, cap weaving and tailoring.¹⁹ The Qur'ānic schools produced the first set of administrative staff in Northern Nigeria, that is, clerks, teachers and judges that formed the solid administration in Northern states.²⁰

This was the status of Qur'ānic schools in Northern Nigeria before the advent of the colonial masters whose advent disorganized the whole system in response to stiff opposition to their secularization schemes by Northern Community and the Christianization of colonial administration. However, Junaid observed that, in a reprisal, the colonial masters attack and took control of the state treasury, killed and deposed Emirs who resist their impositions, refused to recognize the traditional system of Islamic education and abolished its funding arguing that they were religious schools. Even Emirs that aligned with their proposals gradually lost their territories²¹.

In fact, the arrival of the colonial masters was the axis on which the down-turn of the erstwhile *Tsangaya* in view of their unwarranted and calculated scheming to disparage Islam and its institutions of learning which continued till date. In essence, it has been observed that, 'those who inherited colonial legacy still continued the marginalization and disregarding of the Qur'ānic School System.' This, therefore, resulted in the different kinds of mixed perceptions of the graduates of Qur'ānic schools in Nigeria.²²

Statistically, according to Goodluck et al.²³ and Hassan²⁴ there were about 10,000 Qur'ānic schools in Northern Nigeria and UNICEF's²⁵ estimate was put at 100,000 Qur'ānic schools as at 1999 with over 2 Million students (*Almajiris*); while the Ministerial Committee on *Madrasah* under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Education estimated that, there were about 9.5 Million *Almajiris* in Northern Nigeria.

The plight of Qur'ānic schools and their products (*Almajiris*) in Nigeria as stated above is worrisome. Their situation is vividly captured in the following statements:

- i- The neglect of the *Almajiris* does not only deny them of their fundamental rights but also their innate potentials that remain untapped.
- ii- The future of the nation that is supposed to man various sectors of the economy slowly but steadily and gullibly wastes away.
- iii- The *Mallams* are not remunerated by the government and the immediate communities are not helping matters.
- iv- The inadequate involvement of the *Almajiris* in secular education is still a problem, and
- v- The pupils are not certified and no specification of the duration for the completion of the programme.²⁶

The Need for Inclusion of Entrepreneurial Education of the Qur'ānic Schools

Education is on the concurrent legislative list of the Nigerian constitution, making it a joint responsibility of the Federal and State governments (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN 13). Therefore, both Federal and State legislatures make laws with regards to all levels and types of education, but LGA's bear substantial responsibility for managing primary education. Since the constitution declares a secular status for Nigeria, religious education does not fall within the above parameters; it is only recognized as an academic subject of study at various school levels.²⁷

States, therefore, often adopt different postures towards religion including religious education. The Nigerian state has consistently undermined Islamic education and institutions designed for dispensing it by failing to recognize and utilize their potentials in expanding access to education. It is therefore fair to say that the Muslim North of Nigeria has a large percentage of children enrolled in Qur'ānic schools who are excluded from the minimum state-sanctioned education provided in public schools and many of its accruing privileges.²⁸

In Fafunwa's observation, it was a concern over the diminishing influence of religious education in the lives of young Nigerian Muslims as Western education expanded, that drove some religious groups and organizations to embark on a reform of Qur'ānic schools. This reform gave birth to *Islamiyyah* schools, which combined the teaching of religion with secular subjects from curricular of public schools, and modernized their organizational and instructional methods.²⁹ In doing this, it was thought that it would make Western education attractive to Muslims and avert the risk that non-participation in it portends to the *Ummah* (Global community of Muslims) within the socio-political configurations of modern Nigeria.³⁰

By 1999 when the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) carried out a population survey of schools in Nigeria, it was found that, pupil enrolments in Qur'ānic and *Islamiyyah* schools tripled that of formal primary schools in key Muslim states of Sokoto and Zamfara.³¹

Baba stressed that, a similar trend was also depicted in a baseline survey of Qur'ānic schools in four states in the North West (i.e. Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara) conducted by UNICEF (1999) which showed that, there were 16,648 Koranic schools in these four states with a total enrolment of 1,145,111 pupils: 63.2% of this number were boys, while the remaining 36.8% were girls. The survey further showed that, out of the total number of students enrolled only 177,592 or 15.5% were attending primary schools; the remaining 967,519 or 84.5% were not.³¹ Although public primary schools in Nigeria enrolled 24, 422, 918 children, about 10.5 million or 30% of the total number of children of primary school age (6 – 12 years) are out of school³².

Similarly, in a recent survey, only 10% of the total number of Qur'ānic Schools in 6 Northern States (Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, &Zamfara) conducted by Federal Ministry of Education (FME)& United Nations International Children's Education Funds (UNICEF)CEF revealed a total pupil enrolment of 514, 264; out of which 194, 368 or 38% were females. When these figures are compared with a total number of 54, 434 public primary schools across 36 states in Nigeria and the Federal

Capital Territory, FCT, it becomes clear that Qur'anic schools have a commanding presence in Nigeria's education sector.³³

Conclusion

Qur'anic schools are what remains of an old system of Islamic learning that has witnessed transformations since Nigeria's encounter with colonialism. Defying efforts aimed at its reform. Qur'anic schools exist very much in their prototype forms characterized by their exclusively religious curricula and absence of linkages with the state. These schools have attracted concerns among scholars, civil society, and the state as hindrances to the attainment of Education for All (EFA) goals in states of Nigeria with large Muslim populations. However, if these myriads arise in relation to the disconnect between the government, the religious leaders and the community in which these schools are sited; it is therefore, appropriate to emphasize that all hands must be on deck to revitalize the most famous and cherish Islamic institutions.

Recommendations

The study would like to recommend the following as measures to check the challenges:

- i- Nigeria's education policy (NPE) should contain concrete proposals on the status of religious schools, a minimum framework for their reform, and possible anchorage points for their linkages with the formal education system.
- ii- Pool local public and private funds to create a small venture capital fund and school-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business using the school as mini-incubators.
- iii- Develop entrepreneurship internship programmes matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.
- iv- Training, on a regular basis of all teachers and instructors on entrepreneurship education. They should be sponsored to attend local and international conferences to acquire more knowledge so that they can effectively transfer entrepreneurial skills into the students.
- v- Provisions of access to adequate resources (including capital) to graduating students to enable them start their own business.
- vi- The various university managements should contact some non-governmental organizations, wealthy Nigerians or banks to give soft loans/grants to entrepreneurship students to establish and run their own businesses. This will enable them to acquire practical experience from their own initiatives for onward transmission to the students.
- vii- The Qur'anic students should also be provided with adequate information about starting a new business and about business trends.

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An Appraisal on the Effects of Syncretism on Selected Muslim Communities in Nasarawa State

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Abstract

This paper discusses the various syncretic practices and its effects among Muslim of selected ethnic communities in Nasarawa State. Syncretism as an attempt to merge two religious beliefs/practices or more is easy to find among Muslim communities in Nasarawa State. This paper provided the more needed information on the reasons and manifestation of syncretism and its practice as well as its effects on Muslims. The paper also shades lights on the various cultural practices of the selected ethnic communities/communities and the Muslims involved in the syncretic practices. In the paper, survey research methodology was adopted where In-depth interview was conducted for the collection of data. The paper recommends.....The paper sum up with the Islamic solution and consequences of been involved in syncretism.

Introduction

The *Jihad* of Uthman Bin Foduye which began in 1804 had far-reaching effects on the Islamization as well as socio-economic and political development of not only Keffi, Nasarawa, Lafia, Awe and other kingdoms of present-day Nasarawa State including the Igbira land in Opanda kingdom in present Kogi State but of course on the most parts of the western Sudan (Black Africa) (Omotosho and Hassan, 190).

The *Jihād* leaders cooperated with one another, for example, the legendary ‘Umaru Nagwamaste of Kontagora (in present day Niger State) was said to have assisted ‘Umaru Makama Dogo when the latter led a successful *Jihad* against Opanda Kingdom of the Igbira land; Umaru Makama Dogo cooperated with Mai Dunama of Lafia to conquer the Doma area. Abdullahi Dallāh of Lafia, Jibrilu of Keffi and Ahmadu of Nasarawa were always said to have cooperated with one another and Muhammad Dan Waji of Nasarawa was perhaps the most important figure in the mobilization of the forces of Islam in the area to work in unison to ensure rapid spread of Islam, Islamic education and Islamic ethics (Omotosho and Hassan 190). Despite the efforts exerted by rulers, traders, scholars and generally the Jihadists to promote acceptance and pristine practice of Islam in what later became Nasarawa State of today; Muslims still practice some elements of syncretism either deliberately or due to ignorance.

Syncretism is defined as a reconciliation of desperate or contradictory beliefs (Balogun, 67). It is a continuous term often taken to imply contamination, the infiltration of a supposedly pure tradition, by symbols and meanings seen as belonging to other, incompatible traditions (Steward and Show 11).

This research explores the belief system, Islamic practice and evidences of syncretism among Muslims in Nasarawa State. These are in the form of fortune telling (*Duba*) magic (*bokanci*), tricks, (*bori*), traditional medicine, (*Tsubbu*), and a host of syncretic manifestations in the religious cum cultural practices of Muslims in Nasarawa State.

Islam, as a religion and a way of life denotes total submission to the will and commandments of Allah in everything that man does including beliefs, worship, socio-cultural activities and traditions, economic, politics, education (Phillips, 25) and a host of others. This is the purpose for which Allah created both man and *jinn* as contained in the Glorious Qur'an.

And I (Allah) created not the *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone) (Q 51:56).

Islam is built upon five pillars and those pillars are inter-related to one another and must be observed by anyone who accepted Islam. First among these pillars is *Tawhīd*, which is oneness of Allah. It includes *Tawhīd al Rubūbiyyah* (That is belief in Allah as *Rabb*, the Creator and Sustainer of all). Even the *Kuffār* have testified to this type of *Tawhīd*

Say (O Muhammad S A W): “Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?” They will say: “Allah.” Say: “Will you not then be afraid of Allah’s punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allah)? (Q. 10:31).

The second type is *Tawhīd al’Ulūhiyyah*, (where all forms of worship such as *Du’ā*, oath, sacrifice must be directed to Allah alone) (Phillips, 16). Anything short of this prestigious Islamic belief and practice amounts to syncretism as stated in the Glorious Qur'an thus:

And this is the Path of your Lord (the Qur'an and the Islam) leading Straight. We have detailed Our Revelations for a people who take heed (Q. 6:162).

The third *Tawhīd* is *Tawhīd al-Asmā’ – wa al-Ṣifāt* that Allah is to be described with all perfection and to be free from all deficiencies. This includes:

Not qualifying Allah except with what He or His Messenger (S.A.W) has named or attributed to Him, another one is that none deserves to be named or qualified with the definitive Names or Attributes of Allah such as Al- Khāliq (The Creator), Ar-Raḥmān (The Beneficent) and we must believe and confirm all the Names and Attributes with which He (Allah) has qualified Himself with in His Books (The Glorious Qur'an) or which are mentioned through His Messenger (S.A.W), without changing them or

ignoring them completely or twisting the meanings or giving resemblance to any of the created things.

Syncretism

Syncretism is the combination of different forms of beliefs or practices. People are said to be syncretic when they combine the tenets as well as partake in the worship of more than one religion concurrently (Opeloye, 7). This concept therefore amounts to fusion or mixture of two or more beliefs or religions. An Arabic word for syncretism is *Takhlīt*, which is derived from the root word *Khalt*, which means mixture (Qāmūs al-Muḥaddath, 6115). The word *Takhlīt* means a combination of two or more people, things, or feelings that are different. The literal meaning of syncretism given above indicates the idea of combining two or more things, ideas or feelings together. This meaning it is closely linked to the technical meaning of the word (Qāmūs al-Muḥaddath, 1243).

Syncretism has been described as a situation in which one religion adopts, or absorbs elements of another religion (Colatoye, 77). It is also defined as the practice of mixing Islam with other beliefs and practices which are opposite to its tenets (Jimoh, 5). To Ibn Foduye, syncretism is the process of mixing the beliefs and practices of Islam with those beliefs and practices which emanate from disbelievers and polytheists (6). Adding further, Ibn Foduye maintains that syncretism constitutes the following acts:

- i. Veneration of trees and stones by offering slaughtered animals and alms to them, or by pouring grain paste on them.
- ii. Casting of cottons on some other things on stones by the roadside or at the foot of the trees, or at the junction of two roads, at some such locations where it is sacrificially cast.
- iii. Putting clothes or food or some other things on the tombs of saints or scholars, or of a pious as votive offering.
- iv. Charming people.
- v. Separating two people between whom there is mutual affection, like putting asunder union of a wife and her husband.
- vi. Writing the Qur'an or the name of Almighty Allah with blood spilled during slaughter, etc. (7).

Other forms of syncretism include claiming to know something about the realm of the unknown through the sound or movement of birds or by some other means and consulting diviners about affairs and believing what they say (Ibn Foduye, 7). However, the clearly identified forms of syncretism among the Muslims in Nasarawa State are as follows:

1. **Worshipping of Idols:** This involves the real practice and belief in the existence of demigods, etc. that have been idolized and made subjects of worship by the people. This is primarily the religious preoccupation of the heathens/pagans, sometimes with the intention that those idols are believed to either answer their prayers or provide their needs directly or act as mediators between them (the people) and their Creator, the Most High.
2. **Tsibbu (Tricks and magic):** This is different from idol worshipping because it is being practiced mainly by the Muslims themselves. This is a

practice where some Muslims turn to some Muslim scholars believed to have knowledge of divination through casting of dice, beating of sand, etc. to have their problems solved.

3. **Believing in Witchcraft:** Witches and wizards are believed to have magical powers or power of sorcery. This is totally out of Islamic way of life. When Muslims are said to believe in or practice witchcraft, they are said to be syncretic in Islam.
4. **Bori:** This is another aspect of syncretism which involves dancing (half naked), incantations, chanting and invoking the hidden spirits into the display while the drummer accompanies the dancers with drumming.

It therefore follows that anybody who professes Islam, performs Islamic acts but at the same time engages in any act mentioned above in accordance with the explanations of orthodox scholars has engaged in syncretism, and he has hence become a syncretist (a mixer of two different religions), which is unacceptable in Islam. This is because Islam does not allow the practice of two religions, either in principle or in act, or borrowing any element that has no root in Islam into the religion. Corroborating this further, Olatoye describes syncretism as a process of borrowing elements, by one religion from another, so much that the receiving religious basic character will not be changed. It is also described as a situation in which one religion adopts, or absorbs elements of another religion or culture.

Cultural Practices of Selected Ethnic Communities in Nasarawa State.

What has come to be known as Nasarawa State can be traced to the creation of Nasarawa province under colonialism, which then comprised Lafia, Keffi, Jama'a Emirate and the present Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (Lewis 77). The state is made up of 13 local government areas and each of these local government areas consists of ethnic communities such as the Egbura, Eggon, Alago, Gbagyi, Gwandara, Migili, Rindre, Kwara, Hausa, Tiv, Afo, Nyankpa, Agatu, Mada and so on. According to Mathew in an oral interview he confirmed that each of these ethnic communities has an enduring history that dates back to pre-colonial times (Lewis 77).

The Mada Cultural Festival

The Mada people have a rich collection of divergent history, which can be narrated in two broad categories; the first is the migration account, while the second is the unsubstantiated claims that there are two versions of migration narratives. According to the account, there was a general dispersal of the inhabitants in the remote past, which saw Mada moving southwest along with the Kwararafa to Wukari.

The Mada people according to Aminu believe there is an all-powerful and good god, who lives in the sky, but there is no after-life. They sacrifice goats and chicken at religious festivals, and holding big dances and drinking bouts of local drink at these occasions. There is also a particular dress worn also *tsafi* armulets. These accounts were in pre-colonial Mada setting, but the scenario has radically changed since the advent of colonialism in this region. Colonialism has brought with it some changes which has greatly influenced some cultural practices, particularly the Muslim way of life. Not only that the Muslims people were affected in this manner even the Eggon and other ethnic communities in the former Lafia Division experienced this religious and

cultural transformation, and as a fall-out of this, certain festivals and cultural practices are regarded as satanic and fetish practices by Muslim.

The Rindre Cultural Festival

The pre-colonial origin of the Rindre people who were formally referred to as Nungu is said to be unknown (Ayih 54). But according to Dahiru, the Rindre people are said to have migrated from Kwararafa kingdom. The account further states that Jade Oka, after crossing River Arikya moved north and established the old Wamba town; then Ubina went and established his own domain southeast of Wamba. As a result, smaller settlement like Wamba Kurmi, (Now Wamba Koh), Libata and others came into being.

The Rindre religious practices embrace ancestral worship, as they swear by the spirits of their deceased ancestors. Each village has its own tsafi groove, which consists of a ring or shady trees, which may further be surrounded by a dry-built wall of stone, encircling an upright stone in the centre. The heads of enemies are deposited here. The spirits' representative attends certain festivals clad in tightly fitting, closely meshed net, which covers him from the crown of his head to his thigh. He further wears a kilt of dried grass and porcupine quills and long stems of grass are thrust through this nose and ears.

Dahiru also mentioned that for various festivals, three kinds of drums are used, the first is made from hollowed tree trunk and is about five feet long, and the skin is stretched over one end only. It is used for signal and sometimes call for assembly and to mark the rhythm of dances the second drum is a cylindrical double-end drum of varying size, which is hung over the shoulder, and is commonly used in coveting, or by deserted husband, who thus denotes to the runaway wife his desire that she will return to him, some third party comments on his distress to her, and if she is willing to reconsider her decision she sends trinket through the intermediary. The third drum is a kettle drums some fifteen inches in height and nine inches in diameter. It has a wooden base comprising massive feet.

Colonialism has left its mark on the culture and way of lives of the Rindre people, Islam is still in practice. Ancestral festivals called *Azhilli* and rite of passage were organized where the people danced with masquerade to celebrate harvest of crops in praise of the supreme god and the ancestors for their health and material blessings, in times of birth, mourning, marriage, coronation and many other festivals. It is followed by a traditional dance popularly known as *gelle* and *patta* dance which portrays unadulterated root dance. Apart from the Rindre language, the influence of Hausa language and culture has gradually eroded and diffused the original cultural traits of the early inhabitant of the land (Mustapha 23).

The Gbagyi (Gwari) Cultural Festival

The Gbagyi constitute a large tribe spread across, Toto, Karu and Nasarawa Local Governments Areas and are sparsely scattered in other local government areas of Nasarawa State. According to (Binbol and Marcus 1) it is possible that they are indigenous to Zamfara and the district stretching eastwards to the southern part of Zaria province, and their religion and customs may be compared with those of Bassa,

Kamuku and Kambem, who came from the same neighborhood and who carry loads on their shoulders instead of their heads (Elijah 180).

In an oral interview with Abdulwahab he confirmed that the Gbagyi are musical communities, which habitually works to the accomplishment of music. Besides drums, horns and guitars, they have a big stringed instrument something like a cello, and inserted in the neck of each is an iron with rings, which rattle as they play. The Gbagyi have a song for each occupation, sowing, harvesting, marriage, death, and so on. They sing in four distinct parts. The Gbagyi Waiki are especially noted dancers and musicians. He further revealed that, Festivals are regularly observed at the sowing and again at the reaping of crops. The Priest *fatauchi* oversees the ceremonial activities, robed in kilt of flowing grass, his body smeared with clay. Women may not be present and if a woman sees the priest the belief is that she would die, unless her crime were confessed, beer brought to the priest, and absolution obtained. When the chief eats the first of the crop he practices *tsafi*, so that sickness may not fall upon his town. In the event of an epidemic the priest assumes his official robe and cries out, *Eheu*, sicknesses go and leave so that the village may find health. The major religious festival of the Gbagyi people are known as *Amwamwa*. It is celebrated for four days at sowing time, and again after the guinea corn harvest. It is confined to men, and the *Badakka* (or *maiginrol*) presides over the ceremonies. A major festival, *Kalma*, inaugurates the burning of grass, the eldest son of the family makes *kandolo*, and takes it to the top of the hill where a libation is made and a he-goat is killed, the flesh would then be eaten by those participating in the ceremony.

Each individual Gbagyi male worships a personal god, or guardian spirit whose shrine is a special tree in the forest (*kurmi*), where offerings of fowl and beer are made. The Gbagyi believe in an omnipotent god whose responsibility is to punish offenders, and in times of bad harvest famine and war they make incessant supplication, while in prosperous times they do not think it necessary to trouble the gods.

The Gbagyi culture has been able to stand the test of time, just like some cultures in Nasarawa State. Islam did not influence most of these traditional practices; and as if to crown it all, the creation of the new FCT has brought with it myriads of other cultural beliefs, practices and western civilization pointing to a trend towards gradual increase of the Gbagyi culture and belief system.

The Gwandara Cultural Festival

The Gwandara people are believed to belong to the original Hausa ethnic communities; a claim that appeared to have been corroborated by the fact that their language is akin to non-Arabic rooted Hausa and that a Gwandara man can understand Hausa if simple words are used. The Sarkin Keffi states that the Gwandara were original inhabitants of Kano, (Kano being the name of their founder), but left for Gwagwa near Keffi after their king (sarki) named Gwandara refused to adopt Islam at the instance of Shehu Maigili, his elder brother.

Another similar version has it that the Gwandara lived at Dalla (Kano), until the Sarkin Kano became a Muhammadan, when they migrated to Zaria under the leadership of Gwandara Maidaiki. The Sarkin Zazzau, however, told them to go further south to

Wakari (Muri Province), but they stopped instead at Gwagwa between Keffi and Abuja (Mustapha 65). Sarkin Zazzau sent a force against them and broke their ranks forcing the larger number to flee to the Yeskwa District, north of Keffi while the others scattered a little further south to Karu. In Yeskwa District they were again conquered by Mohammad Sani of Zaira who drove them to seek shelter around the neighbouring Gitata Hills.

In an interview with Rikici he said that, Gwnadara dances and religion are similar to those of Arago but the Gwandara custom and tradition has resemblance to the Yeskwa and Gbagyi ethnic communities. Tribal marks consist of three lines radiating from each corner of the month. Gods are worshiped in open circular spaces inside groves; a mid-temple generally stands at the back and is often connected with enclosure.

A cross-comparison between the various ethnic communities inhabiting the present day Nasarawa State portrays some close resemblance in traditional customs and practices. The most interesting phenomena amongst these people is that, notwithstanding social change that radically transformed the past into the present, some element of the past cultural practices are still evident in the people's beliefs and ways of live.

Discussion of Findings

Syncretic Practices among Muslim in Nasarawa State

Traditional religion in Nasarawa State is one in which traditional religious beliefs, customs, social organization, cults and philosophies are interwoven (Abdullahi 60). It can be said that despite the acculturation through Islamic culture, Arabic Language and the responsive adaptation by the Muslims, there are certain remains of traditional beliefs among the people of Nasarawa State customs, for example: superstitions, witchcraft, black magic and secret societies which some of the Muslims have found difficult to forsake. Since it is the same people that embrace Islam, there is no reason to doubt the interaction of the people's traditional religion and Islam. This is obtained in an oral interview with Abdulkarim.

Superstitions (Chanpi)

Superstition can be seen as a belief or ways of believing that is based on fear of the unknown and faith in magic or luck or a belief that certain events or things will bring good or bad luck (Opeloye 7).

Superstition, as seen in its explanations, and as obtained in an interview by the Ayiwulu, Lubabatu and Hajiya Faty that superstition is devoid of knowledge and is an irrational belief in fear or magic. It is also seen as mixing the fear of something else with Almighty Allah. Another syncretic aspect of superstitious belief and practice is where the practitioner believes that the outcome or future of certain events can be influenced by certain specified behaviour i.e. if one believes that by wearing lucky rings or lucky charms, amulets, talismans, using traditional medicine and lucky pens that guarantee examination success as obtained in an oral interview by Umami Oyiza, Fatima Saheed, Zainab Shuibu, Shuibu Hamed, Abdulgafar Oluwaseun, Opeyemi Abdulhamid, Mubarak Abdulrahof and Barakat Adeyemo. The traditional custom of believing in bad luck, for instance, there is a believe that on the last Wednesday of

every year people should not go out in the night and not to allow anything useful open outside as that would cause some bad things to happen, walking under a ladder, or breaking a mirror which will cause seven years of bad luck are all syncretic. The information was stated in an oral interview with Nimatallahi Abdulhamid, Abdulhamid Ramalan, Mohammed Ramalan Mohammed, Abdullahi Safiyanu and Hamza Isa Angulu.

Another syncretistic aspect of superstition which can be found among the selected ethnic communities in Nasarawa State is borne out of fear of the unknown, ignorance and imagination; which Islam does not condone as a religion of knowledge and civilization this is also ascertained in an interview with Aliyu and corroborated with the opinions of Unice, Audu, Zaidu and Dogara. Although, some psychologists claim that superstition is an innate quality in individual human being (Parinder 45) and Islam is considered as a comprehensive religion that solves all problems. Some Muslims in Nasarawa State still adhere to some traditional superstitious beliefs despite their acceptance of Islam, believing its observation or otherwise can bring them benefit or harm. For instance, some Muslims in Nasarawa state will not allow their children or themselves to cut their nails, sweep an environment or loosing of hair at night; they believe that this can induce the Jinn to harm them. They will not cut firewood at night, or sit at the entrance of the room as jinn will break somebody's back born. On wedding day, the bride would not eat or drink anything from her husband house until after some days, this is confirmed in an oral interview with Halima Tijjani, Zainab Zakari, Rafi'u Boyi, and Bangi Hamisu. Some Muslims, among the selected ethnic communities as mentioned earlier, had the belief that going contrary to the aforementioned practices which are superstitious; they will be doomed in no distance from those evils of the practices.

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is not allowed to fetch water from the well in the night. They will not also allow a man to buy something from them when hawking their wares while going out in the morning; if their first son is a male, they will prefer a female person to buy from them. If they have an appointment with somebody and their left leg stumbles on a stone, they consider it as a bad omen or luck. Whistling in the night can annoy the elderly people, the ardent traditionalists around them. They also believe that the cock should not crow at night and to ward off the crowing-danger, the cock must be killed on the spot and its head buried there. This is as confirmed in an interview with Zubairu Abdullahi, Sanusi Musa, Usman Abdullahi, and Abubakar Muh'd.

Besides, it is also regarded as dangerous if a pregnant woman plucks red pepper by the way side or if her hen dies on her eggs during the incubation period. A pregnant woman does not walk in the afternoon between twelve and one o'clock, in order to stop her from giving birth to (a child-born-to- die, literally) and if she wants to go out at that particular time she must tie a needle and stones to the edges of her clothes. All these superstitions are still believed by many Muslim members among the Gbagi of Karu, Koto of Toto and Gwandara of Kokona as disclosed in an interview by Ahmad Ibrahim. Many still hold on tenaciously and religiously to observation of these beliefs and practices which appear not to have any rational basis.

Looking critically at these various superstitious beliefs and practices that were enumerated in the above, one will glean that many of them connote syncretism as irrational belief in things that do not have any effect except in psychological or traditional culture.

Another syncretistic belief inherent in superstition belief among Muslims in Nasarawa State as observed by the researcher is the belief relating to twins in which various sacrifices are made such as fried plantains, cooked beans, honey, sugar, local sweet are performed so that they will grow up healthy. These sacrifices are done every now and then to the twins, and if in any event, one of them dies, they will carve an idol of him in order to represent him. Some also believe that witchcraft and any diabolical act cannot have any effect on the twins.

Other problem in these belief as explained in an interview with Zainab and Tukura that some unseen things include spirit companions from and to whom they make journeys; children with strange whims and fancies which their anxious mothers (and perhaps fathers too) dare not deny. They are recognized by ‘amulets’ which are bought to hang around their necks and wrists; special feasts are prepared for them. Their identities are often clearly recognized from the presence of distinctive birth marks or physical stigmas. Well known to be practice as observed by the researcher are very common among the Hausa, Fulani, Nindre or Rindre, Gwandara and Koto communities of Nasarawa State. The said belief has been extended to mean that, the children would be protected from some illness or sickness like measles, fever and other child-related diseases that may easily cause death to the child.

In another information obtained in an oral interview with Dahiru and corroborated with the opinion of Abdulwahab, Hadiza and Sadiya is that some Muslims also hold on to the custom regarding certain days of the week as being more auspicious than others for various activities. Wednesday for instance, is characterized as replete with blessings (*al-barakah*), as well as Friday. Marriages, the commencement of house-building and the celebration of the ceremonial completion of the Qur’an by a student *walimah al-Qur’an* (‘Qur’an banquet’) are all best held on Wednesdays. The Malam with his calendric divination as well as being the Qur’anic teacher and officiate at these ceremonies knows best how to advise his clients on the choice of the right day for any activity, including travelling. Thursday, more particularly at the eve of Friday, is esteemed by some accommodating Muslims as a time for prayer for the dead as they superstitiously believe that the dead people come home in the night and look at what is going on at home. And they would be sad if sacrifice was not sent to them as they would come with their age communities. This belief in some certain days of the week as being strikingly advantageous compared to other days has been phenomenally embraced and practiced by some Hausa Fulani, Gwandara, and Gbagi Muslim fellows of Nasarawa State, as informed in an interview by Sadiya Ibrahim, Sabo Mansur and Opeyemi Abubakar.

Witchcraft (Maita)

Witchcraft is syncretic aspect of belief and practice is that it wipes away one of the fundamental articles of faith in Islam which emphasises belief in Allah who having foreknowledge of all occurrences. Although, the concept of destiny is controversial in Islam, but *Jazāi'r* examining the issue of trust in Allah (*tawakkul*) argues that after necessary preparations and hardworking, the outcome of such an effort whether success or failure should be attributed to Allah. In other words, Muslims are enjoined to prepare, work hard and follow the rules and regulations of healthy living, because they take responsibility for some of their actions and utterances.

The belief that witchcraft can harm, kill or render any other havoc in the society engenders associations of partners with Allah; which He alone has the power upon. It also creates psychological fear among the Muslims to the extent that they will not be able to speak the truth, work hard, and preach according to the laid down rules and regulations in the Qur'an as well as by the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), for the fear that these people can harm them. Their acts of transforming themselves, using bird, animal familiars, flying to their assembly or nocturnal meetings, and their dependence on human victim contributions according to Islamic beliefs amount to syncretism.

Any Muslim who is involved in this type of alliance is actually associating partners with Allah by seeking the assistance of something outside Islam. Such a Muslim has already syncretised in his Islamic religion which preaches absolute submission to Allah's will. As opined by Dahiru Liman in an oral interview.

Tsubbanci

Some Muslims in Nasarawa State are also guilty of syncretism whereby they use the Qur'an in a talisman-like manner where they perform the washing of some verses of the Qur'an with traditional herbs or animal parts. Gwagwale informed that writing of God's names or Qur'anic verses either with blood, bones or merely with the blood of animals slaughtered in the Muslim fashion; the medicinal mixture of water washed over God's names or Qur'anic verses with bits of snake skin is a habit of some Muslim in Nasarawa State in seeking for protection or success. This to Yusuf is reminiscent of the mixing of Qur'anic instrumentality with traditionalist instrumentality (represented by such things as blood, bones and snake skin). Such mixing repudiates ones Islam, as implying twofold faith: both in God and in other forces.

Another syncretism as indicated in an interview by Mustapha and Yusuf is that characterises its practitioners is that hardly any distinction will be found among some Muslims of Nasarawa State between medicine-men, magicians and herbalists as They are usually combined in one person, because virtually all of them have knowledge of herbs, some knowledge of magic as well as knowledge of oracle and divination in order to discern the nature of the problem of their client, as well as to recommend 'appropriate' remedies for their problem. That is why they are called 'men of hidden supernatural power'. There is no difference between Traditional medicine men or herbalists and their Muslim Cleric herbalist counterparts.

In his extensive answers on the practice of Muslim Clerics in Nasarawa State, Yahaya avers that some Muslim clerics or *Malams* work as writer of amulets or ‘doctor’. The *Malams* usually makes use of techniques of control through their familiarity with the pharmacopoeia stemming from Traditionalist Muslim sources; especially the herbal system, in addition to their Arabic literacy relying on the ‘mysteries’ of the Arabic language. They often adapt the traditionalist techniques of control that are manipulative for good and evil, combining verses of the Qur’an with tradition- originated herbal prescriptions. He further submits ‘...this literal mixing strikes such *Malams* as pragmatic and sensible, although the forces of Reform look upon it as egregious impiety’.

The homoeopathic and contagious magic that characterises traditional medicine is exactly the same that characterises the Muslim *Malams* amulet. The Muslim ‘*Malam*’ will ask his client to bring hair, nails, clothing, sleeping mat, footprints, etc., and anything that belongs to his supposed target either for the magic of love, separation, hallucination, possession, drowsiness, cries and shouts, sickness, haemorrhage and sexual impotence. He also specifies taboos like his traditionalist counterparts; failure to observe them renders the amulet inefficacious.

Another syncretic aspect of black magic as obtained from interview with Audu and Yazid is its association with specific animals, plants, objects and inanimate objects like skulls, skins, bones etc. It is believed that they possess occult powers that can make their charms effective. The amulets are put in the same places as the traditionalist; buried in the ground, powder rubbed into incisions, rings, etc. This is symptomatic of syncretism.

Another syncretic practice among Muslim in Nasarawa State as identified in an interview with Sarki, and Faiza is Oracle and divining which mean communicating with the gods and instructing people, telling them what will happen in future. This smacks of syncretism. Consulting diviners is common among many Muslim. This is also corroborated with the opinion of Bashiru Bello, Abdullahi A. Sarki, Murjanatul Nalaraba, and Maishanu Balarabe

They further maintain that another seeming reminiscence of traditionalism in Muslim clerics’ divination is that they both sometimes deliver prophecies to their visitor in an ecstatic state; something the likes of which some Muslim diviners and some Sufi orders fall into. Diviners read signs, events, or omens or through an alleged contact with a supernatural agency. The relationship that exists between the diviner and the evil *Jinn* makes the practice syncretic. According to an authentic *ḥadīth*, the *Jinn* informs their friends, Muslim diviners, of certain events in the future which they steal from the lower reaches of the heavens, information about the future which the angels pass among themselves:

...they (the *Jinn*) would pass the information back down until it reaches the lips of magician or fortune-teller. Sometimes a meteor would overtake them before they could pass it on. If they passed it on before being struck, they would add to it a hundred lies (Bukhari Vol.7, No. 439).

Proof of the Jinn's ability can also be found in the Qur'an, in the story about Prophet Sulaymān and Bilqees, the Queen of Sheba. The utterances and activities diviners usually embark upon during the divinatory process smacks of syncretism.

Idol Worshipping (*Bautan Gunki*)

Ancestral and Idol worshipping as the name suggests is another syncretic practices among Muslim in Nasarawa State and it indicates syncretism (Abdullahi 99). In an interview with Laurence, Tsaku and Agbo they all believed that hero worship is considered as 'living dead', immortal and spirits who can only be approached spiritually. Death has raised their status. They further assert that idols possess considerable power for good and evil, hence, food and libation should be given to them. This corpus of belief is syncretism. In Islam a dead person has nothing to do with this world (Abdullahi 100). Elayo sees this act as syncretic, when he mentioned that the acts involve saint worship or tomb veneration or casting of cotton on stones, path, trees and crossroads.

Gadara maintains that the belief arrogated to ancestors that they are present among us, watching our household, concerned in all the affairs of the household, giving blessing, etc. to Aisha Jibrin and Ayuba this means that they are likened to God, who is omnipresent. This belief goes against the principle of the oneness and uniqueness of Allah. They also believe that if certain traditions are not performed to propitiate these fathers they will be angered; this is superstition amounts to syncretism.

Another area of syncretism in this belief as indicated by Danladi and Doglas is the practice of ascertaining the will of the ancestors through the oracle, securing their help and appeasing them when they are provoked to anger. Offended ancestors can punish their offspring for moral offences. Crimes such as: witchcraft, stealing, adultery and murder are punished by them.

Some Muslims among the communities of Gwandara and Mada in Nasarawa State, whenever they dream of their ancestors in a bad state, they will superstitiously believe that their ancestors are angry with them. This is the opinions of Auwal and Jibrin, so, they have to prepare sacrifice and ask the *Malam* to help them read some portions of the Qur'an. After the recitation, people will gather at their houses to eat the sacrifice and sometimes such sacrifice will be taken to the mosque, in most cases, immediately after the *Subh* prayer (early Morning Prayer) in the form of local staple food. To Ancho's opinion he said that this also prompts extravagant expenditure at the funerals of departed ancestors. Sometimes people call the spirit of the dead to intervene in the family's conflicts. This is syncretism.

Effects of Syncretic Practices on the Muslim Society

Syncretism as a practice in any society has far reaching effects than one anticipates. This is because it touches on one's faith, wealth, relationship and even life. To put these succinctly, we can document that some effects of syncretic practices on the society include: loss of faith, loss of wealth, loss of life and creation of enmity among the Ummah.

Loss of faith

It is stated in the Qur'an that:

He who associates partner with Allah, Allah has forbidden for him His Paradise; what is install for him is the Hell (Fire) (Q 31:14).

This, among other several Qur'an verses, have condemned any form of syncretism with it perpetrator ending in Hell as his final abode. Syncretic practice can rightly be classified as a form of shirk because of the activities involved during the practice and for whom it is being offered. The case in point is the fact that any syncretic practice involves activities which are practically anti-Islam. Such syncretic activities like the practice of *bori*, *arizeni* among some Alago and Gwandara Muslims (noted in the foregoing), the practice of *tsubbu* by some purported Islamic scholars in Lafia, Keffi and many other towns in Nasarawa State are all forms of shirk. This is because, first, the activities are abhorred in Islam due to their un-Islamic nature; second, they are offered for purposes other than Allah (SWT). This, therefore removes one from his faith. So long one keeps involving himself in any of these syncretic acts, one would only be answering Muslim by name but in a real sense he is without his Islamic faith, and if he dies in that manner, that is the end for his acclaimed Islamic name or faith. This information was obtained from interview with Malam Musa Mai Sunan Malam.

Loss of wealth

Most if not all syncretic practices are money-incurred adventures. Take it from those involved in visiting some soothsayers (mai *tsubbu*) seeking this or that. Most of the so-called Malams take advantage of their misadventure and often ask them to bring this or that for sacrifice. The resources they would have used to better their lives and that of their families are wrongly channeled into devil's work. Again, take for example the *lancika* house in the outskirts of Lafia; the activities there involve women, mostly young girls dancing almost nakedly while the men take comfort in watching them, feasting and spreading money unto them. If the men had put the money wasted there to good use, say on their families, their wealth would have been blessed the more.

Furthermore, in an interview with Malam Isa Doma, he noted that the latest syncretic practices in the state which cuts across the entire northern states is marital/wedding syncretic practices. It is very common now to see Muslim weddings being accompanied with all the western shenanigans involving such anti-Islamic activities like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Sisters' Day, Brothers' Day, *Kauyawa* Day, *Fulani* Day, *Hausawa* Day, etc. This syncretic practice has become a norm now in our society, it is like the modernized form of picnic nowadays. This is because it involves men and women, boys and girls coming together, drumming and dancing half-nakedly, and sometimes it goes beyond that.

Loss of lives

Some actions and inactions of the syncretic practitioners end up in hurting others or themselves, sometimes even lives are involved. This is because some people go out of their way to use charm upon their fellow human beings with the intention of causing

them harm or killing them completely for their personal gain. Others inflict injuries upon one another in the name of *Kaura* cultural exhibition, a kind of display of power, strength and prowess for cheap popularity during the period of celebration such as festive period, *Eid* celebration, wedding or some royal coronation. This kind of traditional sporting game sometimes involves lives of the participants or accidentally the on-lookers since weapons such as local guns, knives, spears, cutlasses or well-crafted and charmed/spelled sticks (in the case of Fulani *sharo*) are involved.

In addition to the above, Malam Jibrin revealed (through an interview) that some bad eggs among the Muslims who visit those corrupt Islamic scholars are asked to bring not just animals, but some parts of human beings for sacrifice. In order for their needs to be granted, they are sometimes asked to bring human eyes, breasts, private parts, etc. and when this happens, it means somebody has to be killed for such parts to be extracted. Sometimes they are even asked to sleep with dead bodies for their requests to be granted.

Creation of enmity

Enemies are created by words and by deeds. Since syncretism involves fusion of two or more unlikely beliefs, ideas or deeds as if they were the same, enmity is easily created in the act. For example, Islam says no to visit any corrupt scholar seeking divination or clarification on any future occurrence or on hidden motives of people. According to Auwal, it is very unfortunate the way Muslims, especially women do frequent those Malams seeking to know what evil is so, so and so planning against them. The Malams then take advantage of their misdeed and fill their ears with whatever they want to hear. Thus, enmity is created between them and their co-wives, husbands, in-laws, step-mothers, step-sisters, etc. This is just one of the many instances where syncretic practices often create enmity in the society.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion that has been stated above, some conclusions from this study is that syncretism behaviours are still often done among Muslim community in Nasarawa State because they want to preserve their culture as well as the syncretic behaviors perceived not derivate from their religious teachings. This study has investigated syncretic practices among Muslims in Nasarawa State. The paper appraise the extent of religious syncretism among Muslims in selected ethnic communities in Nasarawa State that were involved in it despite the long advent of Islam in their midst. It has been discovered in the research the reasons and manifestations as well as giving Islamic rulings on each of these syncretic beliefs and practices. The paper also reveals major problems of syncretism among the Muslims in Nasarawa State that is born out of the fact that some of them do not have adequate knowledge of 'pristine' (true) Islam and are ignorant of oneness or unity of Allah, (*Tawhīd*). It is concluded the problem of religious syncretism among the Muslims in Nasarawa State is as a result of the legacies of African traditional religions, as many Muslims cannot see any difference in Muslims worshipping their ancestors; otherwise called participating in his traditional festivals so as to promote the good and progress of society and themselves. According to them, Islam does not debar them from participating in their traditional rites. Base on the

above mentioned statement, the paper recommends that relentless religious and awareness should be mounted everywhere in the villages of Nasarawa State with a view to making the Muslim Malams and their clients realise the evil of syncretism. They should be made to realise that Islam as a perfect religion proffers solutions to all the various problems that face human existence.

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TABLE OF INTERVIEWEES

S/N	Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
1.	Dahiru Liman	54	Islamic Preacher	Sabon Gari Awe	Awe Central Mosque	16/08/2020
2.	Aminu Mada	42	Civil Servant	Akwanga	Akwanga	21/82020
3.	Awwal Abdulrahman	48	Islamic Scholar	Pada	Emir Mosque	16/08/2020
4.	Aminu Kokari	20	Business	Adogi	Adogi	28/10/2020
5.	Ayiwulu Anzaku	92	Farmer	Mada Station	GSS Mada Station	19/08/2020
6.	Lubabatu Ayoshi	33	Trader	St. Williams Doma	Govt. Tech. College Doma	17/08/2020
7.	Haj. Faty Yahaya Aliyu	60	House Wife	Danka Lafiya	Danka Lafiya	17/08/2020
8.	Ummi Oyiza	40	Trader	Doma	Doma	29/09/2020
9.	Fatima Saheed	43	Civil Servant	Garaku	Garaku	21/07/2020
10.	Zainab Shuaibu	32	Trader	Karshi	Karshi	29/09/2020
11.	Shuaibu A. Hammed	27	Trader	Keffi	Keffi	05/10/2020
12.	Murjanatul Nalaraba	40	Civil Servant	Mararaba Akunza	Mararaba Akunza	05/09/2020
13.	Mubarak Abdulraof	19	Business	Keffi	Keffi	05/10/2020
14.	Zubairu Abdullahi	28	Student	Mararaba Akunza	Mararaba Akunza	05/09/2020
15.	Ahmad Ibrahim	50	NURTW	Wamba Road	Wamba Road	19/08/2020
16.	Sanusi Musa	32	Student	Mararaba Akunza	Mararaba Akunza	05/09/2020
17.	Usman Abdullahi	19	Business	Agwada	Agwada	14/11/2020
18.	Abubakar Muhammad	32	Business	Agwada	Agwada	14/11/2020
19.	Halima Tijjani	30	Student	Agyaragu Tofa	Agyaragu Tofa	02/09/2020
20.	Zainab Zakari	25	Student	Agyaragu Tofa	Agyaragu Tofa	02/09/2020
21.	Bangi Hamisu	23	Student	Agyaragu Tofa	Agyaragu Tofa	02/09/2020

S/N	Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
22.	Nimatallahi Abdulhamid	35	Business	Keffi	Keffi	05/10/2020
23.	Tukura Muhammad	30	Business	Keffi	Keffi	05/10/2020
24.	Rafi'u Boyi	29	Student	Agyaragu Tofa	Agyaragu Tofa	02/09/2020
25.	Abdulhamid Ramalan	40	Business	Keffi	Keffi	16/10/2020
26.	Mohammed Ramalan Moh'd	43	Business	Keffi	Keffi	16/10/2020
27.	Abdullah Safiyanu	32	Business	Keffi	Keffi	16/10/2020
28.	Hamza Isa Angulu	39	Business	Keffi	Keffi	16/10/2020
29.	Dogara Idoko	37	Civil Servant	Amba	Amba, Doma	17/08/2020
30.	Zaidu Imran	41	Mechanic	Emirs Palace Doma	Emirs Palace Doma	17/08/2020
31.	Mustapha Abdulwahab	46	Business	Tudun Kwashi, Lafia	Tudun Kwashi, Lafia	19/11/2020
32.	Sadiya Ibrahim	40	Civil Servant	Awe	Awe	23/09/2020
33.	Sabo Mansur	32	Civil Servant	Awe	Awe	23/09/2020
34.	Opeyemi Abubakar	38	Business	Keffi	Keffi	05/10/2020
35.	Hadiza Muhammad	36	House Wife	Garaku	Garaku	28/08/2020
36.	Yusuf Dauda	43	Civil Servant	Baki Kasuwa	Baki Kasuwa, Wamba	19/08/2020
37.	Mustapha Laminu	40	Business	Bakin Rijiya	Bakin Rijiya, Lafia	16/10/2020
38.	Maishanu Balarabe	40	Business	Sabon Gida	Sabon Gida, Kokona	03/11/2020
39.	Mal. Musa Mai Sunan Mallam	74	Islamic Scholar	Rice Mill	Rice Mill Lafia	17/08/2020
40.	Malam Isa Doma	49	Islamic Scholars	Doma	Doma	23/11/2020