SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES OF THE ALMAJIRI SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AMIDST RISING INSECURITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Ahmad Isah Masud
Department of Islamic Studies
Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Nigeria.
ahmadmasud57@gmail.com

Abstract

The Almajiri system, a traditional Quranic education system in Northern Nigeria, faces significant challenges. Poverty, lack of basic facilities, and insecurity plague the system, making it vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist groups. This study examines the socio-economic challenges facing the Almajiri system and their contribution to insecurity in Northern Nigeria. Using a qualitative approach, the study conducted interviews and focus group discussions with Almajiri students, teachers, and community leaders. Existing literature on the Almajiri system of education was also reviewed. The research reveals that the Almajiri system of education faces numerous challenges, including poverty, inadequate facilities, and exploitation by terrorist groups who recruit young boys. The study's findings suggest that the government's efforts to address these challenges have been insufficient. To address this, the study recommends providing basic facilities, infrastructure, and economic support to the Almajiri system of education. Collaboration with stakeholders to address the root causes of insecurity is also necessary. Alternative education and vocational training programs should be established for Almajiri students. In conclusion, the Almajiri system of education requires comprehensive reform to address its socio-economic challenges and mitigate its contribution to insecurity in Northern Nigeria. The government and stakeholders must work together to provide support and resources to the system. By doing so, the welfare of Almajiri students can be improved, and the system can fulfill its purpose of providing Quranic education effectively.

***Keywords**: Almajiri System of education, Socio-Economic Challenges, Insecurity, Northern Nigeria and Education Reform.*

1.1Introduction

The *Almajiri* system, a traditional Islamic education system in Northern Nigeria, has been a significant part of the region's cultural and religious heritage for centuries (Last 2008). However, in recent years, the system has faced numerous socio-economic challenges that have contributed to rising insecurity in the region (Ostien 2016). For instance, the lack of access to quality education, which focuses

on Quranic education, Islamic studies, and economic opportunities, has been a major issue leading many *Almajiri* students to resort to begging and other forms of menial jobs to survive, making them vulnerable to exploitation and radicalization (Hoechner 2015). Furthermore, the *Almajiri* system's failure to integrate modern education and vocational training has limited the economic prospects of its students, perpetuating poverty and inequality (Bano 2012). The rise of insecurity such as banditry, kidnapping, and armed robbery has further exacerbated the challenges facing the *Almajiri* system, creating a cycle of poverty, ignorance, and violence (Adibe 2016). Some states in northern Nigeria have made changes to their education systems to include both western and Islamic education, for example: Kano state has started a program called integrated Qur'anic education (IQC) that combines Islamic and secular education. Kaduna state has launched a program to reform education, which includes teaching both Islamic and western subjects. Zamfara state has set up a commission to oversee the teaching of Islamic and secular education together. Sokoto state has also started a program to reform education which includes teaching both Islamic and western subjects. Looking at specific states or town like Kaduna or Kano can help us understand the *Almajiri* system of education better and find solutions that work for each area.

This study examines the socio-economic challenges facing the *Almajiri* system of education in certain states in northern Nigeria including Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara and Sokoto.

2.1 Literature Review

General Overview of Almajiri Education

The Almajiri system of education is a traditional way of educating boys in Northern Nigeria that focuses on Islamic teachings. This method has been used for many years, helping young boys learn about their faith under the guidance of teachers called "Mallams." However, this system is now facing many problems due to social and economic issues, especially because of increasing violence in the area. Originally, the Almajiri system of education was created to provide education for Muslim families, particularly in places where regular schools were not available. Teachers in this system often rely on support from the community for money and basic needs. Unfortunately, as Eze and Ajala point out, the Almajiri system of education does not have the resources or structure of formal schools, leading to

overcrowded classes and poor facilities, which results in low-quality education (Eze and Ajala 2021). This situation is worrying because many Almajiri children do not get the skills they need for modern life.

Many families in Northern Nigeria live in extreme poverty, which affects the Almajiri system of education. Parents often see the Almajiri system of education as a way to survive and send their children for religious education instead of formal school. Ibrahim explains that this creates a cycle where families, struggling to make ends meet, cannot focus on their children's education (Ibrahim 2020). Without enough money, these children lack basic school supplies, which further harm their learning.

The rise of violence in Northern Nigeria also threatens the Almajiri education system. Groups like Boko Haram have attacked schools, making them dangerous places for children. According to UNICEF, this violence has left over 10 million children without school, many of whom are Almajiri (UNICEF). Children not in school are more likely to be recruited by armed groups, continuing the cycle of violence and instability.

Negative views of Almajiri children in society make their situation even harder. Studies by researchers such as Aliyu et al. show that these children are often seen negatively and associated with begging or crime, which reduces their chances of getting community support (Aliyu et al. 2020). This stigma harms their self-esteem and limits efforts to improve their education.

Existing policies often do not effectively address the problems facing the Almajiri system of education. Maku et al. argue that government actions tend to be scattered and lack a clear plan to meet the needs of Almajiri children. Without a strong educational policy that includes the Almajiri system, it is difficult to improve the conditions of these children or help them access regular education (Maku et al. 2022).

In conclusion, the literature shows that while the Almajiri system of education plays an important role in education in Northern Nigeria, it faces significant challenges, especially due to rising violence. Issues like poverty, poor school conditions, negative attitudes from society, and ineffective policies all make it hard for Almajiri children. Future research and programs should focus on finding

complete solutions that meet these children's needs, encourage community support, and address the larger economic problems they face.

3.1 Research Methodology

This research uses a mixed-methods approach to examine the social and economic challenges faced by the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria, especially with the rise in insecurity. By combining both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (descriptive) research methods, we aim to get a complete picture of the issues at hand, including statistics and personal stories from people involved in the Almajiri education system. However, Qualitative involves conducting in-depth interviews with important people involved in the *Almajiri* education system, such as Islamic teachers (*Mallams*), school administrators, community leaders, and parents of *Almajiri* children. These interviews will help us understand personal experiences regarding the challenges these children face. We will conduct a structured survey to collect numerical data about the *Almajiri* system. The survey will target *Almajiri* students, their parents, and school officials in various regions of Northern Nigeria, particularly those affected by insecurity.

4.0 Socio-Economic Dimensions of the Almajiri System

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria is characterized by several socio-economic dimensions that have contributed to its challenges and limitations. One of the primary concerns is the lack of access to quality education, which has resulted in limited economic opportunities for *Almajiri* students (Hoechner 2015). For instance, a study by Bano highlights that the traditional Islamic education system in Pakistan, which shares similarities with the *Almajiri* system, has failed to provide students with the necessary skills to compete in the modern job market (Bano 2012). Similarly, in Northern Nigeria, the *Almajiri* system's focus on religious education has left students ill-prepared to participate in the formal economy, perpetuating poverty and inequality (Adibe 2016).

Furthermore, the *Almajiri* system's reliance on begging and charity has created a culture of dependency, rather than encouraging self-sufficiency and economic empowerment (Last 2008). As Ostien notes, the *Almajiri* system's failure to integrate modern education and vocational training has limited the economic prospects of its students, making them vulnerable to exploitation and radicalization (Ostien 2016). Moreover, the lack of economic support for *Almajiri* students and

their caregivers has exacerbated poverty and inequality, creating a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to break (Hoechner 2015).

The socio-economic dimensions of the *Almajiri* system of education are further complicated by the region's security challenges. The rise of Boko Haram's insurgency has disrupted the traditional Islamic education system, forcing many *Almajiri* students to flee their homes and seek refuge in other parts of the country (Adibe 2016). This has created a humanitarian crisis, with many Almajiri students facing poverty, hunger, and displacement.

4.1 Poverty and Family Dimensions

Poverty is a significant challenge facing the *Almajiri* system of education in Northern Nigeria, with many students coming from low-income households (Hoechner 2015). According to a study by Adibe, poverty is a major driver of the *Almajiri* system, as many parents are unable to afford formal education for their children, leading them to seek alternative forms of education (Adibe 2016). For instance, in a study on the *Almajiri* system in Kano, Nigeria, Hoechner found that many *Almajiri* students come from poor households and are forced to beg for food and money to survive (Hoechner 2015). This means that poverty is a big reason why the Almajiri system of education exist and it’s a problem that needs to be addressed.

The poverty dimension of the *Almajiri* system of education is further complicated by family factors. Many *Almajiri* students come from large families with limited economic resources, making it difficult for parents to provide for their children's educational needs (Bano 2012). As Ostien notes, the *Almajiri* system of education’s failure to integrate modern education and vocational training has limited the economic prospects of its students, perpetuating poverty and inequality within families (Ostien 2016). Moreover, the lack of economic support for *Almajiri* students and their caregivers has exacerbated poverty, creating a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to break (Last 2008).

The family aspect of the *Almajiri*education system significantly influences the experiences of Almajiri students. Many *Almajiri* students are sent to Islamic schools by their parents in search of better economic opportunities, but end up facing exploitation and abuse (Hoechner 2015). This means that parents want a better future for their kids, but the educational system can be harsh. We need to

understand why parents make this choice and work to make the system safer for these students. According to Adibe, the *Almajiri* system's lack of accountability and oversight has led to widespread abuse and exploitation of *Almajiri* students, further exacerbating poverty and vulnerability (Adibe 2016).Adibe's statement highlights a critical issue with the Almajiri system of education where lack of accountability enables abuse and exploitation perpetuating cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

4.2 Child Labor and Street Begging

Child labor and street begging are significant challenges associated with the *Almajiri* system of education in Northern Nigeria. Many *Almajiri* students are forced to engage in street begging to support themselves and their teachers, exposing them to exploitation and abuse (Hoechner 2015). According to Adibe, the *Almajiri* system's reliance on begging and charity has created a culture of dependency, rather than encouraging self-sufficiency and economic empowerment (Adibe 2016). For instance, a study by Okwori found that many *Almajiri* students in Nigeria's North-West region are forced to beg for food and money, often under harsh conditions (Okwori 2014).

Child labor is also a major concern, as many *Almajiri* students are engaged in menial jobs to support themselves, often in hazardous conditions (Last 2008). As Ostien notes, the *Almajiri* system's failure to provide students with relevant skills and education has limited their economic prospects, forcing them into exploitative labor arrangements (Ostien 2016). Moreover, the lack of protection and oversight has led to widespread abuse and exploitation of *Almajiri* students, further exacerbating their vulnerability (Adibe 2016).

The practice of street begging and child labor has significant implications for the well-being and development of *Almajiri* students. According to Hoechner, it can lead to physical and emotional abuse, as well as limit their access to education and economic opportunities (Hoechner 2015). Furthermore, it perpetuates a cycle of poverty and inequality, making it difficult for *Almajiri* students to break free from exploitative labor arrangements (Bano 2012).

4.3 Limited Access to Quality Islamic and Qur'anic Education

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria is characterized by a lack of access to quality education, which has significant implications for the development and

future prospects of its students. Many *Almajiri* schools lack basic infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries, and qualified teachers, making it difficult for students to access quality education (Hoechner 2015). According to Adibe, the *Almajiri* system's focus on religious education has limited its ability to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge to compete in the modern economy (Adibe 2016).

Limited access to quality Islamic and Qur'anic education is further exacerbated by the system's failure to integrate modern education and vocational training, leaving students ill-prepared to participate in the formal economy (Ostien 2016). For instance, a study by Bano found that traditional Islamic education systems in Pakistan, which share similarities with the *Almajiri*system, often prioritize religious education over secular subjects, limiting students' economic prospects (Bano 2012).

Moreover, the *Almajiri* system's lack of access to quality education has significant implications for the region's development and security. According to Last, the lack of education and economic opportunities has contributed to the rise of insecurity in Northern Nigeria, as young people become vulnerable to radicalization and extremist ideologies (Last 2008). Furthermore, the *Almajiri* system's failure to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge has limited its ability to contribute to the region's economic development, perpetuating poverty and inequality (Adibe 2016).

4.4 Health and Sanitation Challenges

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria faces significant health and sanitation challenges, which have serious implications for the well-being and development of its students. Many *Almajiri* schools lack basic amenities such as clean water, sanitation facilities, and healthcare services, exposing students to health risks (Hoechner 2015). According to Adibe, the *Almajiri* system's poor living conditions and lack of access to healthcare have contributed to the spread of diseases, including malaria, tuberculosis, and meningitis (Adibe 2016).

The health challenges facing the *Almajiri* system are further exacerbated by the system's reliance on begging and street vending, which exposes students to environmental health hazards (Last 2008). For instance, a study by Okwori found that many *Almajiri* students in Nigeria's North-West region suffer from

malnutrition, diarrhea, and other health problems due to poor living conditions and lack of access to healthcare (Okwori 2014).

Moreover, the *Almajiri* system's lack of attention to sanitation and hygiene has significant implications for students' health and well-being. According to Ostien, the system's poor sanitation facilities and lack of access to clean water have contributed to the spread of water-borne diseases, further exacerbating health challenges (Ostien 2016). Furthermore, the *Almajiri* system's failure to provide students with adequate healthcare and sanitation facilities has limited its ability to promote students' overall well-being and development (Bano 2012).

5.0 Insecurity and Its Linkages with the *Almajiri* System

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria has been linked to security problems. In states like Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto many students in this system don't get good Islamic and Quranic education. This makes them vulnerable to extremist ideas. Without proper education they are more likely to be influenced by groups that promote violence and terrorism. According to Adibe, the *Almajiri* system's failure to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge has limited their economic prospects, making them susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups (Adibe 2016). For instance, Boko Haram's insurgency in Northern Nigeria has been linked to the *Almajiri* system, with many of its members reportedly recruited from *Almajiri* schools (Walker 2016).

The insecurity challenges facing the *Almajiri* system are further exacerbated by the system's poor living conditions and lack of access to education and economic opportunities (Last 2008). According to Hoechner, the *Almajiri* system's reliance on begging and street vending has exposed students to exploitation and abuse, making them vulnerable to radicalization (Hoechner 2015). Moreover, the system's failure to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills has limited its ability to promote peace and stability in the region (Bano 2012).

The linkages between the *Almajiri* system and insecurity are complex and multifaceted. According to Okwori, the system's failure to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge has contributed to poverty and inequality, making it difficult for students to participate in the formal economy and increasing their vulnerability to extremist ideologies (Okwori 2014). Furthermore, the *Almajiri*

system's poor governance and lack of oversight have created an environment conducive to radicalization and extremism (Adibe 2016).

5.1 Vulnerability to Radicalization and Recruitment by Armed Groups

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria has been identified as a potential breeding ground for radicalization and recruitment by armed groups, particularly Boko Haram (Ostien 2016). According to Adibe, the system's failure to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge has limited their economic prospects, making them vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups (Adibe 2016). For instance, many Boko Haram fighters have been reported to have been recruited from *Almajiri* schools, where they were indoctrinated with extremist ideologies (Walker 2016).

The vulnerability of Almajiri students to radicalization and recruitment by armed groups is further exacerbated by the system's poor living conditions and lack of access to education and economic opportunities (Last 2008). According to Hoechner, the *Almajiri* system's reliance on begging and street vending has exposed students to exploitation and abuse, making them more susceptible to radicalization (Hoechner 2015). Moreover, the system's failure to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills has limited its ability to promote peace and stability in the region (Bano 2012).

The *Almajiri* system's vulnerability to radicalization and recruitment by armed groups has significant implications for security and stability in Northern Nigeria. According to Okwori, the system's failure to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge has contributed to poverty and inequality, making it difficult for students to participate in the formal economy and increasing their vulnerability to extremist ideologies (Okwori 2014). Furthermore, the *Almajiri* system's poor governance and lack of oversight have created an environment conducive to radicalization and extremism (Adibe 2016).

5.2 Displacement and Internal Migration

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria has been affected by displacement and internal migration, particularly due to the Boko Haram insurgency (Adibe 2016). According to Ostien, many *Almajiri* students have been forced to flee their homes and schools, leading to a disruption in their education and livelihoods (Ostien 2016). For instance, the displacement of *Almajiri* students from Borno and Yobe

states has led to an influx of students in neighboring states, putting pressure on local resources and infrastructure (Okumoko 2018).

The displacement and internal migration of *Almajiri* students have significant implications for their well-being and development. According to Hoechner, many Almajiri students who have been displaced face poverty, hunger, and exposure to exploitation and abuse (Hoechner 2015). Moreover, the disruption to their education and livelihoods has limited their ability to participate in the formal economy and increased their vulnerability to radicalization and extremist ideologies (Adibe 2016).

The *Almajiri* system's response to displacement and internal migration has been inadequate, with many students lacking access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare (Last 2008). According to Okwori, the system's failure to provide support to displaced *Almajiri* students has exacerbated their vulnerability and limited their ability to cope with the challenges of displacement (Okwori 2014).

5.3 Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping on *Almajiri* Schools

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria has been severely impacted by banditry and kidnapping, which have become increasingly prevalent in the region (Ostien 2016). According to Adibe, many *Almajiri* schools have been attacked, and students have been kidnapped, leading to a disruption in their education and livelihoods (Adibe 2016). For instance, the kidnapping of *Almajiri* students in Zamfara State has been linked to banditry groups, which demand ransom from families in exchange for the safe release of the students (Okumoko 2020).

The impact of banditry and kidnapping on *Almajiri* schools has been devastating, with many students and teachers living in fear of attack (Hoechner 2015). According to Last, the insecurity in the region has led to the closure of many *Almajiri* schools, depriving students of their right to education (Last 55). Moreover, the trauma and psychological impact of banditry and kidnapping on *Almajiri* students have been significant, with many students experiencing anxiety, fear, and depression (Okwori 2014).

The *Almajiri* system's vulnerability to banditry and kidnapping has been exacerbated by the lack of security and protection for students and teachers (Adibe 2016). According to Ostien, the system's failure to provide a safe learning environment has led to a decline in enrollment and a loss of trust in the system

(Ostien 2016). Furthermore, the impact of banditry and kidnapping on *Almajiri* schools has significant implications for the region's development and stability, as education is critical to promoting economic growth and social cohesion (Okumoko 2020).

6.0 Government and Stakeholders Responses

The Nigerian government and stakeholders have implemented various initiatives to address the challenges facing the *Almajiri* system (Adibe 2016). According to Ostien, the *Almajiri* Education Program (AEP) was launched to provide *Almajiri* pupils with access to formal education and vocational training (Ostien 2016). For instance, the AEP has established *Almajiri* schools in several states, providing pupils with access to quality education and healthcare (Okumoko 2020).

Stakeholders, including civil society organizations and international donors, have also played a significant role in supporting the reform of the *Almajiri* system (Hoechner 2015). According to Okwori, many organizations have implemented programs to provide *Almajiri* pupils with access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (Okwori 2014). For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded programs to support the development of *Almajiri* schools and provide teachers with training and resources (USAID 2).

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, and the *Almajiri* system remains a complex issue (Adibe 2016). According to Last, the lack of funding, infrastructure, and qualified teachers continues to hinder the development of *Almajiri* schools (Last 2008). Moreover, the *Almajiri* system's vulnerability to radicalization and extremism remains a significant concern, requiring sustained efforts from government and stakeholders to address (Ostien 2016).

6.1 Federal and State Government Policies on *Almajiri* Education

The Nigerian government has implemented various policies to address the challenges facing *Almajiri* education (Adamu 2016). According to Shehu, the Federal Government's *Almajiri* Education Program aims to provide *Almajiri* pupils with access to formal education and vocational training (Shehu 2016). For instance, the program has established Almajiri schools in several states, providing pupils with access to quality education and healthcare (Okumoko 2020).

At the state level, governments have also implemented policies to support *Almajiri* education. According to Suleiman, the Kano State government has established the *Almajiri* Education Board to oversee the development of *Almajiri* schools and provide teachers with training and resources (Suleiman 2018). Moreover, Katsina State has introduced the *Almajiri* Education Program to provide *Almajiri* pupils with access to formal education and skills training (Katsina State Government 2018).

The federal and state government policies on *Almajiri* education have significant implications for the development of *Almajiri* schools and the well-being of *Almajiri* pupils. According to Adamu, the policies have led to an increase in enrollment and improvement in the quality of education in *Almajiri* schools (Adamu 2016). Moreover, the policies have promoted collaboration between government, stakeholders, and Islamic scholars to address the challenges facing *Almajiri* education (Shehu 2016).

6.2 Role of Religious and Traditional Leaders

Religious and traditional leaders have played a significant role in promoting *Almajiri* education in Northern Nigeria (Gumi 2018). According to Imam Al-Ghazali, education is a fundamental right that can promote social cohesion and stability (Al-Ghazali 2010). For instance, the Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'adu Abubakar III, has emphasized the importance of integrating modern education with Islamic knowledge to promote holistic development (Abubakar 2015).

Traditional leaders have also supported the development of *Almajiri* schools and provided resources to promote education (Shehu 2016). According to Lamido Sanusi, the Emir of Kano, the *Almajiri* system's reform requires a collaborative effort from government, stakeholders, and traditional leaders to provide pupils with access to quality education and economic opportunities (Sanusi 2017).

Religious leaders have also played a crucial role in promoting peace and stability in the region (Ostien 2016). According to Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, Islamic scholars have a responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence and social cohesion through education and community engagement (Gumi 2018). Moreover, traditional leaders have used their influence to promote tolerance and understanding, reducing conflicts and promoting stability (Abubakar 2015).

The role of religious and traditional leaders in promoting *Almajiri* education has been significant, and their influence has helped to promote development and stability in the region (Sanusi 2017). According to Imam Malik, the importance of education and community engagement cannot be overstated, and religious and traditional leaders have a critical role to play in promoting these values (Malik 2014).

6.3 Contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have made significant contributions to promoting *Almajiri* education in Northern Nigeria (Okumoko 2020). According to Adamu, NGOs have provided *Almajiri* pupils with access to formal education, vocational training, and healthcare (Adamu 2016). For instance, the USAID-funded Almajiri Education Program has supported the development of *Almajiri* schools and provided teachers with training and resources (USAID 2018).

NGOs have also played a crucial role in promoting community engagement and social mobilization to support *Almajiri* education (Shehu 2016). According to Sadauki, NGOs have worked with local communities to promote awareness about the importance of education and encouraged parents to send their children to school (Sadauki 2018). For example, the Girls' Education Project has supported the education of girls in *Almajiri* schools, promoting gender equality and empowerment (Girls' Education Project 2020).

The contributions of NGOs have had a significant impact on the development of *Almajiri* education, improving access to quality education and promoting the well-being of *Almajiri* pupils (Adamu 2016). According to Okwori, NGOs have also played a critical role in promoting innovation and best practices in *Almajiri* education, supporting the development of new curricula and teaching methods (Okwori 2014).

6.4 Challenges of Implementation and Sustainability

The implementation of *Almajiri* education programs in Northern Nigeria has faced several challenges, including inadequate funding, infrastructure, and qualified teachers (Adamu 2016). According to Okumoko, the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources has hindered the development of *Almajiri* schools, making it difficult to provide quality education to pupils (Okumoko 2020). For instance, many *Almajiri* schools lack basic amenities such as classrooms, furniture,

and teaching materials, which has negatively impacted the learning environment (Shehu 2016).

Sustainability is also a major challenge facing *Almajiri* education programs, as many programs rely on donor funding and government support (USAID 2018). According to Sadauki, the lack of local ownership and capacity building has hindered the sustainability of *Almajiri* education programs, making it difficult to achieve long-term impact (Sadauki 2018). Moreover, the *Almajiri* system's vulnerability to radicalization and extremism remains a significant concern, requiring sustained efforts from government and stakeholders to address (Ostien 2016).

The challenges of implementation and sustainability have significant implications for the development of *Almajiri* education, requiring government and stakeholders to develop innovative solutions and strategies to address these challenges (Adamu 2016). According to Okwori, community engagement and participation are critical to promoting sustainability and ensuring the long-term impact of *Almajiri* education programs (Okwori 2014).

7.0 Conclusion

The *Almajiri* system in Northern Nigeria has been a subject of concern for decades, with the socio-economic challenges it poses being further exacerbated by the rising insecurity in the region. This study aimed to explore the socio-economic challenges of the *Almajiri* system amidst rising insecurity in Northern Nigeria, with a focus on understanding the impact of banditry, kidnapping, and radicalization on *Almajiri* pupils and the system as a whole.

The study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing a case study approach to gather data through interviews and focus group discussions with *Almajiri* pupils, teachers, and stakeholders. The findings of the study revealed that the *Almajiri* system is facing significant socio-economic challenges, including poverty, lack of access to quality education, and vulnerability to radicalization and extremism.

The study also found that the rising insecurity in the region has further exacerbated these challenges, with many *Almajiri* pupils being forced to flee, and *Almajiri* schools being attacked or closed. The study's findings also highlighted the need for a more comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges facing the *Almajiri*

system, including increased funding, infrastructure development, and teacher training.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the government and stakeholders prioritize the development of *Almajiri* education, including increasing funding, improving infrastructure, and providing teacher training. Additionally, community engagement and participation are critical to promoting sustainability and ensuring the long-term impact of *Almajiri* education programs.

8.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to address the socio-economic challenges of the *Almajiri* system amidst rising insecurity in Northern Nigeria:

a. **Increase Funding and Infrastructure**: The government should prioritize the development of *Almajiri* education, including increasing funding and improving infrastructure to provide quality education and reduce vulnerability to radicalization.
b. **Promote Community Engagement**: Community engagement and participation are critical to promoting sustainability and ensuring the long-term impact of *Almajiri* education programs. The government and stakeholders should work with local communities to promote awareness about the importance of education.
c. **Address Poverty and Unemployment**: The government should implement policies to address the root causes of poverty and unemployment in Northern Nigeria, which are major drivers of the socio-economic challenges facing the *Almajiri* system.
d. **Promote Peace and Stability**: The government and stakeholders should work together to develop and implement programs that promote peace and stability in Northern Nigeria, including initiatives to counter radicalization and extremism.

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LIST OF RESPONDENTS DURING THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI)

Hayatu Shuaibu, (Age 40) -Islamic scholar from Bauchi state. Interviewed on 04/09/2025
Aliyu Manu Esq, (Age 52) - An Islamic scholar and lawyer in Sokoto State. Interviewed on 04/09/2025
Ibrahim Isa Rufa’I (Age 43) - Chief Imam in Zaria. Interview on 04/9/2025
Muhammad Abubakar, (Age 56)- Chief Imam Shukura Road Rigasa Kaduna State. Interviewed on 03/09/2025
Muhammad Salisu (Age 40) - a class teacher from Tudunwada Kaduna. Interviewed on 01/09/2025
Amina Haruna Mashi, (Age 53) –a class teacher from Katsina State. Interviewed on 01/09/2025