

University of Salford, Manchester

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE  
ALMAJIRI SYSTEM IN BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA

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## **List of Abbreviations**

IPOB - Indigenous People of Biafra

ISWAP – Islamic State West Africa Province

NBS – National Bureau of Statistics

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CAN – Christian Association of Nigeria

NYSC – National Youth Service Corps

BRC – Bauchi Radio Corporation

BBC – Bauchi Broadcasting Corporation

BATV – Bauchi State Television

NTA – Nigeria Television Authority

AIT – Africa Independent Television

NAN – News Agency of Nigeria

ICPC – Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission

EFCC – Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

PCAC – Public Complaints and Anti-Corruption Commission

CISLAC - Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre

SEC - State Executive Council

APC – All Progressives Congress

PDP – Peoples Democratic Party

UBA – United Bank for Africa

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

VVF – Vesicovaginal Fistula

NHS – National Health Service

NGOs – Non-governmental Organisations

TA – Thematic Analysis

RTA – Reflexive Thematic Analysis

CTA – Codebook Thematic Analysis

CNN – Cable News Network

DW – Deutsche Welle



VOA – Voice of America

AST – Agenda-setting Theory

NFT – News Framing Theory

SRT – Social Responsibility Theory

AJ – Advocacy Journalism

CBS – Columbia Broadcasting System

RTL - Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines

NPC - Nigeria Press Council

## Glossary of Key Terms

- Almajiri - Singular term for Almajiri child
- Almajirai – Plural term for Almajiri
- Al-muhajirun - The Arabic root word for Almajiri
- Almajiranci – The concept of Almajiri education
- Allo – A wooden slate that Almajirai use to inscribe Arabic alphabets
- Arewa – Hausa term for northern Nigeria
- Bara – Hausa term for Begging
- Boka – Hausa term for native doctor
- Boko – Western or formal education
- Boko Haram – A northern Nigerian extremist group
- Gardi – Term for students in the final stage of Almajiri education (13-16 years old)
- Gardawa - Plural term for Gardi
- Hijra – Arabic for migration or emigration
- Islamiyah – A school in northern Nigeria for children of the Muslim elite
- Kolo - Term for students in the first stage of Almajiri education (4-8 years old)
- Kolawa - plural term for Kolo
- Laya – Charm supplied by native doctors to the sick
- Mallam- Almajiri teacher (derived from Arabic Mu'allim, meaning “teacher”)
- Mallamai – Plural term for Mallam
- Makarantar Allo – Another term for Almajiri education
- Mai Kose – Vendors of bean cakes found in northern Nigeria
- Mai Masa – Vendors of rice or corn cakes found in northern Nigeria
- Sara-Suka – Bauchi local gangs
- Tarbiya – Hausa for good moral behaviour
- Tsangaya – The initial term for Almajiri education
- Titibiri - Term for students in the second stage of Almajiri education (9-12 years old)
- Titibirai – Plural term for Titibiri
- Talibe – The name of an Almajiri in Senegal and some African countries
- Zakat – obligated almsgiving required for all Muslims. Among Islam's five pillars

## **Abstract**

The focus of this research, “An Investigation Into The Media Representation of the Almajiri System In Bauchi State, Nigeria”, is to explore how media organisations represent the conflictual relationship between the Almajiri system and Bauchi society. The primary objective is to investigate the relationship between the Almajiri system and the mass media. The thesis focuses on Bauchi, a region that has had notable security challenges, including religious and ethnic conflicts, as well as political instability, for a considerable period. Consequently, these security issues have greatly hindered Bauchi’s advancement in terms of social and economic growth. The Almajiri system in northern Nigeria is widely perceived as a breeding ground for potential criminals and is considered partially responsible for the current state of instability in Bauchi. However, this study has identified two issues regarding the representation of the Almajiri by mass media. First, the thesis offered a more comprehensive insight into how newspapers’ perspectives on Almajiri representation is deeply problematic. Second, the thesis highlights a system where lack of education and economic opportunity faced by the Almajirai is profoundly concerning. This study proposes that newspapers can address these issues by, first, altering their perspectives on Almajiri representation, and second, that the local radio (the Bauchi Radio Corporation) offers hope for a media facilitated advocacy to alter the existing mindset of the proponents of Almajiranci. Overall, this thesis suggests that Advocacy Journalism has the potential for the amelioration of the representation of the Almajiri and could act as a means through which a more positive future might be built on Almajiri and mass media relationship.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This research trains its focus on the under-addressed topic of the role and position of the Almajiri system in Bauchi State, in northern Nigeria. Its particular concern is the relationship between the mass media and the Almajiri system. For decades, there have been security risks in Bauchi in the form of religious and ethnic conflicts, kidnappings for ransom, armed banditry and robbery, and political thuggery. As a result, some residents have relocated to safer locations while those who remain live in fear, and this had slowed down Bauchi's socio- economic, and developmental growth. The Almajiri Islamic system in northern Nigeria is thought to be a haven for potential criminals and partly to blame for the current state of instability. This study aims to ascertain new evidence on the representation of the Almajiri by selected mass media; to highlight the importance of media advocacy in comprehending how the Almajiri are portrayed in Bauchi State; and to offer suggestions to the media and government on actions to provide more progressive representations of the Almajiri through media.

### **1.2 Nigeria Insecurity Issues and the Almajiri System**

Nigeria has faced security difficulties for decades such as the Maitatsine riots and the Boko Haram insurgency in the northern region, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) unrests in the eastern region, the presence of Area Boys gangs in the western region, and the Niger Delta militant agitations. Additionally, there are nationwide ransom kidnappings, ethnic and religious conflicts, and clashes between Nigerian security forces and demonstrators, to name a few. These issues have drawn the interest of many academics who have aimed their searchlights at the immediate and distant sources of instability in this multi-cultural country. Several causes have been cited as contributing to the current level of insecurity and war. According to Omede & Omede (2015), moral derailment, loss of values, and religious instruction are to blame. Onifade, Imhonopi, & Urim, (2013), hold a similar viewpoint and include ethnic and religious supremacy, unemployment, political corruption, and poverty as important challenges. Within this picture, a small but growing body of scholarly work, Aghedo & Eke, (2013); Goment & Esomchi, (2017); Dixon (2014) has focused on the Almajiri Qur'anic system, found in the north of Nigeria which tends to argue that it has served as a breeding ground for terrorists and gang insurrection.

Lawson et al. (2021) state that in the north of Nigeria, an Almajiri is a male child between age 5 to 16, who is taken to a faraway village, town or city by his parents and left under the custody of an Islamic tutor known as Mallam to be taught how to read Arabic alphabet, memorise the Qur'an, and acquire Islamic Hadith (traditions). Okonkwo (2022) posits that from Prophet Muhammad's time, the pursuit of Islamic knowledge has been a precondition of the Islamic religion, and to make it easier for people to memorise the Qur'an, Qur'anic schools were established concurrently with the early spread of Islam. The Almajiri system was created in northern Nigeria specifically to accomplish this goal of learning about Islam. However, Abdullahi (2021) posits that the conditions under which Almajirai (plural for Almajiri) live are insanitary, degrading, and violent. For their basic needs, Almajirai are compelled to solicit for charitable donations from the public to survive, and it is expected that being far from home, they will be unable to return to their parents due to these challenges. Almajirai do not go to formal schools as their parents and teachers Mallamai (plural for Mallam) consider formal education as un-Islamic.

### **1.3 Gap in Knowledge that this Research will Attempt to Fill**

Academicians have written about the Almajiri system and links to criminal activity in the larger Nigeria's north. It is therefore not a new topic as both local authors (Suleiman et. al. 1985; Sule-Kano, 2008; Awofeso et al. 2003; AbdulQadir, 2003; Oyewumi & Saba, 2014; Edinyang et al. 2020) and foreign authors (Purefoy, 2010; Hoechner, 2012; Hoechner, 2013) to name a few have written about it. It has also generated discussion at conferences where both the elite and common people have given their perspectives on this educational system. Nevertheless, to the researcher's knowledge, no work to date has been done to investigate the representation of the Almajiri system in Bauchi State, Nigeria, through the lens of media theory as a framework for analysis, a gap in knowledge which this research addresses. Newspapers have been selected to provide evidence and to enhance a deeper understanding of the nature of representation of the Almajiri through mass media content. Furthermore, radio is chosen as the focus for advocacy in this research because Almajirai, their parents and teachers are largely uneducated and unable to read or write using the English alphabet. The second dimension of the research is a consideration of the perceptions of Almajiri people by providers of the mass radio medium that they consume. Providing evidence of the kind gathered in this study helps us understand better both the problematic nature, as well as the potential for change in mass media regarding its engagement with – and about – the Almajiri system and those within it.

## **1.4 Researcher Motivations for Conducting This Study**

This study was inspired by two key factors: first, the unfair double standard applied to children's education, which is based on the economic status of their parents, and second, the long-standing insecurity issues in Bauchi society which had impeded its growth and development for decades and ultimately led to poverty. The tradition in Bauchi is that children from low-income families are enrolled into Almajiranci to gain only Islamic knowledge and are misled to believe that formal education is incompatible with Islamic values. In contrast, children from wealthy and middle-class Muslim families are enrolled full time in formal education institutions, and part time (mainly weekends) in Islamic knowledge schools, known as Islamiyya, to acquire Islamic knowledge. Unlike children from middle-class and wealthy Muslim families, the Almajiri system has resulted in the children having no professional options because they did not receive a formal education. Consequently, it has become a breeding ground for Boko Haram and Sara-Suka (Bauchi local criminals). Almajiri youngsters are often employed by self-interested persons, particularly politicians and religious bigots to cause mayhem in society. It is crucial to understand that in Bauchi society, people prioritise their religious, ethnic, and political distinctions over their shared humanity. As a result, during conflicts, that result in the loss of lives and property, religious, ethnic, and political divisions emerge, and Almajirai and graduates of the Almajiri system play a crucial role in the chaos. Over the years, Almajiri teachers (Mallamai) and their supporters have disagreed with the media's coverage of the role of Almajirai in these insecurity issues, leading to strained relations between the Almajiri and the mass media. Thus, this research is an attempt, first, to examine how the media portrays the Almajiri, and second, to explore the potential of mass media serving as a catalyst for Almajiri reform due to the former's influence in society.

It is important to highlight that, despite spending more than 20 years living in Bauchi, the researcher's personal experiences there had no bearing on how this thesis was analysed.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The project will close the gap in knowledge identified in Section 1.3 through providing answers to the following research questions:

1. What role does the mass media play in the representation of the Almajiri system?
2. What challenges do the mass media encounter in representing the Almajiri system in Bauchi State?
3. What is the scope for change in the ways the Almajiri system is represented by the media in Bauchi State?

## **1.6 Study Aim**

In addressing its research questions, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the role Nigerian media organisations play in representing the often conflictual relationship between the Almajiri system and wider Bauchi society. In order to answer its research questions and achieve its aim, the study sets the following objectives:

1. To establish the features and character of selected media content that provides a representation of the Almajiri.
2. To determine and analyse the significance of the challenges that selected mass media encounter in their representation of the Almajiri system.
3. To assess and establish the scope for change in the ways that the Almajiri system is represented in Bauchi media.



## **1.7 Contribution to Knowledge**

This study will contribute to knowledge in three core ways:

**1. Empirical contribution-** new evidence on the representation of the Almajiri by mass media in Bauchi state.

**2. Conceptual contribution** – illustration of the value of media advocacy theory in understanding the representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi state.

According to Ryan (2018) the practise of reporting news in Advocacy Journalism involves switching from a strictly informative to a purely persuasive approach to solve a particular issue. Advocacy Journalism deviates from the supposed objective reporting by showing readiness to provide a subjective take on the news. This study will explore the potential for Bauchi mass media to use Advocacy Journalism geared towards Almajiri reform.

**3. Practical contribution-** recommendations to media and government on actions to improve the representation of the Almajiri through mass media.

To achieve better Almajiri-media relations, the thesis presents proposals which might be considered relevant by both government and mass media on steps that could be taken to improve Almajiri media representation.

## **1.8 Summary of Research Methodology**

This research adopted constructivism as its philosophical viewpoint and deployed an inductive approach through the qualitative research methods of media textual content analysis and semi-structured interviewing. This methodology is chosen due to the nature of the research questions which required interactive sessions with media professionals, government officials, and Mallamai (Almajiri teachers) to understand their challenges and the meaning they ascribe to their lived situation. A full treatment of methodology is provided in Chapter 3 of the thesis.



**Figure 1.1: Niger Delta Agitators (Niger Delta Herald: [www.nigerdeltaherald.com](http://www.nigerdeltaherald.com))**



**Figure 1.2: Area Boys in Lagos (Nigerian Tribune: [tribuneonline.ng](http://tribuneonline.ng))**

## **1.9 An Overview of Bauchi State: History, Governance, Economy, and Tribes**

Since only little has been written on Bauchi State, it is pertinent to highlight the local environment of this study through its history, government, economy, religion, its media systems, a timeline of key conflicts, as well as the possible root causes of insecurity in Bauchi society.

Bauchi State is in Nigeria's northeast sharing borders with Borno State. Borno State serves as the operational base for both Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) insurrection. Bauchi State is overseen by a Governor, while the ancient Bauchi Emirate is ruled by an Emir. Bauchi city is the state's political capital and was founded by a man named Yakubu Ibn Dadi, according to oral history that was eventually written. He had a close hunter companion named Baushe, and he named the city after him. The population of Bauchi State is estimated to be 5 million people. However, it is crucial to note that knowing the exact population figure in any part of Nigeria is challenging as figures are frequently fabricated for political gain. There are several tribes in this diverse state, but the Gerawa, Jarawa, Hausa, Fulani, and Sayawa are the most common. Bauchi is home to the Yankari national game reserve, which has a variety of animals such as hedgehogs, monkeys, elephants, several bird species, and a slew of others (Bauchi State Government, 2019; Musa, 2011; Kabiru, 2001).



**Figure 1.3: Map of Bauchi State (Leadership News: leadership.ng)**



Figure 1.4: Map of Bauchi State Within Nigeria (Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org)



**Bauchi State Government**

*..... Pearl of Tourism!*

Figure 1.5: Bauchi State Government Emblem (Bauchi State Government: [www.bauchistate.gov.ng](http://www.bauchistate.gov.ng))





**Figure 1.6: Bala Mohammed, Bauchi Governor (Naija News: naijanews.com)**



**Figure 1.7: Rilwanu Suleiman Adamu, Emir of Bauchi (Daily Post: dailypost.ng)**

This state has a long political history in Nigeria as Nigeria's first and only Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (from the Gerawa tribe) hails from there. Tafawa Balewa who was assassinated in a military coup on 15 January 1966, is buried in Bauchi. It is significant to state that on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960, Britain granted Nigeria independence. However, the exiting British colonial authority modelled Nigeria's government after the United Kingdom's parliamentary system, which is why Nigeria had a Prime Minister. However, after the assassination of Tafawa Balewa, military control was instituted, followed by a presidential system of government modelled after that of North America (Modu, 2005; Lame,2003).



**Figure 1.8: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria's First Prime Minister (Imago Images: imago-images.com)**



**Figure 1.9: The Mausoleum Housing the Tomb of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi (Daily Nigerian: dailynigerian.com)**

Bauchi's economy is based on agriculture, and peasant farmers make up most of the population. An agency of the Nigerian government, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2010) published a poll and *PM News* (2020) statistics show that poverty is a major concern in Bauchi State, with 73 percent of its population poor. These figures, combined with significant unemployment and with over half population under the age of 19, point to a high danger of instability.





**Figure 1.10: Crude Oil Well at Kolmani Oil Site, Bauchi State (Business Hallmark: hallmarknews.com)**



**Figure 1.11: Muhammadu Buhari, Former Nigeria's President During the Commissioning of Kolmani Oil Site, Bauchi State, November 22, 2022 (Oil + Gas Report: africaoilgasreport.com)**



**Figure 1.12: Elephants at the Yankari National Game Reserve, Bauchi (Wiki Voyage: [en.wikivoyage.org](https://en.wikivoyage.org))**

In Bauchi, Islam is the most frequently practised religion, and Sharia Law is its guiding concept. The second most common religion is Christianity. Bauchi has a reputation for being a center of sectarian conflict between Christians and Muslims as believers of these faiths often live in mutual suspicion. This state is also known for ethnic and political warfare and its progress has been hampered by frequent outbreaks of violence, driving many inhabitants to flee to safer environments. According to Bauchi State Government (2019), Islam attempted to infiltrate Bauchi from the adjacent Borno State in the 14th century but was unsuccessful. However, in 1804, hundreds of years later, Dan Fodio, an Islamic Sheikh and reformer, launched a Jihad to convert the entire northern part of Nigeria to Islam, and he either went on the Jihad himself or used his foot soldiers to accomplish this. The latter was the case with Bauchi, when he educated a Bauchi native, Yakubu Dosa, to wage Jihad in his hometown (Edinyang et al., 2020; Barau, 1991; Bauchi State Government, 2019).

### **1.10 Timeline of Major Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Bauchi State**

Adebayo (2013) posits that no human culture is completely free of crime but the pace at which crimes are committed varies between societies. Okechukwu (2012) and Adebayo (2013) posit that crime is the failure or refusal to uphold the norm of behaviour agreed as obligatory by members of a community. It is any behaviour that violates a society's laws or an action or inaction that results in legal repercussions. Violent conflicts are a form of crime and when left



unchecked often fosters a climate of danger, chaos, and insecurity (Aremu, 2011). Therefore, addressing criminal acts is necessary to combat insecurity. Ifeanyi (2010) argues that conflict is a prevalent crime in Nigeria, and while the real issue is competition among the population over distribution of goods and services, scramble for political or economic supremacy, politicians divide the populace along ethnic or religious lines, which is a significant national issue. Okene (2005) argues that although these riots appear with religious and ethnic garb, the underlying concerns are political such as the demand for financial resources, political independence, and self-determination. Nigeria is regarded as an exemplary case study of political disputes under the camouflage of ethnicity and religious war and it is estimated that between 1960 to 2023, over 11 million lives have been lost to ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, along with much material and psychological harm (Agbiboa, 2013; Kwaja, 2011; Ayinla, 2003).

Udom and Okolie (2022) argue that with more than 250 ethnic groupings that include Muslims, Christians and traditionalists, discrimination based on ethnicity and religion has become prevalent in Nigeria. This is fuelled by a variety of community allegiances, such as claims of linguistic supremacy, cultural autonomy, and theological superiority. Okene (2005), Abah (2009), Udom and Okolie (2022), Ojo (1985), and Adesoji (2011) argue that the unity and cohesion of Nigerian nationhood have been endangered by ethnic and religious conflicts since the country's independence in 1960. These scholars made a catalogue of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria including the Maitatsine in northern Nigeria between 1980 and 1984 in Maiduguri, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Yola; the religious riots in Kafanchan College of Education (1989), Zangon Kataf (1992); the protests against the imposition of Sharia law in Kaduna (2000), the Muslim-Christian riots in Jos (2002), Tarok-Fulani rioting in Langtang (2004), Muslim-Christian riots in Kano (2004), Maiduguri Christian - Muslim riots (2006), Jos Christian-Muslim violence in 2008 to name a few (Ojo, 1985; Adesoji, 2011). The 21st century saw further ethno-religious unrests in Nigeria, including, the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency (Adesoji (2011), and the 2022 killing of a Christian girl, Deborah Yakubu, accused by her college mates at the Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto of committing blasphemy, to name a few. These riots show how Nigeria is divided along religious, and ethnic sentiments.

The BBC World News published an article titled "Guide to Nigeria's Trouble Spots" on their website (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17310808>) on March 10, 2013. Using a

map of Nigeria and explanations, the BBC named the South-East, North-Central, North-East and the Niger Delta regions among the most insecure and the riskiest areas for people to live. Bauchi State, which has had a fair share of violent ethno-religious and political clashes over the years is in the north-east. The following are the key, though not all-inclusive, details of Bauchi ethno-religious riots:

According to Wadam (2014), in 1991, ethno-religious conflict broke out in Bauchi, and this has gone down in history as the bloodiest one to date, given the number of people killed and the amount of property destroyed. Trouble started in Tafawa Balewa area of Bauchi when a Sayawa Christian butcher was accused of selling non-Muslim or Haram meat (meat from animal slaughtered by a non-Muslim) to a Fulani Muslim, thereby making it forbidden (Haram). In any case, the meat served as a catalyst rather than the main stimulus. When the outraged Fulani Muslim buyer realised this, he allegedly slashed the seller's arm with a knife. Other Christian butchers rushed to his aid, and the Muslim butchers did same for their own colleague. This led to a bloody confrontation and the unrest spread to Bauchi city and surrounding areas, resulting in the death of more than 200 individuals, and injuring a considerable number more. More than 500 residences were set ablaze, as well as fifteen hotels, churches, and mosques (Wadam, 2014; Suleiman, 2019).

In another instance, on July 1, 1995, a group of Christian women opposed the selection of Mr. Ibrahim Musa, a Hausa Muslim, to replace Mr. J.K Manzo, a Christian, as a commissioner by the Bauchi State administration. This degenerated into a fierce and violent armed brawl between Christians and Muslims and resulted in the death of three people and a vast amount of property, including mosques and churches, destroyed (Wadam ,2014).

Furthermore, from June 15 to June 20, 2001, Bauchi was engulfed in yet another crisis. State Governor Ahmed Adamu Mu'azu and his advisers lobbied for the state to adopt the Sharia Islamic legal system. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), a body which represents Nigerian Christians, was adamantly opposed to the idea, citing constitutional provisions which states that Nigeria is a secular state. Christians and Muslims, who were already at odds, turned against each other, as a result many lives were lost and property such as homes, churches, and mosques were razed (Omotosho, 2014; Wadam ,2014).

Additionally, just as in previous elections, violence, thuggery, and vote box theft at gunpoint characterised Nigeria's general elections in April 2011. Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari were the two leading candidates for President of Nigeria. Bauchi, known for violent conflicts had its fair share of post-election squabble, where over 50 people were murdered, including nine National Youth Service Corps members (NYSC) who are fresh graduates on national service, mobilised to help with the election. Both private property and places of worship were reduced to rubble (Edeh, 2011; Tukur, 2012).

In Bauchi society, ethnic and religious divisions have harmed peaceful coexistence; and due to the frequency of violent incidents, people live in fear and suspicion of one another. Most residents are dispersed in communities depending on their faith or ethnicity. For example, a Muslim living in Yelwa, a Christian-populated area of Bauchi metropolis, would be considered too risky a situation. Similarly, a Christian residing in Bauchi's Dutsen Tanshi neighbourhood, which is predominantly Muslim would also be considered dangerous. When choosing a town or village to reside in Bauchi State, people consider their potential neighbours and get to know their ethnicity and religion, the justification for doing being vulnerability to violence. In previous conflicts, whole families have been murdered because of residing in areas where most of the population did not belong to either their ethnic group or religion. In Bauchi, most of the Hausa and Fulani tribes would be Muslims, while the Sayawa would largely be Christians. Other tribes, like the Igbo and Yoruba, are non-natives but live there conducting business or working. The Igbo are predominantly Christians, and the Yoruba and other smaller tribes are split between the two faiths.



**Figure 1.13: Arrested Bauchi Gangs, Sara-Suka Members (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))**



**Figure 1.14: Arms Recovered from Sara-Suka Gangs in Bauchi (Daily Trust: dailytrust.com)**



**Figure 1.15: Nigeria Police Examining the Arms Recovered from Sara-Suka Gangs (The Punch: punch.com)**





**Figure 1.16: Funeral of a Young Graduate (NYSC member) one of nine, killed in Bauchi Post Election Violence in 2011(The Nation: thenationonlineng.net)**

## **1.11 Bauchi Media Systems**

The media plays a crucial role in communicating conflict in Bauchi and residents rely on it to learn about the immediate cause of violence, as well as the number of victims and property destroyed. It serves as a better alternative to rumour mongering and the incorrect estimates on the loss of lives and damage that the Nigerian security forces routinely release.

### **1.11.1 Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC)**

The Bauchi State Government owns the Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC), which may be heard on 94.6 Amplitude Modulation (AM). It was established in 1977 with the original name Bauchi Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Sale et al., 2018). This radio station serves as a mediator between the state government and the residents of Bauchi by providing information about government programmes and promotes entertainment. In general, Nigerians rely extensively on radio as a means of communication, about 62 percent of the population (NOI Polls, 2018). The northeast of Nigeria, where Bauchi State is located, has 72 percent of its inhabitants relying on the radio for information, second only to the northwest of the country, which has 77 percent (NOI Polls, 2018). This is because radio is less expensive to maintain and is more convenient. People frequently carry their small radio sets with them while they travel or go to work to listen to news and entertainment, driving with the radio on is also favoured by Bauchi citizens. Nigeria has an erratic power supply, and the radio often comes to the rescue because it can be powered by inexpensive dry battery cells, circumventing an economic obstacle. This is useful

especially for persons who cannot afford to own or use an electricity generator. Another advantage of radio is that it does not require the capacity to read and write, and in Bauchi, usually the broadcasts are conducted in the native tongue which everyone understands thereby overcoming the educational challenge (Familusi et al., 2014; Anifowose, 2013).



**Figure 1.17: Emblem of Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) (Bauchi Radio Corporation: [brcradiobauchi.com](http://brcradiobauchi.com))**

### **1.11.2 Bauchi State Television (BATV)**

The Bauchi State Television (BATV) was founded by the Bauchi State Government in 1998. At first, it was combined with the Bauchi Radio Corporation as part of the former Bauchi Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which at the time comprised radio and television stations (Yahuza, 1996). The establishment of BATV was possible because earlier in 1992, the Nigerian federal government relinquished control of radio and television broadcast stations and allowed state governments to establish their broadcast stations and to have control over them. Given the diversity of the Nigerian population (more than 250 ethnic groups who speak more than 500 languages), this was seen as a step forward. Each state's television and radio stations focus on more important local issues (Garba, 2020). However, unlike radio, only a few people will have access to Bauchi State Television's programming for obvious reasons. First, a television is out of reach for many individuals, particularly in rural areas, and the bulk of rural areas lack access to the national power grid, and even in urban areas, six hours of uninterrupted electricity is not guaranteed every day. Most individuals, at least those who can afford them, rely on power

generators. Second, the range of radio transmitters is greater than that of television (Yahuza, 1996). Aside from BATV, the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), which is operated by the federal government, and the privately held African Independent Television (AIT) are also found in Bauchi.



**Figure 1.18: Emblem of Bauchi State Television (BATV) (Bauchi State Television: batv.com.ng)**



**Figure 1.19: Emblem of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) (Nigeria Television Authority: nta.ng)**



**Figure 1.20: Emblem of Africa Independent Television (AIT) (Africa Independent Television: <http://ait.live/>)**

## INTERNATIONAL RADIO STATIONS



**Figure 1.21: Worldwide Radio Services in Hausa Language Heard in Bauchi (Sources: BBC Hausa: <https://www.bbc.com/hausa>; VOA Hausa: [www.voahausa.com](http://www.voahausa.com); DW Hausa: <https://www.dw.com/hausa>)**

### 1.11.3 Bauchi Print Media

According to Lami (2000) the print media is patronised by literate residents of Bauchi State, however, people who read newspapers account for a modest percentage of the population due to economic challenges and low literacy rate. Another obstacle is accessibility, as newspapers and periodicals are only available in the state's two major cities, Bauchi and Azare. Furthermore, during an interview done by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) with Bauchi Newspaper vendors in 2018, the *Punch* Newspaper reported that vendors bemoaned the hardships they were experiencing because of a decline in newspaper sales brought on by the emergence of online publications (Zovoe, 2018). The most widely read newspapers in Bauchi are the English-language *Daily Trust* and Hausa-language, *Aminiya*, published by a privately held Nigerian newspaper publishing corporation, The Media Trust. Others are, *The Nation*,



Punch, The Sun, Leadership, The Vanguard, Daily Post, and The Guardian, to name a few. (Lami, 2000).

## Newspapers



Figure 1.22: Newspapers Read in Bauchi (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com); Vanguard: [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com))



Figure 1.23: Newspapers Read in Bauchi and TV News on Almajiri (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com); TVC News: <https://www.tvccommunications.tv>)

## **1.12 Possible Root Causes of Insecurity in Bauchi Society**

According to Wadam (2014), no society is without challenges, as even the most advanced democracies face problems. While some issues are universal, others are unique to a society. Political corruption and polygamy, two major issues in Bauchi are emphasised here to show how they relate to insecurity.

### **1.12.1 Corruption**

Gyimah-Brempong (2002) contends that academics face challenges in precisely defining the concept of "corruption" because it has varied meanings to different people. This is so since what is deemed corrupt in one culture might be the norm in another. Similarly, Olayiwola (2013) and Olopoenia (1998) argue that defining corruption without being swayed by the established standards or principles of a particular society is challenging. Although acceptable, defining a term based on societally accepted criteria presents issues in a scientific study due to different understandings of the term (Gyimah-Brempong, 2002). Osoba (1996) opines corruption is a global issue that affects the ability of government to ensure the wellbeing of all individuals by engaging in unlawful conduct that grants unfair advantages in violation of legal and moral principles. For Jain (2001), corruption is the illegal use of one's position of authority for personal gain or the misuse of authority granted to one for personal advantage. Gyimah-Brempong (2002) classified corruption into three categories based on the kind of people who engage in it: that of the ruling class, that of the bureaucracy, and that of parliament. However, what is common to all these three categories of corruption is the effects which results to inefficient resource allocation and reduced system effectiveness. In Nigeria, corruption has evolved into a pervasive issue that has permeated the country's cultural fabric so thoroughly that for most persons in both the public and private sectors, it has become a component of their everyday life. To bolster this claim, Moyosore (2015, paragraph 4) offers his opinion:

*Without gain saying, it is a wide held belief that corruption is a way of life in Nigeria and that it is responsible for broken promises and dashed hopes which has characterised the lives of most Nigerians. It is not surprising to hear people saying that Nigerians are corrupt. Making it a fait accompli. Moreso, Nigeria is a country where corruption is rife and where greed for material acquisition and quest for political power had relegated to the background morals preached by various religions. This is because despite our claim to be religious, our quest for relevance had made nonsense of our self-acclaimed religiosity and nothing can be left undone by our elites and non-elites for the realisation their self-desire. The end, it is believed, justifies the means.*

Osoba (1996) posits corruption in Nigeria has a lengthy history as it developed into the main means of individual affluence and started to affect political intrigues and engagement after Nigeria attained independence in 1960. He goes on to say that historically, corruption was a feature of both civilian and military governments. It grew worse during the 1970s, known as the "Golden Decade," when Nigeria emerged as the richest nation on the African continent, because of rising oil profits. In addition to the seemingly absurd prosperity that the governing few seem to enjoy, most Nigerians continue to face increasing rates of deprivation, suffering, and humiliation. Thus, while the economy and social structures have been allowed to collapse, political discourse has come to be typified by sectarian strife, political animosity, and aggression (Osoba, 1996). Furthermore, Osoba (1996) claims that because the government was unable to curb corruption, Nigerians had had to put up with it for decades. To steal the commonwealth and be certain there would not be any repercussions, politicians bribe the courts, and the government anti-corruption agencies, namely, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Matters Commission (ICPC), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Abu and Staniewski (2019) contended that corruption is widespread in almost every aspect of Nigerian society, encompassing the executive, judicial and the legislative branches of government. Moreover, corruption is widespread in all security forces such as the Army, the police, and the paramilitary (Abu & Staniewski 2019). It is common on Nigerian roads for security personnel to frequently erect roadblocks for security inspections, but regrettably, they would not let cars through until they received bribes (Rabiu, 2019). Numerous incidents have also been reported in the media in which members of the security forces have colluded with criminal groups such as Boko Haram, robbers, and kidnappers to turn a blind eye while these criminals wreak havoc on civilians. These criminals later divide the spoils with the security personnel. Additionally, the tremendous corruption within the security forces is the reason behind the proliferation of weaponry among Nigerian criminals as security personnel smuggle and sale weapons intended for the police and the army to criminal groups. There is a wealth of evidence in the media from confessions by arrested criminals supporting this claim (Nurudeen & Staniewski, 2019).

Kunle (2023) posits that the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), a Nigeria based non-governmental research organisation which partners with Transparency International, published in Abuja the Corruption Perception Index for 2022, which saw Nigeria ranked 150 out of 180 nations. Mohammed (2019) posits that Nigeria has paid a very high price for corruption over the years as the nation's moral, cultural, and political foundations have all

significantly deteriorated due to corruption. He argues that although, Olusegun Obasanjo, a Nigeria's former President founded two anti-corruption commissions, including the ICPC (established on September 29, 2000) and the EFCC (created on December 12, 2002), mentioned earlier, to address the issue, the two anti-corruption bodies failed to accomplish their goals because some of their officials were involved in accepting bribes from corrupt government officials and looking the other way. Vanguard (2023, Paragraph 2) quoted Ibrahim Magu, a former EFCC chairman, where he said:

*With the benefit of hindsight and having been at the helm of affairs of the foremost anti-graft agency in Nigeria, I wish to state that fighting corruption is not an easy task. It is a patriotic and selfless service to one's fatherland. This is because corruption is pervasive and for an agency to tackle this monster headlong, all hands must be on deck. I wish to state with a high sense of responsibility that the fight against corruption must be pursued with vigour as corruption remains the impediment to our collective progress as a nation. I urge the government to persevere in the relentless fight against corruption, as a corruption-free nation is the bedrock for sustainable economic growth and positive development. Let us work hand in hand to break free from the vicious grip of corruption and pave the way for a brighter future for Nigeria. Nigeria is blessed with an abundance of human and natural resources. Our solid minerals in all 36 states can fetch the country enough revenue to sustain governance and provide basic amenities for all Nigerians.*

Osoba (1996) contends that corruption in Nigeria is not limited to the public sector, but extends to the private sector, although previously thought to be less corrupt. According to him, it is evident that banks are utilised by politicians to siphon, or launder stolen money. Furthermore, he posits that the consequences of corruption include low public investment on healthcare and education, high levels of poverty and unemployment, increased insecurity, theft, and abductions for ransom to name a few. He identified the endemic corruption in the public sector as the major contributor to Nigeria's low living standards and insecurity.

Bauchi State is not exempt from the problem of rampant corruption that affects all of Nigeria. Corrupt practices in Bauchi are not limited to the security services, politicians, or government officials, but includes clerics, educational institutions, health care services, and businesses, to name a few. Furthermore, corruption is at the heart of the issues that residents of Bauchi State suffer, including insecurity, illiteracy, religious and ethnic conflicts, poor infrastructure, a failing economy, and insufficient electricity supply. Oyewole (2022) reported that during a meeting of the State Executive Council (SEC), the present Bauchi Governor, Bala Mohammed, expressed deep regret over the extent of corrupt activities among public servants. The Governor claimed that public officials appear to have been schooled in corrupt practices by possessing a strong inclination to exclusively extract resources from the system without making any

contributions in return. The Governor lamented that public servants have established alliances to such an extent that they are unwilling to offer services to the public unless they receive bribes, stating further that he has made utmost efforts to combat corruption among public officials, although it seems the situation is irredeemable (Oyewole, 2022).

Hafsat, A. (2022) states that to address the issue of government corruption, the current Bauchi Governor, Bala Mohammed whose political party is the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), established the Public Complaints and Anti-Corruption Commission (PCAC) in 2022. According to its website (<https://pcac.ng>, 2022 paragraph 1), this Commission has as its vision: “To instil public empathy, professionalism, and ethical conduct through transparency and accountability in governance and service delivery” and as its mission: “To bring about and sustain administrative and financial transparency and accountability in governance and service delivery to the people of Bauchi State within the context of a rapidly changing environment” (<https://pcac.ng>, 2022, paragraph 2).

However, the opposition party, All Progressives Congress (APC), asserted the establishment of PCAC was only a ruse designed to deceive Bauchi citizens into thinking that Governor Mohammed is devoid of corruption (Hafsat, 2022). According to Doya (2022) and Nurudeen (2017) to substantiate their accusation, the opposition made the following claims: First, that Governor Mohammed obtained a loan of 30 billion Naira (60 million US dollars) for infrastructure development from the United Bank for Africa (UBA) but had no results to show for it. Second, that the governor's claim to have spent more than 2 billion Naira (over 4 million US dollars) of taxpayer money to purchase mahogany trees and shrouds for Muslim burials in Bauchi between May 29, 2015, and May 29, 2019, is untrue. The reason for disagreeing is because the purchases were made through unregistered enterprises run by alleged fronts for the governor who were given contracts to deliver the products. Third, that the governor lied when he claimed to have spent 400 million Naira (800,000 US dollars) fumigating public buildings and schools and spent 96 million Naira (195,000 US dollars) buying horses for six traditional rulers.

Bakam (2022) and Nurudeen (2017) argue that another way through which corrupt practices occur in Bauchi is through government officials who bloat the payroll of government staff known in local parlance as ‘ghost workers’. They contend that this illegality increases the State's monthly pay costs as it is prevalent in all ministries of government, organisations, and

local governments. For instance, senior corrupt government officials replace deceased personnel on salary vouchers with fronts and the money redistributed among them. Again, inflation of pay grade levels is another corrupt method. For example, an employee at grade level 07 receives pay at grade level 14, with the increase being split among dishonest officials. Orude (2021) further suggests that the names of children of well-known local leaders, such as the Emirs, are often printed on payment vouchers as ghost workers, with the money collected and given to the leaders. Consequently, it is not unusual to have certain employees handling three or more bank accounts with different banks, each of which receives their salary each month. These are only a few instances of the dishonest behaviour and fraud destroying Bauchi State's public sector. Additionally, Nuruddeen (2017) posits that a significant amount of corruption proceeds was uncovered in Bauchi State in 2017 when the ICPC, one of the federal government commissions which focuses on combating corruption (mentioned earlier) uncovered 23 estates with roughly 202 homes belonging to one Sanusi Muhammad, who was an aide to former Bauchi State governor, Isa Yuguda. Furthermore, ICPC discovered 15 brand-new air conditioners, five top of the range cars, weaponry and ammunition that were allegedly donated to the Bauchi state by the government of the People's Republic of China during Mr. Yuguda's rule. Other items include twenty bales of brocade, 28 expensive watches, and an undetermined sum of cash in local and foreign currencies all found in Muhammad's home. Natural and human resources abound in Bauchi State, but these riches are poorly managed through corrupt governance and ineffective leadership. Consequently, there is a great deal of poverty, ignorance, thuggery, and violence perpetrated by young adults which has impacted Bauchi security.

### **1.12.2 Polygamy**

Chiwuiké (2022) and Chikelum(2023) describe polygamy as the practice of having numerous spouses at once, while the reverse is monogamy, where a person has just one partner at a time. Under Nigeria civil law, polygamous unions—whether involving a man and numerous women or vice versa, or partners of the same sex—is not accepted. Only monogamous relationships between a man and a woman (not same sex) are recognised (Sanusi, 2014). However, according to Yelwa (2014) 12 of the 36 Nigerian States, namely, Niger, Kaduna, Zamfara, Borno, Katsina, Yobe, Gombe, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Bauchi and Kano, uphold Islamic Sharia law and they accept polygamous partnership involving a man and no more than four women at a time. Bauchi State became one of these twelve states when it enacted Sharia law on July 1st,

2001. According to Naksomboon (2013) Nigeria is listed among the “polygamy belt” due to the prevalence and strong cultural foundation of polygamy. It is estimated that Nigeria has fifth highest number of polygamous marriages in the world (approximately 28%) after Burkina Faso, Mali, The Gambia, and Niger. Yelwa (2014) argues that polygamy and early marriages are ways of life in Bauchi society, which has raised fertility rates and brought about unfavourable consequences like poverty and insecurity. Furthermore, Zullai (2022) argues that polygamy is a patriarchal and misogynistic practice which had produced too many human beings in Bauchi for a system that cannot support it, as women typically marry and have children in their teens, sometimes as early as age 12. She contends that although polygamous unions are typical among rural populations in Bauchi (majority of whom live in poverty) it is also common in urban areas. Zullai (2022) argues further that despite not having enough money to provide basics like food, shelter, and education, couples in Bauchi give birth to many children, and due to tremendous poverty exacerbated by population expansion there are a lot of disadvantaged children on Bauchi streets who beg to survive. Additionally, corrupt governance coupled with overpopulation has worsened the scramble for limited economic resources and placed Bauchi society among those with the highest poverty rates in Nigeria.

Dikim (2008) argues that the overwhelming acceptance and pervasive prevalence of polygamy in Bauchi is influenced by religion and culture. Bauchi’s cultural position and its religious history and polygamy are intertwined. Culturally, it is widely believed that a man will be wealthy if his family is large as women and children will be used as labourers in agriculture. This notion led men to marry several women and produce children without considering the responsibility that goes along with it. According to Sani (2013) many tribes in Bauchi have traditionally regarded big families as a symbol of distinction and many of the cultures encourage polygamous lifestyles. It is thought that a small family is incomplete especially where it has one woman with less than ten children. Nasir (2017) states that religiously, Islam permits polygamy, allowing men to simultaneously have up to four wives. However, that certain persons have wedded more than four times. For instance, a man who was previously married to four women may take a new spouse after a divorce to fill the void. It is also common for divorced women to remarry and have more children in addition to the children they had in the previous union. On the other hand, Dantala (2011) argues that, although Christianity recognises monogamy as the only form of marriage, it cannot be absolved of polygamous unions, as evidence abounds that monogamy proclaimed in Christendom is only in principle

and not in practice. Many Christian men in Bauchi have secret spouses or some openly reject monogamy and admit adopting polygamy.

Yelwa (2014) argues that polygamy among the impoverished who make up most of the population in Bauchi State has some detrimental repercussions. He posits that Polygamy causes population to soar which had put strain on meagre resources leading to environmental issues that further endanger food supply and security. Consequently, children raised in poverty develop aggressive behaviours as a mental defence towards their unfavourable circumstances. Emeka (2020) posits that in most polygamous households, parents have little time and money to devote to their children. Therefore, children from these homes beg on the streets to meet their basic requirements, including food, clothes, and shelter. These children lack parental love and care, and due to their circumstances, become vulnerable targets for criminals. Some of them are hired to rob banks, rob stores, and rape helpless women in exchange for meagre financial inducements. Dogara (2015) argues that polygamous couples and large households make up the bulk of poor households in Bauchi—far more than small monogamous households—and are the leading factor in child poverty. A prevalent situation is one in which a large family depends on the small salary of only one person (usually the father) to meet their needs and because of low income, malnutrition among children is common. Okafor (2019) posits that child trafficking is widespread in Bauchi society because of the high population density and the inability of polygamous or big families to maintain a decent standard of living. Children from these homes work as domestic helpers, beggars, or undertake hawking, where they are more likely to be trafficked. He also argues that in polygamous marriages, there is bound to be rivalry between co-wives, as most women in these unions have little economic clout and are exclusively linked to the prosperity of their husbands. It is the same with the children, as there is bound to be resource-motivated rivalry among half-siblings.





Figure 1.24: Nigerian Anti-Corruption Agency Logo (The Punch: [punch.com](http://punch.com))



Figure 1.25: Nigerian Anti-Corruption Agency Logo (Nigerian Pilot: [nigerianpilot.news](http://nigerianpilot.news))

### 1.13 The Relationship Between Corruption, Polygamy, and Insecurity in Bauchi

Mamuda (2018) argues that to have a safe society where development can take place, Bauchi State government needs to address the core causes of insecurity, namely, corruption in governance and overpopulation. The current practice, where the government deploys military might, will continue to fail as this approach can only temporarily address security concerns.

Nurudeen (2017) posits that majority of people in Bauchi live in extreme poverty because government officials steal resources meant for everyone's welfare. Consequently, the rise of terrorist organisations like Boko Haram, Sara-Suka political thugs, kidnappers, and miscreants can be traced to corruption. Furthermore, corruption has exacerbated the appalling socio-economic situation, increased youth unemployment, poverty, ignorance, infrastructural decay, and abuses which led to the current level of insecurity. In addition to theft of public funds, overpopulation is an issue. Due to high birth rate occasioned by polygamy, Bauchi does not prioritise the education of underprivileged children and does not provide child support to struggling families like developed nations do. One would not be wrong to conclude that any society that does not prioritise education, ignorance rules supreme. One of the consequences of ignorance is that poor Bauchi parents have been led to erroneously assume that Islam opposes formal education for children. Unfortunately, these same poor parents fail to recognise the distinction between their decision and that of middle-class and wealthy Muslims (majority of whom are government officials) who enrol their children in both formal and private Islamic schools. Polygamous homes who are overburdened by the responsibility of feeding and caring for many children, and without government support, send their children to Almajiri system where they are not required to pay school or upkeep fees, thereby neglecting their parental responsibilities. The girl child from poor parents is the most neglected in all this since neither formal nor Islamic kinds of education are given to them. Most of them end up being married off at age 12 and become teen mothers with negative health effects.

Kano Emir, Mohammed Sanusi II, though a polygamist himself, distinguished between polygamy practised by the wealthy and that practised by the poor. He argues that polygamy itself is not the issue, but rather the effects of polygamy as practised by the less privileged. Sanusi, an economist and Islamic scholar who previously held the position of Central Bank Governor (Nigeria's apex bank) opines that the north of Nigeria is the poorest part of the nation economically because most of the impoverished people practise polygamy (Maiharaji, 2020). Despite the criticism he had faced for such comments, it is obvious that polygamy has detrimental impacts, such as high divorce rates and child neglect. Danliti (2019) posit that 22% of Bauchi's polygamous marriages occur in urban areas, while 78% occur in rural locations. Furthermore, most poor families live in rural areas, with peasant farming as their source of livelihood while middle class or rich families live in the city. Ikechukwu (2018) argues that 92% of Almajirai are from rural polygamous unions and are sent off to distant Almajiranci where they eventually end up begging on the streets. He contends that it is a false belief

therefore to view polygamy as beneficial by providing more labourers for agricultural tasks as most of these children end up as Almajirai in the cities begging to survive. From above opinions, it may be inferred that the Almajiri system is a by-product of polygamy especially among impoverished rural communities, which results in the birth of several children for whom the parents are unable to cater. Then, due to corruption, Bauchi government is unable to provide education or social support to the parents. To be relieved of their parental responsibilities, these poor parents enrol their children into the Almajiri system far from their abode. Bawa (2014) sums up the problems of Bauchi to include poverty, illiteracy, indoctrination, and misinterpretation of religion, as well as insufficient parental guidance, which leads to recruitment of youth into violent extremist groups and Almajiri pupils appear to be exposed to all these factors, thereby creating security issues for Bauchi.

### **1.14 Justification for Media Choice and its Almajiri Representation**

The mass media has an obligation to fairly portray various regions of the world. In the instance of Bauchi, it seems it has covered little to nothing of the underlying causes of insecurity, either intentionally or by negligence which does not present the truth. Instead of focussing on the sources of the problem, Bauchi media appears to be unsympathetic to Almajiri as it blames them for insecurity. This is why central to this study is the analysis of media representation of the Almajiri system. For Instance, polygamy is a problem in Bauchi, but the media appears to neglect or ignore this reality and mis-apportions blame on the by-product of polygamy, the Almajiri, which is like ignoring the elephant in the room. Additionally, there have been attempts in the past to address Bauchi security concerns through religious, ethnic, and political leaders having round table discussions, which have largely failed. This research attempts to introduce a new element into the analysis of the Almajiri, the media, considering its influence on people's daily lives. Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, argues that the press fulfils a significant function in society when he said:

*.... Were it left for me to choose whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I shall not hesitate a moment to choose the latter (cited in Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013, p. 862)*

Jefferson's statement underscores the importance and influence of mass media in every society. Furthermore, Nwabueze and Ebeze (2013) highlights the importance of mass media in society to include: ensuring a two-way communication between government and the governed, promotion of core values and principles that bind a society together and creating awareness on

issues to be addressed for the greater good of society. Additionally, Malcolm X, cited in Dodo (2020) highlights the influence of mass media in society, asserting that the media is the most influential entity on the planet. According to him, mass media possesses the ability to falsely incriminate the innocent or exonerate the guilty, which is a demonstration of power. In other words, mass media has the capacity to exert influence, and to manipulate the thoughts and beliefs of the public.

Despite its influence and importance, the mass media has the potential to wrongfully impact society by skewing people's perceptions of situations, individuals, or things through portrayal thereby influencing public judgement or understanding. Agenda-setting, news framing, and social responsibility media theories, and a genre of journalism, Advocacy Journalism, have been chosen as the conceptual-theoretical underpinnings for this research. While Agenda-setting and news framing theories have been adopted to understand how precisely the Almajiri are represented in and by the media, Social Responsibility and Advocacy Journalism are utilised as theories which may pave the way forward conceptually, as a means through which media could play a significant role in reducing insecurity in Bauchi. However, to achieve this, substantial change will be needed.

## **1.15 An Overview of Thesis Chapters**

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

### **Chapter Two**

Reviews literature on Almajiri origin, history, mode of operation, and its decline. The decline triggered academic criticisms which have been grouped under subheadings and discussed. This chapter's goal is to deepen the foundational understanding of Almajiri covered in Chapter One.

### **Chapter Three**

Describes the research methodology used to accomplish the study's aims and objectives and to answer the research questions. Constructivism is adopted as philosophical viewpoint and deployed an inductive approach. Qualitative research method of media textual content analysis is chosen and discussed. Semi-structured interviews model was used to collect primary data from Almajiri teachers (Mallamai), media professionals, and government officials, to understand their challenges and the meaning they ascribe to their lived situation.

## **Chapter Four**

This chapter discusses the theoretical basis and explanation for this investigation. Although many media theories could serve as the footing for this debate, agenda-setting, news framing, social responsibility, and a genre of journalism, advocacy journalism, are chosen due to the nature of the research questions. There is a discussion on Social Change journalism, Campaigning journalism and how the two relate to Advocacy Journalism and Social Responsibility Theory. Furthermore, "Media Representation" and "Stereotyping" are also discussed. Additionally, Literature on the role of the radio in ethno-religious and political conflicts is also discussed in this chapter since radio holds the potential to serve as an avenue through which advocacy journalism could bring the needed reform in Almajiri system, as will be explained later in the thesis.

## **Chapter Five**

This chapter explores how Bauchi society interpret and comprehend Almajiri based on information from a series of detailed semi-structured interviews undertaken with Almajiri teachers (Mallamai), media professionals, and government officials. A series of themes are identified from the interview data and discussed in detail.

## **Chapter Six**

This chapter explores primary source material on the representation of Almajiri in chosen Bauchi print media and its implications. A content analysis is conducted on material found on newspapers' websites. Based on the language and the tone used to depict Almajirai, major themes are unearthed and examined. How the themes were spotted, investigated, and presented has also been stated. To analyse the themes, the theoretical frameworks of agenda-setting, and news framing theories were applied. This chapter outlines how the outcome that evolved from the primary data can assist in answering the research questions

## **Chapter Seven**

This chapter synthesises the findings from Chapters Five and Six, and through application of the project's framework for analysis (presented in Chapter Four), provides a model of media's representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi State. It illustrates how triangulation-a method that combines disparate sources of information to create a holistic understanding-was deployed in this research. Additionally, this chapter applies social responsibility theory to the research

findings. Overall, the chapter demonstrates how the findings drawn from the project's data sources - semi-structured interview evidence, and on the representation of Almajiri in chosen Bauchi print media - have served to provide answers to the project's research questions.

## **Chapter Eight**

The final chapter provides a conclusion to this thesis. It reflects on the relationship between the Almajiri system and mass media in Bauchi State. It proceeds to explore the value of Advocacy Journalism as a reform strategy. The chapter considers the importance of the findings and offers proposals on how the media might change its representation of the Almajiri. In the process, the potential value of the media in assisting the reform of the Almajiri system is explored. This chapter emphasises the study's contribution to knowledge and potential research topics for the future.

### **1.16 Conclusion**

Bauchi State, for over three decades, has a reputation for conflicts and insecurity. In 2009, the first ever significant Boko Haram terrorist strike, occurred in Bauchi. Possible reasons of Bauchi disputes have been explored by academics such as Wadam (2014), Nurudeen (2017) and Suleiman (2019). Wadam (2014) attributes the issue to disparities in religion and ethnicity among the tribes, while Suleiman (2019) and Nurudeen (2017) blames corruption, polygamy, poverty, and ignorance, as responsible. To date, no scholar has examined the relationship between the media and Almajiri in Bauchi State using the framework of a media theory. To accomplish this, the study has set forth its purpose, goals, and research questions that it intends to address. Three media theories—agenda setting, news framing, social responsibility, and a genre of Journalism, advocacy journalism—serve as the foundational lens for provision of an enhanced comprehension of the correlation between the mass media and the Almajiri system in Bauchi State. The investigation undertaken in this research is important because it has the potential to add to knowledge on issues of the role of the media in situations of ignorance, poverty, child neglect and conflicts.

## **Chapter Two: Almajiri System: Origin and Goal, Decline and Scholarly Evaluation**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter expands knowledge on the Almajiri system beyond the scope of what was presented in Chapter One. It covers its history and purpose, its decline, and an assessment of this religious education by scholars after its decline. An in-depth understanding of Almajiri system became necessary given that it is the subject of this study, focussing on how it is represented by mass media. Almajiranci is known by other names, including Tsangaya or Makarantar Allo.

### **2.2 Origin and Goal**

Almajiri is a Hausa term derived from the Arabic "Al-Muhajirun," which translates to "emigrant." (Oyewumi & Saba 2014). Its origin can be traced to Islamic Prophet Mohammed's migration (Hijrah in Arabic) from Mecca to Medina. Al-Muhajirun is the name given to his followers who migrated with him. Subsequently, Al-Muhajirun, came to denote persons who leave their home to seek Islamic knowledge in other environments (Usman et al., 2017; Nwanze, 2019; Oyewumi & Saba, 2014). However, in Nigerian context, the word denotes a male child between the ages of 4 and 16 who is taken away from home by his parents or guardian to a distant town or city and left under the care of an Islamic tutor known as Mallam (derived from the Arabic Mu'allim, meaning teacher) to be taught to read the Arabic alphabets, to study and memorise the Qur'an, and the Hadith (Islamic traditions) (Edinyang et al., 2020; Oyewumi & Saba 2014). Sule-Kano (1997) and Fada (2005) posit that Islam grant parents the liberty to send their children to any Islamic educational institution of their choice, the reason Almajirai are taken away from home. They also argued that Mallamai in Nigeria believe that taking children away from home improves their concentration and speeds up their learning, a view supported by rural poor parents.

Ajakaye (2014) argues that, historically, the establishment of Qur'anic schools in northern Nigeria coincided with the expansion of Islamic faith in Africa. Similarly, Mohammed (2015) posits that the Kanem Borno kingdom, which was the first to encounter Islam in Nigeria, established Almajiri system (then known as Tsangaya) in the 11th century before the British conquest of Nigeria, for the purpose of training Islamic scholars to aid the spread of Islam. Kanem Borno is an ancient empire that has existed as a governing power for a significant period

in human history, spanning from the north of Nigeria through to Chadian territory and up to the frontiers of Libya. Furthermore, he posits that boys were taught about Islamic principles and theology, to prepare them for their future duties as leaders in their families, communities, and the practices of Islam. Almajiri system was the only kind of compulsory education that was advised at the time for children of Muslim parents. Furthermore, AbdulQadir (2003) and Al-Amin (2019) posit that in 1804, more than 700 years after Kanem Borno encountered Islam, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, a Fulani Islamic scholar (who was once an Almajiri) launched a Jihad in northern Nigeria and was successful in conquering Hausa states. After this victory, Dan Fodio established the Sokoto Caliphate (an Islamic theocracy in which Muslim leaders held sway over the government) with the aim of creating a stricter Islamic standard than that of Kanem Borno empire. He imposed and established Emirs from his Fulani clan after deposing the local Hausa chiefs. These Fulani Emirs were granted authority to oversee Tsangaya (Almajiri system) in their areas and to sustain it with money they obtained from taxes. Sule-Kano (1997) and Abbo et al. (2017) claim that this arrangement worked well and Tsangaya operated flawlessly under the Sokoto Caliphate (1804–1903). However, at that time, pupils did not leave their family to live with an Islamic instructor in the same manner that they do now as Tsangaya schools were spread out in the villages, pupils could walk from their homes to the schools and back without worrying about distance.

Abu (2012) posits that the goal of Almajiri system is to acquire Islamic religious doctrine as the Islamic faith teaches: “The best man among you is one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5027, cited in Abu, 2012, paragraph 1). Similarly, AbdulQadir (2003) argues that Muslims have a duty to acquire knowledge about the Qur'an and the Hadith (traditions) of the Islamic prophet Mohammed and then teach it to others. Therefore, Almajiri system was the reliable setting at the time where such knowledge was acquired in northern Nigeria. Rural dwellers, for instance, favour it above other educational options because they feel it gives their children the greatest and most fundamental Islamic education. Additionally, Danbuzu (2012) argues that the aim of Almajiri system is to teach religion, morality, culture, virtue, and values to children. It is anticipated that the knowledge they acquire will make them responsible adults who will exhibit honesty and diligence. Thus, the goal of Almajiri system is for religious and moral goals rather than to prepare or equip its graduates for the workforce. Hoechner (2013) corroborated this perspective by arguing that Almajiri system is primarily an Islamic religious education and should not be confused with more general formal schooling. She made a distinction between education and schooling, that while schooling prepares people



for the workforce, education which occurs in our homes and communities prepares persons to be good members of society.

Edinyang et al. (2020) posit that Almajiranci takes place in three stages: Kolo (first stage, made up 4-8 years old), Titibiri (second stage, made up of 9-12 years old) and Gardi (third and final stage made up of 13-16 years old). Students of first and second stages, Kolo and Titibiri, are saddled with going out to beg (begging is known as *Bara* in Hausa) on the streets or from house to house for their needs. The final stage students, Gardi, go out to work or provide valuable services in exchange for money or other material incentives in the community where they live. The Mallam instructs mainly Kolawa (plural for Kolo) and Gardawa, (plural for Gardi), that is those in the second and third stages respectively. The Gardawa assist the Mallam to teach the first stage students, Kolawa (Fada, 2005). Generally, each Almajiri is given individualised teaching and progresses at his own pace. Mohammed (2015) and Ado (1997) outlined the order of learning in Almajiri system to include: Babbaku (introduction to Qur'anic alphabets), Farfaru (learning Arabic vowels), Hadda (memorization of Qur'an), Zuku (Writing designated Qur'anic passages), Satu (reproducing the whole Qur'an), Tilawa/tishe (revision), and finally Sauka (completion and graduation). To graduate, a student must be able to memorise and recite the entire Qur'an (Sani 2021). For individuals who are interested in continuing their education, there is a postgraduate programme on themes related to Islamic law, Hadith (traditions), and Qur'anic exegesis (Fada, 2005). Almajirai lesson classes are typically held in the evening and into the night. This is because during the day they go out to either beg or work for their sustenance (Aluiagba 2009). Before classes, a firewood is used to start a fire in the open to brighten up the area, and the Almajirai sit on logs that have been piled in a circle-like pattern around the fire. It is the duty of Almajirai to go into the woods from time to time during the day to get firewood for their studies. There are no classrooms, boards, or books. Each student is given a wooden slate called Allo, in which they follow the Mallam's instructions to create Arabic inscriptions (Sule- Kano, 1997). This tuition-free education has no official prerequisites or predetermined application procedure, no restriction on the number of children to enrol as admission number is unlimited. Parents simply hand their child off to the Mallam (Edinyang et al. 2020; Oyewumi et al. 2014). Fada (2005) posits that Mallamai are either volunteers or individuals chosen by the locals based on their honesty and understanding of Islam to train Almajirai. They do not receive a salary but depend on donations from Almajirai's supporters and parents. Umoru (2020) argue that Mallamai enjoy having a large student body because it gives them status and boosts the amount of Zakkat (donations) they receive. A Mallam's

reputation is also considered by parents before they hand in their child. Fada (2005) and Sule-Kano (2010) distinguished three classes of Mallamai based on seniority, much like the Almajirai, but generally, they are all called Mallam. First category is those who are fresh graduates (post-Gardi status) and new to the teaching field. Typically, they have a small number of Almajirai and continue to learn from the more seasoned Mallamai. Second, is the Alaramma, a more experienced teacher who has a substantial number of Almajirai and third, Sheikh, the most senior and experienced educator of the three. A teacher who has attained the level of a Sheikh does not instruct Almajirai students directly, instead trains those who teach Almajirai. Thus, the Mallamai of first category and the Alaramma, of the second category are students of a Sheikh.

Abbo and Njidda (2017) posits that Almajiri system was a structured and an all-inclusive educational system that was successful in imparting both Islamic beliefs and career to children before colonisation. This is because at the time, along with Islamic education, Almajirai were taught about farming, traditional sewing, cap weaving, bricklaying, commerce, and other related fields. It is partly due to farming activities by Almajirai that Kano city gained the reputation as the commercial center of northern Nigeria due to its extensive and prosperous groundnut cultivation which gave rise to its nickname "Kano Groundnut Pyramids." Similarly, Adamu (2003) argues that Almajirai's effort in farming and tanning is responsible for Sokoto city becoming renowned for hides and skins in addition to being the Sokoto Caliphate's capital. He argues further that graduates of Almajiri system were among the first workers hired by the British colonial authorities who served as cleaners and messengers. He posits that when Jos city was still part of Bauchi Province, some graduates of Almajiri system were hired to work in the tin mines in Jos, while others worked as clerks or messengers. Nwanze (2019) and Edinyang et al. (2020) posit that apart from religious education, Almajiranci also produced technocrats and entrepreneurs, among them Alhassan Dantata who was born to Addullahi and his wife Amarya in Bebeji, Kano Emirate, in 1877. Addullahi died when Alhassan was only 8 years old and his mother Amarya, migrated to Accra, Ghana, leaving him in the care of Tata, a slave girl. Tata took Alhassan to a Tijjaniya Mallam at Bebeji to become an Almajiri. After graduation from Almajiranci, 17 years old Alhassan visited his mother in Accra, who also took him to another Islamic scholar in Ghana to learn more about Islam, trade, and judicious management of money before his return to Bebeji to live with his foster mother, Tata. Based on the Islamic knowledge he acquired especially on the virtues of honesty, prudence, and diligent labour, he established a business and travelled through the trade routes which provided

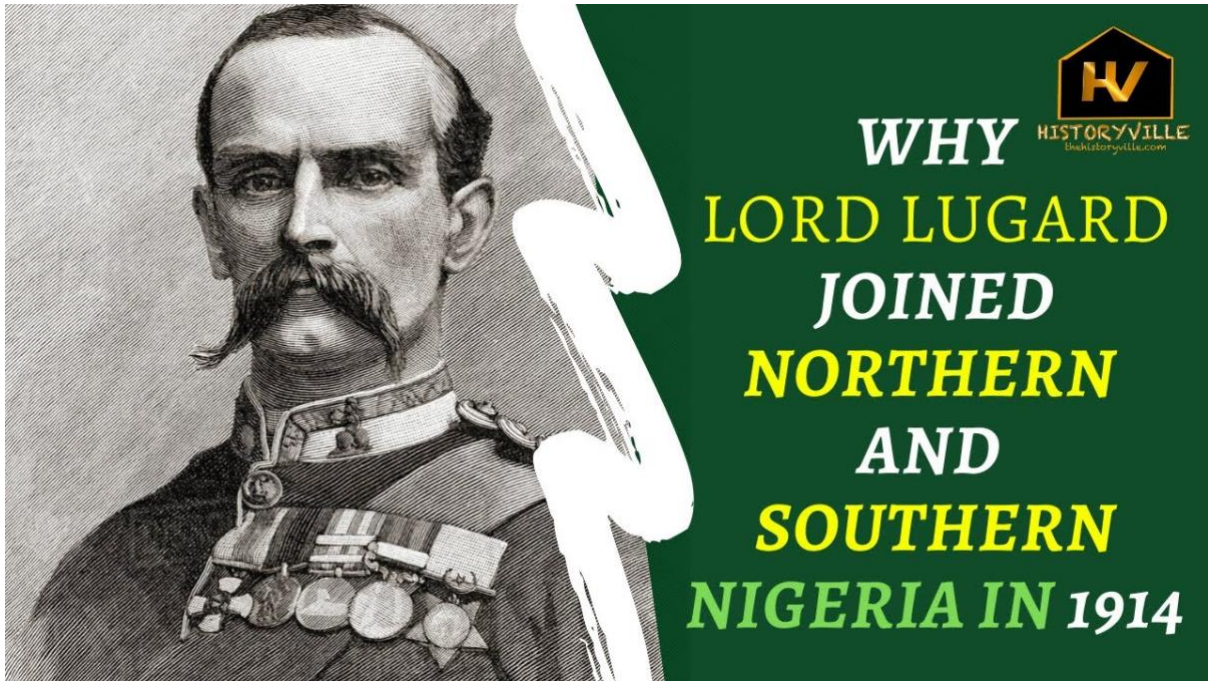
many lucrative possibilities during British colonialism. Alhassan began displaying his strength and bravery for trade between Accra, Sekondi (also in Ghana) and Lagos by 1906. At his death, he was the richest man in West African region. Alhassan Dantata, is the great-grandfather of Africa's richest man according to Forbes ranking for 2024, Aliko Dangote. Additionally, Abdul Samad Rabiu, founder of the BUA conglomerate was once an Almajiri who later acquired formal education (Oyero, 2021).

Ado (1997) argues that Almajiri system is the oldest form of Islamic education in northern Nigeria, however, it is not unique to Nigeria as it is found in other countries such as Sudan, Mali, Senegal, and Burkina Faso where it is referred to as Daraas, or Talibe and in some Muslim countries, it is called Madrassa, (meaning "school" In Arabic). Daraas or Talibe like Almajiri in Nigeria, also migrate.

### **2.3 The Decline of Almajiri System**

Linden (2016) opines that the signing of the Lagos Treaty of Cession, by the British Acting Consul in Lagos, William McCoskry, and the King of Lagos, Oba Dosunmu, in August 1861 after a British naval force, HMS Prometheus, invaded and annex Lagos as a British province signaled the start of British colonial control in Southern Nigeria. Twenty-four years later, in 1885, the Treaty of Berlin gave Britain Northern Nigeria, based on its proximity to their older protectorate of Southern Nigeria. However, following hostilities with the formidable northern Sokoto Caliphate, the British employed Indirect Rule (rule by proxy) to maintain control over northern Nigeria through pre-existing indigenous power structures, to defuse the tension (Adamu, 2003). Furthermore, Lovejoy & Hogendorn (1990) and Adamu (2003) argue that in 1900, Lord Frederick Lugard, the colonial Governor-General, created the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria with the aim of reducing the power of the dominating Sokoto Caliphate. To exert authority and total control, the British invaded the entire northern Nigeria in 1903, abducted Emir Aliyu of Kano, and captured Kano the largest northern city, and killed Sultan Muhammadu Attahiru of the Sokoto Caliphate. Many other Emirs who resisted the colonial rule were either assassinated or exiled. However, those Emirs who succumbed were spared but relinquished their authority over their respective realms and acknowledged their new position as vassals (Fafowora, 2013; Adamu, 2003). It is pertinent to note here that Flora Shaw, a British journalist and Lugard's mistress, whom he later married, coined the name Nigeria on 8 January 1897. The river Niger, which dominates much of the country's terrain, inspired her to give it

that name. The neighboring country of Niger also derives its name from the same river (Iloani, 2020). Almajiri system began to decline in 1904 when Lugard took over education from the Emirs as well as the control of taxes, introduced and supported formal education (Adamu, 2003). Furthermore, Adamu (2003) argues that the collapse of Tsangaya (Almajiri) system justified the northern Emirs, who had earlier resisted colonial rule due to fear of losing influence, and the corruption of their cultures and traditions. During the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, Lugard stated that there were more than 24,000 Almajiri schools in Northern Nigeria (Fowoyo, 2013). Awofeso et al. (2003) and Hassan (2010) argue that Tsangaya, was not outlawed by Lugard, but he neglected it by refusing to provide financial support. Consequently, since tax proceeds were now not under the control of Emirs, Tsangaya students (Almajirai) and teachers (Mallamai) became impoverished. Despite strong public support, the Almajiri system was neglected by the colonial authority and tagged as solely a religious instruction. This attitude of the colonial government enraged Muslims, who considered formal education as anti-Islam and inspired by Christian Europe. This marked the beginning of antagonism towards formal education by Almajirai, Mallamai and indeed a good percentage of the Muslim population in the north of Nigeria (Fada (2005). Adamu (2003) argues that the introduction of formal education by the colonial government, rendered Almajiri system ineffective. Mallamai were of the notion that formal education (known as Boko in Hausa) was of Christian-European origin and thus anti-Islamic because of what Lugard (a Christian) did to Almajiranci. Mallamai were worried that a child raised with western beliefs would eventually lose his Islamic identity and take up vices that are contrary to Islamic principles and values, such as drinking of alcohol, fornication, indecent dressing, and abandoning prayers and fasting (Shittu and Olaofe, 2015). Despite being abandoned by the colonial government and lacking resources, Almajiri system continued with the assistance of the locals. To reciprocate the goodwill and generosity of host towns, Almajirai offered services including farming, cobbling, weaving, and laundry. As at this time, begging was still uncommon and so the Almajirai resorted to menial work to get by instead of begging. However, overtime, Mallamai sent their students out to beg because of lack of resources. To make ends meet, some began charging the students "Kudin Sati," a form of weekly fee (Akali, 2020).



**Figure 2.1: Frederick Lugard Governor-General of Nigeria 1914-1919 (Historyville: thehistoryville.com)**



**Figure: 2.2: Flora Shaw, A British Journalist, Credited with Naming Nigeria. (Same Passage: samepassage.org)**

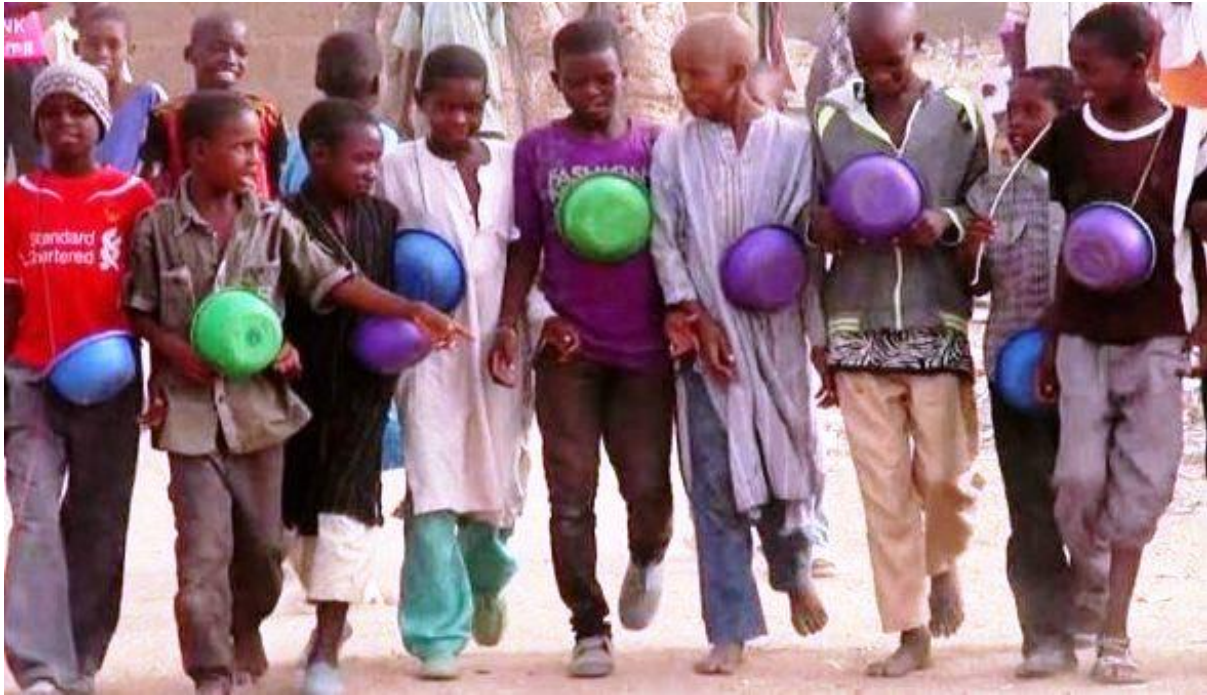
## **2.4 Almajiri Situation After Decline**

AbdulQadir (2003) and Ajakaye (2014) argue that Almajiri system has changed over time and the current mode is very dissimilar from the original. Similarly, Bambale (2003) argues that Almajiranci has deviated from its original purpose and its current method of operation is harming Nigeria's perception of Islam. The current situation of Almajirai is discussed here under the following subtopics: source of food, living conditions and medical care.

### **2.4.1 Almajirai Source of Food**

Ajakaye (2014) argues that Almajiri are hungry boys who can be seen begging for food in marketplaces, parking lots, restaurants, supermarkets, mosques, and churches. They eat anything offered to them. Okonkwo (2022) asserts that Almajirai's primary means of survival is through begging (known as *Bara* in Hausa), labouring on their Mallam's farm, and performing menial tasks like helping others carry loads in exchange for food or cash. Any Almajiri who refuses to go begging or perform menial tasks to get food is punished by the Mallam. In the morning, they are typically seen lurking around bean cake vendors (known as *Mai Kosai* in Hausa) hoping that customers will buy and offer them some. Musa & Mahmud (2014) posit that Almajirai lurk around restaurants, washing dishes and other household chores in return for leftover from food vendors and it is common to see them fight over leftover food. As soon as individuals indicate they are done with eating, Almajirai rush at the leftover, occasionally spilling it, and still scoop the morsels from the ground to eat. Edinyang et al. (2020) and Okoye & Yau (1999) posit that Almajirai in the last stage of studies, Gardawa, do not go begging themselves but do menial jobs such as being hired for farming to buy food or rely on leftovers from their juniors. Furthermore, because they are not far from the age of reason, Gardawa feel shy to beg at bus stations and markets. Another reason is that since Gardawa are males and in the puberty age, 13 to 16, they are forbidden from entering married men's houses, and so cannot go begging in houses. Okonkwo (2022) argues that lack of food reportedly caused many Almajirai to give up their studies or engage in vices. He contends that abandoning children without food when their bodies require a lot of nourishment for growth is cruel. Similarly, Shittu & Olaofe (2015) argue that food scarcity and parental poverty are the main causes of malnutrition among Almajirai which negatively impacts their health as they are prone to diseases, kwashiorkor and delayed cognitive development.





**Figure 2.3: Almajirai with Bowls Begging in Northern Nigeria Streets (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))**

## **2.4.2 Almajiri Living Conditions**

One of the qualities of any good boarding institution is adequate lodging, which includes beds, toilets, playgrounds, and good clean dormitories. Sule-Kano (1998) and Aluaigba (2009) argue that the accommodation in Almajiri system is deficient in all these areas. According to them, Almajirai's accommodation included crowding and they spend their nights in small, poorly ventilated quarters with an average of over twenty pupils in a thatched room. Like their accommodation, instruction takes place in cramped classrooms under the direction of one Mallam. Bala (2014) argues that children who reside in crowded housing have delayed cognitive growth, are anxious, hostile, and emotionally withdrawn. Consequently, Almajirai living conditions have a significant effect on their psychological development. Qadir (2003) and Fada (2005) list three types of accommodation available to Almajirai:

### **Mud Bricks Thatched Huts**

Mallamai constructs mudbrick, grass-thatched huts to serve as accommodation but there is never enough for the enormous number of pupils they must house. Traditional woven mats are used as bedding in these shelters. These huts are left open without door frames to use when necessary, and no provision of windows to allow for proper ventilation. Scarcity of this lodging is the reason Almajirai look for other options.

## **Zaure**

In northern Nigeria, mud brick and grass-thatched homes typically have a porch called Zaure. It performs the role of the traditional living room where guests are welcomed and entertained, and mud-built seats are among its features. As previously mentioned, male visitors are prohibited from entering the homes of married men, hence, the Zaure is the last destination for male visitors. Zaure is typically left open without doors, therefore, Almajirai who cannot find a place to sleep at their Mallam's thatched huts wander into the neighbourhood and sleep on the flat mud-built seats in people's Zaure. Many homeowners ask Mallamai to send their Almajirai to sleep in their Zaure because it acts as a sort of security to warn if thieves attempt to steal livestock, grains, or other items from their homes.

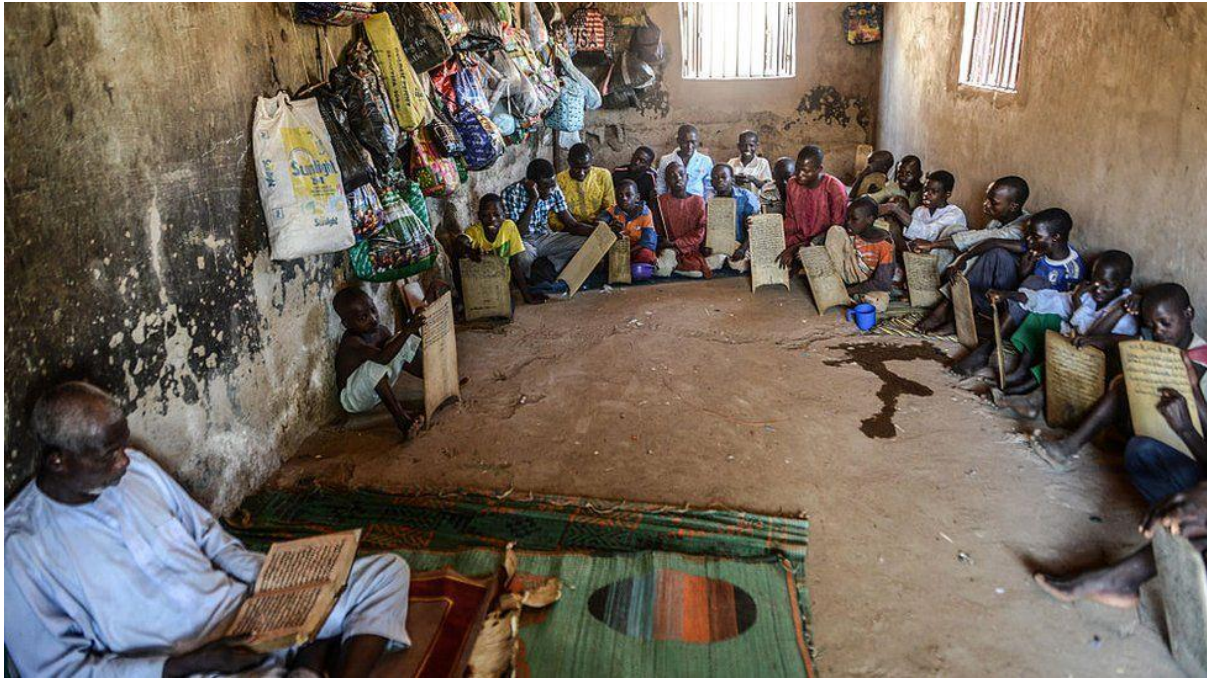
## **Market Shops Veranda and Mosques**

The veranda of stores in the markets also serve as accommodation for Almajirai. They sleep on benches on the veranda enduring the cold and mosquitoes. When they wake up in the morning, they sweep the market and the areas around the shops hoping that the shop owners will offer them food or money for breakfast. It should be noted, however, that Almajirai and shop owners do not always get along as some shop owners accuse them of breaking into their shops at night to steal. In the case of sleeping in Mosques, only the senior Almajirai, Gardawa, are permitted to do that.



**Figure 2.4: Almajirai with their Teacher (Mallam) Around their Accommodation (Vanguard: [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com))**





**Figure 2.5: Almajirai with their Teacher (Mallam) During Class Lessons (Vanguard: [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com))**

### **2.4.3 Medical Care**

Abubakar-Abdullateef et al. (2017) argues that the first issue Almajirai encounter once they enrol in school at age four is emotional deprivation caused by the absence of their parents. Additionally, poor nutrition and eating contaminated leftover food or food that has gone bad or stinky exposes them to medical issues. Akintunde et al. (2020) argues that their crowded living conditions render them more vulnerable to diseases. Furthermore, that insufficient ventilation in Almajiri accommodation is a significant threat from epidemics, as infections transmit quickly when people are crowded. Communicable infections like tuberculosis and scabies are caused by overcrowding and poor cleanliness, which are common health issues among Almajirai (Akintunde et al., 2020). Bala (2014) argues that Almajiranci, is a covert case of child abuse. This is because the conditions that the Almajirai find themselves is deplorable. Furthermore, he lists some of the conditions of Almajirai to include sleeping on the ground or on old, worn-out mats without mattresses or beddings, which leads to skin rashes from bedbug and lice. Similarly, Fowoyo, (2013) argues that Almajirai sleep outside which makes them vulnerable to malaria-causing mosquitoes bites. Additionally, they walk barefoot, a situation which exposes them to foot diseases and infections. Much like how they eat and sleep, the health care of Almajirai is worse and riskier because they are mostly cut off from modern medical and healthcare facilities. Fada (2005) argues that more than 80% of Almajirai, have

never visited a hospital and are not conversant with contemporary medical procedures. Most of them come from rural, peasant origins where their parents still turn to local herbalists and native doctors (*Boka* in Hausa) for medical care. When an Almajiri becomes ill, the Mallam doubles as a physician, employing the traditional healthcare system. Fada (2005) identified three ways in which an Almajiri is treated when they become ill:

**Herbs or Roots:** Herbs or roots of trees are boiled, and the sieved water is given to an Almajiri to drink or bath with. Alternatively, dried herbs or roots could be grinded into powder and applied to porridge and then given to the patient to consume. Fresh or dried herbs, or roots could be obtained for a reasonable price from traditional medicine vendors or from the bush by a person knowledgeable in traditional medicine. Typically, dosage and diagnosis are conjectured. Almajirai themselves receive instruction as part of their studies in the use of roots and herbs to create traditional cures for the most common illnesses.

**Rubutu:** This procedure involves the Mallam inscribing on a wooden tablet (known as *Allo* in Hausa) a passage from the Holy Qur'an, utilising water to wash it into a cup, and then giving the liquid to the sick Almajiri to drink as medication.

**Prayers and Charms:** The Mallam or a Gardi will perform prayers over a sick child as part of the "Prayers and Charms" ritual. Charms (*Laya* in Hausa) are purchased from native doctors to treat illnesses and to ward off evil spirits, witches, and wizards.

When none of these methods succeed in curing the child, the Mallam might seek modern medical attention, which rarely happens, or sends the Almajiri to his parents. For older students, Gardawa, the approach might be different when they get sick as they are frequently seen around pharmacies buying their medicines from the little money they saved from their manual labour. However, they still deal with the risks and dangers of self-treatment because the medication is not recommended by a doctor. In the worst scenario or the event of death of an Almajiri, the Mallam notifies the Almajiri parents or guardian who accept it as Allah's will without questioning the illness or the care their child received prior to death.

## **2.5 Scholarly Evaluation of Almajiri System Today**

Despite the admirable intent behind the Almajiri system original conception, finding literature about it today is like looking for criticism of Almajiranci. However, it should be noted that this criticism does not dwell on what Almajiranci aims to achieve, which is Islamic religious knowledge, but on how it is currently being implemented, which is at variance with Islam. Most criticisms, notably from academics and prominent persons, centres on the obvious consequences that arose from the current practice of the system, with some suggesting its abolition. Adetoro (2010), for example, characterised it as a system that is obsolete, anti-development, and devoid of values; Ajakaye (2014) characterised it as a legacy gone wrong; Alkali (2020 p.1), describes Almajirai as children who were “forced, stigmatized and misunderstood”; Obaro (2016) describes Almajirai as children who are mistreated and ignored; Purefoy (2010) as children who are being exposed to a life of violence and poverty. Agbiboa, (2013) argues that Boko Haram owes its existence to Almajiranci and therefore a potential danger to Nigerian security. These criticisms, advanced arguments, and viewpoints by scholars are grouped and discussed below under the following subheadings: the Almajiri system and potential child neglect; Almajiri as aiding insecurity, religious extremism, and violent activity; the Almajiri system as child education deprivation; Almajiri as prey and murder victims to ritualists; and the exploitation of Almajiri for child labour.

### **2.5.1 The Almajiri System and Potential Child Neglect**

Bala, (2014) argues that Almajiranci is a form of child abuse or child neglect. The rationale for such claim is that children from age 4, who are still in need of their parents' love and affection, are taken away and unable to go back even in times of difficulty and forced to scavenge on the streets for needs like food. Qadir (2003) argues that there is generally no need for an alarm clock to wake people up in northern Nigeria as one can hear the cries of children carrying bowls, wandering from house to house, market to market and begging for food and cash. He maintains that this practice which focuses on children and the beggarly behavior is un-Islamic. To buttress this point, Oyewumi & Saba, (2014) argue that during the time of the Islamic Prophet, Mohammed, children were not the focus of Almajiri system, rather, it was about adults. At the time, Muslims were instructed by the Qur'an to give alms (Sadaqat) to those in need and the 'Al-muhajirun' (emigrants), who came to Medina to learn about Islam but had no family, homes, or means of support. They were urged to do this as a matter of duty and to advance Islam. Those who responded to this cause were known as 'Al-Ansar' which means

'helpers' in Arabic (Quran 2:270; 274, 3:92, 3:134 cited in Oyewumi & Saba, 2014). Contrary to the current begging practice, Prophet Mohammed, rather warned Muslims against begging and suggested instead, they could sell firewood or do paid work (Oyewumi & Saba, 2014; Edinyang et al. 2020). Yunusa (1994) argues that an Almajiri is a child who begs or works to earn a wage to survive. That Almajiranci today represents poverty, suffering, and child exploitation. Shittu & Olaofe (2015 p.40) argue that Almajiri system was thoughtfully designed to impart religious knowledge, however, that it has deviated from its goals:

*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.....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 (Shittu & Olaofe, 2015 p.40)*

Musa & Mahmud (2014) argue that Almajiri are children who endure horrific living conditions, with some of them having no idea of their origin or parents because they left home at a young age. Without a choice, they follow other children or classmates studying under a Mallam. Furthermore, he asserts that in northern Nigeria, it is typical to see them congregate around food vendors such as bean or rice cake sellers (*Mai Kose* or *Mai Masa* in Hausa) early in the day hoping that a kind customer will buy and present them as an offering (Sadaqah). It is quite sad that they do not care where their food comes from, how it was prepared, if it is fresh or stale. Their look also gives the impression that they seldom bathe.

Hoechner (2013) posits that Almajirai come from low-income rural homes and reside in conventional Qur'anic schools. In terms of their everyday activities, they spend little time each day learning to read, write, and recite the Qur'an and most of the time is spent doing a variety of things to make a living. The typical Almajiri does not have enough food to eat, access to formal education, decent housing, or enough sanitary amenities. She argues further that the Mallam is responsible for teaching Almajirai the Islamic faith only, but they must fend for themselves. Since Mallamai are unpaid and rely on farming, leftovers from alms that their students bring, and gifts from the local community (zakat), it is hard for them to care for such a huge number of children. Aside this, decades of deteriorating economic conditions may have

made employing donations (zakat) as the primary method of system support less feasible the reason for resorting to begging (Adewuyi, 2000). Oyewumi & Saba (2014) argue that begging (Bara) is synonymous with Almajirai but ironically, the Islamic religion forbids begging in any form since it lowers a Muslim's sense of dignity. Shima & Daudu (1981:187) cited in Fada (2005, p. 18) opines:

*.....a casual but observant visitor to the major urban centres of the country, particularly in the northern states, will not miss the presence of a large number of young children, age between 6 and 14, in some cases older in market places, petrol filling stations, railway stations, by department shops or on the streets generally, with or without enamel-ware bowls, begging for alms from shoppers, vehicle owners or simply anybody considered by them to be more well-to-do. To those not used to the system of institutionalized begging, these children constitute a nuisance, others are considerate and give them money, while the unsympathetic dismiss them with insults.*

Furthermore, Shima & Daudu (1981:88) cited in Fada (2005, p. 19) asserts that:

*The little Almajirai sleep anywhere in motor parks, on the floor in verandas, broken down buildings. In sun or in rain. They must fend for themselves hence the begging and accompanying insults.*

Fowoyo (2013) argues that Almajiranci is a child neglect by all definitions. For the benefit of Nigerian society, the government must therefore implement changes. Shittu & Olaofe (2015) suggest that cooperation among all members of society is crucial to decrease the prevailing rate of child abuse in Almajiranci. It has been suggested that Muslim scholars and authorities should urge parents to provide their children with basic needs including an education. Since the government cannot handle these difficulties on its own, cooperation is essential. According to these scholars, Almajiranci's current state of child neglect is primarily the result of poverty.

### **2.5.2 Almajiri As Aiding Insecurity, Religious Extremism and Violent Activity**

Onochie (2011) argues that Almajiranci is essential to Boko Haram's survival because the two are intertwined. He goes on to say that Boko Haram is an alumnus of Almajiranci and that it is impossible to separate the two from one another. Abbo et al. (2017) argues that social groupings and social influence in Northern Nigeria played a significant role in solidifying an alliance between Boko Haram and Almajirai. To substantiate his claim, he argues that Muhammad Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, graduated from the Almajiri system as he was not able to attend a formal institution. As a result, he shares the same fate and social category as the Almajirai, which allows his ideology to have a significant impact on them. Scholars like

Aghedo & Eke, (2013) also demonstrated that there is a tenable relationship between Almajiri system and Boko Haram (referred to as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda Al wal jihad). These scholars rationalise and argue that alumni of Almajiranci, renowned for their contempt for formal or western education (*Boko*), have ties to Boko Haram since the terrorist organisation shares the same ideology with them by viewing formal or western education as un-Islamic. The reason for this claim by these scholars is because Abubakar Shekau, one of the commanders of Boko Haram (killed in May 2021) and some of his detained colleagues acknowledged to being Almajiranci graduates. Abbo et al. (2017) posit that Boko Haram uses three key factors—cultural and social status, extreme poverty, and government counterterrorism—to further exclude the Almajirai from the dominant political structure and incite their anger for retribution in a bid to draw them into their fold. As a result, Boko Haram provides low-cost sources of recruitment to the Almajirai. In the same vein, Thurston (2013) notes that the Almajiri system made it simple for Boko Haram to attract members and claims that the violent Northern Nigerian sect draws some of its recruits from them.

These academics represent a small minority of those who have connected Almajiranci to other criminal activities in northern Nigeria as well as Boko Haram. In addition to being charged with acting as a base of recruitment for Boko Haram, they were connected to ethnoreligious clashes in the northern part of Nigeria. AbdulQadir (2003) contends that because Almajirai live in poverty, terrorists easily recruit and radicalise them by providing them with food and shelter in exchange for their support to their cause, which is to engage in violent activities. Similarly, Bhatia and Ghanem (2017) found a correlation between economic hardship, unemployment, idleness, frustration and extremism or unrest in Arab countries. When people lack what to eat and other basics of life, in their anger can resort to violence, in extremis. According to Ibrahim (2021) the Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, a well-known figure who vehemently opposes the present Almajiri system blames the security challenges in the north on them. He suggests that government should make and enforce regulations including penalising Almajirai parents for abdicating their parental responsibilities. At the celebration of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in Kaduna, he made the following remark:

*If you cannot maintain one wife and you marry three and if you cannot maintain three children and you have 17, if you leave those children on the street without education, without training, you are going to have young men that would be a problem to our society. The youths that you see on drugs, those in stealing and kidnapping are all products of that social system. And we need to ask ourselves, is this what Islam said we should have? Are these the children that Islam said we should have? (Ibrahim, 2021, paragraph 23).*



Likewise, according to Asani (2017) Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, the current Sultan of Sokoto, has publicly declared that the act of street begging by Almajiri is contrary to the principles of Islam:

*Almajiri does not represent Islam, but hunger and poverty. Almajiri system of begging is not representing Islam and must therefore be distinguished from Islam. Islam encourages scholarship and entrepreneurship and frowns at laziness and idleness as exemplified by itinerant Almajiri. Therefore attempt, must be made to stop the practice of Almajiri system of begging among Muslim faithful (Asani, 2017, May 21, paragraph 2).*

Onochie (2011) argues that due to parental abandonment, living in poverty and dirt, and receiving physical punishment when they take too long to memorise the Qur'an, Almajirai develop hostile behaviour towards their surroundings. This attitude support psychologists' claims that children who experience harsh environments tend to develop into violent adults. Awofeso (2003) labelled the Almajiri as a potential terrorist. He argues that it is impossible to have millions of naive, starving youngsters wandering aimlessly on the streets without expecting terrorists, religious fanatics, and extremists to recruit them for anti-social purposes. He posits that the Almajiri are harmful to an orderly and peaceful society.



**Figure 2.6: Fifty Boko Haram Members Attacked Bauchi Prison on September 7, 2010 to free their members held there by Nigerian Government. 721 Prisoners escaped out of which over 150 were Boko Haram Members (Daily Trust: dailytrust.com)**



**Figure 2.7: On 28 March 2022, Ansaru Group Attacked a Passenger Train Headed to Kaduna from Abuja, Nine Passengers were killed, 20 Injured and Over 60 Kidnapped (NaijaNews: naijaneews.com)**



**Figure 2.8: The Interior of the Train after the attack on 28 March 2022 by Ansaru Group (Premium Times: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>)**





**Figure 2.9: Boko Haram Members in Sambisa Forest Nigeria (BBC Hausa: <https://www.bbc.com/hausa>)**



**Figure 2.10: Arrested Boko Haram Members in Nigeria (BBC Hausa: <https://www.bbc.com/hausa>)**

Bala (2019) and Adetoro (2010) argue that Almajirci is the breeding ground for political thugs and religious fanatics. They assert that this is evident and bolstered by confessional comments

made by arrested and detained members of Sara-Suka, a well-known band of political thugs in Bauchi, as well as Boko Haram and Maitatsine, two religious extremist groups. From their confessions, some members of these violent organisations admitted to being graduates of the Almajiri system. Ojo (1985) argues that graduates of Almajirci provided the bulk of recruits for the 1980 Maitatsine riots in Kano, Bauchi, Maiduguri, and Yola. It was found that the group's leader, Mohammed Marwa, a Cameroonian, who lived in Kano, had indoctrinated them with his ideas by promising to improve their lot if they supported him. In Kano alone, between December 18 and 29, 1980, about 4,177 persons lost their lives because of the Maitatsine incident, this includes members of the Army and the Police, along with a great deal of property destruction (Adesoji, 2011). Furthermore, Ojo (1985) argues that Yandaba the political thugs of Kano State draw its members from Almajirai and politicians have been known to utilise them to target political foes and promote election fraud in their bid for power. In other words the bulk of Yandaba gang members are graduates of Almajirci with only a small percentage being school dropouts. Wadam (2014) argues that northern Nigeria saw four serious religious crises between 1980 and 1985, each resulting in the loss of lives and destruction of property. Onochie (2011) argue that the religious disputes in Kano city in 2004 involved the Almajirai as active participants and complicit parties. Furthermore, he argues that Almajiri system is a sanctuary where violent Islamic sects like Boko Haram, Maitatsine, and gangs like Yandaba, recruit their followers. All in all, these academics have linked Almajitranci to Nigeria's security concerns.

Aside, terrorism and gang violence, scholars have also linked Almajiranci with religious fundamentalism. Ayinla (2003) argues that, when applied to religion, fundamentalism is the rigid dedication to one's religious convictions that results in less tolerance of others who have a different belief. Furthermore, fundamentalism gradually leads to religious extremism which can be combined with violence to seek for political or economic relevance. Religious extremists such as Boko Haram which is the West African branch of the Islamic State whose aim is mainly political also bring religious extremism into their ideology. They seek to create and be governed by a Caliphate in northern Nigeria under the strict observance of Sharia law (Alli et al., 2011). Their aim is to do away with anything connected to the West like democracy as they consider Western way of life as liberal, ungodly, and corrupt. Although their conflict is mainly political, they use violence and attack vulnerable people (both Christians and Muslims who do not subscribe to their version of Islam) to pass their message. When extremists notice a particular group will be sympathetic to their ideology, they utilise every tool at their disposal

to recruit them (Onuoha, 2010). Adetoro (2010) and (2012) argued that Almajiri system is a recruiting hub for Boko Haram and religious extremists who indulge in violent and criminal behaviour. Initially, one of Boko Haram's original priorities was to spread Islam when it first began its brutal terrorist activities in 2009. To accomplish this, they killed non-Muslims in their houses and targeted them for suicide bombings. After realising that most Muslims did not agree with their version of Islam, they quickly broadened their attacks to Muslims as well. Their activities also involve abductions, as with the famous Chibok school girls in 2014 where 276 girls (95 percent of them Christian) were taken and forcefully converted to their version of Islam. Statistics of arrested Boko Haram members or those who voluntarily laid down their arms and are in deradicalization centres in Gombe State and other parts of Nigeria, showed 80 percent of them were Almajirai (Zakariya, 2017).

Disapproving of the extreme way religion is practised, and misinterpretation of religion in Nigeria, Professor Wole Soyinka, a Nobel Laureate, states, "Religion has become the number one problem for Nigerians" (Soyinka, 2021, paragraph 1). He argues that religious extremists who are found in all religions in Nigeria, could engage in battle for supremacy or one trying to impose their values on others. Religious tolerance is not very common in Bauchi State as seen in Chapter One of this study, where a catalogue, of key conflicts were outlined triggered by religious differences. There is abundant evidence from comments made and actions exhibited by extremists that they want their religion and ideology to be supreme and the Almajiri have been recruited in their innocence, either through persuasion or by force to advance extremists ideologies (Purefoy, 2010). Some Boko Haram child soldiers arrested by Nigerian security forces were between the ages of 13 and 16 years, and some were used for suicide bombings, between 2009 and 2015, although there were more female suicide bombers in their teens than male (Osasona, T. 2022).

Alli (2009) asserts that northern Nigeria will continue to be a haven for extremist organisations such as Boko Haram given the large number of Almajirai in the region. This is because the Almajiri system as currently practised has become a problem and serves as a sanctuary for radical and antisocial activity. Furthermore, he argues that rising insecurity is a symptom that those who have been subjected to significant humiliation have had enough and that there is an increasing number of people who are bitter and devoid of optimism of a better life, hence, they are fighting back.





**Figure 2.11: Mohammed Yusuf, Founder of Boko Haram, Killed in 2009 By Nigeria Security Forces. He was a Mallam (Daily Post: [dailypost.ng](http://dailypost.ng))**



**Figure 2.12: Abubakar Shekau, Graduate of Almajirci, Mohammed Yusuf's student and Successor as Boko Haram Leader. He Killed Himself on 19 May, 2021 during Supremacy Battle in Sambisa Forest Between his Group and a Faction ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province) (<https://www.cfr.org>).**

### **2.5.3 The Almajiri System as Child Education Deprivation**

The Almajiri system has been known to place no value on formal education, hence, majority of Almajirai do not attend formal schools because they are erroneously taught that doing so is un-Islamic. The late Balarabe Musa, a former governor of Kaduna State, believed that the

failure of government to adapt and integrate the Almajiri system with formal education led to the emergence of Boko Haram terrorists. He accused northern Nigerian nobility of preserving Almajiranci without incorporating it into modern schooling to further their own political ambitions (Sahara Reporters, May 13, 2020). Balarabe Musa argues that northern leaders are the political beneficiaries of the rot in Almajiranci. Mr. Musa noted that during his childhood, he attended a formal education institution when most of northern Nigeria rejected it. He and a select few who chose to do so were referred to as "Yan Boko" (students of western education) and warned they were deserving of hell because they uphold Western ideas and lifestyles (Iwok, 2020). There are approximately 244 million children globally who are not attending school according to a 2022 UNESCO report. Nigeria, Pakistan, and India are the countries with the most children not attending school globally. Nigeria alone has 20 million and by all indices Almajirai forms the bulk of that number. Along with poverty, ignorance also plays a significant role on why Almajirai join Boko Haram and Yandaba gang (Alabi, 2022).

Enemo (2021) posit that in 2004, the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo signed into law a legislation known as the Child Rights Act 2003, with the express purpose of overhauling the country's educational system. According to the Federal Ministry of Education Abuja, Nigeria, website (<https://education.gov.ng>), Child Rights Act 2003, Part 1 section 2(1) declares:

*Every government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory, and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school ages. Section 2(2) also adds: Every parent shall ensure that his or her child or ward attends and completes his or her:*

*I. Primary school education and*

*II. Secondary education.*

*Section 2(4) continues: a parent who contravenes section 2(2) of this act commits an offence and is liable.*

*I. On first conviction, to be reprimanded.*

*II. on second conviction to a fine of 2000 Naira or imprisonment for a term of one month or to both.*

(Source: Federal Ministry of Education Abuja, Nigeria, <https://education.gov.ng>)

Eighteen years later, despite the provisions of this Act, the count of children who are not attending school had increased from nearly 7 million in 2004 to 20 million in 2022 (Alabi,2022; UNESCO, 2010; Enemo ,2021). Bauchi is among the states with the least number of children enrolled in formal schools (about 60.8percent of children do not attend schools) only better than two other States, Kebbi and Zamfara (Ukpe, 2022). Going by these statistics, it means

over half of Bauchi children do not attend formal education. It will come as no surprise to learn that Almajirai makes up most of that figure. This low enrolment in schools indicates a low rate of literacy.

In Bauchi State, girls suffer more than boys when it comes to lack of access to formal education. At age 13 or 14, most female children are married off and early marriages leads to teen mothers and health challenges. Many of these young mothers develop Vesico-vaginal fistulas (VVF), a condition affecting the vagina and bladder that results in uncontrollable vaginal discharge. This condition mostly arises because of a challenging child delivery by a teen mother or surgery (NHS UK, 2018). Due to the large number of patients with such conditions, a special hospital was founded in Ningi part of Bauchi to treat such cases (Edeh, 2012). Bauchi is home to many uneducated women which prompted Aisha Mohammed, the wife of the current Bauchi governor, to initiate a campaign for women adult education tagged, "Not too Late to Learn". The campaign backed by the Al-Muhibbah foundation promotes adult education for girls and women. This became a need due to the significant number of women who were married off in their teens without an education. Interestingly, the Governor's wife was also a beneficiary of adult education as she had no formal education prior to her marriage to the Governor (Alhasan, 2020).

Abu (2012) notes that Islam encourages people to search for knowledge, and in no way does it forbid formal education. Therefore, the views held by Mohammed Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau, two deceased Boko Haram commanders on formal education are not true. "Boko Haram" in the Hausa language translates to "Western education is prohibited" Their contempt for formal education is evident from their name. However, lack of literacy has detrimental impacts since it encourages belief adoption over critical thought. This might explain why Almajirai might be susceptible to influence by equally ignorant Boko Haram members to adopt their ideology.

Yunusa (1994) argue that Almajirai learn the price of not having a formal education later in adulthood as they are left without professional options. They soon realise that life is more than only receiving a religious education. Often, they despise those who had had a formal education and are successful in their careers. He further states that lack of formal education makes Almajirai feel cheated in life and succumb to indoctrination by insurgents easily and voluntarily. Sule-Kano (1998) argues that a child nurtured with negative views of other people

may grow up to be violent and be inclined to work with criminals. However, formal education is not a guarantee against criminality. Lack of education in Bauchi State manifests itself in a wide range of unusual behaviours. For example, people frequently block highways and spread their mats so they can pray, and motorists are expected to pause until the prayers are over. In the developed world, doing such would be unimaginable, yet in Bauchi State it is the norm. Due to ignorance, the current practice of Almajirci impacts human existence negatively, as it is opposed to progress and a well-ordered society (Oyewumi & Saba, 2014).

#### **2.5.4 Almajiri as Prey and Murder Victims to Ritualists**

Almajirai have been a target for ritual executions. Usually, they are enticed with food or money which they tend to lack and thus are easily compromised. There have been numerous cases where they are either murdered or had their body organs removed, while still alive, for ritual use. The following are a few examples:

According to Hafsar (2021), Bauchi Governor, Bala Mohammed, expressed regret at the horrific murder of an 11-year-old Almajiri, in the Kofar Wambai neighbourhood of the city of Bauchi. Two Almajirai were enticed to a remote location by an unidentified person who promised to feed them but instead used a stone to break the skull of one of them and took his brain out. The other Almajiri, who was fortunate to escape with a bloody body, attracted the attention of their Mallam who proceeded to the area along with a crowd and discovered the deceased's remains.

Similarly, Hajara (2022) and Bashir (2022) reported about another incident in which the eyes of a 17-year-old Almajiri, Mustapha Yunusa, were removed in Bauchi, by a ritualist, Isah Hassan. Hassan was arrested by the police and confessed to the crime. In his confessional statement, his goal was to use Yunusa's eyes for charms to aid him vanish from robbers whenever he roams around Bauchi jungles. He used a knife to forcibly remove the eyeball of the Almajiri child after luring him with the promise of food to the outskirts of Bauchi. In another instance, 6-year-old Almajiri, Uzairu Salisu had his eyeballs removed by an unidentified ritualist. Hajara (2022) posit that Uzairu was approached by a man who offered him a job on his farm in Dutsen Jira, around Yelwa neighbourhood of Bauchi city. Uzairu was unaware that his employer had other plans. Uzairu survived but would remain blind for life. Uzairu was given a scholarship by Bauchi State government to pursue formal and Islamic

education through special schooling. Bauchi Governor, Bala Mohammed, states that to lessen Almajiri molestation, a strong and concerted effort will be made to integrate the Almajiri system within the established educational framework. His remarks:

*“... the practice of Almajiri system we must ask governors to as much as we can to make sure we bring it within the mainstream of education where we will be able to take away the responsibility from the parents. In our country, our southern counterparts are able to educate all their children and their wards, I know they don't have Almajiri but they have children, they are all given free education at the primary level and that is why we in Bauchi we are going to declare emergency in education and we will take responsibility of the education of our children and our wards both in Almajiri and in western education so that we will be at par with our counterparts and we will do away with this without going into the controversy. “*

(Hajara, 2022, paragraph 3)

The three instances above are a tip of the iceberg out of so many instances within Bauchi and the wider north of Nigeria, where Almajirai had been killed or had their body parts removed.

### **2.5.5 The Exploitation of Almajiri for Child Labour**

Aluaigba (2009) has drawn attention to yet another plight of Almajirai, namely their usage by their Mallam (teacher) in labour-intensive farming, domestic tasks, splitting of firewood, and the care of animals like goats and calves which he referred to as pure child exploitation. This scholar argues that Almajirai's human dignity is violated because they labour at unsuitable work for their age and lack access to the kind of high-quality healthcare that every child deserves. Bala (2014) argues that Almajiri teachers are independent contractors who do not receive a salary for their services, hence, they take advantage of labour provided by the Almajirai and some of the proceeds from their street begging (Bara). Furthermore, that one of the system's negative effects is child labour, in which Almajirai must help their instructors to provide for their families and must also beg to support the welfare of the Mallamai (teachers). Additionally, he contends that Almajirai have been turned into tools for their teachers to make money and in some cases, required to give a set amount daily, feed themselves, and clothe themselves. Due to these demands from their teachers, they constantly beg for money in motor parks, houses, streets, and other public areas to evade punishment. They do manual labour at restaurants or even illicit establishments, leading them to associate with unsavoury individuals and participate in unlawful actions like pickpocketing or theft. Furthermore, that Almajirai waste their time on unproductive pursuits, which ultimately hinders the main objective for which they were brought to Almajirci, namely, to pursue Islamic knowledge.



Okonkwo (2022) argues that given the history of the Almajiri system and the decades of mistrust that accompanied its decline and eventual collapse, reputable Islamic academics in Nigeria need to educate northerners on the importance of both Islamic and formal education. Despite the necessity for change, the northern elite lacks the political will to modify Almajiri system with northern conservatives opposed to its modernization (PM News, 2020). However, despite the bleak prognosis, there has recently been grounds for optimism as Almajiri reform is being championed by NGOs with origins in northern Nigeria. For instance, *Better Almajiri* is an advocacy group whose main objective is to push for Almajiri reform. Using the hashtag #BetterAlmajiri, they frequently urge affluent members of society to adopt the spirit of support, enrol Almajirai in formal education, and change the existing trend of Almajiranci (#BetterAlmajiri, 2022). This points to the power of newer social media to raise awareness of the role and position of the Almajiri.

## **2.6 The Future of Almajiri Education**

Sule-Kano (2010) argues that most Almajirai hailed from impoverished farmer backgrounds. Thus, it is determined that parents send their children to Almajiranci dur to poverty. Similarly, Abdullahi, (2021) opines that parents' decisions to send their children hundreds of kilometres away to study and live as Almajirai are significantly influenced by poverty and deprivation. These findings demonstrate that all Almajirai come from low-income families. Fada (2005) suggests government should tackle poverty among the citizenry and ensure that all children (Almajiri inclusive) are enrolled into formal schools. In addition to formal schools, Islamic education should be available to all children without discrimination in the Islamiyyah. The Islamiyyah model of education, is currently available to the children of middle class and rich Muslims. The Islamiyya model is attended only during weekends. During weekdays, students of Islamiyyah attend formal schools. Unlike Almajirci, Islamiyyah are day schools and in addition to teaching Islamic knowledge, the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, and Arabic, disciplines like arithmetic and science are also taught, though much emphasis is on religious instructions. Furthermore, Islamiyyah students pay school fees, wear uniforms and each term's end is marked by exams for all students. Additionally, unlike Almajiri system, Islamiyyah has both boys and girls as students and the curriculum is devised to match the demands of the modern world. All these efforts are crucial to curb the scourge of ignorance, which is prevalent in northern Nigeria, unlike the south (Oyewumi & Saba, 2014).



**Figure 2.13: Islamiyyah Where Children of Rich and Middle Class Muslims Receive Islamic Instruction (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))**



**Figure 2.14: Islamiyyah Where Female Children of Rich and Middle Class Muslims Receive Islamic Instruction (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))**

AbdulQadir (2003) argues that addressing corruption in governance is a crucial step in improving Almajiri situation. Tackling corruption will lead to improved infrastructure in schools as what is currently available in government formal schools are run-down structures, devoid of books and furniture. Tackling corruption will pave way to hiring qualified teachers, provide modern facilities and educational resources, and delivery of standard instruction. This will increase the appeal of formal schooling among Almajirai.

Enemo (2021) argues that the future of Almajiri depends on the government putting the Child Rights Act 2003 into effect and any parent judged deficient ought to face consequences. In other words, all children must attend formal education, and deliberate attempts should be undertaken to integrate Almajiranci with formal education. Once again, AbdulQadir (2003) makes the case that incompetent Islamic instructors who mislead other Muslims about the real teachings of Islam need to have their activities regulated. According to him, the teaching of Islam should only be done by authorized Islamic scholars, as for instance, the misinterpretation of Islamic teachings on polygamy is what has sustained Almajiri system. Al-Amin (2019) advocates that Almajiri graduates who may be too old to enroll in primary school should be supported through the creation of centers for skill learning by government. They can acquire skills necessary to make a living. But for any of these recommendations to be achieved, he argues further that government must have the political will to spearhead the Almajiri reform project. Ajakaye (2014) is of the view that the dignity of every child should be upheld without prejudice to their family social status. He argues that the present Almajiri system is a child abuse stemming from the impoverished status of their parents. Abdullahi (2021) suggests that to deter future child abusers, the laws of the land should take their course by prosecuting those who abuse Almajirai, and indeed all children.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter explores the origins and objectives of Almajiri system and argues that despite being a success at first, its decline began with the British colonisation of Nigeria. The chapter also shows how most literature about Almajirai today is negative and critical of the system but despite the criticism, we can infer that this religious education was intended to be relevant for the study of Islamic theological doctrine. The evidence also reveals that majority of criticism of Almajiri system focuses on how it functions rather than what it promotes. This chapter thus sets a context for the investigation of how the Almajiri are represented by the media in the latter part of this thesis.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

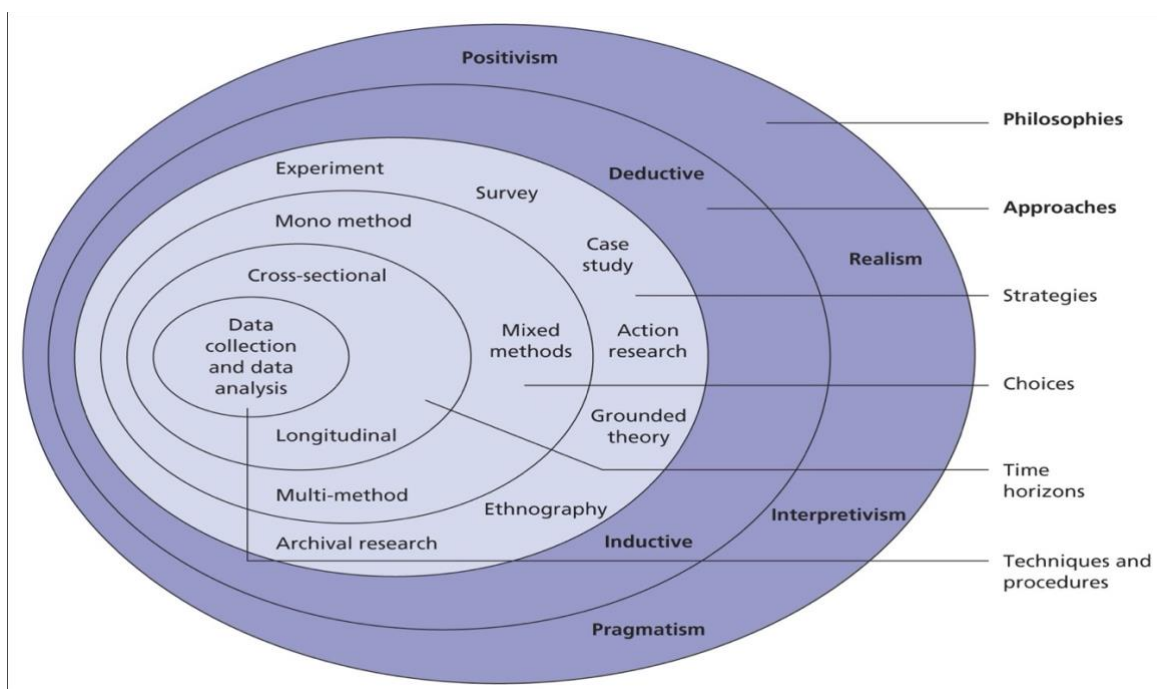
### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation of the methodology and methods used to carry out this research on how selected media organisations represent the Almajiri system in Bauchi society. Houser (2014) argues that knowing the methodology used to conduct any study is essential for understanding and properly analysing it. Therefore, it is always important for researchers to state at the outset the research design they deployed in conducting their study. This chapter therefore sets out the methodological approach and associated methods chosen and deployed in this research project to address the project objectives and research questions.

### 3.2 The Research Onion

To illustrate the different phases and options available in a research design, Lewis, Saunders, and Thornhill (2012) used the analogy of onion layers to show the various stages, and available options of methods and methodologies in a research design, starting with research philosophy as the outermost layer (shown in Figure 3.1), and moving inwards to the other stages and options. The description of choices made for this study follows the research onion pattern starting from the outer layer, then moving inwards to the data collection and analysis phase.

**Figure 3.1 The Research Onion**



**Figure 3.1 The Research Onion (Lewis, Saunders, and Thornhill, 2012, p. 128**  
<https://15writers.com/research-onion/>)

### **3.3 Research Epistemology**

Epistemology is the theory or philosophy of knowledge. Therefore, a research epistemology is the mindset, ideas, or concepts that a study investigator brings into their research to arrive at new knowledge. This inclination influences first, the choice for a research topic, then how the research would be conducted, information gathering and analysis methods, and how its findings should be presented (Robson & McCartan 2016; Marshall 1998). Weber (2004) posits that constructivism, positivism, objectivism, or subjectivism theories of knowledge are the options deployed for scientific or social science investigations. Creswell (2003) posits that options are prioritised by a researcher based on knowledge of all options and making the most appropriate choice to serve a particular purpose. Therefore, this researcher deems it appropriate to describe the features of the chosen and the unchosen methodologies, stating the arguments for the choices made, and arguments against the unchosen choices for this investigation.

#### **3.3.1 Positivism**

Positivism philosophy holds that knowledge is found, not created, and considers knowledge to be separate of a societal participant. According to Richards (2003) the term positivism is credited to Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Comte led the charge that all information gained through methods other than science should be discounted and only scientific knowledge arrived at through sense experience or examination of visible facts should be trusted, a view backed up by Emile Durkheim. Turner (2001) described Positivism as a knowledge mindset that emphasises the importance of learning through science and numerical data. To arrive at this knowledge, there is a procedure used to assemble and examine data which is quantitative data collection and analysis methods, such as surveys, experiments, controlled observations, and interviews. Positivism holds that for knowledge to be credible, it must be free from any prejudice that might result from the investigator's views. Halfpenny (2001) states that the key point in positivism is trusting only information arrived at through the senses (objective knowledge) which should be subjected to further tests (deduction) to confirm its trustworthiness or disprove it. Positivist philosophy has not been chosen for this study and the reasons are consistent with criticism of positivist viewpoints by Gage (2007), Richards (2003), and Grix (2004), who claim that while scientific methods are appropriate for studying natural phenomena, they are insufficient for studying people and social phenomena.

Therefore, since the goal of this research is to investigate the role of selected mass media in representing the Almajiri system in Bauchi State, which is a social phenomenon, it makes positivist philosophy unsuitable for this investigation. Additionally, Thyer (2007), Giddens (1974) and Keat (1979) argue that positive thinkers favour concise and objective reasoning over emotive and subjective human interpretations. They shun the use of descriptive narratives that are based on human emotions. This represents yet another limitation to positivism not been considered for this study. The nature of the research questions in this thesis necessitates experience-based interpretations from those who reside in Bauchi and have a sense of the local context regarding Almajiri representation by mass media. As such, the answers to the research questions are inextricably linked to human experience. Even though positivism has not been chosen, Robson & McCartan (2016), and Bryman (2008) cited by Flick (2014) posit that the fundamental benefit of positivism is that social scientists can make conclusions and assessments that are extremely precise, coming closer to an accurate understanding of how social phenomena acts. Additionally, positivist approach allows researchers to exclude from prior "knowledge" preconceptions, assumptions, beliefs, and other unscientific concepts that have been accepted as knowledge surrounding these social phenomena. Through stringent conditions for investigation, positivism purges social phenomena of presumptive essence and exposes them for what they truly are (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Bryman, 2008; Flick, 2014).

### **3.3.2 Constructivism**

Grix (2004) opines constructivism (interpretivism) arose as a reaction to the dominance of positivism, and unlike positivism, it derives knowledge from the subjective accounts of individuals who have dealt with the topic under study and the meanings they assign to those subjective accounts. In order words, it involves learning from those on ground or individuals who have had interactions with a research topic and their interpretations of those encounters Applefield et al. (2000) opines that constructivism philosophy is based on the idea that reality and truth are made, not found, and learning only occurs when a researcher discovers knowledge through investigation and activity. To arrive at constructive knowledge, importance is placed on the type of language used to describe an identified problem by those experiencing it first-hand. According to Gupta (2011) and Honebein (1993), constructivism holds that the best approach to comprehend a phenomenon is considering the perspectives and interpretations of individuals who interact with it daily. This is because their interaction and thought exchange about their personal experiences puts them in a better position to comprehend and interpret it.

Lupovici (2009) argues that constructivists (also known as interpretivists) attempt to understand the world via a variety of “individual eyes” and their perceptions of reality. Famous constructivists and fervent proponents of this school of thought include Jerome Bruner, Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey. Gupta (2011) argues that the main benefit of Constructivism is its adaptability, which enables the researcher to reframe prior knowledge and presumptions as needed throughout the research process. Constructivism was chosen as the philosophical framework for this study because, in the words of Lupovici (2009) it is more suitable for studies that are exploratory in nature as it avoids the rigid positivist philosophy and seeks to learn through people’s experiences in each circumstance and what they perceive to be reality of their lived situation. The study's research questions necessitate that the viewpoints of Bauchi study participants and the evidence of representation of Almajiri by mass media content be taken into consideration to provide an adequate response. This study is exploratory in nature and fits well with this approach. As mentioned before, positivism was disapproved of because it is more suited for researching natural phenomena than social phenomena and people. Constructivism is thus the most appropriate choice, given that the purpose of this study is to investigate a defined group of people (Almajiri) and their interactions with the mass media in Bauchi State, which is a social phenomenon. Nonetheless, despite the choice of constructivism, this researcher is aware of constructivism's limitations. This is because according to Ryan (2018), Creswell & Poth (2018) and Creswell (1994), since constructivism is characterised by subjectivity, it has the potential for prejudice. Again, since human opinion and values have a significant impact on the data, it is impossible to generalise from it, leading to possible unreliable results. The table below shows the distinction between constructivism and positivism philosophies of knowledge.

**Table 3.1 The Distinctions Between Constructivism and Positivism Knowledge Attitudes**

Constructivism	Positivism
<p>1. Collects information about interviewee's lifestyle and strives to know the motivations that drive their actions.</p> <p>2. Since qualitative methodology allows interaction with respondents, constructivism aligns with it.</p> <p>3. Open to making concessions on accuracy, if necessary, to achieve higher credibility.</p>	<p>1. Collects data to uncover the underlying principles that drive human conduct.</p> <p>2. It is compatible with quantitative methodologies since it necessitates a detachment in relationship between the researcher and the respondents.</p> <p>3. Concentrates on conducting research that is more credible and dependable.</p>

**Ideas in this Chart are taken from Giddens (1974) and Gupta (2011)**

### **3.3.3 Postmodernism and Its Relationship to Constructivism**

According to Stewart et al. (2021) Jeong-ho and Naehui (2022) French philosophers like Jacques Derrida and Francois Lyotard were among the first to introduce postmodernism in the 1960s. These academics aimed to break away from the then-dominant conventional forms of philosophy and instead concentrate on the visual and aural arts to examine the relationship between language and subjectivity in new ways. Francois Lyotard is credited with coining the term "postmodernism," with the aim of distinguishing institutional knowledge from science (Campbell (2018). Campbell (2018) contends that prior to postmodernism, Western philosophy, especially that of the Enlightenment, saw people as autonomous, and sovereign beings who created meaning in the cosmos. Contrarily, postmodernism sought to alter that way of thinking by emphasising that meaning is a byproduct of historical and social processes. Pathak (2017) and Bahc (2022) argue that postmodernism is relevant to practically all social science subfields, and that its emergence was to counter positivism, which prioritised data quantification. In order words, it was an attempt to place social sciences on the same level as natural science. Furthermore, that postmodernism has been a crucial advancement in the social sciences, having assessed the drawbacks and dangers of placing an excessive focus on rationalism. Nicholls (2012) argues that postmodernism aims to critique the power hidden behind the things we take for granted in our daily lives. It investigates what we know, how we live, and how the present came to be historically and socially feasible. It also challenges our presumptions about what we believe to be true. Postmodernism is a philosophy rather than a methodology, although it covers ontology, epistemology, and research methodology, it cannot be categorised as either quantitative or qualitative methodology (Nicholls, 2012). Johari (1982)



posits that Postmodernism is flexible, creative and open to new concepts as against conventional dogmatic worldviews. However, that despite this, postmodernism has been criticised for being merely relativistic, cynical, and obscure.

**Table 3.2: Constructivism and Postmodernism Main Points**

Constructivism		Postmodernism	
Key Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no Universal truths but specific groups maintaining specific ways of knowing which may change in the future and in different situations</li> <li>• Knowledge is not passively acquired through instruction, but through building understanding via social interaction and experiences; combining new information with what is already known</li> </ul>	Key Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge is produced by humans. Consequently, although individuals may "know," "truth" is unreal.</li> <li>• All knowledge is subjective and created as persons reflect on their own world</li> </ul>
Proponents	Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Gaston Bachelard	Proponents	Jean — Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard

**Sources: Stewart et al. (2021), Midgeley (2004), Price (1997), Doan (1997)**

Johnston (2012) argues that Constructivism and Postmodernism concepts concur that knowledge is acquired by integrating new information with what is already known and developing understanding through experiences and social interaction. This offers an alternative to the deeply ingrained Enlightenment paradigm, which maintains that knowledge can only be obtained through natural science or the quantification of data. Pathak (2017) posit that Constructivist and Postmodern ideologies hold that there are only local truths, unique to certain locations and periods, and no universal truths. This is a departure from the traditional belief in universal truths as championed by natural science.

### **3.4 Theoretical Perspectives**

According to Pathirage et al. (2008) theoretical perspectives are presumptions that guide a study investigation. These are deductive or Inductive approaches. Hammond (2016) and Goddard, et al. (2004) state that deductive and inductive reasoning are two distinct modes of thinking that are connected to the two philosophies of knowledge (positivism and constructivism) and the most crucial considerations when selecting whether to use a deductive or an inductive approach is determined by the objectives of the study and the nature of the research questions. Deductive reasoning is a positivist approach which logically and scientifically support or disprove claims made in a previously accepted proposition (Goddard, et al., 2004). As previously said, positivism was rejected and so it is only logical that since deductive reasoning is a positivist approach, it should not be considered here too. Additionally, Hammond (2016) argues that one of the problems with deductive research is believing that all fields in natural science operate in the same way when in fact they do not. As of now, there has never been a study like this one, “An Investigation into the Media Representation of the Almajiri System in Bauchi State, Nigeria”, it is unique and the first of its kind to be conducted, hence there is no old theory in this field to test as deductive reasoning requires. On the other hand, according to Brett (2017) Inductive reasoning relies on the pattern of thinking of people in a collected data who have had first-hand experience of the phenomenon being studied. Based on the thinking of those who supplied information, if the researcher is confident that their findings are accurate, a theory is then developed. Inductive reasoning is the preferred approach for this research since according to Arthur (1994), it involves moving from specifics to broad by using observations from ordinary life and then making generalisations, in this case, what people in Bauchi who have had first-hand experience of the study issue think of their situation. It is expected that their various responses on the relationship between Almajiri-media would be generalised under themes which would serve as the findings of the study. Furthermore, since constructivism philosophy which rhymes with inductive thinking has already been chosen, it only goes that inductive reasoning should be the option.

This researcher considers Almajiri representation in the mass media to be a contentious topic full of assertions by Almajiri sympathisers and denials by media organisations. During the data collection process, these opposing viewpoints became apparent. Thus, there is need to assess mass media content to determine the veracity of the claims. Agenda-setting theory is used in this research to ascertain the kinds of agendas that media may set when it represents

the Almajiri. According to McCombs (2002), news framing can be seen as an extension of agenda-setting and both are related processes. Therefore, news framing is used here to examine the language, phrases, tones, and imagery used by media organisations in their editorials, articles, news headlines, interviews, and opinion columns, to describe Almajirai. Through news framing the vocabulary or imagery used by mass media to create frames will be examined to determine whether agendas were set over time through such frames (these two theories will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and applied to the primary data of selected newspapers in Chapter 6 for analysis).

Siebert et al. (1956) posit that social responsibility theory is predicated on a free press, but that which also carries a responsibility to the public. This theory—which states that the mass media should focus on serving the public interest—is applied here to determine if the agendas set by the media in its portrayal of Almajiri and the frames used to set such agendas are socially responsible or in the public interest (the social responsibility theory will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and applied to the findings of this study in Chapter 7).

Ellis (2021) describes Advocacy Journalism as a genre of journalism that not only reviews but also advises. Jensen (2008) opines that despite its subjective nature, Advocacy Journalism is fact-based and is geared towards addressing a social or political issue. At the study's recommendations phase, which would follow analysis and conclusions on how Almajiri is portrayed in the media, and the discussion of interviews themes and findings, Advocacy Journalism plays a critical role. One of the issues, as mentioned in Chapter One, is the mending of the contentious relationship that currently exists between Almajiri and the mass media. Thus, among the recommendations is to strive to achieve a better Almajiri-media relations, and the goal is to allay security worries in Bauchi. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework, and its application to this thesis. Advocacy Journalism will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and applied to the findings of this study in Chapter 8).

Having set out the philosophical stance and reasoning style, the remainder of the chapter turns its attention to methodology and method. Usually, in scientific or social science research, either quantitative or qualitative methodology is employed, and where both are combined in one study, it is known as mixed method (Kumar, 2014). The researcher alone decides whether to utilise one methodology or a combination of the two. Panneerselvam (2014) and Kumar (2014) argue that the type of information required to answer research questions influence the

methodological choice. Robson & McCartan (2016) argue that prior to making such a decision, it is critical to comprehend the relationship that exists between research philosophy and methodologies for three reasons: first, it facilitates the researcher's decision-making regarding the research design; second, it is crucial in identifying which research design is most appropriate for a given piece of work; and third, knowing the different research stances enables the researcher to choose research designs that consider the constraints of various knowledge structures. A quantitative approach is ideal if the research involves measurements or testing of a hypothesis. Qualitative approach is most appropriate if it calls for examining concepts, contexts, and meanings persons assign to a situation. Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) and Creswell (2014) posit that a mixed method is more effective if it is necessary to measure, test, investigate concepts, contexts, and meanings in a study. Table 3.2 displays the differences among the various study approaches.

**Table 3. 3 The Distinct Characteristics of Research Methodologies**

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
1. Relies on statistical or numerical Data collection and analysis 2. Asks respondents closed-ended questions 3. Do not allow interaction between researcher and respondents during data collection 4. Data is interpreted statistically	1. Assembles and examines data non-numerically 2. Asks respondents open-ended questions 3. Allows interaction between the researcher and the respondents during data collection 4. Interpretation of data is based on themes and patterns	1. Assembles and examines data both numerically and non-numerically 2. Asks both open and closed-ended questions 3. Examines research issues from a range of angles 4. Integrates multiple study disciplines into one work

**Sources: Creswell (2014), Stake (2010) and Houser (2014)**

### **3.5 Research Methodology: Qualitative**

Upon weighing the earlier choices made, such as constructivism philosophy, inductive reasoning, the goals and the nature of the research questions, this research employed a qualitative methodology to investigate how Almajiri are portrayed in Bauchi society through the media. Stake (2010) and Flick (2014) posit that Qualitative methodology, aims to comprehend a phenomenon, individuals, or events from the perspectives of those who have

experienced the issue first-hand. Put another way, it depends on study participants' perspectives on the subject under inquiry rather from the researcher's position. It is a range of interpretive techniques used to dissect, decipher, and clarify terms used by interviewees to describe the subject under discussion. As they are better suited to express their thoughts about Almajiri portrayal in the media and its effect on Bauchi security, this study gave priority to the perspectives of Bauchi local population through interpretation of their views on the study topic, under qualitative methodology prism. Houser (2014) argues that one of the benefits of using qualitative methodology is the fact that it gives the researcher the leeway to use the meanings individuals associate with the study topic to dictate the study conclusions, a view supported by Ting-Toomey (1984) who argues that qualitative methodology is flexible in examining texts and conversations to arrive at knowledge. Qualitative is chosen over quantitative methodology because, Matveev (2002) argues that the main drawback of quantitative methodology is its inability to provide details about the study setting or control the context in which participants provide their responses to research questions. Aside the primary aim of this research, which is to examine how Almajiri are portrayed in Bauchi mass media and the correlation of such depiction to the issue of insecurity in Bauchi, another objective of the study is to investigate the broader socio-political economy of Bauchi State. It is thought that doing so will illuminate Bauchi environment, a society in which nothing much has been written about. Therefore, utilising a quantitative method would have prevented that objective from being accomplished, unlike qualitative methodology which had already allowed the realisation of such aim, detailed in Chapter One.

### **3.6 Thematic Analysis of the Chosen Newspapers**

This section explains Thematic Analysis (TA) and its use in this study. Braun and Clarke (2006) described Thematic Analysis (TA) as a process for locating, examining, and interpreting trends in content (known as “themes”) in qualitative data. It involves searching through a collection of qualitative data to find, examine, and report recurring trends. Boyatzis (1998) contends that TA aids researchers in comprehending the connections between interviewees' ideas and the topics they tend to bring up more frequently. For Aronson (1994) and Attride-Stirling (2001) TA makes it possible to classify data in a way that facilitates comprehension and offers an in-depth and refined explanation of data. TA was used in this thesis because during the interview data collection stage, participants—especially the Almajiri instructors, Mallamai—accused certain media outlets of bias and stereotyping them. However, some media professionals

interviewees disagreed with Mallamai, arguing that Almajiri's representation in the mass media adheres to journalistic norms. Owing to this debate, TA is employed to explore the claims made on both sides of this divide. (TA is to be applied to the interview data in Chapter 5).

Additionally, TA is a qualitative method which is consistent with the earlier choices made for this research. Braun and Clarke (2006) posit that the goal of TA is not just to sum up the main points of the data, but to find and analyse relevant elements of the data considering the research question. In Nigeria, the Almajiri has dominated public discourse for a long time (as detailed in the secondary data or Literature Review in Chapter 2). Almajiranci is a subject that has been extensively written about and discussed at various fora by numerous well-known people. As such, it is hardly a novel subject in public conversation. Due to the high level of interest in this subject, it has become challenging to prevent interview subjects from discussing aspects of Almajiranci that are unrelated to the study's goals. However, the pertinent themes chosen for discussion and analysis were determined by the research questions. Miles et al. (2014) and Braun and Clarke (2006) identified two types of TA. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) and Codebook Thematic Analysis (CTA). CTA involves writing down identified portions of texts or images that are connected by a common subject or idea. These texts or images are then put into categories to create a framework for thematic analysis. On the other hand, RTA version of TA also identifies segments of texts or images that are linked by a shared subject or concept in a collected data but admits that information is never completely free from researcher's or analyst impact and that our beliefs and decisions invariably influence the knowledge we generate rather than 'discover' (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Creswell, 2007). RTA has been chosen for conceptual and creative thinking for this research and to objectively choose relevant themes to address the research questions. Bryne (2022) posit that flexibility is a key component of designing an RTA study and this is what differentiate it from other analytical strategies such as narrative analysis and interpretive phenomenological analysis. Although flexibility was employed for this study, it does not imply that everything goes. According to Braun & Clarke (2022), in designing a study using RTA method of TA, researchers need to adhere to the important concepts of excellent qualitative design practise, such as what Willig (2013) calls "fit" design coherence, or what Levitt et al. (2017) calls "methodological integrity" (both Willig, 2013; and Levitt et al., 2017 are cited in Braun and Clarke, 2022). This means that the researcher carefully weighs the design options and ensures that all the design's components, such as its theoretical underpinnings and philosophical premises are consistent with one another.

Furthermore, according to Braun and Clarke (2022) a study's report offers a compelling defence for choices made when its theoretical foundation and philosophical tenets align. No doubt, this researcher noticed during the data collection phase that interviewees had their preconceived notions which the researcher expected knowing the way people think and act in Bauchi society. Certain prejudices are impacted by prevailing religious or ethnic divides in Bauchi as outlined in Chapter One. However, with the freedom that RTA allows for researchers, such biased responses that obviously would be offensive to others were not considered. This was made simpler by the fact that the focus of this researcher is accomplishing the study's objectives and addressing its research questions. Any interviewee opinions that appear to denigrate a particular religion or ethnic divide were not considered to be a theme for discussion. Six levels of RTA were applied to the interview data from Bauchi locals to arrive at the final themes to address the research questions. Due to the enormous amount of data, this took a long time to complete, as making the choice of what to keep and what to discard was not simple. Generally, the decision of what to keep was based on its usefulness in addressing the three research questions and its non-offensive nature towards any religious or ethnic differences in Bauchi. Certain themes that had made it through the initial stage were eliminated in the latter phases. Braun and Clark (2006) and Bryne (2022) identified six phases of RTA:

1. **Familiarisation:** this is getting acquainted with the data, which entails reading and re-reading textual data, listening to audio or viewing images, and writing down any initial thoughts for further investigation.
2. **Coding:** this is carefully reviewing the data and assigning code labels to all the elements that represent intriguing characteristics pertinent to the research questions.
3. **Initial theme generation:** this is investigating and looking for possible trends of common interpretation centred on a central idea, whereby the researcher repeatedly groups and regroups identical codes. It is examining and classifying these codes into more general themes.
4. **Reviewing and developing themes:** re-examining and enhancing themes, such as merging themes or removing themes for which there is insufficient evidence.
5. **Refining, defining, and naming themes:** further scrutiny and enhancement of themes, ensuring each theme undergoes comprehensive assessment.
6. **Producing the report:** making the final report after thoroughly examining the themes.

It is noteworthy that this inquiry into how Almajiri education is portrayed in Bauchi mass media draws upon three data sources to satisfy the study's goals and objectives as well as address the



research questions. These are literature review, semi-structured interviews, and textual content analysis of chosen newspapers.

As stated earlier, the framework used for analysing the 21 interviews conducted for this research is RTA by Braun and Clarke (2006) and as espoused by Byrne (2022). Byrne (2022) argues that the initial work on TA in psychology by Braun and Clarke (2006) has unquestionably evolved into one of the most well-defined methods for executing TA. However, he argues further that unlike codebook category of TA, the RTA category is still misunderstood and misapplied by many researchers. He cited various publications by Braun and Clarke (see Braun and Clarke 2019, 2020) in which they tried to dispel many myths they discovered in some literature and in which they emphasised that many researchers who assert to use their RTA and who reference their work as such do so inadvertently or improperly To prevent having this study classed among those that misapplied RTA, the recommendation of Braun and Clarke (2012) cited in Byrne (2022) served as guideline for this study, namely, as recommended in the first phase of RTA, transcription was done manually which brought about the researcher becoming familiar with the data. Though more difficult and time consuming, the manual transcription of the data had enabled this researcher to observe closely early data trends and potentially similar transcript passages. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2012) cited in Byrne (2022) recommended that researchers should note their subjective comments regarding key responses of the respondents, which this researcher did. Going by the religious and ethnic divides in Bauchi, the researcher noted points that could be offensive to the ethno-religious divides in Bauchi. Some comments if allowed to become a theme for discussion in the study, it would not have helped in the realisation of the aims and objectives of this study. Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2012) cited in Byrne (2022) posit that it is preferable that the practice of noting down points by researchers is maintained throughout the whole investigation because some of the observations may be useful to the understanding of the study's ultimate themes. The notes made on some of the comments, although not developed into themes had helped the researcher to understand people's thoughts on Almajiri system, which in a way had helped in the formulation of recommendations to government and individuals in Bauchi society on the need for tolerance and harmonious coexistence. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2019) cited in Byrne (2022) argues that RTA highlights researcher's active engagement in the generation of knowledge. RTA is regarded as a manifestation of the researcher's assessment and explanation of the data and the language patterns, however, the codes are to be determined by the respondents' opinions. Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2019) cited in Byrne (2022) posit

that RTA rejects positivistic methods for interpreting data and encourages researchers to embrace innovation and subjectivity to produce knowledge. They did, however, point out that some scholars, like Boyatzis (1998) wrongly perceive these advantages as risks. As stated earlier, positivist philosophy has been rejected and constructivism which emphasises the subjective construction of knowledge is the preferred approach for this study which is consistent with RTA.

### **3.7 Research Methods**

Dawson (2009) posits that there is a distinction between research methodology and research methods. While research methodology is the steps taken to locate, collect and evaluate data regarding a subject as discussed earlier, research methods are data collection instruments. Research methods refer to the techniques employed in gathering data for a study. To learn more, the collected data is further examined through analysis. The most frequently used research methods are participant observation, surveys, focus groups, experiments, questionnaires, and interviews (Bhandari, 2020). An interview is a discussion between two or more people in which the initiator of the discussion tries to gather information from the other party by asking questions about the topic of discussion and documenting the answers (Warren, 2005). Johnson (2002), Rubin & Rubin (2012) define an interview as a conversation whereby the interviewer seeks knowledge from the interviewee. Interviews can take place in-person, over voice or video conversations (Miller et al., 1999), and for Kvale (1996) in-person interviews are best for acquiring qualitative information. According to Stake (2010) interviews are both a qualitative and a quantitative data collection strategy, although for a qualitative researcher, the data is collected non-numerically, while for a quantitative researcher, the data is collected numerically. The constructivist standard which directs qualitative research, recommends contact between subjects of study and the researcher, and the research site is the most suitable setting for this interaction (Warren, 2002). When an interviewer arranges questions ahead of their meeting with the respondent, the interview is described as structured. When no questions are arranged but arise during the encounter, it is unstructured. When the structured and unstructured techniques are combined in a single interview, that is a few pre-planned questions and some other ones emerging as the dialogue unfolds during the interview, it is semi structured (Bhandari, 2020; Kumar, 2014, Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It is recommended that a chosen interview format should agree with either constructivist principles (for qualitative methodology) or positivist principles (for quantitative methodology), or both (for mixed

methods) to get the best interview findings that meet the goals of the study (Kvale, 1996). For social scientists, interviews are the preferred method of data collection when studying social life, as they often rely on verbal reports (Kvale, 1996; McCracken, 1988). According to Kvale (1996) the benefit of conducting interviews for data gathering is that it helps the investigation of respondents' beliefs, actions, emotions, experiences, and phenomena.

**Table 3.4 The Distinct Characteristics of Interview Types**

Structured	Unstructured
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A structured interview follows a set format with predetermined questions, prepared with a specific questionnaire.</li> <li>2. Facilitates mainly discussions that adhere to a predetermined format and do not break from the established pattern.</li> <li>3. Produces quantifiable statistics but lacks information about the candidate's actions during a specific circumstance or occurrence.</li> <li>4. Uses closed-ended questions that are applicable to all candidates.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The interviewer strikes up a discussion and guides the conversation. There is no pattern or established format used.</li> <li>2. This is more of a conversation-based discovery interview. Any questions are welcome from the interviewer and relies on spontaneity.</li> <li>3. Gathers information for qualitative research. Collects comprehensive information to have a better picture of a person's situational awareness.</li> <li>4. Contains open-ended question components. The inquiries vary amongst candidates and follow a natural conversational flow.</li> </ol>

**Sources: Kvale, (1996) and Bhandari (2020)**

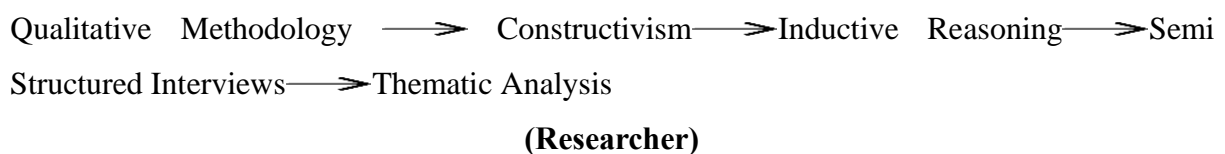
Having enumerated, what each interview type stands for, the chosen interview type for data collection for this study is semi-structured interview. In a nutshell, aspects of both structured and unstructured interview type were deployed simultaneously during the data collection phase.

### **3.7.1 Semi-structured Interview**

A semi-structured interview is the use of both structured and unstructured interviewing methods in a single session (Bhandari, 2020; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interviewer(researcher) sends the interviewee(respondent) their desired questions in advance, but as the conversation progresses on the day of the interview, additional questions may come up to clarify the answers provided (Bishop, 1997). Kallio et al. (2016) describes a semi-

structured interview as a discussion with a goal and the benefit among others include the opportunity for two-way conversation that allows interviewers and interviewees to learn about the questions and the justifications for the answers. Bhandari (2020) posits, in contrast to structured, a semi-structured give interviewers more leeway when posing questions and provide interviewees time to speak up about delicate topics. However, Galletta (2013) opines a semi-structured is more challenging to analyse due to the open-ended nature of questions which leads to respondents discussing other issues outside the purview of the questions and which might not be needed for the study. As stated earlier, a semi-structured interviewing approach was employed to gather data for this study in Bauchi society. Twenty-one persons were interviewed and the decision to use semi-structured interviews method was arrived at due to the categories of persons that information was sought from. There were both educated and uneducated individuals and some of the questions had to be translated into Hausa, the local language for the uneducated participants. Those interviewed were Almajiri teachers known as Mallamai, Journalists and a few employees of media organisations whom I would prefer to refer to collectively as “Media Professionals”, and government officials. Prior to the scheduled interview date, the researcher prepared questions and sent them ahead to the interviewees. During the interviews, the researcher asked additional questions not included in the original list. This is because some of the responses made it necessary to pose more questions.

**Figure 3.2 The Chosen Methodology for this Study**



Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher thought about interviewee sampling, that is the choice of those to be interviewed.

**3.7.2 Sampling**

Martin (1996) posits that Sampling in research is choosing a group from a larger population and then using its members’ views to draw conclusions about the selected area or people for the study. Additionally, sampling is a limited numerical portion of inhabitants whose characteristics are researched to learn more about the entire population (Martin, 1996; Gomez & Jones, 2010). The religious and ethnic divisions in Bauchi had an impact on the sampling of interview candidates. Higazi (2015) estimates that 76% of people in Bauchi identify as

Muslims, 23% as Christians and 1% as traditional worshippers. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that obtaining precise data is challenging on any region of Nigeria due to the politics surrounding population estimates, and more so, Bauchi State, which has little literature. But the indisputable fact is that over half of the population are Muslim and to remove bias, out of the 21 people interviewed, seventeen are Muslims and four are Christians. Their contributions will be detailed in Chapter Five. The need to give the study's conclusions the greatest amount of credibility was the researcher's driving force during the sampling stage. For this reason, Muslims who have a close connection to the Almajiri were most of the interview subjects. During the data collection stage one of the accusations that Mallamai and Almajiri supporters made is that non-Muslims who bring up Almajiri issues are doing so to disparage Islam. Therefore, foreseeing the coming of this sentiment earlier before the interview, this researcher decided to select a greater number of Muslims and less non-Muslims for the interviews.

**Table 3.5 Classification of Interview Respondents**

Respondent	Code	Designation
Respondent 1	R1	Media Professional
Respondent 2	R2	Media Professional
Respondent 3	R3	Media Professional
Respondent 4	R4	Media Professional
Respondent 5	R5	Mallam
Respondent 6	R6	Mallam
Respondent 7	R7	Government Official
Respondent 8	R8	Mallam
Respondent 9	R9	Media Professional
Respondent 10	R10	Government Official
Respondent 11	R11	Media Professional
Respondent 12	R12	Government Official
Respondent 13	R13	Media Professional
Respondent 14	R14	Media Professional
Respondent 15	R15	Mallam
Respondent 16	R16	Government Official

Respondent 17	R17	Media Professional
Respondent 18	R18	Media Professional
Respondent 19	R19	Media Professional
Respondent 20	R20	Media Professional
Respondent 21	R21	Media Professional

**(Researcher)**

Prior to analysis of interview data, the audio, or video recordings of research findings, are usually converted into text, and this is known as transcription. Transcription can be done through software or manually but as stated earlier, manual transcription was done for this study even though it requires more time (Tilley, 2003; Matheson, 2007). Despite the availability of software for transcription, this researcher opted for manual transcription because among other reasons, some of the data was acquired in Hausa language and to ensure that the original intent of the respondents' statements are maintained, manual proved to be the best choice. Furthermore, manual transcription led the researcher to get closer to the data, which resulted in ready identification of major themes.

### **3.7.3 Triangulation**

Patton (1999) describes triangulation as a method of verifying conclusions drawn from various respondents or information sources to bolster interpretations we make of things and to elicit fresh interpretations. Similarly, Saunders et al. (2012) posits that triangulation is a verification approach where confluence is sought among numerous and various sources of data to establish topics for a study. It is the merging of different sources of information in one study. Triangulation serves to broaden and improve awareness of the subject being examined and to improve research accuracy (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Denzin (1970) identified four different kinds of triangulations:

1. Data triangulation: collecting data using various sampling techniques (as done in this study)
2. Investigator triangulation: utilization of many methods in the field for data collection and interpretation.
3. Theoretical triangulation: using several theoretical viewpoints to evaluate data.
4. Methodological triangulation: using multiple methods to collect data.

Since the sources for data collected for this research came from different quarters, namely, newspapers, interviews with different people (educated and uneducated, Muslims and Christians, media professionals, Almajiri teachers (Mallamai), and government officials) and literature of various kinds, triangulation in inductive reasoning was used to assess the consistency of the findings in the data to merge, to confirm and to validate. How triangulation was achieved in this thesis is discussed in Chapter 7.

### **3.8 Focus of Analysis on the Two Selected Newspapers: *Daily Trust* and *The Nation***

Central to this study is to investigate the representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi media and the security implication of such representations on Bauchi society. As would be seen subsequently in Chapter Five, during the data collection phase, interviewees especially Mallamai accused the mass media of using stereotypes to portray the Almajiri. Prominent were the use of terms and phrases like “terrorists” “beggars” “looters” and “criminals” among others. Some interviewees highlighted the fact that the ‘terrorists’ stereotype has been there for long but became more prominent since the Boko Haram Insurgency started in the northeast in 2009 to date. Although the interviewees named many news sources within and outside Nigeria for such representation, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers were mentioned more frequently than others. This prompted this researcher to map out or select these two newspapers for analysis of their stories focusing on their editorials, columns, headlines, and features relating to Almajiri representation. Apart from being mentioned more frequently by interviewees, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* are the most read in Bauchi and some journalists interviewed for this study work for them. While *The Nation* is published in the majority Christian south, the *Daily Trust* is published in the majority Muslim north, which is where Bauchi State is located. This researcher made the effort to get old hard copies of the newspapers but could not lay hands on any. This is because, in Bauchi state and in the larger Nigerian society, records of publications are hardly kept, they usually end up with bean cake sellers, known in Hausa language as “*Mai Kose*” or roasted meat vendors “*Mai Tsuya*”. The researcher then searched the internet for soft copies of these publications, paying particular attention to those that contained Almajiri stories and relevant to this investigation. Once more, because using the internet for publications and record-keeping is still relatively new in Nigeria, the researcher discovered more content related to Almajiri from the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* between the years 2017–2023. Not that the two newspapers did not have online publications in



pre-2017, but the researcher found more material in these years bracket, hence the choice. The content of these two newspapers on the Almajiri (2017-2023) will be examined using the theoretical framework of agenda-setting and news framing. As stated, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* are not the only news sources accused by interviewees of using stereotypical depictions of Almajirai, the BBC, VOA and DW Hausa radio services, and CNN are also mentioned. Although I could not get audio evidence to support this claim from the BBC, VOA and DW, the CNN's website does contain some text proof. Furthermore, although without proof or evidence, journalists have also been accused by interviewees of exploiting photographs of Almajirai and using them on their individual websites or pages to request donations under the pretext that they are engaged in Almajiri advocacy, while converting the funds for personal gain. Mallamai highlighted the fact that without authorization, images of malnourished and dirty Almajirai, living in dirty environment and thatched homes are published by journalists, (which is an illegal usage of photographs for unlawful benefit). It must be admitted that the only evidence that the researcher discovered for this claim, is that journalists publish such images on behalf of their media organisations to portray the appalling living conditions of Almajirai, but as to whether they do such publications as individuals, efforts made by this researcher in that regard has not led to any evidence.

Danbuzu (2012) argues that the Almajiri is one of the most misunderstood form of religious education and attributes this to mass media representation, citing, for example, that the number of Almajirai in the north is exaggerated; and that the mass media makes broad generalisations that the north of Nigeria is a haven for child abuse with abandoned, dirty boys who beg on the streets for food and, above all, are potential terrorists. He claimed that it has been challenging to speak out in favour of the Almajiri due to negative preconceptions and stereotyping that have been portrayed by mainstream media to paint them as posing a security threat to Nigeria. He argues further that along with newspapers, internet publications like *Sahara Reporters* depict Almajirai as "terrorists," "criminals," "beggars," or "societal misfits." Lipmann (2004) cited in Ellis (2021) describes stereotypes as the discrepancy between what is true in the world and the ideas, we have about it. It is a biased and incorrect opinion people have about other persons or things that gives them specific untrue characteristics. Markina (2019) argues that mass media portrayals in movies, pictures, television, newspapers, and magazines, are imbued with established norms and criteria, information, and descriptions that define people, organisations, and institutions in modern society. This creates either reality or stereotypes which overtime normalises worldviews or ideologies with profound and long-lasting effects:

*In countries around the world..... today certain individuals and entire groups face discrimination because they differ, for one reason or another, from the generally accepted idea of the norm or are perceived as 'Others' or different. The heterogeneous field of cultural production, which includes the print media, the Internet, cinema, literature, and even textbooks, is filled with various alienating representations of groups who are commonly perceived as 'Others'. Discussions of individual statements or images can spread widely throughout the society, and sometimes these discussions have a scandalous tone (Markina, 2019, p.1 paragraph 1).*

Fürsich (2010) posits that representation is the meaning we assign to people, objects, or events, which affects how other people see those same things. It is the process by which mass media employs various forms of communication, such as words, photos, video or sound, to convey information to the public regarding topics related to race, age, sex, national or local recognition, and social concerns. Usually, media viewpoints on these subjects impact the understanding and comprehension of an audience about them. Fürsich (2010), Bullock & Jafri (2000) argue that the key factors that leads to distrust of the media and journalists is stereotypes and unethical behaviour in media content. They suggested that it is imperative for individuals in society to go above the mere interpretation of messages from the press as a reflection of reality to questioning the veracity of the claims in such messages. These scholars argue that stereotypical representations or perpetuated preconceptions about people or groups is common in mass media. Therefore, the claim that stereotypes were and are still used to describe Almajirai inform the decision to bring in media theories that serve as a gauge to determine whether *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* Newspapers through their editorials, columns, news headlines or opinion columns used stereotypes in Almajiri representation. Detailed analysis of this is in Chapter Six.

### **3.9 Notes from Fieldwork**

Field notes are records taken while doing a field study to recall and record the behaviours, activities, events, and other characteristics of an observation. It is recommended in qualitative methodology (Philippi et al., 2018).

The Ethics Panel of the University of Salford approved the ethics application for this study on 28 September, 2021. Immediately, preliminary contacts with persons to be interviewed began through phone calls and WhatsApp messaging. Those contacted were journalists, Almajirai teachers (Mallamai), employees of the Bauchi Radio Corporation and government officials. The responses were generally encouraging, except for three persons who although did not refuse said they required more information. In addition to the Participant Information Sheet,

Consent Form, and a sample of the interview questions sent to them, further information was given to them over the phone as requested. The study's fieldwork was scheduled for May and June, 2022 in Bauchi, Nigeria. It was a difficult moment in Nigeria in terms of security. Daily kidnappings for ransom were common, with one significant incident occurring two months before the scheduled dates for the first interview. A passenger train between the Nigerian capital of Abuja and the city of Kaduna was ambushed with some passengers killed and others taken hostage. On arrival in Abuja in May, travelling by road to Bauchi was too dangerous, this necessitated taking a domestic flight to Bauchi. The interactions with each respondent are detailed below, beginning with the first interview, and concluding with the final one. For confidentiality reasons, the first interviewee will be known as Respondent One (R1) followed by R2 and so on.

The interview with R1 took place on 27 May around 7pm. Despite the undertaking of confidentiality as contained in the signed Consent Form which was also verbally explained, R1 reiterated the need to remain anonymous. The discussion lasted for nearly one hour and was only interrupted when R1 asked to be excused to pray. R1 is the ideal type of person to start with, very welcoming and friendly. The historical details revealed about the Almajiri were the most fascinating component. Along with the recording, notes were taken, not only at this first interview but throughout the others. R1 expressed satisfaction with the interview and requested more time to talk about other contemporary concerns.

The meeting with R2 took place two days later. R2 requested for more time even though it was scheduled to hold by 2pm and an apology was tendered for late coming. The 37-minute conversation was enjoyable, although all the questions had succinct answers. Even after signing the Consent Form, R2 reiterated verbally the need to remain anonymous in which he was assured of confidentiality.

Due to illness, the first scheduled interview with R3 was postponed until two days later. R3 had keen interest in the subject of study and was happy to share their opinions. The conversation was interrupted as a neighbour's house was on fire and we all left the room to help put out the fire. Our chat eventually came to an end after 1 hour, 20 minutes.

The interview with R4 proved to be the most difficult. Another person stood in and read out the typed responses to the questions. Although the answers were good, further questions which

came up because of the answers provided could not be answered by the delegate who was warned not to say anything beyond the typed answers. This interview was conducted in a very structured interview approach and lasted for 32 minutes.

The interview with R5 was postponed from its initial date due to religious strife in northern Nigeria. In Sokoto, a northern city, Deborah Samuel, a young Christian woman was accused of insulting the Islamic prophet, Mohammed. Deborah was murdered by her Muslim classmates, who then burnt her body. This led to tensions between Christians and Muslims throughout northern Nigeria as there was anxiety of reprisal attacks. Given the scenario R5 declined the interview but later changed their mind. This conversation lasted 45 minutes.

The interview with R6 was conducted in a farm under a tree's shade in the sweltering heat, during work hours. This respondent has an unmatched level of candour and honesty. It took 37 minutes for this interview. After this, there was a three-day interregnum, more persons were contacted as a backup in case some persons declined.

R7 finally agreed to an interview after two fruitless tries. The prior attempt failed because R7 lacked faith in the media, especially with confidentiality. Beyond the questions, the discussion continued other issues. The Consent Form was signed, and verbal assurance of confidentiality was given.

R8 was interviewed in a market shop. There were frequent interruptions from people who had come to make purchases in the highly noisy surroundings. During the interview, some Almajiri came around begging for alms. R8 and this researcher offered them some cash.

The interview with R9 got underway 33 minutes behind schedule. Due to the noise from children and barking from German shepherd dogs a new location next door was arranged. Beyond the questions, it was an educative session on other issues. Due to the need to reschedule some of the interviews, there was a four-day gap.

R10 was interviewed at the premises of a wedding reception as that was the day available due to other engagements. Only 9 out of 14 questions were answered. Although the answers were brief, the information was sufficient for the questions answered.

R11 agreed to the interview after just recently making a full recovery from injuries sustained in a horrifying vehicle accident. R11 remained in bed throughout the interview. There was power outage, and the room became quite hot. This conversation ended after 52 minutes, and all the questions were satisfactorily answered.

R12 agreed to the interview but did not show up at the agreed time and location. A reminder phone call was made and an hour later, the conversation started. The interview questions were satisfactorily addressed. At the conclusion of the session, and with Consent Form signed, it was also verbally emphasised that the study's confidentiality should be upheld. R12 asked for a copy of the study to be made available after completion of the study.

R13 felt honoured to have participated in this study because they were bothered by Almajirai's predicament. R13 therefore believed that whatever it takes to assist or promote Almajiri reform is welcome. The problem of Almajirai ritual killings is one of R13's topics of concern. This interview happened shortly after three Almajirai were killed in four months by ritualists. The interview took one hour, ten minutes since the responses were so lengthy.

The day R14 was to be interviewed, there was a heavy rain and strong winds, but the interview went on regardless of the early morning challenge. It was a good conversation, and a promise was made to make a copy available at the completion of the study.

The interview with R15 was delayed by 4 days due to death in the family. All the questions were addressed, and the conversation went beyond the initial questions.

The interview with R16 took place in a restaurant. Two questions were declined for personal reasons. The conversation lasted for one hour, 16 minutes.

After two date changes and 5 days before the return flight to the UK, the interview with R17 eventually took place. The questions received sufficient responses.

The second phase of interviews for this study took place in July 2023. All the four persons interviewed were media workers. First to be interviewed will be known as R18 and then followed by others.

R18 is a radio station owner who attended school in overseas. This interview took place in the radio station's premises. Along with agreeing to participate in the interview, R18 also got in touch with three other journalists to help grant the interview. R18 answered the questions honestly and with a great deal of enthusiasm. R18 was grateful that the researcher had investigated a subject that, despite being important, had not previously been addressed. R18 turned down a token for his assistance and was very much open to collaboration on the future Almajiri-media relations.

R19 was very careful with responses to the questions. This was presumably because R19 worked for a government-owned media outlet and took care to avoid criticising the government. During the interview, there were interruptions from the media organization's workers because they kept walking into the room. R19 assisted by getting in touch with another media professional to secure another interview. Other subjects outside the purview of the interview questions were covered by R19.

R20 arrived late, so the researcher had to wait a while at the reception. This interview took place inside a radio station's premises too like the interview with R18. R20 is kind and very welcoming. The questions were all satisfactorily addressed, and other unrelated topics discussed were quite informative. R20 was open to collaboration to achieve the study's goals.

R21 interview was the longest of the four second phase interviews. R21, is a seasoned and knowledgeable journalist who works with the government, but provided thoughtful answers to the questions because the Almajiri problem was a subject of great concern to R21. There was demonstration of knowledge about other topics unrelated to the interview questions.

The key interview questions and the reasons for asking them are listed in tables 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 for each category of interviewees. It should be mentioned, nevertheless, that since the interviews were semi-structured, additional questions were asked over the course of the conversations due to the need to clarify certain responses of the interviewees and are not recorded in these tables.

**Table 3.6 Interview with Media Professionals**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Reason For Asking Question</b>
1	Ethno-religious conflicts have a long history in Bauchi State. The key ones occurred in 1991, 1995, 2001 and 2007. Consequently, many inhabitants have fled Bauchi in search of safety in other Nigerian cities. What are the main causes of these conflicts?	To determine the key issues behind Bauchi's security concerns from mass media perspective
2	What role has the media played in terms of objectivity, truth-telling, and understanding the root causes of these unrests? Do you think it has helped to escalate or de-escalate the situation in Bauchi?	To know whether the mass media was socially responsible in its role and involvement in the security issues in Bauchi
3	The majority of children in the Almajiri Islamic education system do not attend formal education schools since they are thought to be un-Islamic. In contrast, as you may be aware, this does not apply to children from middle- and upper-class Muslim homes, who go to an Islamiyya school, which imparts both formal education and Islamic knowledge. What, in your opinion, is the origin of these differing experiences?	To understand the historical perspectives on Almajiri system of education, and the rationale behind their rejection of formal education. Furthermore, to understand the reasons for the disparities in children's education in Bauchi State
4	The Almajiri have been blamed in some quarters for arson, the destruction of lives and property, and the looting that accompany Bauchi ethno-religious confrontations. Do you agree with this?	To know the individual opinions of media specialists about whether they agree with claims made by media organisations that the Almajiri is to blame for security issues in Bauchi. This will shed light whether what is portrayed by journalists is due to media ownership influence and not the personal opinions of individual journalists
5	Do you agree that the Almajiri system requires reform? If so, what steps do you recommend?	To know whether journalists support Almajiri reform. If yes, to know their suggested ways as to how such reforms can be achieved
6	Are you pleased with the media representation of the Almajiri system of education in the framework of responsible journalism? If not, what kind of Almajiri media representation would you recommend?	Given that the study's primary focus is on how Almajiri is represented in the media, this question is regarded as crucial. This is to get media professionals' opinions about their role in representing Almajiri and whether they desire a new way forward
7	What are the challenges you encounter in representing Almajiri system?	To get a list of issues that the media has identified as concerns with the current practice of Almajiri educational system



8	Do you think the media has the power to reform Almajiri system? If yes, what approach do you advise?	To ascertain whether media experts are optimistic that mass media can spearhead Almajiri reform initiatives and what are the the strategies to make this happen
9	The goal of Advocacy Journalism is to increase public awareness of a social issue by taking a subjective position. Do you believe that will be the most effective strategy to use to enhance the current needed reform of the Almajiri educational system?	To establish if media specialists agree that advocacy journalism has the potential to lead Almajiri reform

(Researcher)

**Table 3.7 Interview with Mallamai**

S/N	Question	Reason For Asking Question
1	What is the Almajiri system all about?	To know about Almajiri system of education from Almajiri teachers, Mallamai perspectives
2	Do the children's parents have to pay fees? What about the children's eating and sleeping arrangements?	To know about Almajiri current mode of operation as regards material needs
3	Is the Almajiri meant only for children from poor parents, and where do the children of rich Muslims acquire Islamic knowledge?	To establish the reasons behind the standard applied to children's education based on the financial status of their parents
4	How does one become a Mallam like you? How do you receive your training?	To know how Mallamai are trained, and whether their training is sufficient for the tasks they perform
5	Is there any remuneration or aid from the Bauchi State government for your job?	To know if Bauchi Government appreciates or supports what they do
6	Do you agree that the Almajiri system requires reform? If so, what steps do you recommend for reforming Almajirai?	To know if Mallamai will support Almajiri reform and in what ways
7	Do you support that the Almajiri should acquire both western and Islamic education? Or do you support only Islamic knowledge for them?	To know the reasons why Almajirai do not attend formal education. Also, to know if Mallamai support the approach to Islamic education for children of the rich where they acquire both formal and Islamic education
8	Can you defend the Almajiri against those who associate them with insecurity in Bauchi like ethno-religious conflicts, Sara-Suka political thugs or terrorists like Boko Haram?	To ascertain whether Mallamai agree that their students get involved in criminality
9	In your view, what is the relationship between the mass media and the Almajiri educational system in Bauchi State and Beyond? Do you think it has	To establish what Mallamai think of the mass media in its representation of their students and themselves

	been fair in its portrayal of you and your students?	
10	If no, give concrete examples of how the media portrays you negatively. (If you can remember the name of a radio, TV or newspaper or any media outlet and what they said (or continuously say) negatively about you, please name them.	To know the various media organisations they consume and how each represents them
11	What do you anticipate from the media, the Bauchi state government, and individuals in society towards the Almajiri?	To know their expectations of what an ideal mass media is, and the attitude they envisage from government and individuals in Bauchi society

(Researcher)

**Table 3.8 Interview with Government Officials**

S/N	Question	Reason For Asking Question
1	Ethno-religious conflicts have a long history in Bauchi State. The key ones occurred in 1991, 1995, 2001 and 2007. Consequently, many inhabitants have fled Bauchi in search of safety in other Nigerian cities. What are the main causes of these conflicts?	To determine the key issues behind Bauchi's security concerns from government perspective
2	What measures is the government putting in place to ensure that Bauchi is more peaceful in the future?	To know the action of government for a more secure Bauchi State
3	What role did the media play in terms of objectivity, truth-telling, and understanding the root causes of Bauchi unrests? Do you think it has helped to escalate or de-escalate the situation?	To know what the government thinks of the role of mass media in Bauchi insecurity
4	The Almajiri have been blamed in some quarters for arson, the destruction of lives and property, and the looting that accompany these ethno-religious confrontations. Do you agree with claims like these?	To know what the government think of the Almajiri system, and whether they play a role in Bauchi security challenges
5	It is argued that Sara-Suka and Boko Haram draw their members from among Almajirai. Do you agree that Almajirai are potential Boko Haram and Sara-Suka members?	To know if government see the continuous practice of Almajiranci as a security risk to Bauchi
6	The majority of children in the Almajiri Islamic education system do not attend formal education schools since they are thought to be un-Islamic. In contrast, as you may be aware, this does not apply to children from middle- and upper-	To comprehend the historical viewpoints of Almajiri system of education and the reasoning behind their refusal of formal education. Furthermore, to know the underlying causes of the discrepancies in children's education in Bauchi State

	class Muslim homes, who go to an Islamiyya school, which imparts both formal education and Islamic knowledge. What, in your opinion, is the origin of these conflicting opinions?	
7	The Nigeria Universal Basic Education Act, 2003 stipulates, among other things, that all children must attend a formal education. 19 years later, why do we have children in Bauchi society without a formal education?	To know why the provisions of the 2003 Child Rights Act which stipulates that every child must attend formal education, failure of which could lead to prosecution of their parents, has not been implemented in Bauchi State
8	What is the Bauchi State Government doing towards ensuring that all children attend a formal education?	To know when Bauchi State government will implement or enforce the provisions of the 2003 Child Rights Act
9	Do you support the viewpoint that the Almajiri system needs reform? If yes what is the Bauchi State Government doing towards Almajiri reform?	To know whether the government supports Almajiri reform, and what efforts are being implemented by government to achieve this
10	Do you think the media should partner with the government towards Almajiri reform? If yes, how is the government prepared to support this?	To know whether the government is open to collaboration with mass media towards Almajiri reform, and in which ways is government ready to support mass media
11	What is your perception of the Nigerian and foreign mass media in relation to Almajiri representation?	To know the perspective of government on how Almajiranci is represented by mass media
12	How independent and free is BRC (Bauchi Radio Corporation) and BATV (Bauchi State Television) from government interference with their programmes? What of the other privately owned mass media in Bauchi?	To know what relationship exists between Bauchi government-owned media organisations and the government. Also, whether such relationship exists with the privately-owned media organisations
13	Do you adequately support (financially and otherwise) BRC and BATV? What of the other privately owned mass media in Bauchi?	To know the level of support government gives to government-owned media organisations and whether such support is extended to privately-owned media organisations and why

**(Researcher)**

It is important to note that a lot was addressed during the interviews, both topics that were crucial for addressing the study questions and those that were unrelated to them. Although, the unrelated content was also significant as new knowledge emerged. Based on opinions expressed, majority of the interviewees, including media professionals expressed a lack of confidence in the mass media. Apart from entertainment, the impression is that every information from the media is viewed with scepticism. Even after signing the Consent Form,

almost all the respondents underlined the secrecy concern verbally. They cite the media's reputation for poor secrecy as one of the reasons for this emphasis. In the words of one of them, "I know you are watchdogs of society, and you are required to bark at everything, but please do not reveal my identity while reporting what I said for your study." Some concerns that were raised outside the purview of this study by the respondents is the usage of social media and how fake news is spread through it. Originally, for the first phase of the interviews, the plan was to interview 20 persons. However, only 18 accepted out of which one declined. In terms of the second phase, six people were supposed to be interviewed but only four agreed to take part.

It is advisable that future researchers who plan to conduct fieldwork in Bauchi State should take participant confidentiality seriously to protect their identity as this fosters a lot of trust. Unstructured or semi-structured interviews are preferable, especially when dealing with those who have not received a formal education, and knowing Hausa, the indigenous language, is an added advantage. In addition, it is important to provide respondents the freedom to choose the most suitable times and locations.

### **3.10 Ethical Implications of Data Collection**

According to Stake (2010), a study investigator may face a dilemma while gathering data because each person has their own personal space for seclusion. He posits that getting near to a subject to get information may be considered intrusive, or discovering the next thing about them may violate their privacy. He argues further that studies from the past, particularly those in the social and medical sciences, have hurt people's reputations as they were not adequately protected. To avoid intrusion and hurting people's reputation, the research ethical guidance of the University of Salford ([www.salford.ac.uk/ethics](http://www.salford.ac.uk/ethics)) was strictly followed throughout the different phases of this study. To ensure confidentiality during the data collection phase, all participants were given the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to sign. For those who could not read or write, verbal explanation was provided, and their thumbprints taken as signature. In addition, only the respondents had complete discretion on the locations and timings of the interviews. Furthermore, Stake (2010) argues that the best method to protect someone's privacy is to keep your distance from their private affairs and that every investigator should try to foresee intrusion along the process rather than relying solely on a participant to

recognise it. Adhering to this advice, no questions were asked that were not directly connected to the study objectives.

In addition to the University of Salford research ethics policies, the researcher is aware of the need to protect the identities of those who provided information, particularly as it relates to Bauchi State, due to ethnic, political, and religious divides. Without the confidentiality pledge, it might not have been possible to obtain any data. Participants were given the assurance that their personal information would be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of this study, after which it would be destroyed. Every respondent voluntarily consented to participate in the interviews as no one was bribed or coerced into taking part. No participant requested for money or any other favours before agreeing to the interviews. Additionally, individuals were given contacts in case they changed their minds and wanted to decline participation in the study following the interview.

### **3.11 Positionality and Reflexivity**

Finlay (2002), cited in Mason-Bish (2019), posit that positionality in qualitative research aims to evaluate potential influence in a research process, namely, that of the researcher on the research subject. Positionality evaluates how interviewees were accessed, the information they could provide and their willingness to share it. Furthermore, it is an analysis of whether the researcher's perspectives influenced the questions posed, the language employed, and the analysis and writing of the findings (Berger, 2015). Moralli (2024) argues that positionality is the assessment of a researcher's standing whether as an insider or outsider in relation to the research subject. Scholars have frequently maintained that having insider status can provide several benefits, such as effect, trust, and access. Mason-Bish (2019), on the other hand, makes the case that outsiders may notice things differently and go further into a subject than an internal may. Berger (2015) contends that researchers ought to critically examine their positionality and recognise the ways in which their position may have shaped the results of their work. Finlay (2002) and Kezar (2002) define reflexivity as a procedure by which researchers challenge their presumptions to exercise an instantaneous, ongoing, evolving, and personal consciousness in a research process.

My personal experience of Bauchi State was helpful in conducting this research project, I had lived in Bauchi for more than 20 years, and my home state and Bauchi State are adjacent. I

have solid friendships with Christians, Muslims, and traditional worshippers and speak Hausa, the native language with ease. I get along well with a wide range of ethnic groups, including the Hausa, Fulani, Gerawa, Sayawa, and Igbo. I had witnessed firsthand how Almajirai roam Bauchi streets, begging for alms, and been mistreated multiple times. I had seen Almajirai spending their nights on store verandas. As I drove around Bauchi, many Almajirai approached me multiple times asking for charity. I had a deep sense of sympathy to see children subjected to a life of deprivation at such an early age. On several occasions, I had seen on television news how Almajirai had been murdered by ritualists. Additionally, I had witnessed how polygamous marriage and corruption in governance has had an effect in Bauchi ethno -religious conflicts. Throughout my stay in Bauchi, I use to buy two newspapers every day, the Daily Trust and The Sun. Apart from the dailies, I do not miss the television news at 8pm on AIT African Independent Television) and 10pm on Channels TV. Based on my own experience of these news sources as a consumer, I felt they were not reporting on the primary causes of Bauchi security challenges, instead focusing mostly on the Almajiri. This led me to investigate, in more depth through a systematically designed academic research project, how the Almajiri system in Bauchi is portrayed in the media. Furthermore, I was also concerned about Almajirai's lack of formal schooling. I believed that the false and misleading belief that Islam prohibits formal education needed to be investigated further in Bauchi State.

It is pertinent to mention also that I found prejudice in the respondents' responses during the interviews undertaken in this research. Mallamai, for example, felt that the way Almajirai were portrayed in the media threatened their employment. This is because the media was focused on revealing the flaws in the Almajiri system. Media professionals, for their part, had different views. While a few frowned at media portrayals of Almajirai, others believed that by revealing the flaws in the Almajiri system, the media was carrying out its mandate. Government officials attempted to present a favourable image of the government by highlighting efforts done to improve the Almajiri situation. Government officials argued that the media had overblown the Almajiri problem and that Almajiri parents had not supported government initiatives by not enrolling their children in formal schools. Overall, my understanding of Bauchi's religious and ethnic diversity helped me avoid considering overtly biased viewpoints that would offend others with different religious or ethnic affinities.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

The methods and methodology for this research were presented in this chapter. It began with the description of research philosophies, positivism, and constructivism then quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods methodologies. After examining the various methodologies and comparing them with the nature of the research questions, qualitative method and constructivism philosophy were chosen. These choices were made after considering their merits and demerits. The chosen interview technique for this study, semi-structured, was discussed in detail and the reason for the choice was presented. Next was the description of those sampled for the data collection phase of this study. Then the modes of reasoning (deductive and inductive) and the framework for analysis were tabled. The chapter that because different sources of information were involved in this research and that different kinds of people were interviewed during the data collection phase, a triangulation process achieved through analysing evidence from different sources to generate a set of themes that address the research questions of this inquiry. Triangulation was described as a validation procedure where researchers search for agreement among numerous, distinct sources of data to create themes or groupings (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Saunders et al., 2012)). This chapter discussed thematic analysis (TA) the various types, and the chosen for this study's analysis, reflexive thematic analysis, RTA. The specifics of the data collection phase activities were discussed and how the rules guiding research at the university of Salford were adhered to so far. The value of combining the chosen methodologies and methods discussed above is to help keep the process of this study efficient, to offer this research credibility, and to produce reliable results. Next chapter is Chapter Four which is a discussion of theoretical basis for the analysis of media representation of the Almajiri.

## **Chapter Four: A Framework for Analysis of Media Representation of Almajiri System**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the analytical and explanatory framework adopted in this research. This comprises media Agenda-Setting, News Framing, Social Responsibility Theory, and Advocacy Journalism. The chapter provides an explanation of each approach in the process considering its appropriateness for the research questions and objectives of this project. The chapter also explores the complementary role which each of the chosen conceptual approaches plays in analysing the data gathered in the project, explaining the character of media representation of the Almajiri and positing a way forward for alternative approaches to the Almajiri's representation as a contributor to the amelioration of the conditions they face and the way they are viewed in Nigerian society.

### **4.2 Agenda Setting Theory (AST)**

According to Luo et al. (2019) Agenda setting theory states that media can influence the public by emphasising selected themes and topics in the provision of news. As such, public opinion, perspectives on core issues, and what is generally considered vital by the public is considered to revolve around the themes exposed via journalistic media. A key development of AST was when Cohen (1963) argues that whilst the media does not necessarily influence how people think about an issue, they do play a key role in telling people which issues to think about. This implies that the continuous dissemination of information by mass media on a particular subject, has the capacity to influence the public to think of similar issues as vital (Nyam, 2022). AST is considered relevant to the Almajiri issue because, through the media, the reality of the children who are on the street and may be involved in or affected by circumstances they face can be brought to the point of public discourse through the media. As such, the themes relating to mass media representation, challenges that the mass media encounters with Almajiri representation and the scope for possible change in the Almajiri situation are matter that can be illuminated through the application of AST. In this case, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers direct their attention towards Almajiri-related topics to draw readers' attention. Once the issue is brought forward through mass media reports, news consumers can become aware of the Almajiri issue, in the first instance, and thereafter can form opinions about what to do about it because of how the media represent matter.



McCleod et. al. (1974) credited Walter Lippmann to have been the first scholar to refer to the concept of agenda- setting in 1922, although without calling it such. Lipmann wrote about the fundamental similarity between the images in our heads and the media's portrayal of the outer world. The public, in Lippmann's opinion, reacts to mental images, or what he refers to as the pseudo-environment, rather than actual happenings in the environment. He posits that the real world is simply too vast, intricate, and elusive to be directly acquainted with and human beings lack the tools necessary to handle such complexity, variety, and endless variants. Human beings first reconstruct the world using a more basic model to understand it. The media enter the scene and can establish the agenda by providing more basic frameworks through which people might make sense of the world (Lipmann, 1922). According to McCleod et. al. (1991) Bernard Cohen was the first to highlight the notion of AST. These academics argue that Cohen was the one who characterised the press as much more than just a provider of news and viewpoints. Cohen argues that while the press may not always succeed in influencing people's thoughts, it is very adept at directing its readers' attention towards specific topics. Hence, people have varied perceptions of the world, which are shaped not only by their personal preferences but also by the narrative conveyed through media organisations which they consume. He posits that people already have a view on what may be concerning them, however, due to exposure to media contents, people start thinking about issues in the direction that the media may have brought forward (Cohen, 1963). McLeod et al. (1991) argues that Cohen's theories provided the basis for the eventual institutionalisation and progression of the agenda-setting theory by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. In their research, referred to as the 'Chapel Hill study', on the 1968 presidential election in the United States McCombs and Shaw discovered a correlation between the problems reported by the media and the issues thought to be significant by the public during the elections. They conducted a survey of potential voters and grouped the issues covered by the media into five major categories. These scholars concluded that the mass media greatly affects its audience through regular reportage on the same topic (McCombs 1972). McCombs et al. (2009) refers to AST as the intentional and prominent coverage of specific themes by the mainstream media with the aim of exerting a significant impact on a substantial portion of the population, leading them to regard certain subjects as more significant than others.

Furthermore, McCombs (2002) and McCombs et al. (2008) described Agenda-setting as a strategy by which the press repeatedly and extensively covers a particular subject until a notable portion of society begin to view those concerns as more significant than others; It is the choice of specific news stories by news editors and directors to be disseminated to the public as they are deemed to be more significant than other news stories; It is the ability of the media to highlight certain news stories by placing them on the front pages of print publications or prominently in electronic media output (McCombs, 2002; McCombs et al., 2008). Similarly, Mustapha (2012) posits that specific news stories garners significant attention and holds a prominent position in both the media and public perception, since it is perceived to be of utmost importance. The selection process of news stories is necessary since there are numerous events happening every day on the political, economic, personal, and group levels, having either a positive or negative impact on human existence, that cannot all be reported. Such events could be disputes between or among nations or within a family, conferences, meetings, natural disasters, scientific achievements, cultural and religious celebrations, and so on (Mustapha 2012). In the same vein, Weaver (2007) describes agenda-setting as the creation of a hierarchy of news prominence to persuade viewers. Agenda-setting can be explained using the analogy of George Orwell in his allegorical novella, *Animal Farm*: 'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others' to illustrate that some news stories are considered more important than others and those who classify and define what is 'more important' and what is 'less important' are news editors and media owners. These 'more important' issues are covered more frequently in the news and given greater time and space. Due to its enormous sway and the ability to shape public opinion, the mass media through agenda-setting chooses topics and figures out which problems get the greatest attention and discussion in the public sphere. For instance, according to Dearing & Rogers (1996), nations with greater political and economic strength such as France, Russia, China, Germany, Italy, United States, Japan, Canada, and United Kingdom, receive more media attention than the developing nations. According to Scheufele (2000) Agenda-setting is underpinned by the assumption of a cognitive process called accessibility, which holds that if a news item is mentioned repeatedly, it will be remembered by the audience. This explains why, when questioned about a current crisis affecting a nation, people frequently mention what they heard in the news.

Berkowitz (1992) opines that agenda-setting is made possible by policymakers, the audience, and the mass media, the latter of which serves as the platform for articulating and promoting the pre-set agenda. Policy-agenda setting is when decision-makers, such as politicians and

high-ranking government officials, use the media to highlight certain issues regularly to win public support. Audience agenda-setting is when the attitude and beliefs of the public shape the importance of a specific news story, which entails that mass media cover that subject in response to their perception of audience expectations. Media agenda-setting is when what the media chooses to report is related to editors and media owners' opinions on issues such as politics, the economy, and culture (Berkowitz, 1992). According to Lee & Riffe (2017), the media does not function independently and the agenda it establishes is a result of the complex social control methods deployed by prominent groups. External entities can potentially engage in the news media's gatekeeping function due to the constraints faced by journalists in terms of time and resources. Through analysing the individuals or groups responsible for determining the topics covered by the news media, several scholars have sought to establish a correlation between sources of information and the predetermined agenda of the press (Lee & Riffe, 2017). Similarly, Cobb & Elder (1971) argue that external social dynamics affect what happens during the decision-making process for news stories. This highlights the interdependence of society and decision-makers, which is a continuous process by which organisations try to persuade public authorities to put their own interests first, as a result, policies that advance the objectives of these organisations are disseminated through the mainstream media (Cobb & Elder, 1971).

Key concepts of agenda-setting theory are vital for the analysis of news content of primary source data in this project in relation to the output of the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. This is crucial to understanding how the Almajiri are represented in Bauchi media. The application of this theory to this research to determine the type of agendas set by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* on the Almajiri is dealt with in Chapter 6.

### **4.3 News Framing Theory (NFT)**

Price et. al. (1997) argues that if agenda-setting indicates how frequent and prominent media coverage of a specific subject appears in the content of a particular news brand, news framing manifests in the words, or phrases used by reporters to illustrate or articulate the subject reported in the news. Ette & Joe (2018) argue that usually the media attracts attention to subjects through agenda-setting, then goes further to develop a frame to persuade the audience to understand such material in a certain way in line with the news producer's perspective.

Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007) posit that news frames are key organising strategies for news information that provides circumstances and denotes the topic by way of choice, stressing, avoiding or advancement. Additionally, that Journalists frequently choose words and images to accentuate the information they are transmitting to persuade their audience to understand the information through the journalists' viewpoint. Likewise, Obaje (2017) argues that news items are presented to an audience by attributing meaning to the messages to influence how they choose to understand it. Similarly, Arowolo (2017) posits that news framing can explain how sources, reporters, journalists, editors, and broadcasters organise and display a news report on an incident using a pattern of media interpretation, organisation, concept, or story line to try to persuade the public to grasp the material and believe it in the manner the media conceived of it. That the reason journalists use frames to present information is because they want the audience to comprehend such messages from the media's point of view. He argues further that through frames, communication is given enhanced relevance and messages are slanted to shape public opinion and influence perceptions to accomplish a particular objective. Entman (1993) defines framing as the deliberate selection of words or language to shape the interpretation or description of a situation in a specific manner, with the intention of advocating for a particular course of action. Gamson (1992) argues that media frames are like picture frames. This is because media frames use borders like picture frames to draw attention to, and set apart an object or thing. By using media frames, reporters can also highlight a particular aspect of an issue and persuade readers to overlook other relevant aspects.

Dalhatu and Shehu (2020), opine that sociology and psychology are the fields where framing theory first emerged. Its origin in sociology is linked to Goffman (1974), who argues that humans are not able to comprehend the universe, unless they use what he called interpretative schemas, or primary frameworks, to appropriately categorise and comprehend information. Kahneman & Tversky (1979, 1984) cited in Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), established the psychological basis for framing in their research. They investigated how people's decisions and evaluations of different options were affected by the way those options were presented to them under identical circumstances.

During the data collection phase of this project, Mallamai stated that as of now, mass media does not say anything positive in its representation of Almajiranci which they feel is an intentional attempt to disparage them. They cited some frames that have been purportedly used to describe Almajirai such as “beggars”, “Boko Haram”, “looters” and “Sara-Suka” gangs.

Therefore, news framing is employed in this research to examine the extent to which these claims are accurate.

#### **4.4 Social Responsibility Theory (SRT)**

Siebert et al. (1956, p.74) states:

*Freedom carries concomitant obligations; and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under our government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society. To the extent that the press recognises its responsibilities and makes them the basis of operational policies...*

SRT stipulates that the press should keep citizens informed regularly about happenings and occurrences in their communities. However, in trying to keep the public informed, it must be done responsibly (McQuail, 2004; Siebert et al., 1956). Central to social responsibility theory is liberty of the press which must be practised responsibly; and this responsibility is manifested when news publication is backed up by truth-telling (Siebert et al., 1956). SRT mandates that the mass media's interaction with and presentation of news must always put the welfare of society first.

According to Siebert et al. (1956) The Commissioned Report of Robert Hutchins, issued in 1947 in the United States, gave rise to SRT theory. A study conducted by the Commission on the Freedom of the Press, also referred to as the Hutchins Commission, is where the concept of the social responsibility theory originated. These scholars claim that Henry Luce, Time Magazine's publisher, put forth the initiative in 1942 when the expansion of authoritarian regimes around the world posed a rising threat to First Amendment freedoms. At this time, political authorities agree that significant controls must be applied to media operations to address the apparent issue of excessive liberty that the Libertarian press theory allegedly granted to the media. The Commission's report was named, *A Free and Responsible Press* which proposed the following rules for a socially responsible press:

**Table 4.1 Key Elements of Social Responsibility Theory**

The press must provide an honest and high-quality accounts of the happenings in society within a framework that lends them importance
The press must represent all social groups that make up society
The press must outline and articulate societal ideals and aims
The press must serve as a platform for debate, statements, and evaluation
The press must fully access the intelligence for the day

**Elements in this Table are Taken from Siebert et al. (1956)**

Obagwu & Idris (2019) outline specific obligations that the press has regarding social responsibility: to the public, accurate or precise news, thorough and unbiased analysis; to the government genuine criticism; to the proprietor, continued financial success; and to themselves, success, satisfaction, and the ability to accomplish their calling.

This theory is relevant for this study since Bauchi, one of Nigeria's unstable states is presently in conflict and media involvement is required to identify the right solutions to this ongoing strife. It is expected that following the application of agenda-setting and news framing theories to assess news reports on media representation of Almajiri in Bauchi (in Chapter 6) SRT can be used to interpret the evidence and allow for an explanatory model of the representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi media to be developed. Furthermore, one may argue that all the fundamental ideas of social responsibility theory are essential to this investigation. This theory suggests that the media should exercise its freedom responsibly and prioritise advancing the interests of society above everything else. This study is an attempt to explore a solution to the security challenges that have plagued Bauchi society for too long thereby impacting its socio-economic growth. Insecurity in Bauchi manifests itself in the form of ethno-religious disputes, terrorism, and gangsterism and finding solutions to these issues is for the benefit of Bauchi society as required by SRT. It is because this researcher believes that the mass media could do better to the security situation in Bauchi society than it is currently doing, that gave rise to the choice of this media-related research topic. The following are some ways that SRT key elements will support this research:

First, SRT states that news must be supported by truth-telling for the benefit of society. False information causes a great deal of damage and strain relationships. As of now, Almajiri and the mainstream media are trading allegations and denials. It is after an analysis of media content

utilising agenda-setting and news framing theories in Chapter 6, this element of SRT has the potential to gauge the Almajiri-media relationship and to determine whether the mass media has been honest in its representation of Almajiranci.

Second, this theory places responsibility on the media to present a balanced picture of all the social groups that make up society. In other words, SRT demands that mass media presents an image that is inclusive of the diverse social groups that comprise society. As stated, Bauchi residents are divided along religious and ethnic lines, and these divisions are accentuated in the way that the people interact with one another. This component has the capacity to assess the fairness of the mass media's coverage of different groups in Bauchi society, particularly Almajirai.

Third, SRT stipulates that mass media has the duty to outline and articulate societal ideals and aims. Formal education, especially for children, as well as childcare and support, are among the aspirations of every society. As highlighted in Chapter 2, Almajiri children do not currently receive proper care and adequate formal education. SRT has the potential to evaluate the degree to which the principles of Bauchi society, including formal education and child support, have been expressed in Bauchi media contents.

Fourth, SRT mandates that the mass media periodically assesses itself to determine how it has carried out its obligations to society. Central to this study is the assessment of how mass media has portrayed the Almajiri in Bauchi. This assessment will be aided by theories of agenda-setting, and news framing, to analyse media content in Chapter 6. This feature of SRT could evaluate the findings from Chapter 6 to arrive at a conclusion on whether Bauchi media has been socially responsible or otherwise in its representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi society. The application of SRT to the findings of this thesis is detailed in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

#### **4.5 Advocacy Journalism (AJ)**

Ryan (2018) defined this genre of journalism as one that actively engages in discussion and separates factual from non-factual information. Jensen (2008) describes AJ as that which forgoes objectivity in favour of moral involvement to sway public opinion on a subject. Additionally, AJ is a branch of journalism that is inherently subjective and orientated toward cause of action (Jensen, 2008). AJ has as its main goal the good of the public, and because its

goal is to promote the welfare of society, and since not all journalism seeks objectivity by any means, it is willing to even go against one of the main ethical principles of journalism—objectivity—to achieve its own aim. Fisher (2016) opines that typically, AJ approaches the news subjectively and does not distinguish between editorial opinion and news coverage. Although AJ is passionate about its mission, it is important to note that it tries to keep to the facts, unlike the propaganda theory Fisher (2016: 712) cited in Ryan (2018:393) posits:

*advocacy is about pleading another's cause or arguing in support of an idea, event, or a person..... which indicates that this is a form of journalism where the objectivity norm does not apply*

In other words, AJ is a form of Journalism that adopts a particular perspective on topics highlighted by mass media. Janowitz (1975) asserts that AJ places journalists in the position of active translators and players who communicate for the benefit of specific groups, often entities that lack influential voice in the press. Journalists act as campaigners for problems and are motivated by an impulse to bring about reform, particularly when it comes to subjects that are often ignored or misrepresented in the media (Ryan, 2018; Janowitz, 1975). The "gatekeeper" idea which posits that professional journalism is guided by the principles of neutrality and its dedication to serve society is the antithesis of AJ (also see Emery, 1972). Ryan (2018) claims that AJ is vast because it spans a wide range of journalistic activity spanning time, place, and media.

Waisbord (2008) posits that AJ is about using the news media to sway reporting and ultimately have an impact on public policies. It is a type of political mobilisation meant to give individuals and organisations more clout while also improving institutions' receptivity to the needs of people. It aims to broaden people's options by giving them more influence over how problems and solutions are defined and how they participate in larger social and policy debates. Through AJ, civic organisations hope to increase public knowledge, spark debate, sway public opinion, and influence major stakeholders (Waisbord, 2008; Fisher, 2016). Fisher (2016) posit that the history of AJ can be traced to the 19th century when newspapers were first utilised as a vehicle for political propaganda. The first newspaper ever to be regarded as advocacy media was Freedom's Journal, which was published in 1827. Furthermore, Fisher (2016) posits that Muckrakers like Ida M. Tarbell, Ida B. Wells, and George Seldes are sometimes cited as some of the most notable forebears of contemporary advocacy journalists. Additionally, AJ has developed through multiple stages as part of the various evolutions of media systems and journalistic values (Fisher, 2016). She argued that in Europe, for instance, AJ has typically



found a home in papers and magazines that openly support political positions. Due to this conventional link between governing parties' propaganda and its impact on mass media, the historical development of AJ is inextricably linked to news reporting (Fisher, 2016).

Waisbord (2009) argues that AJ originated when individuals made a choice to start publications with the intention of expressing personal viewpoints. Furthermore, that throughout history, the advocacy paradigm has been crucial in shaping the function of the press. He asserts that journalism was primarily characterised by "advocacy journalism" in the past, prior to the rise of objectivity and professional reporting norms. This sort of journalism functioned as a tool for spreading false information by partisan factions, served as a platform for media merchants with political aspirations, and as a way for journalists to engage in political endeavours (Waisbord, 2009). Anyanwu & Ikpegbu (2022), and Ojebode & Akingbulu (2009) posit that AJ is a vocation since it is one of the most significant channels for professional political involvement and that which acts in the public interest in a democracy. Fisher (2016) opines that while AJ is currently the most common name, it has been referred to by several titles in the past, such as activist journalism, radical journalism, social justice journalism, and critical journalism. Wall (2003) argues that traditionally, news reporting generally was tainted by editorial positions but that the historical hold of parties on political discourse has decreased in recent years because of the triumph of capitalism in media platforms and the waning of party loyalties. Moreover, the decline of traditional connections between political parties and the media has resulted in the persistence of the notion of journalists as advocates, which remains an esteemed ideal among European journalists (Fisher, 2016). Ellis (2021) posits that AJ has evolved differently over time in the US. Between the middle of the 1800s and the 1920s, different conditions for AJ were created by the concurrent rise of the commercial press and the slow decline of partisan press. AJ was excluded or side-lined inside the news system because objectivity became the dominant criterion for reputable reporting. She argues that AJ did not have a close relationship with organised parties in the United States like it did in European democracies. In contrast, it has historically been linked to movements from the nineteenth century that supported workers' rights, abolitionism, and women's voting, as well as to muckrakers who exposed corporate and governmental wrongdoing (Ellis, 2021).

Jensen (2008) posits that AJ typically takes the form of editorials or columns as opposed to news articles. Advocacy journalists typically have strong ideas about the topics they report on and employ their platforms to try to persuade readers of those opinions. He argues further that

this journalism approach has the potential to change the world for the better or for the worst. That although advocacy journalists frequently draw attention to crucial topics that might otherwise go unnoticed, they cannot always be trusted as opinions stated may be biased and one-sided and may be exploited to further a specific selfish goal. Ryan (2018) contends that it will be insufficient to distinguish between AJ and news reporting using the terms "persuasion" and "information" respectively as yardstick. By applying these metrics, the variability of any genre will be obscured.

Hackett (1984) criticised AJ for lacking neutrality and objectivity. Similarly, Schudson (1978) and Mindich (1998) cited in Juan (2012) saw objectivity as essential to journalism. This brings up a crucial point: Can journalism truly be impartial or objective in the dissemination of information? It also depends on if we believe objectivity to be feasible, important, both, or neither. Contrary to proponents of objectivity, Durham (1998), Rosen (1993), and Donsbach and Klett (1993) cited in Juan (2012) assert that objectivity in journalism has historically been a difficult topic, particularly in recent journalism history and think it is practically impossible to be totally objective, a viewpoint supported by Fred and Wellman (2003), who assert that editors and media owners determine what the public consume as news. These scholars, therefore, disproved total objectivity and neutrality in journalism and think it is a delusion especially with the link between the media, politics, and corporations.

Fisher (2016) argues all journalism involves advocacy because it seeks to persuade the audience to adopt a position on a subject. Every report, regardless of how it is presented, advances the viewpoint of someone, somewhere, known, or unknown. Additionally, that the key distinction between AJ and the so called "objective" journalism is whereas AJ makes its opinion clear and stressed, so-called "objective" reporting surreptitiously inserts its position into the news. In essence, AJ is open and honest about its opinion while "objective" reporting conceals it (Fisher, 2016).

#### **4.6 Advocacy Journalism as Appraisal and Transformative Force**

Janowitz (1975), argue that AJ is a form of an appraisal and a transformative force to effect change because it aspires to analyse problems and incidents above "the truth and facts" to point out an opinion and direct its wrath at people and institutions that, in the journalists' eyes, are acting improperly. By doing this, it positions itself as an advocate for individuals who lack a

chance to speak or are thought to be marginalised by institutions of authority and seeks to equalise these power disparities. Hindman (1998) cited in Ryan (2018) argue that AJ sees as its purpose the promotion of political and cultural change, placing the advocacy for reform at the centre of its journalism. AJ is renowned for promoting causes like gender equality and rights for workers, denouncing political and economic wrongdoing, and inspiring individuals to bring about changes in society (Waisbord 2008). Jensen (2008) and Benesch (1998) posit that the benefits of AJ, among others, include the potential to challenge prevalent narratives, advance public discourse, draw attention to pressing concerns with the aim of improving a situation and to promote the common good.

#### **4.7 AJ and thinking about the Representation of the Almajiri**

This study aims to evaluate how the mass media portrays Almajiranci. In so doing, it also has the goal of exploring the extent to which a reformed approach to the representation of the Almajiri might be required. In pursuing this, it is argued that the AJ approach has the potential to illuminate ways in which an enhanced representation of the Almajiri might be realised with the potential this might hold for attitudinal change towards them and a consequential amelioration of the circumstances they face. In so doing, AJ can make the key intellectual contribution to ‘evaluate and advise’. Other AJ components, aside “evaluate and advise,” that can help achieve the study's objectives include:

##### **4.7.1 Subjective but factual unlike Propaganda**

This component of AJ has the potential to be used to provide accurate information about the Almajiri going forward, albeit from a subjective perspective. As stated earlier in Chapter 2, many academics have written about Almajiri and shared their subjective perspectives. Similarly, respondents discussed their subjective opinions of Almajiranci during the data gathering stage. Again, journalists have expressed their subjective views on the future of Almajiranci in opinion columns in newspapers (to be examined in the next chapter). From these subjective viewpoints, one thing that sticks out is the need for reform in Almajiri system.

##### **4.7.2 Suggests Remedies for What it Advocates For**

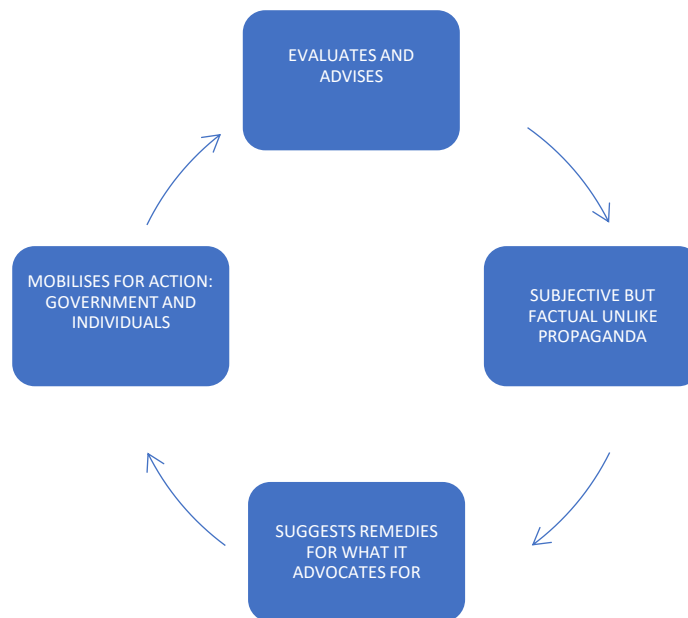
This element of AJ has the potential in formulating recommendations to government and individuals for the Almajiri future course. Assessing Bauchi issues in relation to Almajiri, security concerns, and media portrayals of the same is insufficient without suggesting

remedies. Through AJ, recommendations will be suggested to improve Almajiri-media relations going forward, with the hope that better Almajiri-media relations shall impact Bauchi security concerns.

### 4.7.3 Mobilises for Action: Government and Individuals

This AJ component has the potential to assist in determining who ought to take the initiative to resolve Almajiri issues, who should work towards strengthening media ties with Almajiri, and who should attend to Bauchi's security concerns. In all of this, the role of government to provide support is crucial since, without it, genuine progress cannot be accomplished. Where government is not walking the talk, the mass media has the duty to pressure it to act.

**Figure 4.1 AJ Elements Needed For Study**



**Figure 4.1 AJ Elements Needed for Study (Ideas Taken from Ellis, 2022) (Researcher)**

The application of AJ in this thesis is in Chapter 8. The aim is to propose practical remedies to the problems highlighted after the application of SRT to the findings of Chapter 6 (facilitated through the application of NFT and AST to Bauchi media contents on Almajiri representation).

#### **4.8.1 Framework for Analysis: The Complementary Elements of Agenda-Setting, News Framing, Social Responsibility and Advocacy Journalism Theories**

Elements of the media theories discussed above shall be brought together in the analytical and explanatory phases of this research. The chosen conceptual approaches are complementary. The framework creates the conditions to explore mass media representation of Almajiri via the lens of agenda setting and news framing. The mainstream media may establish agendas to present the Almajiri in a way that is predetermined (agenda-setting). Words, phrases, and sentences may be carefully chosen (news framing) to portray the Almajiri to accomplish these predetermined agendas over time.

Siebert et al. (1956) states that SRT requires that mass media should be socially responsible to society, through a honest and accurate portrayal of persons in society and to behave in public interest. To know whether mass media has been socially responsible in its representation of Almajiri, the determinant factor will be the analysis of the frames employed to achieve set agendas. Where actions of mass media in Almajiri representation are reformative in character, it will be socially responsible in its actions. On the other hand, if cliches, stereotypes and generalisations were employed in these representations, SRT will read this activity as socially irresponsible.

Lipmann cited in Ellis (2021) posit that AJ evaluates issues and situations and offers advice on the new way forward based on its subjective position. In order words, AJ highlights the need for reform, and points towards a new direction for journalism in the context in question. In this thesis, AJ has the potential to suggest that changes are needed in the way journalism is done regarding Almajiri representation. This is more so, if the mass media is found wanting and its actions are deemed irresponsible. Furthermore, components SRT have the potential to explain the existing environment of Bauchi and the events taking place there, whereas components of AJ have the potential to explain the potential future of the interaction between the Almaiiri and the media in Bauchi society. Siebert et al. (1956), posit that SRT requires that the press act as a platform for arguments and expression of opposing viewpoints. It implies that all opinions, even those with which the media owner disagrees with should be represented in the press. According to Lipmann, cited in Ellis (2021), AJ adopts a subjective stance on an issue after weighing the arguments. SRT and AJ complement each other since SRT argues for the role of

the media system as a forum for the articulation of a plurality of viewpoints, while AJ takes a subjective position in arguing for a particular course of action to find a solution to an established and contentious issue. The subjective view of AJ is motivated to by a desire to act for the good of society.

**Table 4.2 Complementarity: Agenda-Setting, News Framing, SRT and AJ**

Agenda-Setting	News Framing	SRT	AJ
Analyses the agenda on issues set by the news media	Analyses the words (frames) and images and sounds used to achieve the set agenda	determines whether the set agendas and the frames used to achieve the agendas are socially responsible	Provides a context for the positing of a strategy to reform journalism in a more socially responsive and progressive direction

Ideas in this table are motivated by McCombs (2009), Arowolo (2017), Siebert et al. (1956), Ryan (2018)

Source: Researcher

#### **4.8.2 The Relationship Between Advocacy Journalism (AJ) and Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) to Social Change Journalism (SCJ) and Campaigning Journalism (CJ)**

AJ and SRT were previously discussed, and their elements that will support this thesis were discussed. The following section undertakes a discussion on SCJ and CJ, and in the process examines how they relate to AJ and SRT.

##### **Social Change Journalism (SCJ)**

McQuail (2010) posits that the mass media serves the following purposes in society: it informs, educates, inspires, monitors, and entertains, all of which serve to raise people's awareness of social issues. Kande (2017) argues that journalism has the power to profoundly impact society because of its ability to inform, inspire, and win over communities. Lasswell (1948) cited in McIntyre (2019) argues that journalism serves a variety of purposes, including warning the public about possible risks and acting as a "watchdog" by reporting on contentious matters like corruption to hold the government accountable. McIntyre (2019) contends, however, that despite the public's many grievances about the negative news-filled media, bad news stories are unavoidably a part of doing a journalist's work well. As the mass media faces several

challenges, newer forms of journalism seek to set themselves apart from traditional journalism through their definition and reporting techniques. Among these is Social Change Journalism (SCJ), which centres on the idea that journalists are essential in influencing public opinion and bringing about significant change. Wagemans et al. (2019) posit that SCJ involves journalists enlightening the public by highlighting important topics, or elevating the voices of the underprivileged, sparking dialogue that results in action for social change. Downman and Ubayasiri (2017) defines SCJ as that which goes beyond simple reporting and takes a more hands-on, advocational approach to the events it covers. McIntyre (2015) posit that SCJ is that which initiates social transformation.

Yellowbrick (2023) posits that SCJ refers to a broad field that encompasses the work of a number of journalists, including investigative journalists who seek out hidden information, expose corruption, and hold people and organisations responsible for their deeds; ecology journalists, who push for changes in policy to safeguard the environment, encourage environmentally friendly behaviours, and increase public awareness of climate change; social justice journalists who question social conventions, promote equality, and highlight structural injustices that marginalised populations suffer; Human rights reporters who bring attention to violations of human rights, encourage responsibility, and support international initiatives to safeguard marginalised communities; solution journalists who are focused on finding solutions to issues by showcasing novel ideas and accomplished projects, motivating people to act and support societal transformation; community journalists who provide a voice to articulate regional problems, encourage a feeling of community, and enable locals to take on issues that directly affect their lives; multimedia storytellers that craft gripping storytelling via a variety of media to engage audiences and inspire social change; data journalists who provide in-depth analyses of complicated data, make information easily comprehensible, and enable readers to take informed action and promote change; peace reporters who, while in crisis areas, offer unbiased reporting, encourage peace and harmony, and give voice to those impacted by violence; and social media journalists that use these platforms to interact with audiences, spread information, and sway public opinion in favour of social change (Yellowbrick, 2023)

Kramer (2021) posits that the foundation of quality journalism is the exploration of societal issues through journalistic storytelling. He argues that journalists should strive to cover social issues by reporting on how people are impacted by them and on how to combat such issues. Furthermore, Kramer (2021) suggests that journalists should work to bring about social change,

through drawing attention to issues, highlighting the person(s) who created the issues, and the interests, prestige or power that further such issues. Kramer (2021) further argues that journalists have a duty to expose people who create problems, those who endanger efforts to resolve problems and normalise them, and those who mislead the public into believing that such a problem does not exist. Kande (2017) argues that social change journalists uncover the causes of societal problems and seek to resolve them.

As previously noted, the main goal of this study is to examine the conflictual relationship between the mass media and the Almajiri system in relation to how Almajiranci is portrayed by mass media. It is expected that this investigation around the issues responsible for the current state of conflict between Almajiranci and mass media will determine recommendations for future modification and improved Almajiri-media interactions. Thus, the objectives of this research project run congruent with the approach adopted by SCJ.

### **Campaigning Journalism (CJ)**

Cantwell-Corn (2019) argues that there is no universally accepted definition of campaigning journalism. However, he defined it as persistent reporting coupled with a firm editorial stance to create a potent amalgam that can have a real influence on readers and communities in general. He contends that covering politicians seeking office or "campaign coverage," is not the same as CJ. Furthermore, he posits that CJ may also be referred to as advocacy or cause journalism. Sule (2019) argues that CJ aims to advance the cause of justice, through engaging its audience and to establish a deep connection with local communities. Birks (2010) argues that CJ is a unique but poorly investigated type of editorialised news reporting, which seeks to educate the public on issues rather than politicians utilising newspaper pages or other media to persuade people to vote for them during elections. Furthermore, CJ, according to Birks (2010), publicly communicates substantive, value-oriented issues and favours or opposes certain policies to influence policy decisions. This clearly deviates from the liberal press paradigm as it aspires to influence politicians rather than enlighten the public and makes no pretence of objectivity or balance. Sule(2019) argues that CJ presents a chance for public interest journalism to empower the news we consume and gives journalists a chance to make a compelling argument for why the topic of a news report is important and deserving of their support. Furthermore, Campaign journalists in their work demonstrate the importance of journalism through addressing themes of justice and inequality. Its main goal is for journalists to comprehend, interact with politics, and speak on behalf of the people. Hanman (2023) posits



that CJ informs the audience about current events and why they are important, and questions the political, corporate, and power systems that frequently obstruct meaningful action and articulates the voices of those striving for genuine change.

There is a connection between SCJ, CJ, AJ, and SRT. First, one of the components of SRT mandates that the media should inform the public on a frequent basis on events and occurrences in their local areas, but that this reporting must be done responsibly and supported by facts. This is consistent with SCJ element that insists on mass media serving as forum in which information on societal issues are highlighted. Similarly, although information through AJ is subjective, AJ mandates that mass media should serve accurate information to the public. In other words, it should be factual and devoid of propaganda or falsehood. CJ, for its part, demands that stories about social issues be consistently reported. However, that journalists must first prioritise their own understanding of the issues before presenting them to the public. The elements of these various approaches outlined above agree that the mass media should keep citizenry informed with accurate information.

Second, SRT requires that news reporting should consistently prioritise the well-being of society. It implies that when presenting reports of everyday events, the mass media should put society's welfare first, giving special attention to pressing concerns. Similarly, SCJ maintains that the news should do more than just report on occurrences; it should engage the public by bringing attention to significant issues and encouraging citizen participation. CJ concurs with the SRT and SCJ position on this since it informs the public about important, value-driven concerns. As previously noted, despite the subjective nature of the AJ approach, its motivation is not self-serving and does not prioritise the interests of any person or group. All its actions are, in theory, motivated by the desire to add societal value. Thus, this is yet another area in which the four approaches concur.

Third, SRT stipulates that it is not enough for mass media to highlight issues in society but that they must also make suggestions on how such issues should be tackled, especially through genuine criticism of government. Similarly, SCJ monitors social problems, and ignites conversation that can lead to action. AJ assesses problems, offers advice or solutions, and mobilises government, individuals, groups or organisations to act. Cantwell-Corn (2019) argues that CJ could be called advocacy or cause journalism. This is because just like AJ, it

accomplishes its goals by taking a strong editorial stance to impact readers and communities, to stimulate policy decisions to address concerns and the cause of justice.

There is consensus in the four communication domains listed above. Essentially, the mass media must provide society with correct information, highlight issues, and suggest ways to tackle the issues. Mass media must educate citizens on the issues, to maintain pressure on government and relevant authorities to act and bring about required reform

To help readers comprehend the subject focus of this thesis, which is an analysis of how Almajiri is represented in Bauchi society through mass media, it is necessary to have a discussion on the topic "Media Representation and Stereotyping"

#### **4.9 Media Representation and Stereotyping**

Hall (1997) posits that representation is the deployment of words, pictures, or images to describe persons, groups, issues and situations which aids in understanding the universe and how it functions. That representation is the use of language for meaning-creation in a culture through narratives, pictures, conceptualisation and the values attached to a phenomena. Furthermore, that representations are connections that exist between words and ideas in our thoughts which correspond to real-world objects, individuals, and occurrences. He identified two approaches to the production of meaning: reflectionist and the constructivist. The reflectionist viewpoint holds that words and visuals portray or reflect reality, acting the same way as mirrors which reflects the reality that already exists. In contrast to the reflectionist method, the constructivist approach contends that all representation is a subjective creation, a selected portrayal or description of reality that creates certain interpretations while excluding others.

Shani (2014) posits that media representation is the way through which words and pictures are employed in mass media content to describe persons, groups, situations or issues. O'Sullivan et al. (1998) argues that when discussion revolves around mass media representation, it embodies the idea that the media uses language and images to create meanings about people, groups, objects, or issues in the world, then presents it to the public with the hope that the public will be persuaded by its portrayals. Furthermore, Shani (2014) argues that media representations are largely based on the constructivist viewpoint which maintains that the media selects meanings concerning topics and communicates them to members of society. This

is the reason images of individuals, organisations, and groups in modern society are ingrained in media representations. Similarly, Markina (2021) posits that media representations are consistent with constructivism, which is bolstered by Immanuel Kant's theory of knowledge, which holds that reality exists only in concepts, not in actuality. Therefore, thoughts only involve ideas, interpretations, and representations rather than real things. Fürsich (2010) argues that, due to its tremendous power to influence the public, the mass media in general plays a significant role in the creation, normalisation, or degradation of reality to draw attention to, or divert focus from, and to determine which public concerns society will either ignore or confront. Similarly, Iyengar (1991) argues that media representations are actions that mass media create generating meanings greatly influencing how much importance recipients attach to it. Hooi-Sean (2022) posit that the creation of meaning is what media representation is all about since it gives people, things, or events significance, which influences how other people perceive the same things. This is evidenced in print, broadcast or online news publications, an attitude which often normalises worldviews or ideologies. Markina (2021) posits that several studies (Dimitrova 2021; Poole, 2002, 2006; Dyer, 1997; Richardson 2004; Meyers, 2004; Manatu, 2003) have demonstrated that media coverage is one factor that influences opinions and attitudes in addition to other factors that have profound and long-lasting consequences. Paluck (2009) in her thesis, "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda" argues that once biases are embedded in the psyche of individuals, it becomes hard to eradicate, not even the mass media can do much to change individual's opinions.

Scholars have been exploring and investigating mass media portrayals because of the possibility that these representations are not accurate representations of reality. For instance, scholars like McInroy and & Craig (2016); Macdonald, (2006); and McKay et al., (2011) have proposed that we should question the accuracy of the claims made in media messages rather than merely accepting them as a mirror of reality. According to Willis (1990 - cited in Willis 2010), media portrayals of reality are fabrications that journalists believe to be true representations of the real world. Nonetheless, he believes that these portrayals are only a shadow world that resembles the real one.

Hilton and Von Hippel (1996) define stereotypes as preconceived ideas about the traits, behaviours, or attributes of individuals who are members of a particular group. Similarly,

Cardwell (1996) defines a stereotype as an inflexible, extreme generalisation about a particular group or class of people. Furthermore, Pickering (2015) defines stereotyping as the representation of a specific group of people in ways that uphold or legitimise unjust social relationships. Stereotyping may stem from racial, ethnic, age, or socioeconomic backgrounds among other factors. Markina (2021) argues that stereotypes serve as a distancing technique by sharply dividing individuals who are stereotyped from those who are involved in the propagation of the stereotypes. Again, that stereotypes are usually in sharp contrast to the identities of those who create them. Stereotypes are created with the aim to degrade, denigrate or limit the social status of those they target, reducing them to certain characteristics.

Willis (2010) argues that media representation frequently perpetuates stereotypes about specific individuals, groups, problems, or objects rather than presenting the truth about the subjects of the depiction. Entman and Gross (2008) cited in Coleman & Lyons (2023) posit that media stereotypes are recurrent themes that link individuals to characteristics, actions, and ideals that are typically unpleasant, inferior or harmful. They argue that journalists are not immune to stereotypes as evidenced in the language and imagery they choose to represent subjects. Numerous research examples (previously mentioned) demonstrated how news material either directly or indirectly reinforces prejudices. Iyengar (1991) argues that the reason there are stereotypes in media content is because journalists attempt to define and shape what society considers suitable or shape social norms, therefore they frequently employ language and imagery to depict individuals, groups, objects or issues. Mahadeo and McKinney (2007) support this viewpoint by arguing that the reason stereotypes appear in mass media is that the process of producing information is laden with strong cultural and ideological presumptions about what is considered normal and appropriate. But they also contend that it is critical to recognise that things left out of - or underrepresented in – the media may be just as significant as those that are included in media content. They emphasised how polarising imagery and narratives dominate the mainstream media, generating and reinforcing existing presumptions as well as hierarchical systems of dominance and submission.

Fürsich (2010) argues that stereotypical media representations of people, groups, objects, or issues has detrimental impacts on society, especially when used for lies or deceit, a view he shares with Walter Lipmann. Furthermore, that stereotypes form when traits become ingrained in our minds because of frequent exposure to media content, or due to cultural and social preconceptions which influence our attitudes towards topics that we are ignorant of (Morgan

et al., 2009). Mustafaj & Dal Cin (2024). and Philo (2002) claim that the public's mistrust of the mass media is exacerbated by the widespread unethical practice of using stereotypes to describe subjects in media content. This bolsters the Glasgow University Media Group's contention that a substantial corpus of recent research indicates that the media is deliberately fostering widespread social ignorance (Philo, 2002). Van Meer and Pollmann (2021) contend that stereotypes are not always negative, however. This is because stereotypes enable us to make sense of a particular objects by using knowledge regarding a group of objects, which aids in our navigation of the outside world. Nonetheless, prejudice can result when stereotypes are applied in social situations since they do not apply to every individual, and instead of judging a person based on preconceived notions about their group, one should get to know them individually (Van Meer and Pollmann, 2021).

Ononiwu (2024) posits that the motivating factor on why stereotypes arise is because persons or groups want to propagate their beliefs and they do so by using stereotypes to achieve their objectives. As a part of society, the mass media has beliefs and philosophical positions, and this shapes how it represents individuals. These media beliefs or ideologies are inevitably realised through writings or arguments, a common feature in mass media content. Coleman & Lyons (2023) drew attention to the problem of stereotypes being used by the media to represent individuals, groups, or topics. He argues that there are no true borders that distinguish one object from another. Thus, individuals or groups employ the mass media representations by using stereotypes to create fictitious boundaries, inequality, and strive to distinguish one object from another. These boundaries, strive to show the distinctiveness of individuals or groups and try to promote a largely contained area of values chosen from a vast range of attributes that are fundamental to an individual or group.

The title of this thesis "An Investigation into the Media Representation of Almajiri System in Bauchi State, Nigeria," aims to explore how media representation of the Almajiri is undertaken through through the choice of words and images evident in selected new content. Stereotyping is particularly important due to its capacity to allow an understanding of how a subjective perspective on news subjects: people, groups, organisations, or situations materialise (see Otto and Meyer, 2012; Jakobsen, 2000; Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018). This is especially true when conflicts or situations involving disputes are portrayed in the mass media (see Wolfsfeld, 1997; 2008; Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Baden, 2016). As previously noted, there is currently a conflictual relationship between the mass media and the Almajiri. Thus, a core goal

of this research project is to establish how and why this has manifested in the portrayal of the Almajiri and, ultimately, what might be done realistically to establish a more accurate portrayal of their role and position in Bauchi society through reformed approaches by the media to representing this important cultural group.

The history of radio is also reviewed next, its importance in communication, as well as how it was used for propaganda in various past conflicts. The radio is being discussed here because of its importance in Bauchi state and its ability to represent the Almajiri to audiences which are unable to access other forms of mass media. Details of how the radio can be used for Almajiri reform based on the evidence of this research are presented in Chapter 8 of the thesis.

#### **4.10 The Role of Radio in Historical Conflicts**

According to Kuyucu (2019) radio broadcasting refers to the transmission of information or entertainment by radio waves to a large audience who listen to the messages using radio sets simultaneously. This involves the transmission of various programmes, including news, sports, documentaries, dramas, musicals, opinions, and interviews, to a large audience. These broadcasts are received instantly by viewers in different locations using a receiver. The radio, a result of technological advancements and the rise of electronic media in the 20th century, has evolved into a widely used means of communication (Famulus & Owoeye, 2014). Furthermore, Kuyucu (2019) argues that the genesis of radio as a means of communication is a subject of debate. While Nikolai Tesla showed the functioning of a wireless radio in 1893, Guglielmo Marconi is credited as the inventor of radio because he was the first to successfully transmit radio signals over the Atlantic in 1901. Additionally, before World War I, radio was employed for contact with ships near the coast, particularly in emergency situations. Subsequently, during the First World War, the military embraced radio as a means of communication with soldiers. Following the war, radio gained increased popularity among civilians, as transmission stations were established in both Europe and the United States, including the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). The commencement of BBC radio transmissions occurred in 1922 and swiftly gained eminence as the predominant conduit of information for the public by 1926 (Anifowose, 2013; Kuyucu, 2019).

According to Samokhin & Tihomirova (2017), Sarkar & Tapan (2006) and Kuyucu (2019)

during World War II, governments made significant use of radio to disseminate information and cultivate the loyalty of the population. Today, the original traditional radio broadcast signals pioneered by Tesla or Marconi have experienced substantial modifications as a result of the advancements in Internet and satellite radio. Nowadays, radios are integrated into many vehicles, mobile phones, and other portable gadgets, allowing users to choose between music and news broadcasts. The commencement of radio broadcasting in Nigeria may be traced back to 1932 when the BBC conducted early transmissions via the Radio Distribution Systems (RDS) as a trial for the empire service of the British colonial government. In 1933, the BBC began airing its initial educational programmes on its West African foreign station, with a weekly transmission schedule (Sarkar & Tapan, 2006; Kuyucu, 2019).

Anifowose (2013) and Olorunnisola (1997) contend that radio is the optimal mass media platform for disseminating information, especially to rural populations. The reason for this is that radio is one of the most valuable resources for obtaining news and other valuable information, as well as providing amusement, education, and enlightenment. According to McLeish (2016), radio provides illiterate individuals with a means to stay connected to the world, unlike print media. Some advantages of using radio include: it can be enjoyed privately, either alone or in a vehicle; it is cost-effective; it does not require literacy skills to understand its message; and it better serves the needs of impoverished, poor, and disadvantaged individuals. Olorunnisola (1997) argue that radio communication is an effective means of engaging the public and involving citizens in the process of development. An optimal radio service facilitates the transmission of information, enhances awareness, and encourages engagement in various topics such as health, agriculture, education, economy, politics, news, entertainment, drama, and conversations (Ojebode, 2003).

While radio has its benefits as a communication tool, it has also been utilised as a powerful tool for spreading propaganda and promoting beliefs that promote hostility, animosity, and aggression. Jowett & O'Donnell (2006) credit the Catholic Church of the 17th Century with the creation of the term "propaganda" and its current connotation. That Pope Gregory XV established the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622. This body commonly referred to in Latin as *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* had as its mandate the spread of Roman Catholicism. The objectives of the organisation were to propagate and spread the Catholic faith globally, while also ensuring the continued supremacy of Catholicism in its ongoing struggle against Protestantism. The pope entrusted this agency with the

responsibility of preventing heresy, to ensure that individuals are guided towards an 'authentic faith', united in their understanding of salvation, and directed towards eternal life. The present propaganda methods drew inspiration from Pope Gregory's plan due to its significant focus on exerting influence over public opinion. Furthermore, it popularised the term "propaganda" in the realm of communication, where it began to denote the techniques employed to disseminate Catholic teachings rather than the teachings themselves. Protestants associated the term 'propaganda' with Catholicism and its response to the Reformation, perceiving it as questionable, deceitful, and detrimental. As a result, the phrase has consistently been regarded with suspicion by Protestants (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2006).

Throughout history, various warring factions and opponents have utilised the radio to disseminate misinformation, deceit, and untruths during conflicts or wars. This has resulted in unfortunate consequences, as evidenced by the examples of the Nazi regime in Germany, the Rwandan genocide, the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, and the political turmoil in Kenya, among others. The consequence of this deceit is that the public fails to grasp the true nature of a war or the matters causing disagreement. Horten (2002) states that Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda during the Nazi administration in Germany and World War II, recognised the radio as a powerful instrument for propaganda. He effectively controlled and unified radio broadcasting, utilising it consistently to disseminate political messages to the uneducated and impoverished population, to motivate and rally the German populace during the Second World War. According to Somerville (2012), "Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines" (RTLM), in French, meaning "Free Radio and Television of the Thousand Hills", a radio station in Rwanda, was key in encouraging the genocide during the Rwandan genocide in 1994 by promoting an anti-Tutsi agenda. RTLM, often known as "Hate Radio," received support from the Hutu-controlled administration and operated as an unofficial extension of the government. RTLM propagated a discourse that encouraged animosity by frequently using the derogatory term "cockroaches" and the declaration "We will kill you!" to denigrate the Tutsis, while also advocating for the complete annihilation of all Tutsis in Rwanda (Somerville, 2012). Additionally, Omaka (2017) states that during the Nigeria civil war in 1967, the Biafran government created the Directorate of Propaganda to centralise, organise, and largely oversee news on radio and newspapers. This branch of the Biafran administration was accountable for gathering and spreading news reports from the Biafran government to both the local population and the global community. Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the leader of Biafra, recognised the significant propaganda power of radio and strategically utilised it by involving Radio Biafra.



He utilised Radio Biafra to effectively rally and organise many young individuals, women, and children who made significant and invaluable contributions to the war endeavours. Radio Biafra was responsible for elucidating and advocating for the war's cause to its audience through a meticulously crafted discourse centred on articulating the killings of the Igbo tribe in Northern Nigeria prior to the war. Radio Biafra utilised terms like 'the people's war' and 'war of survival' in its broadcasts, elevating the victims of killings in Northern and Western Nigeria to the status of martyrs and using them as symbols in the national struggle. Additional slogans included "If we do not fight for survival, we shall cease fighting and perish" and another label the Nigerian military as "vandals" because of their frequent and intentional damage of agricultural crops (Omaka, 2017). Somerville (2012) argues that in Kenya, the Vernacular Radio, which broadcasts in the local language, is thought to have had a substantial impact in instigating the violence that occurred after the 2007 Presidential elections. Disputes emerged between the governing party and those in opposition because of the heavily polarised character of the Vernacular Radio stations. Several journalists utilised the stations to exacerbate the already ethnic and tribal rifts in the nation. As a result, violent uprisings occurred in several locations throughout the nation, resulting in over 1000 fatalities and the displacement of up to 500,000 individuals within the country. Prior to the elections, the vernacular radio had a significant role in dividing the public along tribal differences. The campaigns mostly focused on competition between different ethnic groups, with an emphasis on the ethnicity of the candidates and parties rather than the candidates' manifestoes (Somerville, 2012).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the radio is a useful and effective communication tool, particularly when information is intended for the underprivileged whose only means of access to mass media it may be. However, spreading misinformation over the radio could also be quite harmful. Nevertheless, given of its wide transmission reach throughout Bauchi state, the radio is taken into consideration here because of its potential to further Almajiri reform. This is addressed in Chapter 8 of the thesis.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter sets out and justifies the chosen analytical and explanatory framework to be deployed in the research. News framing and agenda-setting (theories of media effects) are needed for content analysis to interpret the contents of the chosen news outlets. The use of frames has the potential to make a case for the existence of agenda setting related to the Almajiri

in Bauchi media. Social responsibility theory helps in understanding the way the media represents problems in Bauchi society as regards Almajiri, while Advocacy journalism is crucial to practical recommendations for change in the way mass media represents Almajirai. The framework for analysis creates the conditions for addressing the following questions in the research: How is the Almajiri represented by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers consumed by the population of Bauchi State? What are the agendas set by mass media on the Almajiri and the frames deployed to achieve such agendas? What are the implications of this? It is to these questions and others that the remainder of the thesis will turn its attention. The next chapter discusses the primary data from the semi-structured interviews conducted for this study.

## Chapter Five

### Perception and Understanding of Almajiri in Bauchi Society

#### 5.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides an in-depth presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data from semi-structured interviews with government officials, Mallamai, and media professionals. The purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of the views of Bauchi locals concerning the relationship between mass-media and Almajiranci in Bauchi society. The concept of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), first proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and later championed by Bryne (2022) is utilised to examine the data to determine the primary concepts that interviewees emphasised to generate themes. Overall, respondents' potential degrees of awareness about Almajiranci and related activities were taken into purposeful consideration to arrive at the final teams. RTA is a six-step process as shown in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Adoption of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)**

RTA Phases	<b>Relative Narration and Interpretation</b>
Phase one: familiarisation with the data	Transcription and extraction of interview excerpts from the three categories of the semi-structured interviews, from government officials, Mallamai, and media professionals was done manually
Phase two: generating initial codes	Coding template was designed. Main themes = C; Chapter Five = 5; serial number of general themes = n1 to n...); Sub-themes = (A, B, and C)
Phase three: generating themes	Twelve broad themes were carefully considered and generated based on their re-occurrence
Phase four: reviewing potential themes	Eight themes were considered in relation to the broader objectives of the research, three themes were dropped
Phase five: defining and naming themes	The chosen themes were revised and improved by paraphrasing the thematic expression. This was done as literal as possible. Extra assessment of each theme was done at the end of which two themes were merged to make it eight themes
Phase six: producing the report	Semi-structure interview excerpts were carefully reviewed according to codes towards the final report. The final report is however rounded via triangulation and social responsibility-based theoretical perspective

**Note: Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) used herein is based on Bryne (2022)**

Based on table 5.1, the breakdown of the RTA process is explained thus:

#### **Phase one (familiarisation with the data)**

Considering the RTA method, phase one of this data presentation, analysis, and interpretation involved familiarisation with the semi-structured interview contents. This was done by collation of all the interviews, listening to them toward better understanding and transcribing them manually. Some of the interviews were conducted in the local language, Hausa.

#### **Phase two (generating initial codes)**

The codes were considered by default consideration of “C” (the first letter in the word “Code”). This was in relation to the main themes. To help distinguish between codes in this chapter and the next chapter (Chapter 6) figure “5” is added as part of the coding template. This figure “5” is reflected across all codes used in this chapter. This method would result in the term C5, for example, which means Code in Chapter Five. Furthermore, serial numbers of general themes were considered and tagged according to the number of likely main themes. Main themes for example was as such coded as C51, while the interview categories were coded as ‘A’, ‘B’, and ‘C’. ‘A’ stands for Government Officials, ‘B’ for Mallamai (Almajiri Teachers), and ‘C’ for Media Professionals.

#### **Phase three (generating themes)**

The themes were examined and twelve broad themes were carefully considered and generated, these are: social issues, such as drug misuse among young people, rather than ethnicity or religion, are responsible for Bauchi insecurity; British colonisation of Nigeria marked the beginning of Almajiri decline; Mallamai accused mass media for using stereotypes to represent or characterise the Almajiri; Mallamai accused formal education graduates as being immoral; Mallamai blame the government for lack of support; government officials blame Almajiri parents for not enrolling their children in formal schools; Government officials blame mass media for exaggeration of Almajiri issues; mass media is detested by Mallamai and government officials; the need for government to implement systemic reform; the media has the potential to change the Almajiri system in Bauchi State; the Almajiri system currently exists due to ignorance and poverty made possible by government corruption and the practice of polygamy; the current Almajiri system is a result of misinterpretation of Islamic values.

#### **Phase four (reviewing potential themes)**

In the fourth stage of the data presentation, analysis, and interpretation, eight themes were chosen out of the twelve. These are: British colonisation of Nigeria marked the beginning of Almajiri decline; Mallamai accused mass media for using stereotypes to represent or characterise the Almajiri; : social issues, such as drug misuse among young people, rather than ethnicity or religion, are responsible for Bauchi insecurity; mass media is detested by Mallamai and government officials; the need for government to implement systemic reform; the media has the potential to change the Almajiri system in Bauchi State; the Almajiri system currently exists due to ignorance and poverty made possible by government corruption and the practice of polygamy; the current Almajiri system is a result of misinterpretation of Islamic values.

#### **Phase five: defining and naming themes**

This stage directly meant stating the themes as understood. Extra examination, and assessment of each theme was done. This was done as literally as possible. The themes were renamed without alteration of the hallmark of the initial literal sense. The renaming was done to paraphrase and improve the thematic expression. Details of the themes and the renamed versions are shown in table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Themes and Renamed Theme-Versions**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Renamed</b>
1	British colonization of Nigeria marked the beginning of Almajiri decline	Problematic Legacy of Colonisation
2	Mallamai accused mass media for using stereotypes to represent or characterise the Almajiri	Media Stereotypes and Representation
3	social issues, such as drug misuse among young people, rather than ethnicity or religion, are responsible for Bauchi insecurity	Blame Game
4	Mass media is detested by Mallamai and government officials	Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media
5	The need for government to implement systemic reform	Scope/Commitment to Reforms
6	The media has the potential to change the Almajiri system in Bauchi State	Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy
7	The Almajiri system currently exists due to ignorance and poverty made	Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption

	possible by government corruption and the practice of polygamy	
8	The current Almajiri system is a result of misinterpretation of Islamic values	Misconceptions about Islamic Principles

(Researcher)

Overall, despite the renaming of all the themes, their literal sense and intent were retained. The eight themes were then accordingly coded. The respective coding themes are shown in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Themes and Respective Codes**

S N	Theme	Code
1	Problematic Legacy of Colonisation	C51
2	Media Stereotypes and Representation	C52
3	Blame Game	C53
4	Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media	C54
5	Scope/Commitment to Reforms	C55
6	Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy	C56
7	Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption	C57
8	Misconceptions about Islamic Principles	C58

(Researcher)

Table 5.3 depicts additional details of the connection between the themes and the codes. The codes are strictly delineated according to the themes. As earlier stated, to distinguish the codes in this chapter and those in Chapter 6, the figure 5 is introduced therein before the serialisation. For instance, C = Code; 5 = Chapter Five, while 1 = serial number of the theme and code. Such is the case across all the eight themes and respective codes. The sub-themes were factored into the coding template by tagging the number of interview categories. As such, since there were three interview categories, the sub-themes were then coded into the coding scheme as A, B, & C. Details of the semi-structured -based sub-themes are shown in table 5.4.

**Table 5.4: Categories of Interviewees**

S N	Interview Category	Code of Interview	Number of Interviews
1	Government Officials	A	4
2	Mallamai (Almajiri Teachers)	B	4
3	Media Professionals	C	13

**Note: The interview categories are alphabetically arranged -starting with the first three letters**

**(Researcher)**

Table 5.4 shows the interview categories. Notably, the interviewees were contacted and voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. Each interviewee was properly briefed about the broader aim as well as specific objectives of the research. Merging the codes for the themes with the codes of interviews resulted in the final codes used for the interview data presentation and analysis, as well as interpretation. This is shown in table 5.5.

**Table 5.5: Merger of Code for Themes and Code of Interviews**

S N	Theme	Code for Theme	Code of Interview		
			A	B	C
1	Problematic Legacy of Colonisation	C51	C51 A	C51 B	C51 C
2	Media Stereotypes and Representation	C52	C52 A	C52 B	C52 C
3	Blame Game	C53	C53 A	C53 B	C53 C
4	Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media	C54	C54 A	C54 B	C54 C
5	Scope/Commitment to Reforms	C55	C55 A	C55 B	C55 C
6	Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy	C56	C56 A	C56 B	C56 C
7	Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption	C57	C57 A	C57 B	C57 C
8	Misconceptions about Islamic Principles	C58	C58 A	C58 B	C58 C

**(Researcher)**

## **Phase six: producing the report**

As stated earlier, all the three categories of the semi-structured interviews were manually transcribed and carefully examined. Hence, excerpts were carefully extracted and reviewed according to codes. This was done as a means towards completion of the final report. The final report is however rounded via triangulation and social responsibility-based theoretical perspective. How this is achieved will be discussed in Chapter 7.

## **5.2 Coding of Data, Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation**

### **5.2.1 Coding of Data**

Proceeding from the delineated themes and respective codes across three sections of the interviews that resulted into the data for this chapter, it is seemingly prudent to note that every theme that is outlined was referenced during the interviews. The proceeding analysis is therefore based on interview sections. As stated, all codes in this chapter are by default, starting with C5 -which simply means Chapter Five and afterwards, the eight delineated themes are accordingly and respectively added to C5. Example, Theme One, which is ‘Problematic Legacy of Colonisation’ when coded, becomes C51. Also, across the three alphabetical order sections of the interviews (A = Government Officials; B = Mallamai; C = Media Professionals) coded data directly meant adding the sections letter-code to C51 to C58. As such, ‘Problematic Legacy of Colonisation’, which is Theme One, once coded from Government Officials (interview section A) would have C51A as the final code.

### **5.2.2 Themes Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **C51 Problematic Legacy of Colonisation**

Government officials interviewed directly or indirectly linked the problems that currently exist in Almajiranci to British colonial control in northern Nigeria. Going down memory lane, they spoke about historical narratives and believed that a conversation on the Almajiri in Bauchi State would be lacking if the historical context is not considered. Two of the four government officials directly stated that colonialism and its dynamics are part of the ongoing process of Almajiri system in northern Nigeria. A government official (coded as R7) stated that colonisation is a contributing factor in the current Almajiri situation:

*It is the consequences of colonialism. The brutality with which colonialism came with was enough to put the people who lived at that time off anything they wished to implement. Don't forget people were angry of losing loved ones to brutality. Their freedom and way of life had*



*been curtailed; their revered institutions trampled upon, and I can go on and name more. How can you accept or trust any policy from them? Trust has been broken through the barrel of the gun which led to less regard for western education, you see, violence puts people off and if you want to succeed in anything, don't use violence as it should never be contemplated as an option, so much can be achieved through dialogue and peaceful agreement than violence. This is the origin of disregard for anything western, including western education which the colonial powers sought to implement (R7)*



**Figure 5.1: Queen Elisabeth II Visit to Nigeria 28 January 1956 When Nigeria was an English Colony (Old Naija: oldnaija.com)**

Similarly, Mallamai disclosed that "colonial legacy" spearheaded the current problem with Almajiri system. According to a Mallam, one of the reasons formal schools were unappealing to Muslims in northern Nigeria was the fact that English was the language of instruction:

“...for the use of English language for instruction.... no.... I do not support it as even now that English has been made the official language in Nigeria, how many of us speak it?” (R 15). It is vital to note that although English is the official language of Nigeria, which is a legacy of colonialism, Mallamai do not accept it as a language for Islamic education, but Arabic. Another Mallam noted:

*...you had to translate these questions into Hausa for this interview because I told you it is the language, I can express myself better. I love and cherish it. Then way back in 1914, someone is making English compulsory as a medium of instruction? that was totally wrong and should not have happened (R 6)*

Furthermore, responses from Mallamai, within C51B under the “Problematic Legacy of Colonisation” theme appeared contradictory. This is because, as the above quotation illustrates, while a Mallam disapproves with English as a medium of instruction in formal school, another

one supports it and even advocates for Almajirai to acquire formal education. The question, “Do you support that the Almajiri should acquire both Western and Islamic education together? Or do you support only Islamic knowledge for them?” The answer was:

*Oh yes! I agree Almajiri should acquire both forms of education. After going to secular school, they should return to the Almajiri school to learn. I have 12 children and they are in secular schools, and I intend to enrol my other three children when they reach school age. I support it. My oldest son is in the university, and he is a teacher working with the Bauchi State Government. He has been sent on in-service to further his studies...English is a global language and therefore it is good that Almajirai learn how to speak it... (R 15)*

So the question is, is it not contradictory that while one Mallam was against the use of English for instruction - a colonial legacy- another Mallam is in favour of Almajirai learning how to speak English and also advocates that formal education ought to be extended to Almajirai as well. In fact, this Mallam acknowledged that he had attended formal education, when he said “I had only primary school education which I secretly enrolled on my own. But when my father discovered it, he gave me the beating of my life and would not let me continue secondary education” (R15).

Similarly, media professionals’ views classified as C51C under the "Problematic Legacy of Colonisation" theme links Almajiri neglect to the legacy of colonial authorities. Certain reactions indicate that the way colonialism arrived in northern Nigeria planted the seed of opposition among the people against anything associated with the West. A media professional argues that resistance to formal education resulted from the violent conquest of the north and the ruthless execution of Emirs by colonial soldiers, a legacy that turned northerners against anything western:

*Colonisation was the beginning of Tsangaya crisis. The killing of northern kings and the conquest of the north altered everything about Tsangaya, and the issue has persisted ever since because our native leaders cared as little about Tsangaya as the British did as you can see today, you should know Nigerian history better than I do. When western education was first introduced to northern Nigeria by British colonial masters, it was met with resistance. The locals rejected western education because of their tense relationship with colonial authorities, and this attitude persisted long after colonial authority ended (R 3).*

Furthermore, another media professional confirmed that colonial past matters when analysing the Almajiri situation today:

*...this problem of Almajiri not attending western education can be traced to that time of colonisation. Bauchi like most northern States is predominantly Muslim and so Islamic education was considered very important. The invasion of Nigeria by the British forces heralded the beginning of Almajiri problem. Before now, the Almajiri were directly under the*

*Emirs, and it was going well until Lugard tagged it “religious education” and withdrew support for it. The colonial government's disregard for Almajiri schools is the biggest injustice ever done to Muslims. These schools were funded by donations from Muslims and taxes that the Emirs controlled. Islam promotes charity which was the foundation upon which these schools were supported. Then suddenly that was terminated with the dubious justification that everyone had to accept a Christian-controlled education? The Almajiri have never fully recovered from that injustice, as you can see now. Despite some Mallamai imposing a weekly levy on parents to support Almajiri, most parents were unable to pay it, therefore it had no long-term impact as they still had to go and beg (R 20).*

In view of the foregoing, another mass media professional noted colonialism in Nigeria is a factor:

*Western education was Christian-coloured when it arrived here. Muslims in Bauchi and much of northern Nigeria were not comfortable with the goals of western education and labelled it Christian since colonial masters did not give Tsangaya priority. As such Muslims resisted western education -which has continued to affect northern Nigeria (R1)*

Additionally, another media professional acknowledged that many of northern Nigerian Muslims were “...divided based on how they should relate with anything European. While some opted for migration like the Sultan Attahiru and the people he had mobilized from the entire Sokoto caliphate, others opted to remain there and fought the white men; some however, decided to stay with them (British) but secretly spreading anti-British, anti-colonial (Nasara) ideologies. That is how majority of Northern Muslims were conscripted into growing animosity of Karatun Boko (western education)” (R2). However, this mass media professional stated that some years later, “with the massive enrolment campaigns by the established native authorities and traditional rulers, many northerners accepted western education. However, they did so with distrust” (R2). This media professional stated further that the reason for anti-formal education sentiment is because “none of the colonial government authorities were Muslims, as they belonged to an Anglican congregation. The Methodist and Baptist churches, as well as the priests, nuns, and brothers of the Roman Catholic Church, oversaw the schools” (R2). Furthermore, worth mentioning is the fact that Christian religious instruction was taught in formal schools at the time, although deemed inappropriate, this was grudgingly accepted due to apprehension about the colonial government officials. Given this situation, this mass media professional posed the following question, “how then will Muslims find western schools appealing at that time? No way! Unfortunately, the problem had persisted till today, especially among rural and poor Muslims” (R2).

The recurrent thematic expression of “colonization” is one of the issues that has affected the positive evolution of Almajiri system as indicated by Mallamai and mass media professionals and government officials. More than one mass media professional brought up the British colonial activities in northern Nigeria as having had detrimental effects on Almajiri system. Additionally, the problem arose from those who controlled formal education at the time, and the mismatch between the government-funded formal education and the government-neglected Almajiri system. One of such viewpoints is presented in the following excerpt:

*The manner and the way British colonial masters neglected Almajiri education, any Muslim would be inclined to reject western education given the way it was implemented during the colonial era. Islam desired to spread, just as Christianity. Islam arrived with the Almajiri system to aid in its expansion, and Christianity did likewise with western education. Muslims at the time were suspicious of the male and female missionaries who oversaw these western schools and taught Christian religious instruction. This, along with the fact that Almajiri Islamic education was not prioritised by colonial authorities, sent the wrong message, and sparked the campaign against western education which was unfortunate (R 17)*

Furthermore, media professionals argue that in northern Nigeria, there is a correlation between the clamour for religious superiority and the anti-formal education sentiments. This is responsible for the low number of students enrolled in formal, colonial government financed education. The fact that the British colonialists were Christians only served to exacerbate this prejudice. One of the mass media professionals stated:

*Historically, the conquest of Northern Nigeria in 1904 by the British forces had given new dimensions to the Muslim dominated northern Nigeria that was rooted in Islamic scholarship consolidated by the Sokoto Jihad of 1804. Thus, during the conquest, people had divided opinions on how they should relate with anything European. While some opted for migration like the Sultan Attahiru and the people he had mobilized from the entire Sokoto caliphate, others opted to remain and fight the white men. Those who stayed started spreading anti-British, anti-colonial ideologies known as ‘Nasara’ (which means ‘White Men’ in Hausa) and that is how majority of Northern Muslims were conscripted into growing animosity of ‘Karatum Boko’ (‘western education’ in Hausa) (R 2).*

Furthermore, more views gleaned from the interview with media professionals brought to light the relationship between the Almajiri phenomenon, northern Nigeria's geopolitical past, and colonisation. In relation to ‘Problematic Legacy of Colonisation’ another mass media professional insisted that ‘the ethnic and religious conflicts that have lasted for decades in Bauchi is partly the outcome of division that colonialism sowed between Christians and Muslims’. The notion of selectivity which indicted the British colonialists about favouring Christianity over Islam still resonates further:

*According to the information I gleaned from the Personal Information Sheet for this research, you want to investigate the relationship between the Almajiri system and the media in Bauchi.*

*So let me use the Almajiri as a prime illustration. During colonialism, the colonial government forbade the Emirs from supporting the Almajiri with the money they collected from us (taxes), so the Mallamai were forced to ask the Almajiri to go and beg to prevent the school from closing. Today, many people who call Almajiri beggars are ignorant of this history, and this made Muslims feel that colonialism was selective since it accorded western education priority over Almajiranci (R4).*

Furthermore, it was noted during the interview that “the advent of colonisation was the beginning of Tsangaya (Almajiri) crisis and subsequently the conquest of the north altered everything about Tsangaya” (R18). The mass media professional persisted that “this favouritism from our colonial masters has pitched Christians against Muslims to date and that is why at the slightest provocation, they turned against each other” (R18).

### **C52 Media Stereotypes and Representation**

One of the questions that readily prompted comments about media stereotypes and representation from Mallamai was: “In your view, what is the relationship between the mass media and the Almajiri system in Bauchi State and Beyond? Do you think it has been fair in its portrayal of you and your students?” Mallamai responses coded as C52B, deemed many media organisations as being unfair to Almajirai, “They spread news which is not true or not verified. They discredit the Almajiri system as dirty, violent, and poor” (R15). When asked for some instances of such unfair representation, the interviewee was very quick to mention BBC Hausa radio and the VOA Hausa radio services. These broadcast stations and their programmes were considered as “unfair to Almajiri” (R15). To demonstrate a general disdain for the media, one of the Mallamai voiced his dissatisfaction thus:

*The media has not been fair to us. Most of the time they do not consult us, but they consult the rivals of the Almajiri system, the Wahabi, who try to destroy it. For example, how will the media say that the Almajirai are out-of-school children, while they are in school? Almajiri is a form of education and literacy. Number two, all the negative social vice in Bauchi or elsewhere, is attributed to the Almajiri. Three, begging too is attributed to Almajiri but there are children whose parents are alive or even orphans who are not Almajiri but are beggars, yet it is the Almajiri who is targeted and maligned (R8)*

The theme ‘Media Stereotypes and Representation’ directly relates to the work of the media professionals and to the primary focus of this study, which is to examine mass media representation of Almajiri in Bauchi society. The question, “Are you pleased with the media representation of the Almajiri system in the framework of responsible journalism? If not, what kind of Almajiri media representation would you recommend?” elicited divergent views from media professionals. Their answer to this question is coded as C52C in which some of them

said they were not pleased with mass media representation of Almajiranci. Those who belong to this category of media professionals had the notion that the mass media has been unfair because it blames, "...helpless children... spewing misleading information...which is the real problem" (R20). Furthermore, these media professionals noted that the coverage of Almajiranci is more on criticism of Almajiranci which sometimes contains prejudices, such as equating it with crime. A media professional noted that Almajirai are "subject of a lot of criticism; therefore, I believe the media should be fair to them by emphasising the system's advantages as well" (R14). Furthermore, another media professional also expressed dissatisfaction with quality of journalistic coverage of Almajiri education:

*...journalism needs to be more responsible by being open to know more about what the Almajiri system is and give it a responsible representation. I am a Muslim who truly know what Almajiri stand for. But to be honest with you the picture that is painted out there of the Almajiri is disgusting. There is need to separate terrorists like Boko Haram and Yan Sara Suka from the Almajiri system. Some of the things you see in print and what you hear in broadcasts stations are disheartening. Let me summarise the picture of Almajiri that the media had created out there: Terrorists and Beggars. Even Muslim Journalists who should know better had joined the bandwagon of depicting Almajiri in such manner. I know I am part of the system and I strongly believe we need to change the narrative around Almajiri (R11)*

This interviewee persisted that mass media representation of Almajiri is stereotypical and prejudiced towards showing all Almajiri as "terrorists, beggars, Sara-Suka and looters" (R11) amongst all sorts of unsavoury language. It turned out that while some of the media professionals mentioned *Daily Trust* newspaper as one of the not-very objective on Almajiri system, another working with the same newspaper argued that the newspaper "...views itself as speaking for Muslim interests" (R13) and instead point fingers at other conventional media organizations -such as *The Sun*, and *The Nation* newspapers as being for Christian interests, while NTA News and BRC radio are considered to be government-friendly outlets. Generally, media outlets are largely understood to often "convey the news in a way that appeals to their audience, owners, or people who believe they are speaking on their behalf" (R13).

While it is not always simple to obtain complete, truthful, and objective news, some media professionals maintain that media organisations are constantly working to improve the objectivity of news coverage. A media professional noted that Almajirai should be viewed by mass media as victims and not the problem. It was emphasised that they are victims of negligent and inept government. Strangely, one of the media professionals blamed mass media for its coverage of the efforts of Goodluck Jonathan, a former President of Nigeria, for providing

some infrastructure for Almajiri reform that was subsequently neglected by succeeding administrations. However, this view remains contentious at best since in this case, the mass media performed its function.

In contrast to the above category of media professionals who had criticised mass media representation of Almajiranci, some media professionals had approved mass media focus on the representation of Almajiri suffering, their lack of shelter and food, as well as susceptibility to recruitment by criminals. Furthermore, that media outlets within and outside Nigeria, are considered to have reported extensively about “Almajiri’s plight and continues to do so” is commendable (R21). Another media professional said some Almajiri “steal around the neighbourhood, and some of them are violated” (R9) and insisted “these are realities represented by the media. So, because the media is exposing them, they have an anti-media mentality, but the mass media is telling the truth” (R9). Another media professional opines that media portrayals of Almajiri are not stereotypes because they are supported by evidence. Again, he is of the opinion that “mass media associate the Almajiri with terrorism because of its mode of operation. Almajiri is made up of male children from poor families” (R2).

Overall, based on the views of two categories of media professionals above on the theme “Media Stereotypes and Representation” Almajirai's representation in the mass media is understood differently, depending on individual interpretation. While some believe it to be a representation of reality, others think it is stereotyped as this perspective suggests: ... “media portrayals of Almajiri are majorly stereotypic in such a way that the positivity of Almajiri has been completely sapped off,” (R11).

### **C53 Blame Game**

The "Blame Game" theme (C53) draws attention to the three interviewee types' differing opinions over whether or not Almajirai are to blame for Bauchi's insecurity. The question that elicited responses from Mallamai on whether Almajirai are responsible for Bauchi insecurity was: “Can you defend the Almajiri against those who associate them with insecurity in Bauchi like ethno-religious conflicts, Sara-Suka political thugs or terrorists like Boko Haram?” Their answers is coded as C53B, in which all Mallamai dissociated their students - Almajirai - from Bauchi insecurity challenges. They claimed that some Bauchi residents blame Almajirai for Bauchi’s security issues because of the way Almajirai are depicted in relation to these issues

by mass media. They believe that the insecurity in Bauchi is due to unemployed young people, who had had a formal education but are still unemployed. A Mallam remarked:

*It is not true. My students the Almajiri do not have anything to do with criminality. I am saying this because during conflict times, most of the hoodlums caught looting or perpetrating criminal acts are youths living with their parents. You can confirm this from the police. What the Almajiri learns is Qur'anic memorisation, recitation, discipline, and moral values. Unfortunately, stereotyping, and labelling target Almajiri in all situations, but arsonists, looters who roam our streets in big numbers, from all colours and shades including the so called educated do not get the bad name Almajirai get..... (R6).*

In continuation of defending Almajirai against prejudices, a Mallam said:

*Boko Haram activities has been solely blamed on the Almajiri which is not supposed to be. The image that is painted by the media is that all Almajiri end up becoming Boko Haram terrorists and these children are here to learn about Islam, about virtue and about how to become responsible adults in society. It is painful when out of ignorance people associate them with terrorists. I had always wanted to have an opportunity like this to voice out my frustration. To be honest with you, I don't like the media outside entertainment due to issues such as this. I believe strongly that insecurity, like the Boko Haram and political thuggery are caused by dropouts from secular education (R5)*

Overall, Mallamai attested to Almajirai's integrity and claimed that they had given them the necessary training to avoid becoming involved in crime. One of them did, however, point out that he cannot rule out entirely because there is evidence that certain Almajirai are participating in Bauchi insecurity, however, stating that only a small percentage of them do so.

Government officials' comments on the "Blame Game" theme as to who is to blame for Bauchi security challenges are contained in code C53A. Two questions elicited their responses: "The Almajiri have been blamed in some quarters for arson, the destruction of lives and property, and the looting that accompany these ethno-religious confrontations. Do you agree with claims like these?" and "It is argued that Sara-Suka and Boko Haram draw their members from among Almajirai. Do you agree that Almajirai are potential Boko Haram and Sara-Suka members?"

Government officials were mostly divided on Almajiri's involvement in Bauchi security issues. Some denied any involvement, while others said they were. A government official said:

*To a certain extent but that's not entirely accurate. Almajiri may play a role, but not always. We have other young people who are not Almajirai but get involved in these actions during riots. Other criminal elements are also guilty in the destruction and looting that go on during this chaos. The Almajiri can be blamed for looting during riots but not arson and destruction of lives and property (R16).*



All government officials blamed the mass media in some way for linking Almajiranci to Bauchi security concerns. They opined that there is an exaggeration of Almajiri issues by mass media.

One of them remarks:

*That is not entirely true. Although there are some Almajirai among these criminal groups, there are non-Almajirai as well. Some of these ideas linking Almajirai is propaganda of journalists(R12).*

Furthermore, polygamy has been identified and blamed as a fundamental concern with Bauchi security issues. Although Islam allows it, some government officials are of the view that Islamic practice of allowing men to marry up to four wives, if they wish, results to lack of child planning, consequently, too many children produced without the adequate resources to care for them. This in a way had led many parents to resort to the option of the Almajiri system for their children. However, that overpopulation brings its own issues among which is insecurity. A government official also believes that Almajirai do not readily serve as recruitment for criminal elements like Boko Haram but admits, “some Almajiri are ...among these criminal groups” (R10). He also maintained that some Almajirai get involved in civil unrest and disturbances and general criminality.

The thoughts of media professionals about the "Blame Game" theme as to whether Almajirai are participating in Bauchi insecurity are coded as C53C. Like the government officials, two questions were put before them on this: “Ethno-religious conflicts have a long history in Bauchi State. The key ones occurred in 1991, 1995, 2001 and 2007. Consequently, many inhabitants have fled Bauchi in search of safety in other Nigerian cities. What are the main causes of these conflicts?” and “The Almajiri have been blamed in some quarters for arson, the destruction of lives and property, and the looting that accompany Bauchi ethno-religious confrontations. Do you agree with this?”. Again, like government officials, they had divergent views, however, most of them linked Almajiranci to Bauchi security issues. To begin with those who disagreed with Almajiri as responsible for Bauchi security issues, one of the media professionals disagreed and instead, points to marginalisation of groups by government who in turn feel ‘isolated by authorities in power’ (R13). He posits that when marginalised groups feel their peaceful approach of airing their views through the media are not adhered to, they resort to violence to demand for their rights. Other concerns enumerated by the media professional include political intolerance, bad governance, poor leadership, and high level of ignorance. Another media professional indicated that most actors in Bauchi conflicts are those who were not properly brought up with good morals, which could be Almajiri or anyone else. He also

said Bauchi ethno-religious conflicts could be due to, “victimisation, oppression and bigotry –which are deemed significant factors towards crises -not only the Almajiri as insinuated by mass media’ (R4).

Another media professionals defended Almajirai against the popular media portrayal of being potential terrorists as implied in this quotation:

*I had listened to numerous broadcast stations making unfounded allegations about the origins of terrorism and the Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria and connecting it to the Almajiri. I have also read a lot of superficial pieces by authors who have no knowledge of the Almajiri schools, demanding for the abolition of a system they regard as being equivalent to begging. That is entirely unjust. If they had taken time to observe, they would have realised majority of beggars in Bauchi are not Almajiri and that asking for the system's abolition is the same as calling for the end of a long-standing valued system of spiritual instruction. This for me is unfair (R19)*

Contrary to the viewpoint that attributes Almajirai's lack of western education to their gang membership, other media professionals think that those with formal or western education have the potential to turn terrorists or join other criminal organisations –noting that it is a matter of mindset. Corroborating this, a mass media professional said, “there is no empirical data to back up the claim that Almajiri has been part of arsons or form part of ethno-religious conflicts in the northeast or Bauchi per se” (R17) Instead, “...the danger posed by formal schools’ dropouts in the North has been more alarmingly dangerous to the peaceful coexistence of the region than what is portrayed of Almajiri lately” (R17). However, there was acceptance that, “studies in violent extremism have found traces of Almajiri as part of targets of radicalization and subsequent recruit mostly as child soldiers in the Northeast” (R17).

As mentioned, notwithstanding these assertions made by some media professionals in support of Almajiri's innocence on the security situation in Bauchi, most media professionals agreed that Almajirai do get involved in crime because they lack basic things of life, “...and so might see chaotic nature of conflicts as opportunity to loot” (R21). Furthermore, some media professionals are convinced that most Almajiri children are readily recruited by criminal entities, as indicated in these remarks:

*Almajiri play a big role in recruitment to these criminal groups due to their vulnerability. Because they lack the basic things in life, Almajiri are recruited easily into these groups. For instance, 500 Naira given to an Almajiri is enough for him to join them, because of the level of poverty in northern Nigeria and because they are always hungry. If you visit an Almajiri school, you will see a lot of children with nowhere to sleep. Sometimes, you see them sleeping on the streets with rain beating them and so if someone offers them some food, shelter or some amount of money and say come and join me, why won't they take up arms? Some of the Boko Haram members, arrested or those who surrendered were interviewed and they said they were*

*Almajiri before, and they said they were offered food and shelter and so they decided to follow them. So, they are a major contributor. But once you mention it, the Mallamai will begin to say what of IPOB (Indigenous people of Biafra) and the kidnapers in the East, are they also Almajiri?, but we know some of them too are school dropouts. But again, we cannot compare the number of the school dropouts there with the number we have here in the north especially the northeast and Bauchi state (R1)*

In general, most media professionals had connected Almajiranci in some degree to the security problems in Bauchi.

### **C54 Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media**

Coded as C54 is “Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media” theme which is about Mallamai and government officials’ comments regarding their current interactions with the media due to the way it portrays Almajirai. Coded as C54A are the views of government officials about their distaste for the media. They stated that their hostility stems from the way the media reports on Bauchi security issues by not focussing on the root causes but the effects or underlying causes. Furthermore, that the mass media uses gory pictures of bloody people on the streets, corpses and burnt buildings and painting the government as irresponsible in all these. A government official accused the mass media of sensationalized coverages and outright lies that can cause riots get worst. The general perception of government officials is that the conventional mass media often portray Almajirai as the main or even only cause of criminality and outright terrorism which for them is not true. Government officials therefore stated that this is the basis of their dislike for the mass media in relation to Bauchi security issues.

Mallamai viewpoints on their "Antipathy and Resistance towards the Media," coded as C54B, express their distaste for the media and primarily accuse it of prejudice in its coverage of the Almajirai. A Mallam made this remark:

*They are not fair to us. They report over the radios that they assist us but none has come here to assist me. I have been teaching for more than 30 years. Almost all of them portray us as dirty and ignorant people in the news. Almajiri are linked to every vice, not only during conflicts, but they had been linked to Boko Haram, Sara Suka and Yan Daba terrorist groups by Christian mass media. BBC Hausa and VOA Hausa, and DW Hausa radios, Orji Uzo Kalu's newspaper, The Sun, The Nation, AIT Television and many others. Even among the Muslim newspapers, like Daily Trust, the Almajiri are insulted. I had stopped watching AIT for long because they are biased towards my students and we the Mallamai. I do not know an instance where Almajiri fought in conflicts but you know, due to urbanisation and modern form of life, anything can happen. People are many, you cannot tell. If I had money, I would have sued them to get justice (R15)*

One of the Mallamai questioned, “how can the media classify Almajirai among out-of-school children, while actually they are enrolled in school?” (R8). This remark gives credence to the view that Mallamai equate Almajiranci with formal education because they consider Arabic literacy and Islamic religious knowledge to be adequate, therefore, rendering it equal to other forms of education. There were corroborations by Mallamai that Almajiri are unduly “...blamed for every social vice in Bauchi or elsewhere”(R5). There was an expression of anger that ‘even begging is linked to Almajiri alone’(R5) while there are other youngsters whose parents are alive or even orphans who beg, ‘...but it is always the Almajirai who are singled out and denigrated especially by BBC Hausa, VOA Hausa, and DW Hausa radio among others too numerous to mention’ (R5). Furthermore, a Mallam reiterated the inherent view of Mallamai that Almajiranci ‘...is about the studies of the Quran, the Islamic religion and faith’(R15). Mallamai's distaste and opposition to the media is due to the vocabulary and imagery employed in Almajiri-related journalism. Additionally, the belief held by Mallamai is that the knowledge imparted in the Almajiri system is unique and cannot be found in any other Islamic school, particularly in those attended by children from wealthy families. This is because, ‘it is sacred and Holy. But you see, the media does not understand that this tradition of Almajiri sitting around their Mallam to learn started from prophetic times and they only report what they wish to report on us without verifying from us’ (R15).

Overall, government officials and Mallamai's opinions have demonstrated how much they detest the media based on how it covers conflicts and Almajiranci in Bauchi.

### **C55 Scope/Commitment to Reforms**

During the interviews, several recommendations were made on the areas in which Almajiranaci requires change. C55C concerns the views of media professionals related to potential Almajiri reform in which they all agreed that reform is needed. Most of the changes they emphasised had to do with combining formal education with Almajiri system, hiring trained Islamic teachers, and providing classrooms, dormitories, and food for pupils. On the part of mass media which directly concerns them, they acknowledge that Almajirai's current stereotype-based portrayal needs to change, although they see nothing objectionable in the way Almajirai's living situations are portrayed by mass media. One of them states:

*Nobody who possesses even a shred of humanity will accept the Almajiri system's current operating principle. Infrastructure development, Mallamai training and payment, and the integration of Almajiranci with western education are all necessary steps. These, in my opinion, are the essential reform areas, and the government has full responsibility (R4)*

Reiterating the need for reform, another media professional states:

*Whoever, who says that Almajiri does not need reform lacks common sense. I totally agree that Almajiri system needs reform. These children are vulnerable and live in deplorable conditions and lack of basics. The Almajiri system must be incorporated into western education, and the government must adequately train and pay Mallamai salaries (R17)*

There is a general notion that the sight of, “Almajiri children roaming the streets with bowls and begging is pitiful” (R17). It was also suggested that the reform transcends the borders of Bauchi State to include the entirety of northern Nigeria:

*With government support it can help reform the system. But let me add that it must go beyond Bauchi media and include those within and outside. First, it must build a good friendship with the Muslim Ummah (Muslim Faithful) and must be perceived to be impartial, after which it will present the reform message. But let me say that it is not going to be a short time achievement; it will take years (R17)*

Additionally, media professionals are of the opinion that for mass media to spearhead Almajiri reform, the government, religious and ethnic leaders must be committed to the initiative. There is also the need to combat bribery and corruption in the media and enhance media financial independence. A general advice on tackling media bias is highlighted by this remark:

*...there appears to be a broad aversion to the media because it is thought to be biased towards a certain interest or group. Consequently, media programmes are either boycotted or their messages not taken seriously due to the prevalent perception that the media has not treated the Almajiri system fairly (R4)*

Media professionals also urged the government to put the Child Rights Act 2003 into effect. The implementation of the Child Rights Act is thought to be the solution to Almajiri-related issues. Additionally, they offered other recommendations including the availability of high-quality formal education and elimination of corruption in government. Other areas include tackling poverty among Bauchi residents, and establishment of skills acquisition centers. As such, they suggested that government initiatives aimed to eradicate poverty are considered part of the empowering process that can change the narrative of Almajiri system. In this regard, government should focus on economic empowerment of the populace through adequate support to education, skill development and provision of stipends to the less privileged. These initiatives if done well will in turn empower the masses economically, it was argued. They reiterated that if people are actively involved in sources of livelihoods, it will lower the tension and resentment in Bauchi State. Besides, there is also a comparative view that, “Almajiri system as practised in the entire northern Nigeria needs reform” (R14) because as argued by

one of the media professionals, in southern Nigeria, Muslims do simultaneously allow their children to acquire Islamic knowledge and formal education, in decent environments. The question of mind-set is therefore seen as the problem, more than the issue at hand itself. The Government of Bauchi State was nonetheless not spared for the failures of Almajirci and urged to act. There was also the assertion that ‘if you walk the streets, you will see a retinue of Almajiri begging, majority will not be from Bauchi State, though’(R11). Generally, partnership between the government and the media is appreciated and encouraged towards mutual benefits. Corruption in mass media has been identified as an area that needs reform. Corruption in media is made possible because most media organisations face financial difficulties making it harder for them to be independent and to avoid brown envelope journalism. As expected, government officials praised Bauchi government for educational reforms through provision of better school infrastructure, payment of backlog of teachers’ salaries, increased employment of teachers, provision of books and desks among others. One of the interviewees is of the opinion that ‘Almajiri reform needs to conform to modern standards of Islamic education’ (R19). Additionally, religious, and traditional leaders are considered part of the scope of reforms as they are considered to have greater influence in society due to the respect accorded to them. Furthermore, pertinent to these reforms is law enforcement which is expected to be taken seriously. There are calls to ‘detain and prosecute individuals who sell drugs to young people’(R4) who on consumption of such drugs engage in criminality.

The code for the opinions of government officials on Almajiri reform is C55A. Their comments appear to show that while government is making every effort to improve Almajiranci in all the areas recommended by the media, the media is not acknowledging these efforts. They also claim that Almajiri parents are not playing their own part to complement government initiatives through enrolling their children in formal schools. However, there were expression of cautious optimism regarding Almajiri reform:

*That (reform) is possible, but I know it will also create problems. Don't forget that some people are so traditional in thinking. They want the old way to always be maintained. Any Government that will spearhead the changing of the current Mallamai will get a backlash during elections. most of those who want the current status quo maintained will not vote for a government that will change the current crop of Mallamai. And who wants to lose an election? We Politicians can do anything to win an election (R7).*

Another perspective holds that the scope of reforms should extend to change of mind-set towards formal education. Another government official thinks reform must include responsible parenthood and polygamy should only be recommended to those who can afford it. This is

because one of the main problems with Almajiri system is the prevalence of polygamy among the impoverished in both rural and urban areas. In general, it was suggested that for any reform to be successful, the government must take the lead in implementing it. It is evident that without government backing, no endeavour can be successful. The failure of Almajiri system is deemed a ticking time bomb in Bauchi society as they are portrayed to be ready recruits for Boko Haram and other criminal entities. Another government official is of the view that revision of media narratives regarding the Almajiri system is also necessary as part of the reform:

*The media needs to create the awareness more on Almajiri and not only dwell on taking their pictures to portray them in bad light. They are children you know. The media needs to produce educative programmes on the need to embrace both western and Islamic education. These programmes should target their parents too. I am sure if the truth is laid bare, we the politicians will respond to the reform. You know the government and the media do not agree, but I am sure we will agree on this one. The media should perform its role first (R10)*

Mallamai views on the areas that needed reform in Almajiranci are coded as C55B. Mallamai are of the opinion that Bauchi government should support them and their students with resources. Mallamai views stipulates that for any Almajiri reform, priority should be given to religious education as this quotation implies: ‘Yes, we need reform in terms of provision for the needs of Almajirai and Mallamai but not change to our curriculum or the language we use for our education, which is Arabic’ (R15). Furthermore, Mallamai think any reform needs to consider them for remuneration. Overall, most interviewees concurred that a structural overhaul of Almajiranci was overdue but cautioned that any reform must consider the religious sensitivity of the Almajiri system. All things considered, reforming Almajiranci is deemed necessary and immediate, nonetheless, this can only be achieved by cooperation among the three levels of government, namely, the federal, state, and local governments.

### **C56 Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy**

The theme "Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy" is coded as C56 and C56C is the media professionals’ perspective on ‘Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy’. One of the media professionals suggested that mass media holds a key position and can serve:

*...as the spearhead for Almajiri reform by educating these groups on the benefits of western education and dispelling their current misconception that Islam forbids it. In addition, the media can alert the government to the need for almajiri reform. Probably, this might be a way out but only if government provides financial assistance and supports media efforts can advocacy journalism be effective. In Bauchi, advocacy efforts had helped to increase public knowledge on health-related issues. This most likely represents a solution, but as I said, government backing is required (R1)*

An additional viewpoint from a media expert indicates that mass media must avoid ‘...stereotypes and prejudices and focusing on the importance of systemic reform’, noting that the anguish the Almajiri children experience is unacceptable, and it is not Islamic as well. Contrarily, another viewpoint contended that media facts cannot be altered or downplayed due to public opinion, and that rather than being perceived as stereotypical images, those portraying Almajiri as street beggars should use this representation to bring their plight to the attention of all members of society, particularly the government, to assist Almajirai. Another viewpoint states that the media usage of images is to persuade persons in society to act in relation to Almajiri reform as suggested by this quotation:

*Images of Almajiri in the mass media are published so that government and private entities should act to reform it..... (R3)*

Another media expert believes that while advocacy is beneficial, it must be objective and have the full backing of the state, as “the media has unparalleled power to influence people and “every free society, it is said, has a journalist” (R13). Through educational programmes aimed at Almajirai and their parents, and Mallamai—who are largely illiterate—it was suggested that the media can spearhead Almajiri reform by educating these groups on the benefits of formal education and dispelling their current misconception that Islam forbids it. In addition, the media can alert the government to the need for Almajiri reform. Furthermore, in line with mobilising media advocacy -as suggested by some media professionals, “the support of Muslim clerics, the government, and well-meaning individuals is needed for Almajiri reform” (R17). Concerns have also been expressed over how media advocacy mobilisation may be received given the issue of the media's damaged reputation before Mallamai. First, it was suggested that mass media needs to soft-pedal on its negative portrayal and rather focus on solutions to the plight of Almajirai, like addressing Almajiri parents and Mallamai’s incorrect religious understandings. It was made known that media advocacy is becoming more and more necessary but might succeed if Islamic religious leaders are involved into the broader mobilisation of this potential. There is also the need for assistance from government and non-governmental organisations, to mobilise for this reform.

Overall, a media professional highlighted that Mallamai are antagonistic towards certain media outlets because they feel that such media outlets have treated them unfairly, and hence, have lost trust to such news sources. This media professional is of the view that for media advocacy to succeed news sources that receive less criticism for their depiction of Almajiri should be



identified and used to spearhead media advocacy with the aim of reform. Additionally, that the mass media is tasked to regularly confer with Mallamai on Almajiri matters before publication of their news as Mallamai claim that what is reported now on them emanates from ignorance of how Almajiranci operates.

### **C57 Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption**

The dimension of ‘Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption’ is coded C57. A government official, coded as C57A remarked that “poverty, and polygamy are issues especially among the rural poor who cannot afford to cater for the children they produce” (R7). Strangely, a government official noted that corruption in governance and poor policy implementation by government is part of the problem:

*In Nigeria we have beautiful policies designed to make the country better, but they are not implemented. They are just stated on a paper and locked up in the cabinet and the money allocated for these policies are stolen. Corruption has destroyed Nigeria. Money allocated to take the vulnerable Almajiri children off the streets is often stolen by those in government. Where structures are provided, they are not maintained and become dilapidated and inhabitable. Corruption is the biggest enemy to Nigeria’s progress (R16)*

Coded as C57B is Mallamai views about ‘Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption’ in which they highlighted corruption and poor government leadership. Largely, most Mallamai see themselves as doing a good job towards maintaining the Almajiri tradition with a few suggesting that Almajiri should acquire both western and Islamic education. Mallamai acknowledged that poverty is a problem among them, but also pointed out that corruption in government is responsible for their poverty. Again, they perceive nothing wrong with polygamy, nor do they believe that their poverty is a result of their polygamous lifestyle. Once more, they do not view themselves as illiterate because, by the standards of Islamic education and literacy in Arabic, they consider themselves to be knowledgeable.

Media professionals’ perspectives on the relationship between ‘Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption’ and Almajiri system is coded C57C. One of them remarked, “the political elite is notoriously corrupt, and the bulk of the population is poor and ignorant” (R2). The high rate of ignorance is reiterated as responsible for the current realities of Almajiri system. High unemployment is linked to poverty, which in turn is linked to Almajiranci. One media professional noted that, “unfortunately, today, Almajiri is synonymous with poverty and child neglect. The poverty these children found themselves and the affluence they see in society contribute to their hostile behaviour” (R14).

Commenting further on ‘Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy//Corruption’ another media professional stated, “ignorance and poverty aided by polygamy and misleading teachings by some Mallamai” (R1) were all part of the problems associated with Almajiri system and lamented thus:

*...there has never been political will to reform the Almajiri. How much Billions of Dollars have been stolen from Bauchi State and Nigeria since 1960? It is a shame that we have not got our acts together up till now (R1).*

Still on the issue of Poverty and ignorance as deemed responsible for Almajiri practice another media professional stated that lack of literacy was responsible for tagging formal education un-Islamic, and these factors should be part of the focus on Almajiri reform.

### **C58 Misconceptions about Islamic Principles**

Finally, theme number eight coded as C58 ‘Misconceptions about Islamic Principles’ was coded across the three interview sections, C58A (government officials), C58B (Mallamai), and C58C (mass media professionals). Overall, government officials stated that efforts are being made by government to persuade religious and traditional leaders to provide the best guidance towards understanding the true teachings of Islam. As for C58B, that is Mallamai’s comments on this theme, all of them stated that their teachings are the original teachings of Islam. One of them is of the view that begging is permitted and a common practice in Islam, a view debunked by media professionals. In fact, one of the media professionals stated that Islam abhors begging, calling it “Haram”. Another Mallam stressed that, contrary to popular misconception, Almajiri system is classless because it is meant for all, rich and poor. Some of the comments from Mallamai demonstrated their misconception on Islamic beliefs. For instance, views from some Mallamai appear to state that Islam is in support of formal education while others believe it is against as this remark imply:

*People do not understand this, to many Almajiri, formal education does not mean un-Islamic but rather secondary in order of priority. That is why some children from the Almajiri background do join formal education after attaining senior level in their Almajiri education, while some join after graduating from the basic class of Almajiri education. Those that view formal education as un-Islamic are of different class particularly the Boko Haram Sect. Parents who stick to the Almajiri, are of the core conservative Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri tribes, most of other tribes are excluded in this phenomenon. Also, class stratification is playing a role among parents in choosing the type of Islamic education for their children. The rich, the elite, the city dwellers and middle-class Muslims go for Islamiyya schooling while the rural poor, low class status opt to the Almajiranci. Economic, and social status are the factors in play*

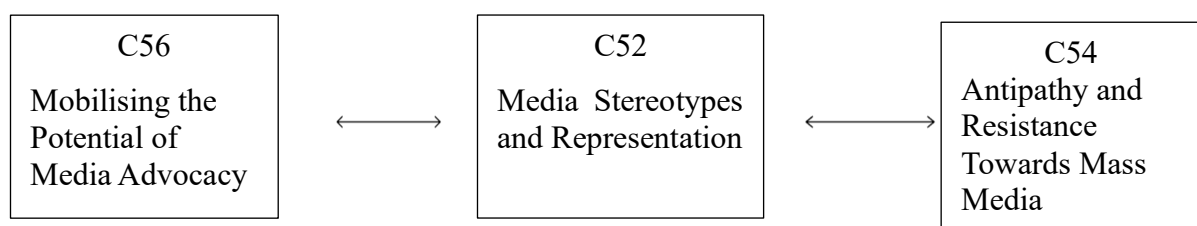
towards making a choice of either formal education with Islamiyya schooling or else, only Almajiri system (R5).

Furthermore, a Mallam regretted for not enrolling in formal education as a child. However, he added, “currently, I have someone coming to teach me formal education privately” (R8). Overall, Mallamai insisted that Almajiranci ought to be regarded as proper places for teaching children about the Quran and the Islamic religion and morals (the Hausa word for morals is *Tarbiya*, a word they used more often during the interviews).

On ‘Misconceptions about Islamic Principles’ C58C, the media professionals apart from stating that begging is un-Islamic, highlighted that polygamy though accepted in Islam comes with responsibility for the women and children involved in the union. One of them stated, “it is recommended that the man must love all four women equally and should also take care of the children. But what you see today is people getting married to four wives and then absconding from their parental responsibilities, which is totally wrong” (R19). Overall, media professionals noted that polygamy is one of the factors that brings about Almajiranci and hold the view that many Muslims have misinterpreted Islamic teaching on polygamy. The situation is considered to have created more problem towards child neglect under the pretext of Islamic education. Hence, the resulting economic problems where childbirth does not match resources for childcare. Again, media professionals agree that misconceptions about Islamic principles coupled with poverty had sustained Almajiri practice for long. They posit that Bauchi State Government needs to ensure that only licensed religious teachers impart knowledge on their followers.

### 5.2.3 Clarification of the Relationship Between The Themes Using Thematic Maps

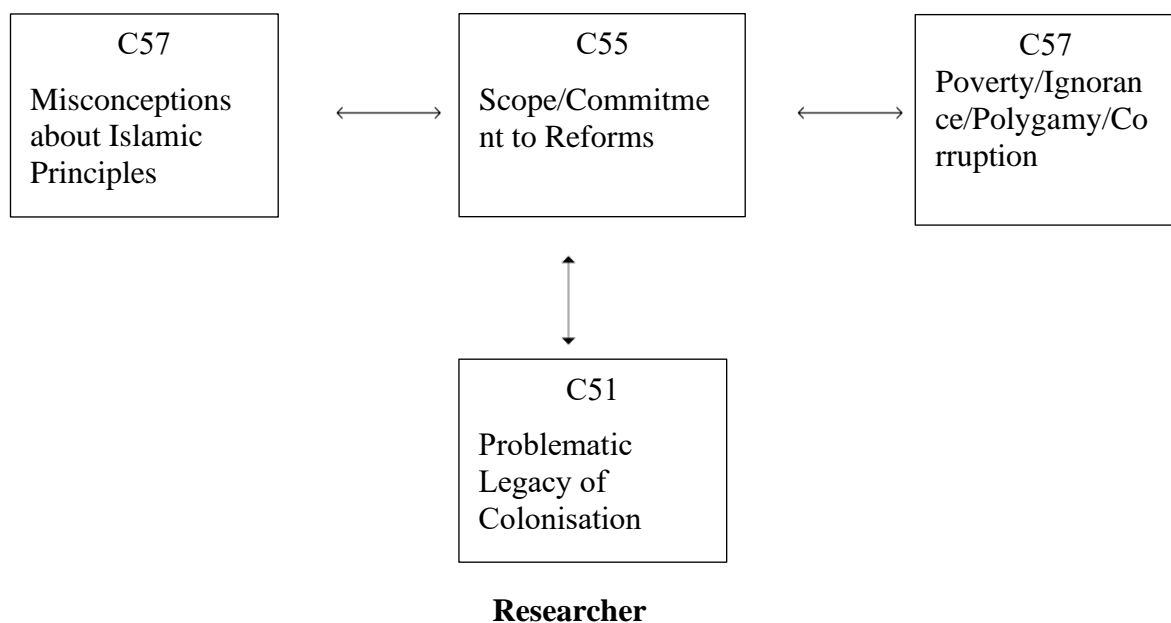
Thematic Map 5.1: C52 (Media Stereotypes and Representation), C54 (Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media) and C56(Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy)



**Researcher**

The themes "Media Stereotypes and Representation", "Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media" and "Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy" are related. Mallamai, for example, claimed that the mass media misrepresents Almajirai by utilising stereotypes to portray them, calling them "terrorists," "criminals," and "beggars," among other disparaging terms. Similarly, Government officials disapproved with the media's portrayal of Bauchi security issues and Almajiranci, claiming it is biased, overstated, and intended to undermine the government. The overall notion among these interviewees is that the media has been unfair to Almajirai in its representations. This supposed misrepresentation had led to the harbouring of animosity towards mass media by Mallamai and government officials giving rise to the theme "Antipathy and Resistance Towards Mass Media". Media professionals advise that media advocacy, has the potential to resolving the often-conflictual relationship between Almajirai and mass media. Media advocacy does not only entail re-orientating misconceptions about Islamic principles among Almajirai sympathisers but also mass media re-examining itself regarding its depiction of Almajirai. Therefore, the three themes are connected.

Thematic Map 5.2: C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms), C57(Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption) C58 (Misconceptions about Islamic Principles) and C51(Problematic Legacy of Colonisation)



The ideas put up by media professionals under the theme "Scope/Commitment to Reforms" have the potential to address concerns about Almajiranci, including "Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption," "Misconceptions about Islamic Principles," and "Problematic Legacy of Colonisation". These four themes are therefore related because they highlighted the main areas where Almajiranci needs reform.

First, the theme "Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption" draws attention to aspects in Almajiranci that require reform. As previously mentioned, these problems are thought to be the underlying cause of Almajiranci. Therefore, interviewees thought that Almajiri-related problems will be resolved if poverty, ignorance, polygamous unions, and most importantly, government corruption, are reduced to the absolute minimum in Bauchi State.

Second, "Scope/Commitment to Reforms" requires that myths are dispelled regarding Islamic tenets. True Islamic teachings from authentic Islamic scholars can address the fallacies that exist today among Almajiri supporters regarding polygamy and formal education, resulting in reform.

Third, the concept of "Scope/Commitment to Reforms" may help people realise that not all colonial policies described in the "Problematic Legacy of Colonisation" are negative. For example, it is noble that they recommended formal education for all children, which unlike Almajiranci, paves the way for future career.

### **5.3 Summary of Analysis**

It should be noted that these different points of view from the various categories of interviewees illustrate the contentiousness of the topic. Mass media professionals are of the view that government is either complicit, complacent, or involved in the complex problem of Almajiranci. Regarding their evaluation of the mass media, media professionals' perspectives can be classified into two categories: those who perceive Almajiri portrayals as an accurate depiction of reality (particularly their living conditions), and those who consider it a misrepresentation (especially linking them with criminal activity). Media professionals also admitted that the mass media has sometimes immersed itself in inadequate conceptualization and contextualization of the Almajiri phenomenon leading to the use of stereotypes to describe them. Furthermore, they argue that there is an inadequate media management and performance model adherence, resulting in mass media getting entangled with politics when portraying

Almajiranci. As for Mallamai, they argued that mass media should portray them devoid of stereotypes. They maintained that the current portrayal of Almajirai by mass media is distorted. Aside the mass media, their major suggestions are directed at government, to recognise and fund independently Almajiranci and formal schools without integrating the two. On the part of government officials, they acknowledged that Almajiri's existing educational practices are not optimal for children. However, they blame other parties, such as Almajiri parents and the media, for the issue. They provided the idea that although the government is making every effort to reform Almajiranci, it still needs the backing of parents, religious leaders, and traditional authorities. Nonetheless, most of these perceptions—whether accurate or inaccurate—permeates modern civil life and have a negative impact on Bauchi society. Overall, media professionals and government officials argue that despite some reservations about the way in which Almajiri are generally portrayed in the media, there are significant problems with the way Almajiranci currently operates.

#### **5. 4 Conclusion**

The opinions of the three types of interviewees (Media professionals, Mallamai, and Government Officials) regarding Almajiri's portrayal in the media were presented in this chapter. An analysis of the opinions unveiled points of agreement and disagreement among the different interviewee categories, and even within the same category. According to the findings the British colonial legacy in Nigeria is still blamed for the current situation in Almajiranci. This, however, is debatable because Almajiranci's emphasis, then as now, was solely on learning Islamic knowledge, which seemed problematic as it interfered with children's capacity to make future profession or work decisions. Again, some pertinent questions arise: Should the focus of blame remain with colonial legacy given that the reins of power were handed over more than 60 years ago? What steps have the present governments taken to improve the lot of an Almajiri child? These are the kinds of questions that spurs debates and in accordance with the provisions of social responsibility theory, has the potential to function as a platform for these conflicting discussions. Overall, these and other findings will be discussed in Chapter 7 under the more general heading of the study's findings. The next chapter examines newspaper contents to determine the accuracy of claims made by Mallamai and other interviewees regarding the usage of stereotypes in portraying Almajirai.

## Chapter Six: Representation of Almajiri in Selected Media Organisations

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides evidence and analysis of the representation of the Almajiri in Nigerian print media through a detailed content analysis of selected content from two news outlets: the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* on Almajiri representation. It uses six Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) steps which have already been described in the methodology chapter to organise the selected news articles thematically prior to analysis. The chapter shows how the themes were discovered, examined, and presented, and proceeds to explore the nature and significance of this evidence in the context of the project's research questions. The potential significance of newspaper content in the representation of the Almajiri became apparent during the interview phase of this research. Although there were concerns raised by respondents about the representation of Almajiri by several such media organisations, the *Daily Trust*, and *the Nation* newspapers were mentioned frequently than others. Alongside the frequent complaints from respondents about these news sources, it is the case that these titles are among the most regularly consumed in Bauchi and are considered particularly apposite to explore in this investigation. Additionally, another factor that influenced the selection of these publications is that the *Daily Trust* is published in the north, and *The Nation* is published in the south. This is supposed to provide a counterbalance or equilibrium to the viewpoints articulated in them on Almajiri representation. The majority population of Nigeria is Muslim in the north, and Christian in the south. It is argued—correctly or incorrectly—that media outlets in the north support Islamic interests, while those in the south support Christian ones. To determine if Almajiri representation results from bias, these newspapers from different regions are selected for comparison.

Although Almajiri has been represented by mass media for decades, it intensified in 2009 when the Boko Haram insurrection started in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The *Daily Trust* and *the Nation* content between the years 2017–2023 has been chosen to provide recent evidence of the representation of the Almajiri by the chosen news outlets. The keeping of records by newspapers and other media organisations in Nigeria is a relatively recent development made feasible by the advent of the internet in this region of the developing world. This proved an invaluable information source in the research.

Ope (2023) asserts that Fu'ad Lawal, a journalist based in Lagos, established the online non-profit organisation, Archivi.ng, with the goal of digitising 18,627 pages of historical Nigerian newspapers from 1960 to 2010 because of lack of keeping newspaper records. Archivi.ng was launched on September 30, 2023, with many persons serving as volunteers to source for old newspapers. Lawal explains why he founded Archivi.ng:

*Nigerian history is inaccessible online, and the greatest repository of that history is old newspapers. The newspapers from our history are rotting away in libraries and private archives, and our mission is to stop the erasure and recapture all the history before we lose them for ever (Ope, 2023, paragraph 5).*

Determined to unearth Nigerian history, Lawal's activities included working with others to obtain old newspapers and writing his thoughts. Prior to examining their content, it is necessary to first provide a historical background of the selected media organisations.

## **6.2 Background Information on *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* Newspapers**

### **6.2.1 The *Daily Trust***

According to *Daily Trust* website *dailytrust.com* (Tue, 31 Jan 2017), Pate (2017) and Olawale and Omotayo (2018), the *Daily Trust* newspaper is among publications belonging to the Media Trust group, a privately owned media organisation in Nigeria's political capital, Abuja. Kabiru Abdullahi Yusuf is the company's founder, chairman, and chief executive officer. *Aminiya*, a Hausa language newspaper is also published by The Media Trust. The Media Trust started publishing in March 1998 starting with the *Weekly Trust* before launching the *Daily Trust* in Abuja on January 15, 2001. The Media Trust publications have the highest circulation in Northern Nigeria and are among the top seven earners of advertising income in the country. The *Daily Trust* has an online edition, on its website *dailytrust.com*. Furthermore, Tope (2009) argues that the *Daily Trust* is seen as both a success story of reliable journalism as well as an outlet that got involved in controversial and even sensationalist journalism.





Figure 6.1: Media Trust Publications Headquarters, Abuja (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))



Figure 6.2: Samples of Daily Trust Publications (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))

### 6.2.2 *The Nation*

According to its website, (<https://thenationonline.ng.net/the-journey-so-far/> (2016, July 31), The Vintage Press Limited in Lagos, Nigeria is the producer of *The Nation*. Its inaugural edition was released on Monday, July 31, 2006, and its current Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer is Victor Ifijeh. The website posits that the newspaper's target readership is the business, political, wealthy, and educated elite, and promotes liberty and fairness. It encompasses not only the dissemination of information on governance and its structures, but also incorporates the reporting of commerce and business.



**Figure 6.3: The Nation Head Office, Lagos (The Nation: <https://thenationonlineng.net>)**



**Figure 6.4: Burning of one of The Nation Offices, Lagos, October 21, 2020, During the End-SARS Protests (The Nation: <https://thenationonlineng.net>)**



**Figure 6.5: Samples of The Nation Publications (The Nation: <https://thenationonlineng.net>)**

### 6.3 An Analysis of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* Newspaper Reports on the Almajiri, 2017-2023, Using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)

The analysis of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*, the two chosen publications on Almajiri representation, as previously mentioned, focus on the years 2017–2023. The focus of the investigation is their news stories, articles, opinion columns, interviews, editorials, and images on the Almajiri. Key themes were identified through the application of the methodology for RTA as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and espoused by Bryne (2022).

**Table 6.1: Relative Adoption of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)**

RTA Phases	Relative Narration and Interpretation
Phase one: familiarisation with the data	Reading of the <i>Daily Trust</i> and <i>The Nation</i> news reports, articles, columns, and viewing of images on the Almajiri
Phase two: generating initial codes	Data is carefully reviewed, relevant properties to the research questions are coded or labelled
Phase three: generating themes	Examining and searching for recurring patterns of interpretation centred on a main idea, then arranging, and rearranging similar codes and categorizing them into broader themes
Phase four: reviewing potential themes	Revising and improving themes by either combining or eliminating ones with insufficient evidence

Phase five: defining and naming themes	Extra examination and assessment of each theme
Phase six: producing the report	Writing the final report after careful analysis of the themes

**Note: The above profile of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is by Braun and Clarke (2006) but presented here based on a review by Byrne (2022)**

**Phase one: familiarisation with the data**

Based on the RTA method, phase one of this analysis involved familiarisation with the portrayals of Almajiri in the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. To accomplish this, relevant newspaper contents regarding Almajiri within the chosen years were gathered, and the materials were rearranged in accordance with the relevant media sources.

**Phase two: generating initial codes**

The codes were considered by default of the initial letter "C" in the word "Code". Hence, listing of the codes was according to the respective number of research questions that corresponded with the equivalent code "C". After the codes were established, the final coding considered the story's original source—*Daily Trust* or *The Nation*—for comparative analysis of the two newspapers. Nonetheless, it is useful to mention that the two publications also shared some of the news articles.

**Phase three: generating themes**

Even though numerous themes emerged from the data following analysis, the ones selected for this study were those that were pertinent to answering the research questions of the project.

**Phase four: reviewing potential themes:**

In the fourth stage of the data presentation, analysis and interpretation, the themes were re-examined and reviewed. In the process of delineation of the news stories, all stories from *Daily Trust* were tagged SD, while those in *The Nation* were tagged ST (S stands for the S in "Story", -which is constant for both *Daily Trust* and *The Nations*, while D is the "D" in *Daily Trust*, and "T" = the first "T" in *The Nation*). The themes as finally posited, are presented in the table 6.2.

**Table 6.2: reviewed potential themes**

<b>Themes</b>	
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Code</b>
Theme 1: Mass Media Representation of Almajiri	C1
Theme 2: The Challenges Mass Media Encounter in Almajiri Representation in Bauchi State	C2
Theme 3: The scope for change in the ways the Almajiri system is represented by the media in Bauchi State	C3

**Researcher**

### **Phase five: defining and naming themes**

This stage directly meant stating the themes as understood. The final definition and thematic expressions are presented in table 6.3. It is noted '*Daily Trust and The Nation*' when a particular theme is covered by both publications, while the name of a specific newspaper is noted when a particular theme is covered by it only.

**Table 6.3: Codes and Coded Portrayals**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Coded according to respective themes</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>
<b>C1</b>		
A	Northern Nigeria-Based Practice	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
B	Security concern	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
C	Street-Based life	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
D	Pitiful looking -as shown in pictures	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
E	Neglected by Parents and Undervalued by Society	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
F	Exploited by northern Nigeria elite	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
G	The Need for empathy	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
H	Location Shifts	<i>The Nation</i>
I	Suggested Solutions	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>

<b>C2</b>		
A	Largely an Un-Islamic practice	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
B	Child Abuse	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
C	Tied to Northern Politics	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
D	Lacks Employment Opportunity	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
<b>C3</b>		
A	Implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
B	Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
C	Tackling Poverty	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
D	Skills Acquisition Centres	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>
E	Almajiranci Has to Change	<i>Daily Trust and The Nation</i>

#### **Researcher**

#### **Phase six: producing the report:**

Considering the last stage of data presentation about newspaper portrayal of Almajiri, the final themes that were defined and accordingly named were used as the lead point for expression of respective media portrayals. Consequently, media portrayal of Almajiri is broken down into 18 sub-themes as portrayed by both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. Accordingly, theme 1 (Mass Media Representation of Almajiri) which is coded as C1 has 9 subthemes; Theme 2 (The Challenges Mass Media Encounter in Almajiri Representation in Bauchi State) has 4 sub-themes; while theme 3 (The scope for change in the ways the Almajiri system is represented by the media in Bauchi State) has 5 sub-themes. This is shown in table 6.3. above.

### **6.4 An Inductive Review of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* Representation of Almajiri**

Various sub-themes emerged through the review of various coverage of Almajiri by *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. Activities relating to media portrayal of Almajiri recorded as C1



were coded under C1A to C1I covering the representation of Almajiri as northern Nigeria-based practice, security concern, and street-based life, among other depictions. Almajiri were also shown in pictures as neglected children, and all these representations appear to have sinister motives or undertones. Largely, Almajiri portrayals reveal a troubling scenario in which poverty, ignorance, government indifference, and misinterpretation of Islamic teachings are identified as the cause. Furthermore, some dimensions of the issues are made to look like the Almajiri status offers an undue advantage to northern Nigeria elite, who are accused of taking advantage of the Almajiri situation to gain numerical edge during elections. Additionally, northern elite are blamed for breeding Almajiri children as thugs for political violence and intimidation of opponents. There is also the aspect of outcry by concerned citizens who expressed dismay, at the Almajiri situation, but also calls for needed consideration and empathy for Almajiri children.

#### **6.4.1 C1 Subthemes: Mass Media Representation of Almajiri**

The C1A subtheme which is (Northern Nigeria-Based Practice) portrayed Almajiri as a practice that is peculiar to northern Nigeria, the region where Bauchi state is located. Northern Nigeria is depicted as the dominant ground where Almajirai are readily found, and other parts of the nation were portrayed as being less involved with Almajirai. The *Daily Trust* (26 February 2019) had as its headline, “Almajiri Menace: Silence And Complacency Of The North” in which it had this phrase, “the Almajiri system currently being practised largely in the North...”. (*Daily Trust*, 26 February 2019, paragraph 1). Similarly, the *Daily Trust* (9 March 2019) states, “The Almajiri system currently being practiced in the Northern region is a ticking time bomb”. (*Daily Trust*, 9 March 2019, paragraph 1). Likewise, *The Nation* (23 April 2017) associated Almajirai with northern Nigeria: “It is not enough for anyone to sit smugly in Lagos or Ibadan and think the Almajiri is a problem far removed from them. The demographics and the dynamics indicate that it is a problem of the North that will soon become a problem for everybody” (*The Nation* 23 April 2017, paragraph 14). Again, *The Nation* (23 April 2017) kept referring to Almajirai as a northern practice:

*A few Northern leaders are waking up to the specific danger represented by the Almajiri and the general dangers posed by a huge population of street beggars disconnected from society, living off handouts from people, and providing cannon fodder for political and tribal warfare* (*The Nation* 23 April 2017, paragraph 15).

Additionally, the *Daily Trust* (21 June, 2023) remarks that:

*In the predominantly northern regions of Nigeria, the Almajiri education system has led to a distressing situation where children are taken away from their homes and left to wander the streets in neighbouring villages or towns through their formative years (Daily Trust 21 June 2023 paragraph 3).*

These sentences and phrases among others gave rise to the C1A subtheme (Northern Nigeria-Based Practice). It is safe to infer from the remarks made by these newspapers that Almajiranci is specific to Northern Nigeria. However, they also pointed out that beyond the shores of Nigeria, Almajirci exists in other African countries, “What we discovered from our survey is that many of these Almajiri come from the Niger Republic, some from Chad, Northern Cameroon...” (*The Nation*, April 6, 2017, paragraph 4).

Coded as C1B subtheme is (security concern). Almajiranci has been depicted as a practice that has evolved into a serious security challenge. There are claims by both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* that Almajirai are usually recruited by Boko Haram and political gangs into training camps for possible criminal acts. Furthermore, it is suspected that Almajirai are eager to continue acting as future ready recruits for criminality in northern Nigeria. Some of the news headlines, phrases or sentences that gave rise to this subtheme are: The *Daily Trust* (9 March 2019) had the news headline, “Almajirci, A Ticking Time Bomb”, and in this same edition of *Daily Trust*, it was stated that, “Insecurity is one of the major challenges in the North, and these children are potential recruits for criminal activities” (*Daily Trust* 9 March 2019, paragraph 1). The phrase, “...ticking time bomb”, raises an alarm on the Almajiri and appear to predict a catastrophic security situation waiting to happen. Furthermore, the *Daily Trust* (15 December 2020) had another headline: “Boko Haram Recruiting Almajirai – Ganduje” in which a former governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Ganduje says, “There is no doubt Boko Haram succeeded in Nigeria because they have a foundation, a recruitment base in the Almajirai who are hugely indoctrinated” (*Daily Trust* 15 December 2020, paragraph 3). In his comments, Ganduje voiced security concerns in northern Nigeria and believes that Almajirai are a factor and if its current mode of operation is sustained, it will be impossible to have a secure society. In this same edition of the *Daily Trust* this remark was made: “Boko Haram insurgents have their strong membership drive in Almajirai in the North” (*Daily Trust* 15 December 2020, paragraph 1). Moreover, the *Daily Trust* (February 26, 2019 paragraph 1) notes, “Insecurity is one of the major challenges in the North; these groups of unloved children are potential recruits for the



bad elements of the street”. Likewise, *The Nation* claims that the main issue with the ongoing practice of Almajiranci is its security implications. According to *The Nation* (23 April 2017 paragraph 13):

*The Almajiri are a social menace that has already poisoned the air and the water, contributing to mindless killings that have gone into the gory past of Nigeria, as well as constituting ready perpetrators and cannon fodder for ongoing terror. But the harm they have already wrought is as nothing compared to the social and physical explosions they stand to cause in the future*

Additionally, in the same edition of *The Nation* (23 April, 2017, paragraph 20), it was stated that, “the Almajiri are a time bomb waiting to explode in Port Harcourt, as in Kaduna”. Overall, one can conclude that security is a concern in Almajiri representation in both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* and that greater danger is ahead for northern Nigeria, and the entire country.



**Figure 6.6: Images Accompanying News Articles to Depict Almajirai's Connection to Criminality (Daily Trust: dailytrust.com)**

The representation of Almajirai, coded as C1C subtheme is (street-based life) which throws up their street-based life. This is because they are frequently spotted on the streets begging for charity. The *Daily Trust* (6 December 2023, paragraph 2) states, “Unfortunately, the Almajiri system has deviated from its original purpose. Many children end up begging on the streets, living in deplorable conditions and lacking access to basic amenities such as education, healthcare, and proper nutrition”. Likewise, the *Daily Trust* (1 April 2017 paragraph 1) notes in its opinion column: “We are still where we were last week – the Almajiri are still roaming the streets while scores of them keep disappearing only for their ritually-disembowelled bodies to be found. No one misses them, including the father (not mother, incidentally) who ‘sold’ them to this vagary-beggary”. Again, the *Daily Trust* (1 January 2017 paragraph 7) notes: “I

saw some Almajiri children sleeping on a pavement in front of the shop. They had no mat or cardboard”. Additionally, the *Daily Trust* (26 February 2019 paragraph 1) reports, “Most of this Almajiri, are minors meant to be under the care and love of their parents but are rather left to fend for themselves on the streets”. Likewise, *The Nation* supports *Daily Trust* assertions that Almajirai are street-based through the following news reports: “The Almajiri would rather be deleted than exist. Almajiri is the most visible tragedy seen on the streets of all northern Nigerian cities and beyond” (The Nation 5 September, 2022 paragraph 13); again, “Almajiri are not just an innocuous presence on the street, in the motor-park, not just an aesthetic displeasure for the sights of well-heeled fellow citizens sitting in their cars, who they accost with their grimy fingers and dirty bowls, begging for money” (The Nation, April 23, 2017 paragraph 11); in another remark, “The numbers of Almajiri children on the streets in the towns and cities of Northern Nigeria are humongous...” (The Nation, April 23, 2017 paragraph 9). Furthermore, The Nation (6 April, 2017) had as its major news headline, “Three million Almajiri roam Kano streets – Ganduje” in which the following remark was recorded in the same publication: “The Governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Ganduje, on Thursday observed that there are about three million Almajiri children roaming the streets in the state” (The Nation 6 April, 2017 paragraph 1). Both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* portray Almajirai as filthy, and stating that despite their dirty appearance, some traders hire them to hawk their goods on the streets in the sweltering hot northern sun. They often sell products like packaged water, which is locally referred to as "pure water" during the hours of the day when similarly aged children from well-to-do homes are either in classrooms or at home with their parents. They are typically seen in traffic wearing tattered and filthy clothing and without shoes. They chant "Buy pure water" as they go through traffic, but few people stop to buy from them and probably because they appear too filthy to be selling anything drinkable. Additionally, Almajirai are depicted as children who sleep on the streets. It is common to see them sleeping on benches on the veranda of shops, exposed to the cold, mosquitoes, and other insects' bites. Such night-time exposure exposes them to greater danger of being kidnapped for ritual purposes as well. Invariably Almajirai are considered a street-based nuisance, homeless, dirty, disease carriers, and abused children. Furthermore, Almajirai are portrayed as having an identity problem, ignorant, and largely a source of destitution on the streets of mostly northern Nigeria. The portrayals indicate a connection between dominant location of Almajirai and the social issues that are more peculiar to northern Nigeria, Bauchi State inclusive. Further analysis of portrayal of Almajirai by *The Nation* indicate that street begging is prevalent in the north because Almajirai and graduates of Almajiri system abound there. The Nation (1 November 2023)

published an article, “Banning Street Begging in Maiduguri” portrayed graduates of Almajiri system as making up of the bulk of the large number of those who continue begging on the streets well into adulthood. It should be stated that the city of Maiduguri in the northeast is the focal point of Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgency in Nigeria. The portrayal demonstrates that the existence of Almajiranci is the reason why it is common to see healthy individuals begging on the streets of northern Nigeria unlike the south where the smallest percentage of street begging is obtainable, and largely done by the disabled. The following remark is extracted from *The Nation* (1 November 2023 paragraph 2):

*To comprehend the issue of street begging particularly in Maiduguri, it is essential to acknowledge the underlying causes. Poverty and unemployment are key factors that drive individuals to resort to begging. With limited access to education and employment opportunities, many find themselves trapped in this vicious cycle. Recognizing this grim reality, we must strive to tackle the root causes of poverty to break the cycle...*

Overall, the impression given by both publications is that everywhere you go on the streets of the major urban centres in northern Nigeria, it is populated with Almajirai. begging for alms from dawn till dusk. The two newspapers warned that Almajiri that is ignored today becomes the undoing of tomorrow. The Almajirai are presented as a big problem seen on the streets of every northern Nigerian city.

C1D subtheme (pitiful looking -as shown in pictures) indicates that Almajirai look pitiful as they consistently appear dirty and unkept. This is clear from the language used to describe them and several pictures taken by both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* to accompany their news stories, columns, or articles. Additionally, Almajirai are depicted as children in distress who engage in child labour. From their pictures, they are seen on the streets tightly grasping bowls while soliciting for charitable donations. Among the remarks that gave rise to this subtheme is an open letter addressed to northern Nigeria governors and published by *The Nation* (16 August, 2019) titled, “Almajiri: Open letter to northern governors”. The following remarks are extracted from that letter: “It is with a deep sense of concern that I present the pathetic and wretched condition of the Almajiri life with a view to finding a positive solution. The horrible tale of the Almajiri is not alien to you. You know him to be completely innocent, hopeless, voiceless Nigerian child who seems to be the only law-abiding citizen without any promising future” (*The Nation* 16 August 2019 paragraph 1), again, “We all know that the Almajiri is an abandoned child in a troubled world. He is a living vagabond whose future is very obscure and undefined” (*The Nation* 16 August 2019 paragraph 2) and in another, “the pathetic condition

of the Almajiri should be accorded the priority it deserves because you have the capacity and resources to tackle the problem” (*The Nation* 16 August 2019 paragraph 8). The *Daily Trust* also agreed that Almajirai lives lack basic needs, as demonstrated in these comments: “I saw some Almajiri eating food that poured on the ground from the flask of a food vendor as a result of a tricycle accident” (Daily Trust, 26 February, 2019 paragraph 1), again, “an Almajiri whose slippers broke, he picked the two slippers with his hands and on his face it was as if he lost everything” (Daily Trust, 1 January, 2017 paragraph 4). Apart from looking dirty, Almajirai were portrayed as children who also engage in child labour and suffer child abuse. Such language readily portrays a pitiable, and desperate situation for an Almajiri child.



**Figure 6.7: Almajirai (The Nation: <https://thenationonlineng.net>)**



**Figure 6.8: Almajirai (The Nation: <https://thenationonlineng.net>)**





**Figure 6.9: Almajirai (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))**



**Figure 6.10: Almajirai (Daily Trust: [dailytrust.com](http://dailytrust.com))**

CIE subtheme (Neglected by Parents and Undervalued by Society) portray Almajirai as children who are neglected by their parents and totally disregarded by other individuals in society. Almajirai are presented as innocent children of negligent parents. Their parents are held responsible for allowing them to live in deprivation, to be homeless, to endure irresponsible livelihoods, to be away from home when they need parental care—provision of food, clothes, formal education, love, and affection. The *Daily Trust* (9 March 2019 paragraph 1) had this assertion to support this view: “Most of this Almajiri, are minors meant to be under the care and love of their parents but are rather left to fend for themselves on the streets. Parental love and care is absent in their lives”, Similarly, *The Nation* (23 April, 2017 paragraph 18) supports this claim: “For all that, it was as disingenuous as it was laughable. Parents? That was the first anyone heard that the Almajiri had ‘parents’. If they had parents, what were they

doing on the streets in the first place?”. In addition to parental neglect, the two publications illustrated how little society values Almajirai as part of the blame is then shifted to other individuals in society who are expected to provide support and assistance in any possible way they can, since it is children who are involved in this issue. They made it evident from their portrayals that some persons in society hold the view that Almajirai should be treated as subhuman as this remark from the *Daily Trust* (1 January 2017 paragraph 3) implies: “I just gave the Almajiri the food I cooked and I told him he could be coming every day to collect food. My neighbour said people don’t give food like that to an Almajiri; she said they were usually given leftovers”. Similarly, another remark supports this claim, “When adults talk about the Almajiri problem they see and visualize the children’s experiences as adults. .... They rarely think about the dangers the children face daily, the hardships and deprivation they face like not having access to proper hygiene, having to beg for food and living on the streets they are exposed to child abuse, accidents, sexual assaults, and ritual killings and riot” (*Daily Trust*, 1 January 2017 paragraph 4). The two news publications placed the blame on Almajiri parents for neglecting their parental responsibility by sending their children to far away states, where they are considered to constitute social nuisance, and subjected to child abuse. Almajiranci is said to be making child labour a more significant problem in Nigeria, and likely to continue, particularly in the north. Overall, it was made quite apparent that their predicament is the result of negligent parenting and unkind people in society.

CIF Exploited by northern Nigeria elite) Almajirai are deemed as a tool of exploitation by northern Nigeria’s elite for their selfish gains. Overall, there is a general notion that it is not beyond the financial and strategic capacity of northern Nigerian elite to solve the problem of Almajirai, but that their current situation provides seemingly undue advantage for those who wield power, especially political power. The *Daily Trust* made it clear that it is not impossible to take Almajirai off the streets, nor to stop people having unwanted children that end up in a school system that is no longer working. The persistent nature of the situation is therefore considered as part of the “advantages” of being a northern elite. To put more directly, northern Nigeria elite are deliberate participants in the perpetration of the Almajiri situation, accounting for the large number of children on the streets of northern Nigeria. Indeed, the *Daily Trust* posit that such exploitation or portrayals is noted as a correlation of the reality between poverty, destitution, politics, and exploitation of the masses towards using the less privilege as willing or helpless participants in the game of numerical democracy in Nigeria. This singular representation by the *Daily Trust* proved that when individuals make an offer for a long-time

help to Almajirai, for instance, to take them off the streets, to give them food, housing, medication and enrol them for both formal and Islamic education, they are met with suspicion and opposition from the northern elite. Overall, it was made apparent that the northern elite's opposition to initiatives aimed at reforming Almajiranci is because of the political advantage it accords them. The northern elite were accused of being the region's biggest scourge, who feed on the extreme poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy of their people and continue to maintain the status quo of their people remaining in perpetual ignorance.

Coded as C1G subtheme (The Need for empathy) the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* have argued that the dehumanising situation of Almajirai ought to attract empathy and not criticism directed at innocent children who for no fault of theirs, found themselves on the streets. Some supporters of empathy for Almajirai contend that the real target of criticism ought to be Almajirai parents, the government, and the elite. This is because, Almajirai are victims and not perpetrators. Furthermore, the representations captured under this subtheme states that what is obvious and absent in the life of an Almajiri is parental love and care. Therefore, such vulnerable children should be treated with empathy. Some comments that inspired this subtheme include: “I had hoped that the book will affect the way the adults view Almajiri and it did. One of the women who bought the book told me she read it and now both she and her children are kinder to Almajiri children. She is from the Eastern part of the country and she said before reading the book each time she saw them begging she felt they were nuisance but now she figured they were victims of their parents’ belief” (Daily Trust 1 January, 2017 paragraph 4). This remark was made by an author who wrote a book on Almajiranci and was interviewed by a *Daily Trust* journalist on the motivation for writing her book. Additionally, the same author said: “They had no mat or cardboard. I couldn’t sleep. The main challenge I had while writing the book was to protect the image of the almajiri children and to make people more empathic towards them” (Daily Trust 1 January 2017 paragraph 5). Similarly, *The Nation* supported the emergence of this subtheme with the following remark: “You will agree with me that the Almajiri does not feel the soft touch of our human heart. We ought to present to him our human face and motivate him for high achievements. The primary purpose of this is to make him understand that he was never born to be an Almajiri but to be fully Allah’s representative on earth” (*The Nation*, 16 August 2019 paragraph 1).

These depictions appeal to people of all backgrounds to view Almajirai as defenceless and to recognise that their difficult circumstances call for everyone's support and to find a solution.

C1H (Location shifts) subtheme is gleaned from thematic analysis of *The Nation* which highlighted the notion that although northern Nigeria is the main location for Almajirai, a small percentage of them, particularly the older ones between the ages of 14 and 16, travel to the south for a brief visit to beg. Typically, they get on trucks or lorries that are transporting livestock or crops from the north of Nigeria to the south. After spending a few days begging on the streets in the south, they board the same truck to return to the north. This quotation from *The Nation* (April 23, 2017 paragraph 6) supports this subtheme: “But the danger – the real problem for Nigeria, is that portended by those who constitute the demographic majority of the street population – the able-bodied ‘life-style’ beggar the overwhelming majority of whom are ‘emigres’ from the North of Nigeria. As a visible demonstration of the size of this issue, every day, train and truck loads of beggars are ‘imported’ into Lagos from different centres in the North and disgorged on the streets”. Furthermore, *The Nation* (7 October 2023) had as a major headline, “Concerns as ‘Almajiri’ children flood Lagos suburbs”. This publication had these remarks: “Kid beggars shun school, roam major roads, eateries for alms”; “They could pose serious threat to their host, says Security expert”; and, “Sanwo-Olu, northern govts must find ways to address menace -Yaradua varsity don” (*The Nation* 7 October 2023 paragraph 1). These comments demonstrate the degree to which Almajirai's entry into Lagos, the largest commercial city in Nigeria, has sparked worries about insecurity. Their presence is thought to exacerbate Lagos' existing security issues. This story suggests that, although being northerners by birth, the Almajiri move to the south from time to time in search of better opportunities, particularly regarding receiving a formal education, denied them in the north. Nevertheless, only a relatively small number of Almajirai travel on such trips. The reason for raising the alarm in Lagos is because although Almajiranci is northern-based, it may eventually impact the entire nation as observed in this quotation, “The demographics and the dynamics indicate that it is a problem of the North that will soon become a problem for everybody”. (*The Nation*, 23 April, 2017 paragraph 18).

Under the subtheme C1I (suggested solutions) various opinions are expressed concerning the future of Almajiri education. The most recurring among the recommendations is for government to incorporate it with formal education, and to build the necessary facilities. This theme emerged because of the following observations: “First and foremost, we must prioritise education within the almajiri system. Islamic scholars, or ‘mallams’, should be encouraged and supported to provide a comprehensive education that embraces both religious and secular



subjects. By integrating subjects such as mathematics, English, and science into the curriculum, these children will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world. Quality education will empower them to become active participants in the nation's development rather than remaining marginalised and at risk" (*Daily Trust* 6 December 2023 paragraph 4); again in another remark, "But the problem should not be left for the religious organisations alone. It is more of a political problem that those saddled with positions of leadership in the north have to see and treat as an emergency" (*The Nation*, 2 June 2017 paragraph 6). Additionally, "the almajiri problem is a systemic problem that needs continuous attention of the Federal Government" (*The Nation* 30 March, 2017 paragraph 3). Other viewpoints shared under this subtheme also demonstrated that the Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, the Sultan of Sokoto, who holds the highest position of leadership among Muslims in Nigeria is against the current Almajiri practice and support suitable modifications when he said: "Therefore attempt, must be made to stop the practice of Almajiri system of begging among Muslim faithful," (*The Nation*, May 21, 2017 paragraph 2).

In summary, the representation of Almajirai by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* as captured in these subthemes present a difficult and distressing account of the experience of the Almajiri child. It should be noted that these portrayals absolved Islam of any blame and state that the fault with the system lies not with worldwide Islam but with the misinterpretation and misapplication of Islamic education by poor northern Muslims in Nigeria. In no way do Islamic teachings and practices condone the mistreatment of children on the pretext of providing an Islamic education. The Almajiri dilemma is blamed on the ignorance of some Mallamai and their misinterpretation of Islamic teachings, poverty, the negligence of parents and above all, government negligence.

#### **6.4.2 C2 Subthemes: The Challenges Mass Media Encounter in Representing the Almajiri System in Bauchi State**

As stated, to address the second research question which is on challenges that mass media encounter in representing the Almajiri in Bauchi State, the following subthemes were identified from the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* and coded as C2. These are: C2A (Largely an Un-Islamic practice) C2B (Child Abuse), C2C (Tied to Northern Politics) and C2D (Lacks Employment Opportunity)

The C2A subtheme (Largely an Un-Islamic practice) demonstrates that Almajiranci as practised today is perceived to have complex relationships with elements beyond Islam. Poverty is portrayed as the driving force behind it, and it is more of an established un-Islamic practice of northern Nigeria. This subtheme distanced Islam from Almajiranci and indicated that this practice arose as the consequences of poverty, a common scourge in northern Nigeria, when compared to the south. Quotations that support this subtheme are: “While noting that hunger and poverty were responsible for children begging on the streets, the Sultan charged the government, particularly at the state level to prioritise welfare of their citizens to address hunger and poverty. He also charged the state governments to strengthen institution of ‘Zakkat’ and endowment to address wanton poverty” (*The Nation* 21 May, 2017 paragraph 2). Likewise, the *Daily Trust* (25 March, 2017 paragraph 3) remarks: “When did a sophisticated system, well intentioned to ensure children memorise the Holy Qur’an and learn to live frugal lives as collateral, divert so dismally? This is not Islam for, if it were, it would be seen to be practiced in Mecca and Medina, Tehran and Jakarta, Cairo and Kuala Lumpur. No, this practice is unique only to Muslim West Africa and, where it grinds most, Northern Nigeria and Niger Republic”. Additionally, this subtheme highlighted that the original goal behind Almajiranci was well-intentioned, namely, Islamic instruction, but the existing procedure deviates from this standard: “The Almajiri system was a good one when it was created because it helped the children to recite the Holy Qur’an. There was no issue of begging then. But later on, the system was adulterated, that is why we find ourselves in this present condition. The curriculum then was just the recitation of the Holy Qur’an, but that’s not enough for Islamic education” (*Daily Trust*, 15 December, 2020 paragraph 7). Moreover, the existence of Almajiri practice has been attributed to polygamous unions which predates Islam in northern Nigeria: “Noting that the large size of families among the people is a causative factor for poverty and street begging” (*The Nation*, 7 October, 2023 paragraph 22); and in another, “most of the parents and guardians admit that the children are sent to Almajiri because they can’t be ‘afforded’, all the while hiding under the guise of searching for Islamic knowledge. This is alien to the pristine Almajiri System – it is plain and simple child exploitation and dereliction of adult duty” (*Daily Trust*, 1 April, 2017 paragraph 5).

From this subtheme (largely an un-Islamic practice), one can infer that the reality of Almajirai and how they may be portrayed is not a one-way phenomenon connected to Islam but rather to other non-Islamic causes, key among them, poverty, and polygamy.

The C2B (Child Abuse) Almajiranci has been described as a child abuse. It has been depicted as a system that exposes children to risks and causes them to suffer. This is one of the main problems with this educational system that the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* have noted. These two newspapers brought attention to the grave worry that Almajirai lack basic needs and therefore a child abuse. The following are a few quotes that inspired this subtheme: “The key problem with the Almajiri system is the exploitation and abuse of Almajiri children. In the predominantly northern regions of Nigeria, the Almajiri education system has led to a distressing situation where children are taken away from their homes and left to wander the streets in neighbouring villages or towns through their formative years” (*Daily Trust*, 21 June 2023 paragraph 3); “Unfortunately, the Almajiri system has deviated from its original purpose. Many children end up begging on the streets, living in deplorable conditions and lacking access to basic amenities such as education, healthcare, and proper nutrition. This state of affairs not only compromises their well-being but also hampers the potential progress of the entire nation” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December, 2023 paragraph 2); “The vulnerable situation these children face calls for a united approach to reform this system and ensure a bright future for them” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December, 2023 paragraph 3); and, “it has taken a lamentable turn, leaving the children vulnerable to various perils” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December, 2023 paragraph 1). Further comments from the *Daily Trust*: “These children account for a significant part of the reported 20 million out-of-school children. They are used as additional labour in their communities and are exposed to hazardous conditions” (*Daily Trust*, 21 June 2023 paragraph 3); “These are concerning issues. It goes against legal protections and international standards and violates their rights. It risks their education, health, well-being, and safety, exposing them to danger in many ways” (*Daily Trust*, 21 June 2023 paragraph 3).

On its part, *The Nation* task the government to end child abuse in Almajiranci. This is because every child's wellbeing should be a shared responsibility between the government and the parents. This becomes even more important when parents fail to meet their obligations to their children: This comment implies this viewpoint: “Every child, like every adult, must be documented. Every child for whom there is no one to perform the functions of parent must become a ward of the State. The state becomes the parent and performs all the functions of parenting – from housing to feeding, to loving and nurturing to disciplining, and supervising homework” (*The Nation*, 23 April 2017 paragraph 21).

C2C subtheme (Tied to Northern Politics) highlighted by *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* unveil Almajiranci and its political affiliations. According to this argument, politicians in the north support this practice because it gives them an unfair edge during elections and therefore oppose its reform. This suggests that those who are otherwise more privileged to deal with the situation of Almajirai are the ones sustaining it, a challenge that is linked to northern Nigerian politics. This portrays politicians in the north as complicit in the political exploitation of Almajirai. To increase their prospects of gaining and retaining political power, they make every effort to obstruct systemic reform and secure its continued existence. Among the statements that inspired this theme are: “These Almajiris are being used as prayer warriors by many of these politicians – and some of the hapless children are also used for ritual sacrifice towards achieving political ends” (*Daily Trust* 1 April, 2017 paragraph 6); “...dangerous tools for desperate politicians to get at one another’s throats...” (*The Nation* 5 September 2022 paragraph 8) and “...they are therefore readily available as cannon fodder for unscrupulous politicians at the snap of the finger” (*The Nation*, 2 June 2017 paragraph 3).

C2D (Lacks Employment Opportunity), under this subtheme, lack of job opportunity has been noted by both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* as another major issue with Almajiranci. These newspapers made it evident that, unlike formal education, this educational system does not guarantee a professional path. Here are a few quotes that gave rise to this subtheme: “By providing alternative perspectives, raising awareness about the challenges faced by Almajiri children, and highlighting the benefits of comprehensive education, we can work towards gradually shifting this perception and encouraging parents and guardians to consider alternative approaches that prioritise their children’s well-being and future opportunities” (*Daily Trust*, 21 June 2023 paragraph 11); again, “First and foremost, we must prioritise education within the Almajiri system. Islamic scholars, or ‘mallams’, should be encouraged and supported to provide a comprehensive education that embraces both religious and secular subjects. By integrating subjects such as mathematics, English, and science into the curriculum, these children will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world. Quality education will empower them to become active participants in the nation’s development rather than remaining marginalised and at risk” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December 2023 paragraph 5). Likewise, *The Nation* (23 April, 2017 paragraph 15) agreed with this viewpoint.: “They are children who will grow up soon to become untrained and un-trainable”.

Overall, this subtheme addresses the need to transition from an educational system that solely meets religious demands to one that meets both career and religious needs. The two newspapers opine that Almajiri education should not be equated with or seen as a complete education for children by those who engage in it as it is purely a religious education which does not prepare them for a career in the future. Therefore, it must be interwoven with formal education.

#### **6.4.3 C3 Subthemes: The Scope for Change in the Ways the Almajiri System is Represented by the Media in Bauchi State**

The third research question looks at possible ways to improve the way Almajirai are portrayed in the media. Subthemes that are related to the third research question are organised under the C3 code (C3A to C3E).

C3A subtheme (Implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003) under this subtheme, both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* suggest that Nigeria ought to abide with the 2003 Child Rights Act, which was ratified by former President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was said that if this act's provisions are implemented, Almajiranci will automatically undergo reform. It was made known that a portion of this statute requires all parents or guardians to enrol their children in formal education, and failure to do so, may allow the government to take legal action against them for prosecution. It was mentioned that the Act lays out duties for guardians, the state, and society at large to advance and safeguard children's welfare. It is noted by both publications that Almajirai's predicament made the Child Rights Act of 2003 imperative. Nigerian governments at different levels were charged because policy implementation has always been problematic. This subtheme is inspired by the following quotations: "The implementation of the UBEC Act, 2003 requires maximum collaborations with the State Governments and indeed the domestication of the Act through the State Legislatures" (*Daily Trust*, 22 July, 2020 paragraph 2); again in another remark, "The Child Right Act, which was signed into law in Nigeria on July 31, 2003, and came into effect on October 20 of the same year, provides among other things for the human rights of a child, including the right to survival, development, and protection. It also sets out obligations for parents, the government, and society in general to promote and protect the welfare of children. The Act also criminalises child trafficking, child labour, child abuse, and other forms of violence against children. However, almost 20 years down the line since the Act was enacted, there has been increased advocacy for the rights of children and protection against violations of these children in Nigeria and yet the numbers of people engaged in this

criminal act are growing on a daily basis” (*Daily Trust*, 27 May, 2023 paragraph 9). *The Nation* had this quotation, “The Child Rights Act 2003, if put into effect by government, is the solution to Almajiri problems” (*The Nation* 23 April, 2017 paragraph 3).

C3B subtheme (Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children) argues that the integration of Almajiranci with formal education is the most significant and crucial needed reform. While all governments bear some responsibility for this, the northern governments, led by the Governors, were encouraged to take on a greater role in this regard since Almajirai originated and continues to operate in their regions. The following are some quotes that inspired this theme: “First and foremost, we must prioritise education within the almajiri system... Quality education will empower them to become active participants in the nation’s development” (*Daily Trust* 6 December, 2023 paragraph 5); “ it is hereby made compulsory on all children or wards to make themselves available for education pursuant to Section 2(1) of this Act, and where a child turns delinquent, he or she shall be forced to acquire the said education, any of the special schools across Nigeria” (*The Nation*, 10 May, 2017 paragraph 3); “Nigeria can continue to huff and puff about poverty eradication and development, but at the end of the day, it is quality education, which can be profoundly alchemical, that can alter the country’s march to doom and transform its national life and outlook” (*The Nation*, 5 September, 2022 paragraph 10). The goal should be to provide every child with a high-quality formal education. Tied to high quality education is the provision of standard school facilities, such as classrooms, libraries, labs, books, hostels, food, and medication for students, as well as the presence of trained and well-paid teachers.

Furthermore, this theme also emphasised the necessity of protecting all schools against terrorist attacks and kidnappings. In northern Nigeria, kidnappers and terrorists are increasingly known to target student residences, kidnapping students, and holding them hostage for ransom. The 2014 kidnapping of 276 girls in Chibok, Borno State, was significant among these many kidnappings. Thus, in addition to providing infrastructure, the two newspapers suggested that government must prioritise securing all educational institutions. Among the quotes endorsing this viewpoint are: “But for quality education to do what it must do, the safety of the schools where it is imparted must be unfailingly guaranteed. There is no other way to this, nor is there a shorter route. Until every pupil and student in Nigeria can feel safe while going to school, while in school and while returning from school, Nigeria will continue to live on a knife’s edge” (*The Nation*, 5 September 2022 paragraph 10). Overall, the two publications share the

belief that prioritising high-quality education will reduce ignorance, which is more common in northern Nigeria than in the south. To ensure the achievement of all that is enumerated in this subtheme is government.

C3C (Tackling Poverty) under this subtheme, both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* made it evident that Almajiranci is the outcome of a poverty cycle that is passed down from parents to children. Unemployment, which is aggravated by ignorance, makes this feasible. Therefore, it is crucial to break the cycle of poverty by giving Almajirai access to high-quality education and empowering them. It was said that to combat this, the government must form alliances with NGOs and religious authorities. Among the quotes that inspired this subtheme are: “Additionally, we must foster partnerships between government, NGOs, and religious leaders to address the socio-economic factors that contribute to the almajiri system’s degradation. Poverty, lack of access to quality education, and systemic societal discrimination are among the root causes perpetuating this cycle of vulnerability. By addressing these issues holistically, we can create an enabling environment that empowers these children to break free from the shackles of destitution” (*Daily Trust*, 6 Dec. 2023 paragraph 8). *The Nation* had this remark: “Northern Nigeria is a poor region, and in order to stop the threat of Almajiranci, efforts must be made to bring poverty there down to the absolute minimum” (*The Nation*, 5 September 2022 paragraph 6).

C3D (Skills Acquisition Centres) this subtheme encapsulates that the future of Almajiri education can be remedied through provision of skills acquisition centres. There is evidence both from *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* of the view that this initiative would be beneficial to Almajirai, their parents, and even graduates of Almajiranci. It is the government's responsibility to provide these centres. A few quotes that served as inspiration for this theme are: “...education alone is not enough. We must also introduce skill acquisition programmes within the almajiri system. By teaching practical skill acquisition programmes within the almajiri system; skills like tailoring, plumbing, farming, and carpentry, we can equip these children with marketable skills that will enable them to support themselves and contribute to the well-being of the nation” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December, 2023 paragraph 6); “...introducing skill acquisition programmes, ...and empower these children for a brighter future... and create a society where every child’s potential can flourish” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December, 2023 paragraph 10). Likewise, *The Nation* provides the following quotes to bolster this subtheme: “Its intendment is basically to establish the National Commission for Almajiri Education and Out-

of-School Children to provide for a multi-modal system of education to tackle the menace of illiteracy. Once established, the commission shall be responsible in providing skills acquisition and entrepreneurship programmes development for children and teenagers through schools to reduce the rate of poverty, and lessen delinquency and destitution in Nigeria...” (*The Nation*, 24 November 2022 paragraph 5). In general, the publications expressed the opinion that formal education should take precedence over other forms of education since it facilitates the acquisition of skills. The following quotation made this view apparent: “The 21st Century and the future belong to those with structured education. There must be basic foundational education before the skills acquisition lessons. There is no skill that does not need some form of literacy to start with” (*The Nation*, 4 October 2023 paragraph 7).

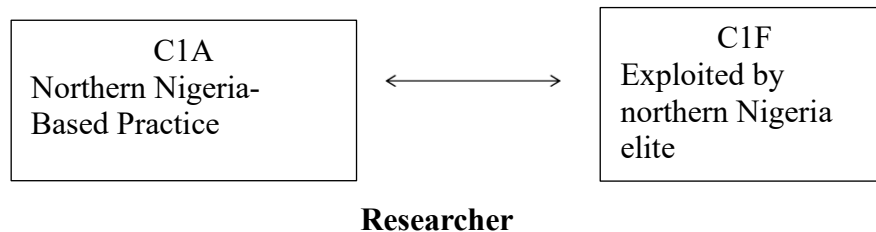
C3E (Almajiranci Has to Change) both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* indicated that change for Almajiranci is the way forward considering all the issues around it. Some remarks by the two publications suggested that it should be completely abolished as it is considered irrelevant. Meanwhile, a few remarks recommended its integration with formal education while giving Islamic instruction precedence in its curriculum. Several quotes served as inspiration for this subtheme, including: “Banishing almajiri” (the headline of *The Nation* June 2, 2017) ; “...we must change the narrative surrounding the almajiri system...we can inspire change and encourage others to support the reform efforts” (*Daily Trust*, 6 December 2023 paragraph 9); “The solution of the almajiri problem, and its corollaries, will determine if the North of Nigeria, and perhaps Nigeria itself, has a future” (*The Nation*, April, 23, 2017 paragraph 21); and again, “During the course of research, I felt that the children suffered a lot and that even though almajiri started as a good thing, it’s time for a change. The disadvantage of being an Almajiri child outweighs the advantages” (*Daily Trust*, 1 January 2017 paragraph 4).



#### 6.4.4 Inductive Review of Interplayed Portrayals

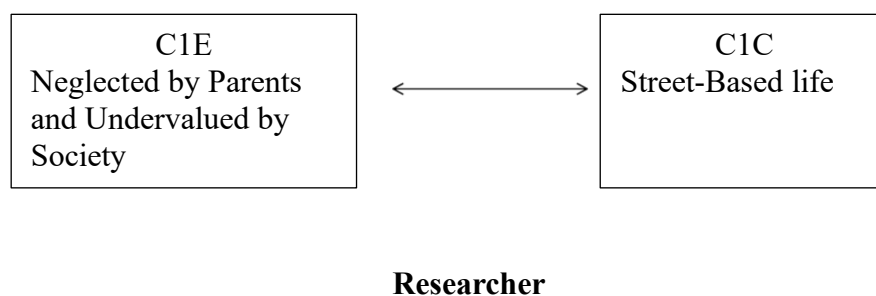
It is important to note that there were times when representations found in and across the subthemes interacted with one another to highlight certain aspects of the Almajiri circumstance.

**Thematic Map 6.1: C1A (Northern Nigeria-Based Practice) and C1F (Exploited by northern Nigeria elite)**



There is an interaction between C1A subtheme (Northern Nigeria-Based Practice) and C1F subtheme (Exploited by northern Nigeria elite). Almajiranci is a northern Nigeria practice and persists there because the northern elite see it as a political advantage and exploit it to gain political power. Numbers are everything in politics, thus for politicians, the more numbers, the better. Due to the prevalent practice of polygamy in the north, which mostly leads to overpopulation with most children ending up as Almajirai, the north enjoys a numerical edge over the south in politics. This is made possible by a sizable proportion of uneducated and illiterate voters in the north and northern politicians easily bribe this big and illiterate voting group to vote for them.

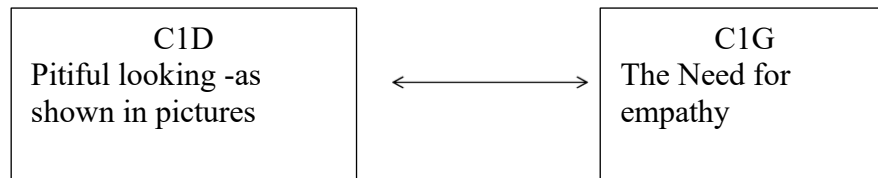
**Thematic Map 6.2: C1E (Neglected by Parents and Undervalued by Society) and C1C(Street-Based life)**



C1E (Neglected by Parents and Undervalued by Society) and C1C (Street-Based life) are related. The Almajirai predicament is a result of their parents' neglect, which is evidenced by

the lack of parental love and care in their lives. They are also regarded as subhuman by society, as among other subhuman treatments, they are given leftover food and viewed as nuisance on the streets due to their beggarly attitude.

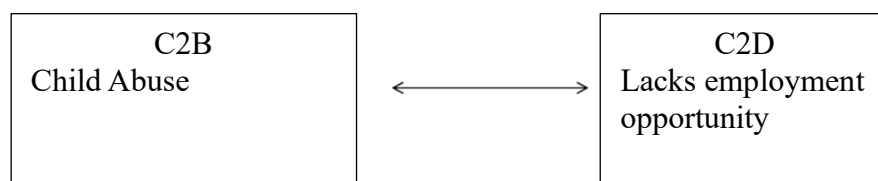
**Thematic Map 6.3: C1D (Pitiful looking -as shown in pictures) and C1G (The Need for empathy)**



**Researcher**

Furthermore, there is a connection among these two themes, C1D (Pitiful looking -as shown in pictures) and C1G (The Need for empathy). Evidently, Almajirai are vulnerable children who live in subhuman conditions, as shown by both written and visual representations of them by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*. Often shown in tattered clothing, barefoot, and clutching bowls, they swarm the streets in vast numbers in search of alms, a situation which elicits empathy from government and individuals in society.

**Thematic Map 6.4: C2B (Child Abuse) and C2D (The Need for empathy)**



**Researcher**

There is a relationship between C2B (Child Abuse) and C2D (Lacks employment opportunity) subthemes. Almajirai experience maltreatment throughout their whole childhood, which includes not having access to necessities like food, shelter, and a formal education. Unfortunately, their suffering does not end with their childhood as due to lack of formal education or skills, they also suffer from unemployment as adults. This implies that their difficulties persist into adulthood and probably for life.

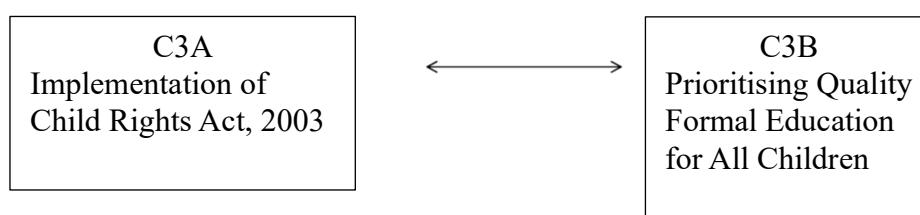
**Thematic Map 6.5: C2A (Largely an Un-Islamic practice) and C2C (tied to northern politics)**



**Researcher**

Furthermore, there is a connection between C2A (Largely an Un-Islamic practice) and C2C (tied to northern politics) subthemes. Although Almajiranci has been portrayed as an un-Islamic practice, the northern elite continues to promote this exploitative practice by using the name of Islam to pander to religious sensibilities. To do this, the elite deceive the parents of Almajiri into thinking that formal education is not Islamic, urging them to send their children to acquire only Islamic knowledge. All the deception is meant to increase the elite political prospects.

**Thematic Map 6.6: C3A (Implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003) and C3B (Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children)**

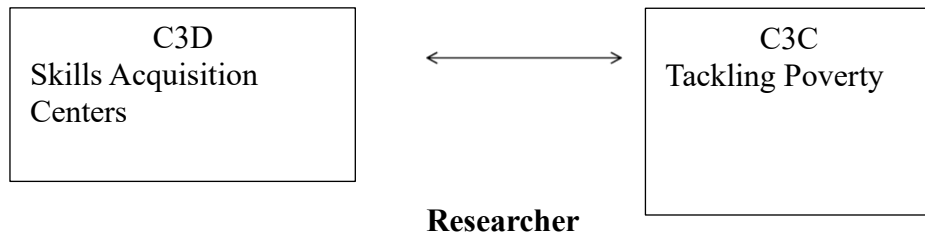


**Researcher**

C3A (Implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003) and C3B (Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children) subthemes are correlated. Both themes call on government to provide and support impartial, high-quality education for all children. Having qualified teachers and a suitable educational infrastructure are two requirements for a high-quality education. Once more, due to insecurity in northern Nigeria, all schools must be guarded to encourage parents to enrol their children in formal education, all this is to give formal education

priority. Another factor is that the Child Rights Act, 2003 mandates that all children attend formal school; consequently, parents who fail to comply with this duty ought to face prosecution.

**Thematic Map 6.7: C3D (Skills Acquisition Centers) and C3C (Tackling Poverty)**



C3D (Skills Acquisition Centers) and C3C (Tackling Poverty) subthemes are related. This is because the suggestion for the creation of centres for skill learning is intended to address unemployment and poverty. Many of the unemployed and destitute are Almajiri graduates. Despite not having a formal education, Almajirci graduates could learn a skill to support themselves, such as carpentry, tailoring, or masonry. This can then enable them to support their own children to acquire a formal education to escape the cycle of poverty.

**6.4.5 A Comparative Analysis of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* Portrayals of Almajirai**

Nyam (2022a) argues that a media organization's proximity to a subject can have an impact on how it presents or portrays that subject. This is due to the possibility that it comprehends the subject more thoroughly and aware of how it affects its local community.

The C1theme (Mass Media Representation of Almajiri) has 9 subthemes. It should be noted, however, that both publications co-represented in eight of the nine subthemes under the C1 theme. Again, *The Nation* representations of Almajiri-related concerns were less extensive than those of the *Daily Trust*. Only *The Nation* represented C1H subtheme (Location Shifts) which refer to Almajirai's migration from northern to southern Nigeria, especially to Lagos, the nation's commercial centre. Since this was exclusively reported by *The Nation*, a southern publication with its main office in Lagos, it is acceptable to say that perceptions, thoughts, and portrayals of Almajirai were shaped by the newspapers' places of publication.

Furthermore, although both publications co-represented C1B (Security concern) and C1G (the need for empathy) subthemes, the *Daily Trust* represented those concerns more than *The Nation*. It is possible that the *Daily Trust*, a northern publication, is more cognizant of or has a better understanding of the security implications of Almajiranci and the need for sympathy towards Almajirai than *The Nation*, with a southern origin. Furthermore, even though both publications co-represented C1A (Northern Nigeria-Based Practice), the *Daily Trust* made it more explicit than *The Nation*, and this is consistent with the subtheme C1E (Neglected by Parents and Undervalued by Society).

Table 6.4 below is an overview of the extent to which *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* represented the Almajiri in connection to each subtheme. A newspaper is said to have ‘Major’ representation when its articles, news stories or editorials refer to a subtheme 8 times and over, it is a ‘Minor’ representation when it is less than 8 times. It is ‘Nil’ when it makes no reference to a subtheme.

**Table 6.4 Mass Media Representation of Almajiri**

Code	Subtheme	Daily Trust	The Nation
C1A	Northern Nigeria-Based Practice	Major	Minor
C1B	Security concern	Major	Minor
C1C	Street-Based life	Major	Major
C1D	Pitiful looking -as shown in pictures	Major	Major
C1E	Neglected by Parents and Undervalued by Society	Major	Minor
C1F	Exploited by northern Nigeria elite	Minor	Minor
C1G	The Need for empathy	Major	Minor
C1H	Location Shifts	Nil	Minor
C1I	Suggested Solutions	Major	Major

**Key:** Major = Major Representation; Minor = Minor Representation; Nil = No Representation

**(Researcher)**

The C2 theme (The Challenges Mass Media Encounter in Representing the Almajiri System in Bauchi State) is made up of 4 subthemes. Although both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* represented C2C (Tied to Northern Politics), the *Daily Trust* highlighted more extensively than

*The Nation*, the political advantage Almajiri practice gives northern politicians. It could be inferred that the *Daily Trust* represented more on this subtheme because of its proximity to the issue, stemming from its northern origin. Both newspapers co-represented C2A (Largely an Un-Islamic Practice), C2B (Child Abuse) and C2D (Lacks Employment Opportunity). The *Daily Trust*, however, mentioned those topics in the three subthemes more frequently than *The Nation* did. Table 6.5 provides the degree to which the two newspapers represented the challenges mass media encounter in representing the Almajiri system in Bauchi State.

**Table 6.5 The Challenges Mass Media Encounter in Representing the Almajiri System in Bauchi State**

Code	Subtheme	Daily Trust	The Nation
C2A	Largely an Un-Islamic practice	Minor	Minor
C2B	Child Abuse	Major	Minor
C2C	Tied to Northern Politics	Minor	Minor
C2D	Lacks Employment Opportunity	Minor	Minor

**Key:** Major = Major Representation; Minor = Minor Representation; Nil = No Representation  
(Researcher)

The C3 theme (The scope for change in the ways the Almajiri system is represented by the media in Bauchi State) is made up of 5 subthemes. All the 5 subthemes were represented by both publications with the *Daily Trust* highlighting these themes more extensively than *The Nation*. Overall, both newspapers firmly affirm that Almajiranci needs to change and that formal education that is safe, easily accessible, and well-equipped needs to be prioritised. The government was charged with the primary duty to lead in the efforts towards Almajiri reform. The extent to which the newspapers portrayed these subthemes is detailed in table 6.6.

**Table 6.6 The Scope for Change in the Ways the Almajiri System is Represented by the Media in Bauchi State**

Code	Subtheme	Daily Trust	The Nation
C3A	Implementation of Child Rights Act 2003	Major	Minor
C3B	Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children	Major	Major
C3C	Tackling Poverty	Minor	Minor
C3D	Skills Acquisition Centers	Minor	Minor
C3E	Almajiranci Has to Change	Major	Major

**Key:** Major = Major Representation; Minor = Minor Representation; Nil = No Representation

**(Researcher)**

## 6.5 Theoretical Applications

The theories—framing, agenda-setting and social responsibility, deployed to study mass media coverage of Almajiri in Bauchi state - are brought into interplay with the actual mass media depictions. This is carried out with consideration for the reviewed literature and empirical evidence that stems from the conventional mass media representation of Almajiri in Bauchi State. These theoretical perspectives aim to increase the coherence and clarity of content that is examined to comprehend the depiction of the Almajiri in the media, the extent to which journalism plays a part in ethno-religious conflicts, and the wider socio-political economy of Bauchi State. Additional facets of this empirical knowledge-based theoretical application address potential challenges traditional mass media encounters in their professional reporting of the Almajiri system and the potential for modifications to Almajiri representation.

### 6.5.1 Application of Framing Theory in Relation to Media Coverage of Almajiri

DeFleur & DeFleur (2022) describes news frames as ideas which arrange or construct the interpretation of messages by choosing the terms or phrases to apply to the data to communicate. Additionally, it refers to how the media arrange and present information to the public by accentuating certain events or features and placing them within a context that affects how the public perceive and construct social reality. Eaton (2020) defines framing of news as the delivery of news information in a way that influences the audience's comprehension. It involves methodically crafting a message to produce a desired effect on the audience or

receiver. Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007) describe news frames as carefully prepared news or reports by mass media to sway the public and further a preconceived agenda. Weaver (2007) posits that news framing implies meaning production process that results from communication, through giving events, persons or things meaning.

After analysis of the mapped-out media content, news frames were discovered in both the *Daily Trust*, and *The Nation*. This news frames were both stereotypical and negative in character. They were carefully chosen to represent the Almajiri as a “security risk”. For instance, in the *Daily Trust*, negative news frames that portray Almajirai as security risk include: “*potential recruits for bad elements*”, “*insecurity*”, “*potential recruits for criminal activities*”, “*ticking time bomb*”, “*gangs*” (Daily Trust). Likewise, *The Nation*, had frames, “*forced to turn into a monster*” “*recruitment by insurgents*”, “*Shekau*” “*Boko Haram*” “*Bandit*” (The Nation) among other frames. Upon closer inspection, these news frames could be described as a security alert to the activities of Almajirai. The intentional choice of frames was made to present Almajirai as a threat to public safety. Almajiranci's goal, which is to impart religious knowledge, was not contained in a single frame. Every frame employed was to advance a "security risk" narrative. The frames conveyed the idea that Almajiranci serves as a sanctuary for the most dangerous members of society.

Like the “security risk” narrative, frames were chosen to accomplish “Almajiranci is Child Abuse” plan. Upon closer inspection, the frames appear to have been selected to emphasise Almajirai's suffering. For example, the *Daily Trust* had: “*unloved children*”, “*left to fend for themselves*”, “*the children suffered a lot*”, “*beg for food*”, “*child abuse*”, “*deprivation they face*”, “*care is absent in their lives*”, “*sexual assaults*”, “*sleeping on a pavement*”, “*not having access to proper hygiene*”, “*no mat or cardboard*”, “*minors*”, “*on the streets*” “*child labour*” to name a few from (Daily Trust) . *The Nation* also featured frames like: “*the most abused personae*”, “*loitering*”, “*hungry*”, “*dirty*”, “*torn clothes*”, “*nuisance*”, “*menace*” (The Nation) among others. An unsettling picture of an Almajiri child's plight was depicted in these frames. This is because on reading these frames, an image of a suffering child in desperate need of help comes to mind. Nonetheless, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* may have chosen these frames to support the view that Almajiri reform is crucial.

Furthermore, frames were chosen by both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* to further the narrative that Almajirai are vulnerable to ritualists and selfish persons. The *Daily Trust* had frames like:



*“ritual killings and riots, “sexual assaults”, and “dismembered body”* (Daily Trust). Similarly, *The Nation* had frames like: *“they risk exploitation”, “human traffickers”* (The Nation) among other frames. These frames serve to illustrate the risks that an Almajiri must face. It also implies how susceptible they are to negative aspects of society. These frames were presumably selected to implicate their parents and the government, who are meant to be their guardians.

Additionally, frames were chosen by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* to set the Islamic faith apart from Almajiri practices. The *Daily Trust* had frames like: *“This is not Islam”, begging is not Islamic”* (Daily Trust). Similarly, *The Nation* had frames like *“It is not Islamic”, “poverty”, “effects of polygamy”* (The Nation). These frames appeared aimed at removing responsibility from Islam regarding the current state of Almajirai. It also serves to highlight some of the inaccurate assumptions held by Mallamai and other supporters, who believe that Islam opposes formal education.

Furthermore, mass media frames reinforced the idea that Almajirai are street children. The *Daily Trust* had frames like: *“living on the streets”, “begging on the streets”* and *“walking in traffic”* (Daily Trust). Similarly, *The Nation* had: *“street begging”, “poverty”, “Almajiri or street child”, “the most visible tragedy seen on the streets”* (The Nation<sup>13</sup> October 2022, paragraph 3). These frames were used to illustrate that the Almajiri lacks access to basic needs like food and housing. They wander the streets in search of food and cash. It also demonstrates how much more time they spend on the streets than they should. It also goes to show that they face danger since they come to interact with a variety of people on the streets.

The two publications were unanimous in using frames to promote the narrative that Almajiranci is unique to Northern Nigeria. The *Daily Trust* has these frames in its content: *“Northern region”, “Arewa”* (Arewa is Hausa word for north, *“northern Nigerian Muslims”* (Daily Trust). Similarly, *The Nation* has these frames: *“Nigeria’s north”* and *“northern Nigerian cities”* (The Nation) among others. These frames were selected, arguably to reduce responsibility of the southern region of Nigeria from Almajiri related problems. It was also intended to depict where this practice originated.

Additionally, the following *Daily Trust* frames promotes the idea that Almajiranci is sustained by ignorance and poverty: *“early marriages”, “child labour”, “malnourished”, “high infant*

mortality rate”, “beg for food” (Daily Trust). Similarly, *The Nation* has: “four wives”, “20, 30, 40 children” (The Nation) among other frames. These frames were selected to illustrate the link between ignorance, poverty and Almajiranci, issues prevalent in the North than the South. These frames were chosen because all available data indicates that poverty and ignorance are more prevalent in Northern Nigeria than in Southern Nigeria. This could be a sign that to overcome the Almajiri issues, the north needs to face these challenges first.

Lastly, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* advocated for Almajiri reform through the frames they deployed to represent Almajirai. The *Daily Trust* frames include: “ of all problems, the most discussed and lamented has been the Almajiri”,(Daily Trust, 26 February 2019, paragraph 1), “it’s time for a change”, “ the disadvantages outweighs the advantages”, “ticking time bomb”, “this is an issue staring us in the face”, “we have not taken action”, “It is time for us to look at this social problem”, “ the elite, religious and traditional rulers must do something”, “before it gets too late” (Daily Trust, Jun 21 2023, paragraph 8). In a similar vein, *The Nation* uses the following frames in this regard: “street child we ignore today becomes the undoing of our civilisation”, “ we must pay attention to the ‘dregs’ or become real victims of our collective apathy”(The Nation, September 5, 2022, paragraph 6) to name a few. These frames were chosen to bolster the argument for Almajiranci's reform. The frames draw attention to how urgent this reform is. It serves as a warning that inaction will have significant repercussions.

Overall, evidence suggests that the social welfare of Almajirai formed the basis for most of the negative frames. Negative frames categorised Almajiri system as insufficient, outdated, and desperately in need of adjustments that many consider long overdue. Therefore, a direction was pointed out with positive frames, geared towards reform such as that from the *Daily Trust* “prioritising quality education”. The implication of this frame is that the whole Almajiri system is deemed poor education. The *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* rather differently used frames to provide some representations that placed the Almajiri system as grossly inadequate and deserving of outright condemnation. *The Nation* had frames like: *Boko Haram, petty and hard criminals, bandits, garage boys, ISWAP (Islamic State West African Province), dangerous tools and male prostitutes*. Furthermore, much of the framing around the day-to-day Almajirai conditions centred around their living conditions and the need for people to show them some more attention and love. However, *The Nation* for instance brought a dimension that showed how individuals residing in different regions of the nation are by default, not comfortable with Almajirai. Yet, the *Daily Trust* took stories that emphasised the support networks within

northern Nigerian communities and a sense of brotherhood and discipline that resulted in rich agricultural outcomes. Through framing analysis and slanting, both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* showed the direction for changes that are possible. The newspapers opened vistas for examining the effect and resulting security implications of the Almajiri situation. Disturbing social ills were also highlighted by the newspapers. The social ills mentioned include exploitation by the elites, abuse such as rapes, extortion, social vulnerability, and recruitment into banditry and criminality. Some of the positive representation covered suggestions for social reforms towards improvement of the general out-of-school children. Overall, both newspapers emphasise the role of government, legislation and education policies, encouragement of social integration, and remind about hitherto unkept promises about change. It is in relation to change from old ways that the subthemes such as “prioritisation of formal education for all children”, and “implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003” were coded. In relation to other aspects of solutions and scope of coverage, the role of international organisations and the level of cooperation and partnerships enjoyed, as well as the extent of possible disagreements with the Nigerian government were not properly accounted for in both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. Overall, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* publications could be criticised for their framing of Almajirai by using terms like "potential terrorists," "beggars," and “potential criminal” in their publications to refer to them. It seems that these phrases and words are intended to place the blame on the victims of this system—Almajirai—rather than those who are at fault and deserving of it—the government, and political elite. However, the way the news is framed regarding the need for the transformation of this educational system by both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* is favourable.

### **6.5.2 Application of Agenda-Setting Theory in Relation to Media Coverage of Almajiri**

The utilisation of the agenda-setting theory in this research is grounded on the fundamental proposition of the theory (see Chapter 4). The *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers provided the themes such as the security implication of Almajiri practice, the general hardship faced by Almajiri children, the social implication of street-life of Almajirai, the significant socio-economic challenges, the social disturbance dimensions of the Almajiri, the religious frames involved, the political dimensions as well as the corporate social responsibility angle. Agenda-setting theory is further applied towards understanding how the mass media contributes to attempts to influence public perceptions about Almajiri and underscore policy narratives. From

the evidence of the frames analysed above, the agendas set by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* over time on Almajiri representation are as follows:

### **Almajiranci is Security Risk**

Key among the agendas set by mass media in its representation of Almajiranci is security risk. The mass media has linked Almajiranci to security issues and a source from where criminals get new members. Although acknowledging that this is a deviation from the primary goal of Almajiranci, which is religious instruction. The mass media highlights that Almajirai live in poverty and since they lack basic needs, criminal elements take advantage of this and entice them to join them by offering them food and money. These remarks, among a plethora of others, provide examples of the kind of agendas set in news media about Almajiranci:

*“...insecurity is one of the major challenges in the North; these groups of unloved children are potential recruits for the bad elements of the street” (Daily Trust, 26 Feb 2019 paragraph 1)*

*“Almajiri is the most visible tragedy seen on the streets of all northern Nigerian cities and beyond. They often end up as street urchins (area boys), male prostitutes, petty and hard criminals, garage boys and most recently, Boko Haram, ISWAP (Islamic State West African Province) and Bandits, as well as dangerous tools for desperate politicians to get at one another’s throats” (The Nation 5 September 2022 paragraph 8)*

*“There is no doubt Boko Haram succeeded in Nigeria because they have foundation, a recruitment base in the Almajirai who are hugely indoctrinated” (Daily Trust 15, December 2020 paragraph 4)*

*“They risk exploitation, recruitment by insurgents, human traffickers, others” (The Nation, 24 November 2022 paragraph 1)*

### **Almajiranci is Child Abuse**

Another agenda set by mass media in its depiction of Almajiranci is that of child abuse. That under the guise of acquiring religious knowledge, children from age 4, who need affection and parental care, are taken away to far-off towns or villages and left to fend for themselves. An Almajiri cannot afford food or safe housing, and to meet those needs, they beg on the streets. Additionally, they also lack access to healthcare when they become ill. These are the grounds which the mainstream media has shaped the agenda that links Almajiranci to child abuse. This agenda is evident from the following selection of these remarks:

*“Most of this Almajiri are minors meant to be under the care and love of their parents. ... they are left ... no one to fend for them. Parental love and care is a fiction far from reality to them” (Daily Trust 26 February, 2019 paragraph 1)*

“...The scruffy children in the almajiri scenario...” (The Nation, 23 April, 2017 paragraph 20)

*“Like Aliyu, many other children are currently facing similar challenges as their parents have sent them away from their houses to several places in the name of acquiring knowledge. They felt abandoned, alone, without the care of a parent, which is a great pillar in a child’s upbringing. “I have been sleeping in a nearby farm where vegetables are grown. For the past 5 years, I have been battling for food to eat. I don’t have clothes, I only bathe once a week, if I get soap and that is usually on Fridays. Our teacher doesn’t give us food, and we are expected to bring food or money back home from the one we gather. They don’t even care if we study, pray or take good care of our health” (Daily Trust, 27 May 2023 paragraph 1)*

*“We all know that the Almajiri is an abandoned child in a troubled world. He is a living vagabond whose future is very obscure and undefined” (The Nation 16 August, 2019 paragraph 2)*

*“Over the years, this has been seen to contribute to and encourage the high growth rate of child abuse” (Daily Trust 27 May, 2023 paragraph 7)*

### **Almajirai are Vulnerable to Ritualists and Selfish Persons**

Mass media agendas also suggests that Almajirai are susceptible to exploitation by ritualists and exploitative persons. Mass media reports instances where ritualists had either killed them or removed their body parts for ritualistic purposes. Additionally, there are times when paedophiles sexually assault them or politicians incite them to riots after election loss, as observed in these quotations:

*“We are still where we were last week – the Almajiri are still roaming the streets while scores of them keep disappearing only for their ritually-disembowelled bodies to be found. No one misses them, including the father (not mother; incidentally) who ‘sold’ them to this vagary-beggary” (Daily Trust 1 April 2017 paragraph 1).*

*“They rarely think about the dangers the children face daily, the hardships and deprivation they face like not having access to proper hygiene, having to beg for food and living on the streets they are exposed to child abuse, accidents, sexual assaults, and ritual killings and riots” (Daily Trust 1 January 2017 paragraph 5)*

*“...several challenges are associated with the high number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. All out-of-school children in Nigeria are at risk of exploitation, vulnerable to recruitment by insurgents, human traffickers and by other criminal elements in the society” (The Nation 24 November 2022 paragraph 4)*

*“This is huge and potentially dangerous. Because of their very nature – the almajiris are largely illiterate – they are therefore readily available as cannon fodder for unscrupulous politicians at the snap of the finger” (The Nation, 2 June 2017 paragraph 3).*

## **Almajiri is Largely Un-Islamic**

There is evidence of a media agenda arguing that the current Almajiri practice is incompatible with Islamic teachings. The media sets this agenda by drawing comparisons between Almajiri practice and Islamic instructions in southern Nigeria, and even outside its borders, which is different. The media's agenda to portray Almajiranci as un-Islamic is also based on its rejection of formal education. This is because Islam promotes knowledge acquisition through formal schooling. This mass media agenda is obvious from these quotations:

*“This is not Islam for, if it were, it would be seen to be practiced in Mecca and Medina, Tehran and Jakarta, Cairo and Kuala Lumpur. No, this practice is unique only to Muslim West Africa and, where it grinds most, Northern Nigeria and Niger Republic” (Daily Trust 25 March 2017 paragraph 3).*

*“Almajiri does not represent Islam, but hunger and poverty...Almajiri system of begging is not representing Islam and must therefore be distinguished from Islam. Islam encourages scholarship and entrepreneurship and frowns at laziness and idleness as exemplified by itinerant Almajiri. Therefore attempt, must be made to stop the practice Almajiri system of begging among Muslim faithful” (The Nation 21 May 2017 paragraph 2).*

## **Almajirai are Street Children**

The mass media has set an agenda through its representation that Almajiri are street children. Mass media represent the scenario that Almajirai spend more time on the street, than learning about Islam or memorising the Qur'an. They are classified as beggars, seen with bowls and begging for their needs. Some mass media descriptions that gave rise to this agenda are:

*“Everywhere you go in the big cities of Nigeria, we now have on our streets ...children begging for alms from sun up till past dusk” (The Nation 24 November, 2022 paragraph 9)*

*“Almajiri is the most visible tragedy seen on the streets of all northern Nigerian cities and beyond. They litter at garages, ATM centres, hotels, brothels, motor parks, Go-slow gridlocks and even church and mosque gates. They often end up as street urchins” (The Nation 5 September 2022 paragraph 7)*

## **Almajiranci is Unique to Northern Nigeria**

Almajiranci is portrayed by media agendas as unique to northern Nigeria. The *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* portrayals underline that Almajiranci is a problem specific to northern Nigeria. It is portrayed as the cause of the north's higher than southern levels of ignorance, poverty, and child labour.

*“Those children coming from the north, most of them, their parents don’t know their whereabouts. Most of them were influenced by some very useless and hopeless individuals to make ends meet” (The Nation 7 October, 2023 paragraph 12)*

*“In the predominantly northern regions of Nigeria, the Almajiri education system has led to a distressing situation where children are taken away from their homes and left to wander the streets in neighbouring villages or towns through their formative years” (Daily Trust 21 June, 2023 paragraph 3).*

### **Almajiranci is Sustained by Ignorance and Poverty**

From news stories, articles and editorial, the mass media also sets the agenda that poverty and ignorance in northern Nigeria is the reason for Almajiranci's continued existence. It also highlights that since politics is a game of numbers, the elite in the north stand to gain somewhat from the high number of Almajirai. The mass media claims that because Almajirai are poor and illiterate, northern politicians easily manipulate them to win their support during elections. These remarks, among others, establishes this agenda.

*“...high level of poverty and illiteracy. ..poverty, ignorance and illiteracy ...remain in perpetuity. It is high time the North re-echos its social problems...” (Daily Trust 26, February, 2019 paragraph 3)*

*“We are all aware that these rights are not obtainable for the Almajiri child. He is the only Nigerian that has no accessibility to healthcare services. His ailments are religiously and traditionally treated or resigning to fate. The Almajiri is not enrolled in the primary education system to learn basic skills to prepare him for future economic life. The Almajiri does not know rest and leisure. From morning till night, he is battling to make ends meet begging for alms. He does not know how to play games to boost his physical being. Even the little time he has for studies is inadequate for him to acquire the best knowledge after rigorous toiling” (The Nation 16 August 2019 paragraph 4)*

*“they milled around the place looking very dirty with rashes on the faces and heads of some of them. People dump all manner of leftover food on them as if they are less human, all in the name of helping them. The manner they run after vehicles for money also puts them in grave danger” (The Nation 7 October 2023 paragraph 7)*

### **Almajiranci is Problem, Requires Reform**

The mass media sets the agenda that Almajiranci is an issue that requires reform. Prominent among those to lead this reform is the government. Crucial to this reform is that formal education should be made mandatory for all children. This agenda makes it obvious that Almajiranci's lack of reform could have negative effects, especially insecurity.

*“The vulnerable situation these children face calls for a united approach to reform this system and ensure a bright future for them. It requires the concerted efforts of individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the government to address the multifaceted challenges facing the almajiri system” (Daily Trust 6 December 2023 paragraph 4)*

*“Your Excellencies, the pathetic condition of the Almajiri should be accorded the priority it deserves because you have the capacity and resources to tackle the problem. Napoleon Hill submitted that, ‘If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way’. The opportunity is now at your disposal to right the wrong. You have the chance to consolidate on past attempts at reformation. The only way you can strike a difference from past attempts is to ensure a synergy which will produce significant outcomes. A conference on Almajiri would therefore not be an unworthy venture” (The Nation August 16, 2019 paragraph 8).*

The above citations are selected number of examples of media content produced by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* from several broader negative agendas regarding the Almajiri system identified in the research. Yet, there is also evidence of a more progressive agenda emphasising the pressing need for reform in Almajirci, especially by governments at all levels to rise to the challenges and to initiate urgent needed reforms.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This sixth chapter of the thesis examined how Almajiri was portrayed by *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers, part of the primary source dataset for this research. Twelve articles from the *Daily Trust* and 23 from *The Nation* were evaluated. After applying Reflexive Thematic Analysis method to the content of the newspapers, 18 themes were identified. Based on what each theme covered and how well it could address any of the three research questions, the themes were coded, discussed, and grouped into three. Theories of news framing and agenda-setting, were applied to analyse the content of the two newspapers which led to the identification of negative stereotypical frames that the mass media employed to depict Almajirai. Through agenda-setting theory analysis, the use of these frames overtime led to the identification of agendas that were set on Almajirai.



## **Chapter Seven**

### **Understanding the Representation of the Almajiri: A Combined Analysis of the Evidence**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a combinative analysis of the findings of the primary source data gathering conducted in the project. In so doing, it takes forward the evidence set out in Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis with the aim of providing a better understanding of the representation of the Almajiri and its implications. In its consideration of the findings of interviews conducted in the project and content analysis, the chapter applies insights from Social Responsibility Theory to provide a model of the current state of media representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi State. In so doing, the chapter directly addresses objectives of the research project.

#### **7.2 Triangulation of Interpretation Among the Interview Categories**

As stated, this study employed a range of data sources, as seen in Chapter 5. Therefore, triangulation approach is used in this thesis to align the views of government officials, Mallamai and mass media professionals. The application of triangulation method is essential to provide an accurate as possible interpretation of the views expressed in the different data sources. Having lived for over 20 years in Bauchi, the researcher was aware of the potential for bias among the interviewees due to their political, religious, or ethnic ties. With this background knowledge, prejudiced viewpoints that could enrage the opposing party were not considered.

An overview of the viewpoints presented in the interview data shows that there were two types of differing opinions held by mass media professionals on mass media representation of Almajiri: those who applaud mass media portrayal of Almajiri especially their living situations, and those who believe that the Almajiri have been unfairly depicted using stereotypes like "terrorists" or "beggars". Mallamai expressed their strong disapproval of how their students were portrayed in the media. They took exception at stereotypes that associated them with Sara-Suka gangs and Boko Haram. For their part, government officials detested the mass media on a whole and in relation to Almajiri, with an exception of one government official, who neither explicitly denounced nor endorse mass media depictions of Almajirai.

Following an overview of the opinions expressed by the three interview categories, the researcher was able to identify bias in a few responses. For instance, some media professionals

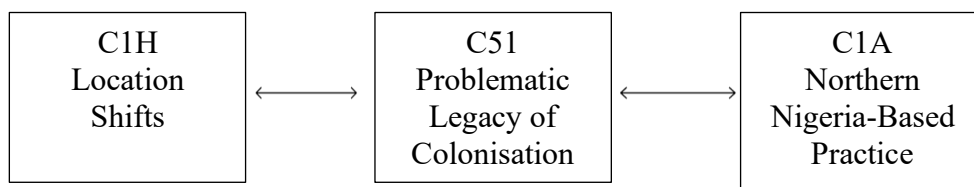
were in defence of journalism. For them, there is nothing wrong with how Almajirai are portrayed in the media, not even when stereotypes such as “terrorists” and “criminals” were used to depict them. On the other hand, Government officials were not in support of mass media depictions of Almajirai. This is not a surprise as government-media relations has historically been frosty. It is possible that their views sprang from the tense historical connection between the two, rather than from objectivity. For Mallamai, their views were anticipated since mass media portrayals was putting their jobs at risk. They were not expected to back a medium that advocates for the elimination of their jobs. Thus, to reach the highest consensus among the three interviewee types, the conclusions drawn from Chapter 6 after analysis of mass media content assisted in resolving the disagreements to arrive at the most agreeable interpretation concerning how mass media represents Almajirai. This is how triangulation was achieved.

### 7.3 Complementarity Between Interview Themes (Chapter 5) and Newspaper Themes (Chapter 6)

The thematic maps below contain themes coded from interviews conducted for this study in Chapter 5 and themes coded from newspapers content analysis in Chapter 6. The theme that correlates to others is presented in the middle box and the subthemes that relates to it, is presented in the other boxes. The complementary attributes are then discussed to show how they relate to one another.

#### 7.3.1 Interview Themes and Newspaper Subthemes on Mass Media Representation of Almajiri

**Thematic Map 7.1: C1H (Location Shifts), C51(Problematic Legacy of Colonisation) and C1A (Northern Nigeria-Based Practice)**



**(Researcher)**

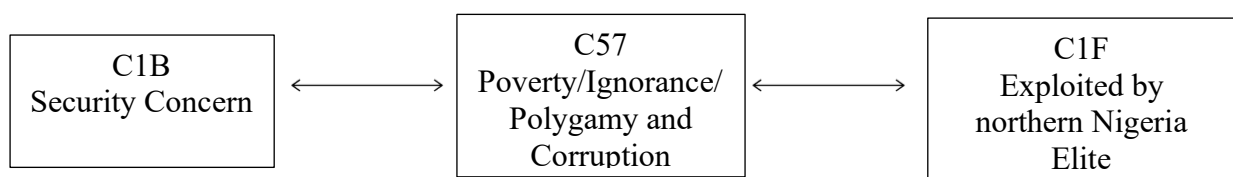
The interview theme, coded as C51, “Problematic Legacy of Colonisation” highlighted that Almajiranci existed and functioned without hitches in northern Nigeria before colonialism. However, that with the coming of the British colonial government, Almajiranci was neglected. This is because the colonial government instead introduced and supported formal education for all, Muslims, and non-Muslims alike. Views expressed under this theme argue that this served as the beginning of the problems found in Almajiri system today. Each category of the interviews (C51A: government officials, C51B: Mallamai, and C51C: media professionals) directly or indirectly linked issues found in Almajiranci today to the colonial history of northern Nigeria. It is important to note that Mallamai in particular, were more critical of the impact of colonisation on Almajiranci. Similarly, findings from Chapter 6, from both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*, portrayed Almajiri system as a practice found in northern Nigeria. An alternative interpretation of this could mean "a practice peculiar to northern Nigeria". This is coded as C1A, “Northern Nigeria-Based Practice”. However, it suffices to reiterate that the two Nigerian national dailies did not equally represent Almajiri system as a problem that is dominant in northern Nigeria – as *Daily Trust* had such prominent posture. Thus, it is not unexpected that the *Daily Trust*, which has its headquarters in the north, strongly portrayed or advocated this viewpoint more than *The Nation*. The *Daily Trust* is generally perceived to be pro-northern Nigeria. Overall, “Problematic Legacy of Colonisation” theme in Chapter 5 and “Northern Nigeria-Based Practice” subtheme in Chapter 6 are interrelated, since both indicated that Almajiranci is primarily concentrated in northern Nigeria.

Similarly, the interview theme C51, “Problematic Legacy of Colonisation” is related to C1H subtheme “Location Shifts” from newspapers content analysis. In this case, only the southern newspaper, *The Nation*, stated that Almajirai are shifting their locations and heading south to Lagos, as a few of them were seen begging in Lagos' streets. *The Nation* was attempting to emphasise, if not outright, that the issues surrounding Almajiranci in the North might materialise in the South sooner rather than later. Thus, it served as a sort of wake-up call. In a way, *The Nation* reporting on Almajirai migration from the North to the South is akin to a warning to the South about the impending arrival of Almajiranci-related problems. Again, this could be interpreted as *The Nation* way of reminding the North to address its issues, as well as seeing Almajiranci as a northern issue rather than a national one. This may demonstrate how *The Nation*, with its Southern ties, is using its reporting to play into the long-running blame

game and historical tense relationship between the North and South of Nigeria, favouring or supporting the latter.

Concerns raised by *The Nation* as contained in C1H “Location shifts” which emphasises the tense connection between Nigeria's north and south, are tied to C51 “Problematic Legacy of Colonisation” in which some interviewees highlighted the history of the conflictual relationship between the north and the south. Media professionals and government officials traced the political discord between Nigeria's north and south to the colonial era. These two interviewee categories contend that before British colonial rule, there was no antagonistic relationship between the North and South of Nigeria. They argue that the colonial authorities appointed Northerners to positions of administration who were less academically competent than their Southern counterparts, therefore favouring the North over the South politically. They claimed that the reason for this bias is because the South was home to majority of those who fought for Nigeria's independence from British rule. For instance, Herbert Macaulay, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Margaret Ekpo, all from the south. Therefore, they claimed that this is the reason behind the colonial authorities’ preference for the North over the South. Furthermore, that while the colonial government was prepared to offer Ghana and Nigeria independence in 1957, northern Nigerian government officials were against the proposal and suggested 1960. Additionally, this media professional contends that the exiting British colonial authority rigged the 1960 Nigerian election to favour the North, producing a Northerner, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, as Prime Minister. Therefore, based on these claims, one can safely conclude that the current frosty relationship between the North and the South may be due to these historical differences resulting from the legacy of colonialism in which *The Nation* subtheme “location Shifts” tried to highlight.

**Thematic Map 7.2: C1B (Security Concern), C57(Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption) and C1F (Exploited by northern Nigeria Elite)**



**(Researcher)**

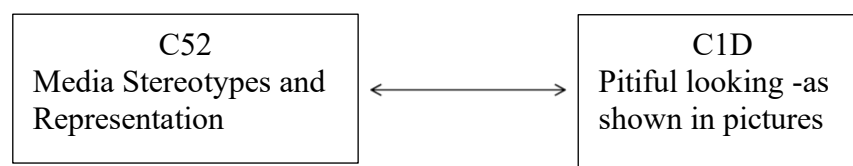
The interviews theme, "Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption," coded as C57, draws attention to the root cause of the main problems related to Almajiranci. In their responses, all interviewees identified at least one or all the problems covered by this code as the cause of Almajiranci's current problems. An overview of the narrations relates to Almajirai's living conditions, the key element that contributed to their perception as a security risk. This view notes that their privations make them susceptible to being prospective recruits for criminal activity. Some interviewees, with majority from mass media professionals, linked Almajiri security concerns to privations stemming from issues like ignorance, poverty, coming from polygamous families, and government corruption. The interpretation of the concern raised by these interviewees about Bauchi security in relation to Almajiri activities strongly correlate with media portrayals of Almajiri system as a "security concern" coded as C1B. Both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* made significant contributions to the Almajiri security concern narrative. It should be mentioned, nevertheless, that Mallamai expressed their dissatisfaction with media representations in relation to Almajiri security concerns and characterised such as stereotypes. Mallamai cited the supposed key media stereotypes to include linking Almajiranci to Boko Haram, gangsterism or involvement in Bauchi ethno-religious riots. Similarly, and to a large extent, Government officials, and a few media professionals believe that the security fear expressed by the media about Almajirai is unfounded and that the media is merely establishing an agenda and using frames to further that agenda. Once more, while most interviewees acknowledged Almajiranci to be a security concern issue, a few disagreed and believe this to be a generalisation.

Overall, these two chapters of the thesis on this subject suggest the following connections between them: first, government corruption, is partly to blame for the security problems in Bauchi which goes beyond stealing government funds but include using the Almajirai for political gain by mobilising them for riots during elections. second, there is a possible link between media vested interests, and its coverage of security concerns in Almajiri representation. Thirdly, there is a link between polygamy (partly responsible for Almajiri parents' poverty and failure in parental responsibilities) to Almajirai becoming easy prey to be recruited by criminals and gangs. Although both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* under "security concern" portrayed Almajiri system as having an inherent potential for insecurity, or as an outright security threat, or breeding ground for gangs, the correlation of such portrayal by the interviewees is contentious and controversial since some interviewees agreed with such

media portrayals and others disagreed. Regardless, the most popular argument is that Almajiri system affects security either directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, Chapter 5 interviews theme, "Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption," is related to Chapter 6 subtheme C1F "Exploited by northern Nigeria Elite" gleaned from newspapers content analysis. Media professionals contend that the elite in the north—majority of whom are government officials—are to blame for Almajirai issues. They posit that the elite embezzle public monies, leaving the mass of the populace in poverty. Again, that the elite's neglect to educate the poor on misconceptions regarding Islamic principles on formal education and polygamy is another factor perpetuating Almajiranci. Furthermore, mass media professionals emphasised that the northern elite perpetuates Almajiranci because of the political advantages it confers upon them. They argued that the elite promote polygamy among the poor and encourage them to send their children to Almajiranci which not only guarantees a big voting population but ignorant one as well. Once more, media professionals claim that when a politician loses an election, the regrettable attitude is that Almajirai are called upon to wreak havoc, which is a typical occurrence in Nigeria. However, Government officials refuted the allegations of corruption and exploitation of Almajirai, instead attributing poverty to polygamy and the failure of Almajiri parents to prioritise formal education for their children. For their part, Mallamai view the lack of support from government for the basic needs of their students, and the lack of remuneration for their jobs as exploitation by northern elite. It was evident from both newspapers that the northern elite supports the current Almajiranci state because it gives them political advantages. *The Nation* mentioned underage voting during elections, a prevalent practice in northern Nigeria, noting that Almajirai make up majority of individuals who participate in such. Overall, the two publications made it clear that keeping Almajirai in perpetual poverty makes it possible for them to be bought over with peanuts by northern politicians during elections to further their interests.

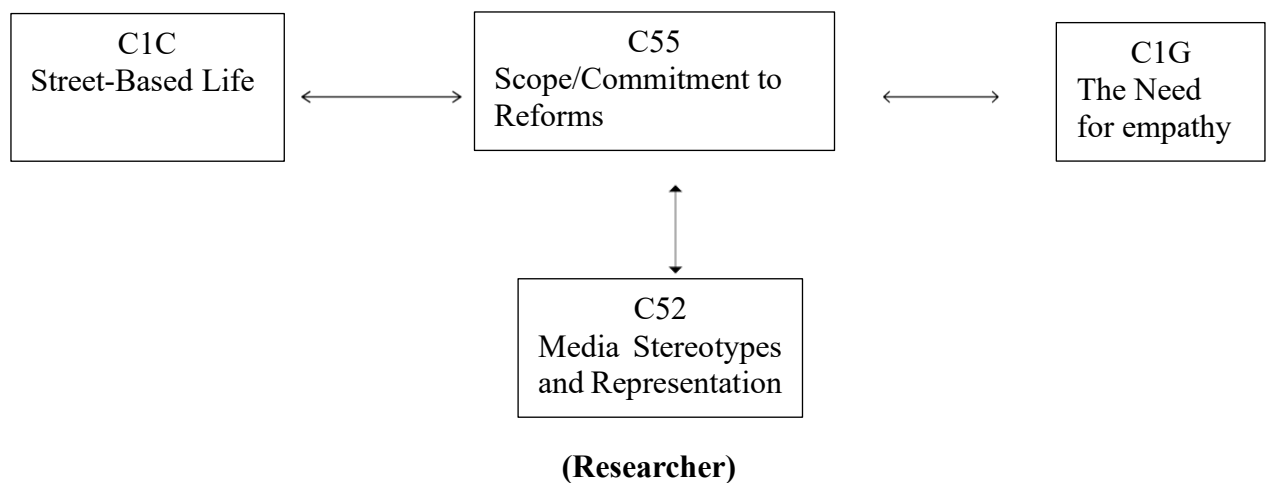
**Thematic Map 7.3: C52 (Media Stereotypes and Representation) and C1D (Pitiful looking -as shown in pictures)**



**(Researcher)**

As stated, the interview theme C52 (Media Stereotypes and Representation) emerged from the perspectives of Mallamai specifically, as well as certain interviewees, who voiced their dissatisfaction with the way the media depicts Almajirai. There was disapproval of media portrayals of Almajirai as violent and dirty. However, it must be stated that most media professionals and a government official contend that mass media's current focus on the living conditions of Almajirai is commendable. Government officials had accused Journalists of using photos of Almajirai in online publications to raise money for their personal gain. Related to this theme is Chapter Six's C1D (Pitiful Looking -as shown in Pictures). Mass media representation of Almajirai by the two publications is accompanied by their pictures which show how pitiful they look. The two publications portrayed the plight of an Almajiri child as pitiful, characterised by a dearth of food, shelter, medicine, affection, and parental care. Interestingly, both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* have this as a major portrayal. Almajiri pictures brings out the contrast between them and the children from middle class and rich homes. Overall, the interpretation of the relationship between the two chapters based on these views, points to the need for improved social responsibility by the mass media in its depiction of Almajirai pitiful situation.

**Thematic Map 7.4: C1C (Street-Based Life), C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms), C1G(The Need for empathy) and C52 (Media Stereotypes and Representation)**



The interview theme C55(Scope/Commitment to Reforms) complements the themes extracted from newspapers content analysis C1C (Street-Based Life) and C1G (The Need for Empathy) and another Interview theme C52 (Media Stereotypes and Representation).

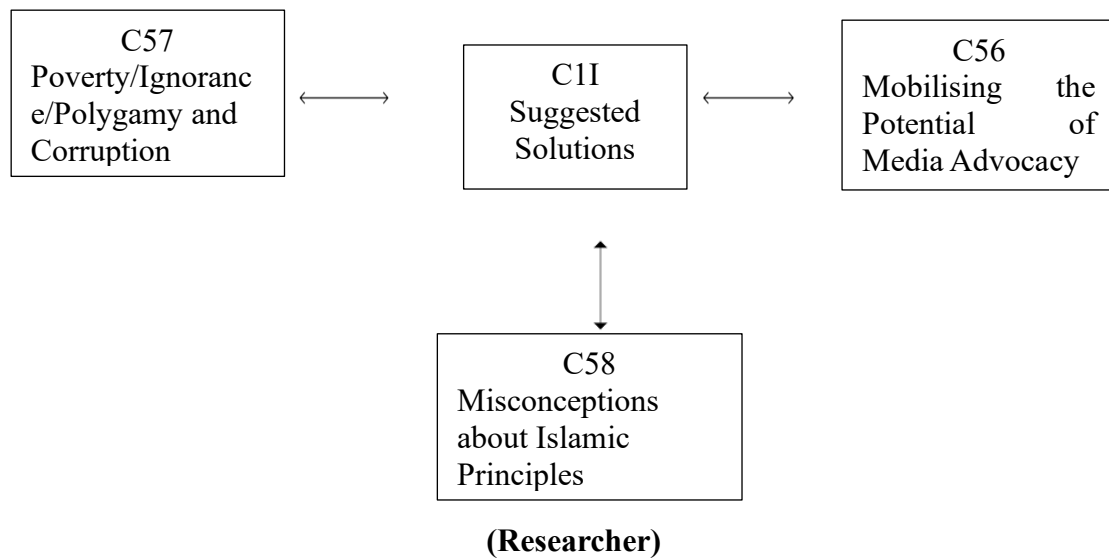
Regarding the relationship between C1C (Street-Based Life) and C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms), the two publications illustrated and expressed concern about the way Almajirai live on the streets, begging for alms and sleeping there. Almajirai were portrayed by *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* as abandoned children or children neglected by their parents. The newspapers advocated for reforms, among which is meeting their basic needs. Similarly, the interviews theme C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) highlighted the idea that Almajiri reform through the provision of their needs is priority.

Regarding C1G (The Need for Empathy) and C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) relationship, the two newspapers recommended that the public show sympathy for Almajirai, this is especially important given that children are involved. Both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* seeks public empathy towards Almajirai as the more people get involved in Almajiri cause, the better, paving way for its reform. This has relationship with interviewees opinions in the theme C55(Scope/Commitment to Reforms) in which they appealed to government, private or individuals to work together towards Almajiri reform.

C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) and C52 (Media Stereotypes and Representation) are related interview themes. It was suggested that as part of scope and commitment to reform of the Almajiri system, the mass media must refrain from using stereotypes to portray Almajirai. When the mass media reforms itself in this regard, it will lead to improved Almajiri-media relations.



**Thematic Map 7.5: C57(Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption), C1I (Suggested Solutions), C56 (Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy) and C58 (Misconceptions about Islamic Principles)**



The *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* recommendations for Almajiri reform are highlighted in the subtheme C1I “Suggested Solutions”. These recommendations correspond with those of interviewees as grouped under the Interviews Themes C57 (Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy and Corruption), C56 (Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy), and C58 (Misconceptions about Islamic Principles).

First, it was suggested by both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* that to reform Almajiranci, government needed to address issues of poverty, ignorance, and eradicating corruption in governance. This is consistent with the opinions of interviewees, who stated that corruption, polygamy, poverty, and ignorance were the main problems promoting and impeding Almajiri transformation.

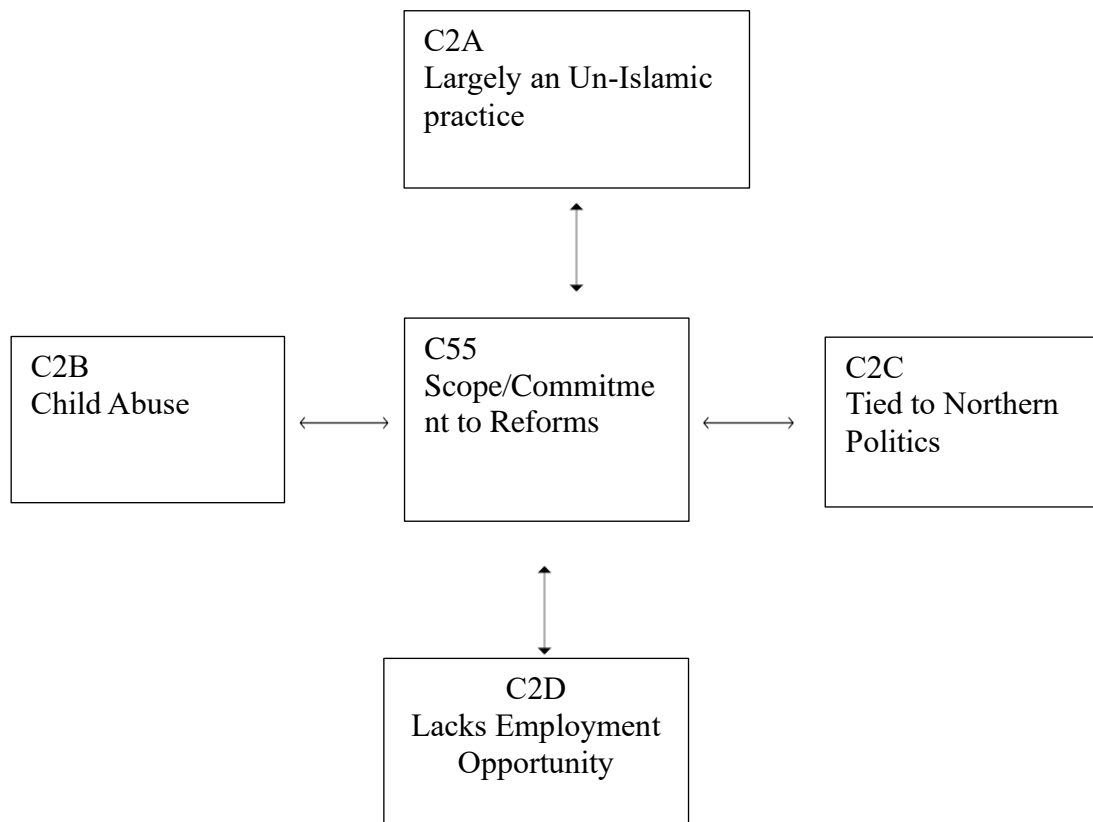
Second, both newspapers published the views of well-known Islamic figures in Nigeria, such as the Sultan of Sokoto, who dissociated Islam from the current Almajiranci. Similarly, interviewees—particularly media professionals—dissociated Islam from Almajiranci and label it as an illegitimate method of teaching about Islam citing misconceptions about Islamic teachings particularly with relation to polygamy and formal education.

Third, the solutions suggested by both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* on Almajiri reform, complements interviewees views and endorsement of the need to mobilise the potential of

media advocacy for Almajiri reform. Interviewees suggested that the mass media should rethink how it portrays Almajiranci and should also take up the task of educating the people about Islamic principles and the value of obtaining both formal and Islamic education.

**7.3.2 Interview Themes and Newspaper Subthemes on the challenges the mass media encounter in representing the Almajiri system in Bauchi State**

**Thematic Map 7.6: C2A (Largely an Un-Islamic practice), C2B (Child Abuse), C2C (Tied to Northern Politics), C2D(Lacks Employment Opportunity) and C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms)**



**(Researcher)**

The areas that require change in Almajiranci, as indicated by interviewees under the C55 theme (Scope and Commitment to Reforms), are a complement to the list of issues that the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* noted in their depictions of Almajiranci in Bauchi State.

First, C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) and C2A (Largely an Un-Islamic Practice) are related. The *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* both described several Almajiri customs as un-

Islamic. For example, distaste for formal schooling and street begging. Similarly, interviewees—especially media professionals—emphasized the significance of implementing real Islamic teachings as part of Almajiri reform, particularly with relation to formal education, polygamy, and street begging.

Second, C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) complements C2B (Child Abuse). Both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* recognised and depicted Almajiranci as child abuse. This is evident in the manner they concentrated on depicting Almajirai's living circumstances. For example, insufficient access to food, lodging, and medicine. It is also thought that the absence of their parents at such an early age traumatises them psychologically. Parental neglect, or the lack of concern for children's well-being is child abuse. Similarly, interviewees under C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) particularly media professionals suggest that ending child abuse is key to Almajiri reform, as they blame government for neglecting its responsibilities to stop the obvious child abuse in Almajiranci. The poverty and ignorance that are apparent in Almajiranci have been attributed by media professionals to government corruption. Government officials on their part shifted the blame to Almajiri parents and poverty-stricken individuals who engage in polygamous unions, however, noting that polygamy is ingrained in the local cultures and predates Islam. Both Chapters Five and Six under the above themes primarily and similarly presented the issue of child abuse as one of the challenges associated with Almajiri system. Views from both chapters suggest that government must address the root causes of child abuse—poverty, polygamy, and ignorance- through curbing corruption in governance as part of the scope and commitment to reforms.

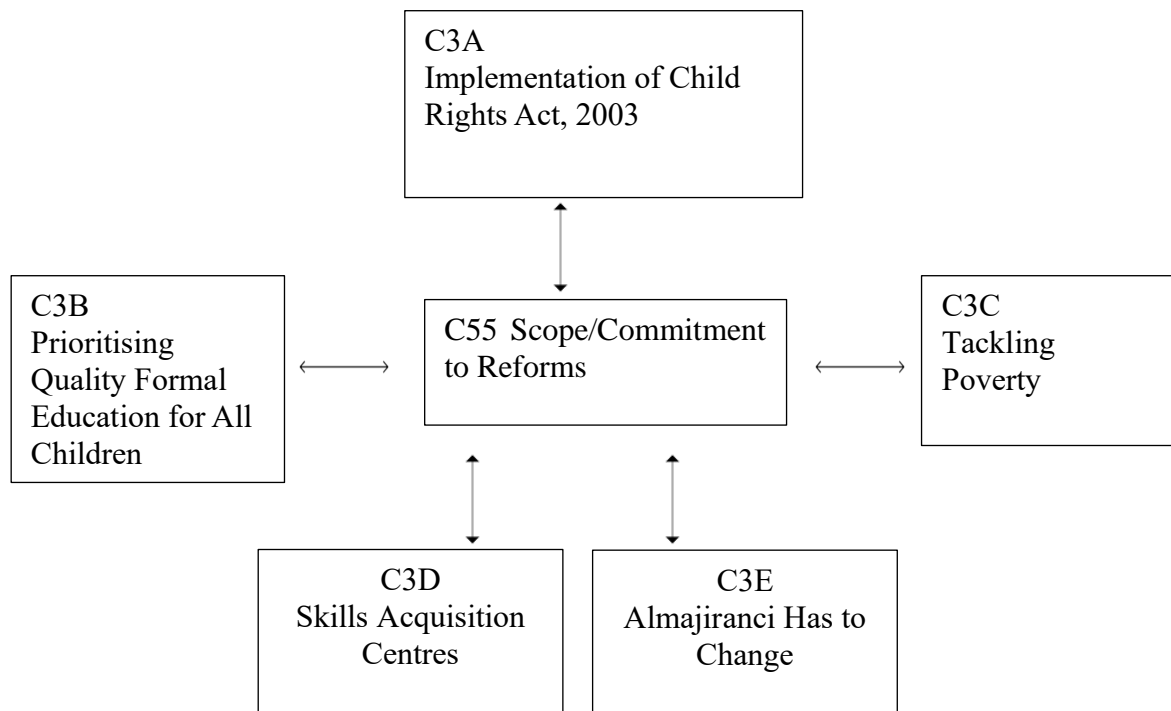
Third, regarding C2C (Tied to Northern Politics), it is about the extent to which Almajiri system is tied to northern politics. The representation of the matter by both newspapers is that Almajiri system benefits northern politicians. This also relates to Chapter Five theme C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms). As part of reform, media professionals advise that to deter future abuses, the government should track down and prosecute individuals who take advantage of the poverty and fragility of Almajirai people for political ends. Overall, findings from both chapters suggest that the continuous existence of Almajiranci can be attributed, at least in part, to the political benefits it provides to the northern elite which needs to stop.

Fourth, Chapter Five theme C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms) identified as problematic the lack of future employment opportunities for Almajirai. Media professionals disapproved

such wastage of intellectual and human capital made possible by the lack of formal education in Almajiranci. Additionally, that misconceptions regarding Islamic beliefs is the cause of animosity against formal education. Thus, as part of reform, they proposed that Almajirai receive formal education as is already possible for children of wealthy and middle-class Muslims. This relates to C2D (Lacks Employment Opportunity) in Chapter Six as both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* portrayed lack of future career opportunities as one of the challenges with Almajiri system. Both publications suggested that this challenge also needs to be addressed by government. Both Chapters Five and Six, reveal that Almajirai suffer the consequences of lack of formal education, leading to no foreseeable professional path, an issue that requires reform.

### 7.3.3 Interview Themes and Newspaper Subthemes on the scope for change in the ways the Almajiri system is represented by the media in Bauchi State

**Thematic Map 7.7: C3A (Implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003), C3B (Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children), C3C (Tackling Poverty), C3D (Skills Acquisition Centres), C3E (Almajiranci Has to Change) and C55 (Scope/Commitment to Reforms)**



(Researcher)

The interview theme C55, "Scope/Commitment to Reforms," aligns with all recommendations from both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* regarding the potential for modifications in the Almajiri system and the way the media in Bauchi State portrays them.

First, under the subtheme C3A "Implementation of Child Rights Act, 2003" both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* argue that the inability of government to implement the provisions of child rights legislation signed into law since 2003 is responsible for the current state of Almajiranci. They highlighted that the fate of Child Rights Act 2003, is not different from other laws, for instance, laws enacted to deal with domestic violence against women and other vulnerable groups, punishment for corruption, and other national issues which have never been implemented. It is noteworthy, however, that the two newspapers saw the implementation of the Child Rights Act 2003 as a potential pathway to Almajiri reforms, should it be put into effect. Under the interview theme C55, "Scope/Commitment to Reforms," media professionals expressed their dissatisfaction with the government's inability to put the Child Rights Act 2003 into effect. They attributed this failure to corruption and incompetence on the part of government, the politicisation of matters and prejudiced structures. All things considered, the Child Rights Act's implementation is thought to have the potential to result in Almajiri reform.

Second, Chapter Six sub-theme C3B, "Prioritising Quality Formal Education for All Children," and Chapter Five interview theme C55, "Scope/Commitment to Reforms," both highlight the need for formal education quality to be improved. Views expressed in both chapters under these theme and subtheme show that prioritizing education is of utmost importance and part of the scope for possible change. Both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* highlighted that public formal schools require reform in terms of infrastructure, hiring enough qualified teachers, and paying a just wage. These reforms are crucial as it will incentivise Almajiri parents to send their children to formal schools. Similarly, media professionals made suggestions about Almajiri reform among which is the provision of quality formal education. Media professionals view corruption in governance as still deemed a concern in relation to "prioritising quality formal education for all children" which needs to change through transparency in governance. Furthermore, both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* argue that tied to prioritisation of quality education is the provision of security for pupils while in school. Likewise, media professionals under C55 "Scope/Commitment to Reforms" highlighted the need of protecting schools from kidnappers to win the confidence of parents regarding their children's safety. This is because the history of kidnappings in schools for ransom, had deterred some parents from enrolling

their children in school. From the above perspectives, it is evident Almajiri reform will require the provision of educational infrastructure and security by government as the first step towards anticipated and necessary changes. Some media professionals suggest that rather than mass media blaming Almajirai, there is an overwhelming need to upgrade formal school's infrastructure and increase a general sense of security for staff and students. Similarly, Almajiri school infrastructure as well as ideas regarding potential security risks were extensively covered by *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*. It is possible that increased security and infrastructure in formal schools may encourage the needed commitment to reforms. Such reform efforts will also increase the likelihood for success when the mass media is mobilised for advocacy. Most of the mass media discussion of the improvement in school enrolment in the north is found to be weaved into the overall sense that improved formal school system will significantly improve security in northern Nigeria. Hence, much of the corroborated sub-themes -including the relationship between improvement of formal school's infrastructure and 'scope/commitment to reforms' as well as mobilising the potential of media advocacy are based on carefully considered thematic links, then contradictions. While the language and syntax associated with the sub-themes of prioritising quality formal education for all children in Chapter Six is not the same with views of interviewees in Chapter Five about what improvement media advocacy should seek, the overall relative contents of the newspapers and the views of media professionals about the connection between good formal school system, security, reforms, and mobilization are aligned towards a resolve to repair and secure.

Furthermore, there was significant coverage in the *Daily Trust* - yet little in *The Nation* - suggesting that government measures to combat ignorance and illiteracy are essential to Almajiri reform. This is achievable through prioritising quality formal education for all children. Similarly, the opinions expressed by some interviewees, media professionals, in Chapter Five also supported the notion that addressing ignorance should be primary focus of efforts towards mobilising the potential for media advocacy, as well as scope for change and commitment to reforms.

Third, Tackling Poverty, which was coded as C3C in Chapter Six is corroborated by C55 - 'Scope/Commitment for Reform' in Chapter Five. These themes all support the general idea that Bauchi citizens need to see a decrease in poverty and unemployment as part of the needed change in Almajiranci. In other words, the scope and commitment to reform includes the need to reduce poverty. As it stands, the Almajiri system does not offer its graduates a professional

path, which contributes to the already high percentage of impoverished individuals in Bauchi society. Mobilising the potential for media advocacy includes the ability to frame a set-agenda towards poverty reduction and unemployment. This is just as poverty, ignorance, polygamy, and corruption are all intertwined with the issues of poverty as highlighted in Chapter Six via media coverage of Almajiri system. Generally, there is a sense that poverty and unemployment are a major influence on the choices made by parents who send their children to Almajiranci. Again, poverty is deemed to be significant in the scheme of religious decisions taken by some parents. The *Daily Trust* newspaper - a northern Nigeria publication – did more coverage in this aspect. It makes sense that a well-known national daily with roots in Almajiri's primary geopolitical region would link poverty to Almajiranci and the difficulties it presents. Poverty, as interpreted in Chapter Six recount destitution and joblessness as prevalent issues. This is corroborated with Chapter Five theme 'Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/corruption' among other aspects of the relationship between socio-economic hardship and Almajiri-based problems.

Fourth, under subtheme C3D, it has been made known that establishment of centres for skills acquisition, which both *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* covered, could be a scope for reform especially for Almajiri graduates. This was expected that the idea of skill acquisition should readily be a major aspect of mass media portrayal of the Almajiri system. Under Chapter Five, C55, "Scope/Commitment to Reforms", media professionals argue that lack of skills acquisition centres is a significant concern for Almajiri system's graduates. It is even suggested under C56, "Mobilising the Potential for Media Advocacy" that for people who have already graduated from Almajiranci and are too old to engage in formal education from primary school level, media advocacy initiatives should place a strong emphasis on skill development. Though some interviewees (government officials and media professionals) agreed on skills acquisition, others hinted that some Almajiri parents would regard acquiring skills as more important and less expensive option to employment to the detriment of enrolling their children for formal education. The notion is to avoid a situation where everything is blamed on lack of money to take children through conventional schools. Given the very broad perspectives brought to bear on the analysis about Almajiri system, scope and commitment to reforms and mobilization of the capacity of the mass media to reform was found to be much in corroboration with the portrayal of the newspapers.

Fifth, in Chapter Five, C55, "Scope/Commitment to Reforms", of the Almajiri system, implies there is need for a systemic overhaul of Almajiri system. All respondents during the interviews

agreed that reforming Almajiranci was necessary but warned that any reform should take the religious sensitivity of the practice into account. This is especially true in Bauchi society where religious considerations take precedence over others. Therefore, it is important to implement Almajiri reform in a way that it does not upset Muslims. Additionally, as part of reform, mass media professionals agreed on the need for proper media management towards attaining the needed change in Almajiri system. Again, they identified the use of Almajiri children by politicians for their own political benefit as a major barrier to the implementation of Almajiri reform. Overall, the range of potential changes demonstrated the amount of work that must be done about Almajiri system, and the parties involved. Furthermore, mass media professionals suggested that for any significant reform in Almajiri system to be realised, efforts should be focused on altering Mallamai's mindset, eradication of corruption among government officials, and government addressing poverty and ignorance issues among its populace. Regarding Mallamai, what they want changed in Almajiranci is the provision of their needs and that of Almajirai, including food, housing, classrooms, and compensation for their labour by government. Mallamai posit that formal education and Almajiranci should continue to be separate entities and are not in favour of their merger. In addition, Mallamai demand a shift in media practices going forward, including the cessation of using stereotypes to represent Almajiranci.

#### **7.4 Summary of Thematic Correlation Between Chapters Five and Six**

The most prevalent points made by interviewees as presented in Chapter 5 that are found to mostly correlate with media representation of Almajiri system in Chapter 6 are 'scope and commitment to reforms', as well as 'mobilizing the potential for media advocacy'. One of the major dimensions to the nature of coverage and portrayal of Almajiri representation is the scope and definition of what is considered objective and factual. Considering the question of the role of the mass media in representation of Almajiri education, reforms, and lapses of the Almajiri are inevitable part of the solutions. Further review shows that media advocacy is generally acknowledged. However, the political dimensions and implications of religious affiliation in Nigeria cannot be discounted.

In relation to challenges in media representation of Almajiri system, themes from interviews showed that the most corroborated dimensions are 'poverty, ignorance, polygamy and corruption', as well as 'misconceptions about Islamic principles.' The connection between



poverty and the Almajirai is clear. The issue of poverty, as presented by the newspapers was also repeatedly reiterated by the interviewees. Much of the contents of the newspapers indicted ignorance and polygamy as major challenges that have continued to negatively affect likely solutions. While some interviewees expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction with the overall role and quality of coverage of the Almajiri system, it was difficult to deny instances of misunderstanding of Islam. As analysis of the coverage of Almajiri system and the views of interviewees are correlated in this chapter, the question of challenges associated with mass media portrayals of the Almajiri are indeed tied to C57 “Poverty/Ignorance/Polygamy/Corruption”, C56 “Mobilising the Potential of Media Advocacy” and C58 “Misconceptions about Islamic Principles”. However, interpretation of some of the views of the interviewees indicate some part of ‘problematic legacy of colonialisation’ and its implication in misconceptions about Islamic principles.

It is important to mention that, in terms of scope for change in the representation of Almajiri system, C55, “scope and commitment to reforms” and C56 ‘mobilizing the potential for media advocacy’ are the most corroborated perspectives derived from the interview themes. Although there are concerns about mass media stereotypes, and accusations of disorientation, and misrepresentation, and bias, the overall role of the media is appreciated around its representation of Almajiri living conditions. Overall, the general notion among the interviewees is that Almajiri system ought to be better organised than it is being currently practised in Bauchi State and by extension, northern Nigeria.

## **7.5 Research Findings in the Context of the Project Research Questions**

The findings of this research have provided evidence to answer the three research questions of the project. This is discussed in what follows.

### **7.5.1 What role does the mass media play in the representation of the Almajiri System?**

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the Almajiri were misrepresented by the mass media. Stereotypes and derogatory terms like "terrorists," "political thugs," and "criminals" were used in both the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*, as evidence of this misrepresentation. When such terms are examined within the prism of news framing theory, it is evident that the purpose was to present Almajirai in an unfavourable light to the people of Bauchi. Shaw (2007) through an empirical analysis of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia,

Somalia, and Rwandan wars argues that news frames commonly found in news media could skew our perception of issues or situations. The goal of mass media's emphasis and use of these stereotypes to describe Almajirai was to persuade Bauchi citizens to see them as those who get involved in political violence, criminal activities, and anti-social behaviour, such as ethno-religious conflicts. Examining this misrepresentation of Almajirai through the prism of framing theory reveals that the mass media frequently and prominently covers Almajirai utilising stereotypes and negative narratives as enumerated above to further a predetermined agenda. Although the findings show that some Almajirai are indeed recruited into criminal activities, such as joining Boko Haram and other criminal groups, or getting involved in gangsterism, the number of them who are involved or recruited into these organisations is exaggerated by narratives propagated by the media. Additionally, there is no press coverage of Almajirai graduating and going on to become law-abiding citizens, even though this does occur. It is crucial to note that, at best, the narratives about Almajiri in the mass media today is negative, and it seems there is no positive story about them. Again, one may claim that the mass media is participating in fallacious generalisation when they refer to them as "terrorists" or "criminals" that are allegedly implicated in ethno-religious disturbances in Bauchi.

Still on misrepresentation of Almajiri, and aside the use of stereotypes to describe them, it was found that the mass media places greater emphasis on criticising Almajirai, who ought to be viewed as victims rather than offenders. Without any fault of their own, innocent children who are born into impoverished homes—the majority of which are polygamous—are forcibly taken to the Almajiranci, where they live in deprivation at a time when they are most in need of the love and support of their parents. Those in different ways responsible for their predicament, such as politicians, and the northern elite, who incite them to cause chaos after losing elections, and dishonest government officials who embezzle funds that could have been utilised to improve Almajirai's and Bauchi society's lot, are regrettably less highlighted by the media. As a result, there is a need for the mass media to concentrate more on providing context and identifying the underlying reasons of the issues surrounding Almajiranci. Currently, the mass media concentrates more on Almajiranci's shortcomings, including its connections to gangsterism, criminality, and participation in the ethno-religious disputes in Bauchi.

Nevertheless, portrayals of Almajirai that centre around themes like "northern-based practice," "street-based life" "neglected by parents and undervalued by society," "child abuse" and "exploited by northern elite" are near accurate depictions. This is because such representations

are supported by evidence. Overall, as stated earlier, Almajiri has been misrepresented and the consequences is that it has led to antipathy towards mass media particularly by Mallamai.

### **7.5.2 What challenges do the mass media encounter in representing the Almajiri system in Bauchi State?**

In evaluating Almajiri system, the mass media unveiled numerous issues associated with it with the following as the most significant challenges:

First, is the absence of formal school enrolment for Almajiri children, a primary issue that the mass media emphasises in its assessment of Almajiri system. Currently, children from low-income families are the ones who enrol in Almajiranci, and majority of them, their poor parents, and their teachers, Mallamai, do not consider formal education as a top priority. Almajiranci is focussed on pure Islamic education which must be done in Arabic language. Again, there is a double standard in children's education, with wealthy Muslim children enrolling in both formal education and learning about Islam in a different environment than Almajiranci. As things stand, Almajiranci does not offer its graduates a future career while graduates of formal education from wealthy Muslim families have a career and live better lives.

Second, there is the problem of poverty and ignorance among Almajirai and Almajiri graduates. As stated earlier, graduates of Almajiranci often end up jobless, a contributing factor to their poverty. Again, ignorance and illiteracy result from a lack of formal education and Bauchi society is rife with these problems. The likely basis or foundation upon which Bauchi's insecurity challenges rest, is these deprivations among Almajiri graduates. The mass media consistently draws attention to these problems and emphasises that insecurity would persist as long as the government does not address Almajiri issues.

Third, the mass media has identified child abuse as a challenge in Almajiranci. Children from the tender age of four are taken away from their homes, brought to a Mallam and left to fend for themselves. Almajiri system lacks essential amenities like food, water, sanitary facilities, infrastructure like classrooms, boarding houses, or an infirmary. Above all, the environment is not secure for children as they sleep in the open. Almajirai spend most of their time during the day begging on the streets for their needs; they appear unkempt, easily abused by adults, and become targets of ritualists who sometimes abduct and kill them or amputate sections of their bodies for ritual purposes. The mass media uses samples of photographs to bolster its claims

and frequently report on specific Almajiri scenarios to substantiate their findings on this challenge of child abuse.

Fourth, there is the reality that certain Almajirai become political thugs, others join Boko Haram, and some have been implicated in ethno-religious confrontations in Bauchi. Abubakar Shekau, a former leader of Boko Haram, graduated from Almajiranci, as did many of his followers. While not all Almajirai become gang members, some do join criminal organisations.

Fifth, the corruption of government officials in Bauchi has made poverty worse for both graduates of Almajiri and the society at large. Resources meant for everyone aimed at reducing poverty, are being stolen by government officials. Again, corruption in governance does not impact Almajiranci alone, as it has led to the deterioration of the quality of formal education too. Most public formal schools in Bauchi lack the necessary infrastructure and qualified teachers.

Sixth, there is ignorance-based misinterpretation of Islamic ideals, a challenge the mass media encounters in Almajiri system. For example, the hostility against formal education stems from an incorrect perception that Islam opposes formal education, regrettably, a misconception maintained by only the poor in Bauchi. Again, due to misconception of Islamic precepts, polygamy is more widespread among the poor than the wealthy in Bauchi. Islam advises that individuals who want to engage in polygamy should not marry more than four women at once, should ensure they have the financial means to do so, and the man has the duty to be faithful and fair to all the women and children involved. In Bauchi today, the practice of polygamy by the poor which results in many children born into such households is one of the bases that has kept the Almajiri culture alive.

Seventh, the connection between Almajiri and northern politics presents another challenge for its reform. While some individuals favour change, the northern elite oppose it because it serves their political interests.

Eighth, although it is widely acknowledged that no child should be in the circumstances of Almajirai, no one wants to be held accountable for the Almajiri scenario. While Mallamai accuse the government of neglect, and the mass media of misrepresentation, the government

points fingers at Almajiri parents. However, amid these accusations and counter accusations, Almajirai are the ones who are disadvantaged.

Ninth, another challenge is that there is no commitment from government towards Almajiri reform. The implementation of Almajiri reform necessitates the government taking the lead and pursuing cooperation with the media. To incorporate Almajiri system into formal education, school infrastructure and other standard school requirements must be undertaken by government. The third research question will be addressed in Chapter 8.

## **7.6 The Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) in Relation to Research Findings**

It is critical to keep in mind that the main assumption of SRT is appropriate ethical conduct. In relation to the mass media representation of Almajirai, the challenges involved in the coverage of eventual representation, as well as the scope of possible changes to the Almajiri issue, the major question to address is the extent to which the entire *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* coverage can be deemed ethical. The answer to these potent theoretical aspects of this research stems from direct assessment of the content of the two Nigerian newspapers. Therefore, this section considers the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* content analysed in Chapter 6 and gauges the findings in respect of whether it might be considered socially responsible journalism or not. To achieve this, core features of social responsibility theory are used to evaluate the coverage of the selected news outlets.

First, SRT demands that the mass media has an obligation to act in a socially responsible manner towards society and to ensure that all social groups within society are represented equitably. The *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* were not socially responsible as demonstrated by their use of negative stereotypes to describe Almajirai, including "terrorists," "criminals," "beggars" and "Boko Haram." This indicates bias, which is an inaccurate and unfair portrayal of a specific group in society. The utilisation of stereotypes by the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* to describe Almajirai validates the allegations made by the interviewees, particularly Mallamai, in Chapter 5, who find these portrayals offensive. A Mallam remarked:

*I do not like the media. I expect them to be just to us. They should investigate before broadcasting their information about the Almajiri. They should not interfere into something they do not know... my students the Almajiri do not have anything to do with criminality.... Unfortunately, stereotyping, and labelling target Almajiri in all situations*

Second, SRT requires that the press outline and articulate societal ideals and aspirations. Some of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* representations, such as the call to end poverty, fight ignorance and illiteracy, prioritise formal education, are reformatory. This in a way is the mass media articulating societal ideals, which provides evidence of good socially responsible journalism. Supporting this perspective on mass media being socially responsible is the endorsement by media professionals interviewees who approve of the depiction of the living conditions of Almajirai by mass media. Media professionals expressed their opinions on the need for government to reform Almajiranci, specifically in relation to formal education and their living conditions.

Third, SRT indicates that the press has an obligation to report the events of the day in a way that provides them context and is honest, comprehensive, and insightful. Therefore, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* depictions of Almajirai were dishonest. These portrayals could be described as a fallacy of generalisation since these publications assume that all Almajirai are involved in criminal activity. The two newspapers portrayed Almajirai as "terrorists," "criminals," and "Boko Haram." As such, this is not socially responsible journalism. This also substantiates the previous allegations made by Mallamai, namely, on the media's lack of honesty in portraying their students. Thus, the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* lack social responsibility, in this case.

Fourth, SRT demands that the media serves as a forum for discussion, analysis, and declarations. Almajiri practices are currently being reviewed and opinions are being shared in publications like the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* among other news organisations. This shows that the press is socially responsible since it is functioning as an avenue for evaluating a contentious topic. Similarly, findings from interviews with media professionals indicate that Almajiri issues is a topic of interest among individuals employed by media organisations. Media professionals have shown willingness to engage in debates and analysis concerning Almajiri issues. This shows social responsibility by those associated with mass media.

Fifth, there is no denying that the way Almajirai are currently portrayed in the media needs to be improved with a new strategy, direction, and a fair and better representational model. As stipulated by one of SRT element, that the mass media must periodically assess its own performance in terms of fulfilling its societal obligations. Therefore, this component of SRT

assigns responsibility, and the need for mass media to reconsider its frames in Almajiri representation.

Overall, based on the findings from the data presented in Chapter 6 from *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*, as well as the views of interviewees tabled in Chapter 5, it is possible to characterise mass media's behaviour as both acting in public interest and acting against it. Therefore, *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* coverage on Almajirai is both socially responsible and socially irresponsible. One could characterise as positive the media's reformatory depictions of Almajiranci. However, depictions that rely on generalisations and prejudices are not socially responsible.

Since analysis using SRT elements has identified problems with how Almajiri issues are portrayed in Bauchi media, and interviewees have expressed concerns about specific behaviours of the mass media in this context, it is crucial to suggest ways through which mass media behaviour regarding Almajiri depiction in Bauchi society will be more socially responsible. This will be detailed in Chapter 8.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has elucidated the correlation between the findings obtained from the primary data sources, namely *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* on their representation of Almajiri (detailed in Chapter Six), and interviews with Bauchi residents (detailed in Chapter Five). To reconcile the different primary data sources, the themes of these two chapters were triangulated. It was indicated how they jointly contributed to addressing the research questions. Then, this chapter employed components of the social responsibility theory to analyse the triangulated data and the result indicated that mass media's actions in relation to Almajiri representation were both socially responsible and socially irresponsible. Chapter 8 provides a detailed explanation of the strategies to be deployed to deal with the effects of mass media representation of the Almajiri.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This final chapter closes this thesis, “An Investigation into the Media Representation of the Almajiri System in Bauchi State, Nigeria”. This research was initiated to study the role of the media in representing the Almajiri system in Bauchi State, northern Nigeria an under-addressed aspect of research on the Nigerian media system. The sole purpose of the Almajiri educational system is to acquire Islamic knowledge. However, there has been concern that because the Almajiri system is unregulated, it has become a source of criminality and insecurity in Bauchi State and Northern Nigeria, more broadly. This thesis derives its findings and conclusions from three data sources: interviews with Bauchi residents; analysis of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers’ representation of Almajiri; and literature review of secondary source material. This chapter is structured as follows: It commences with a discussion of the significance of the findings and their analysis presented to this point in the thesis. In so doing, it reflects on the contribution to knowledge of the research. In a more practical mode, it presents a series of recommendations for change to media representation of the Almajiri which might assist in creating the conditions for the eventual amelioration of the position they find themselves in. This chapter suggests that AJ can serve as a remedy to the problems in Almajiranci. That AJ could provide a different, more realistic, and enlightened portrayal of the Almajiri in Bauchi society. The chapter concludes by considering the limitation of the research and set out potential future avenues of research arising from the achievements of the research project.

### **8.2 Significance of Findings and analysis**

The core finding of this thesis is that the mass media have misrepresented Almajiri. This misrepresentation is not predicated on their portrayal of Almajirai’s living arrangements, their appearances, or their mode of operation but on using stereotypical language to describe them. For instance, the framing of news which refers to Almajirai as " criminals" and “terrorists”. The current picture of Almajiranci that mass media portrays, which rarely mentions anything positive about it, and instead focuses on its drawbacks, is inaccurate. The Almajiri narratives put forth by *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*, and media professionals during the interviews, show how uncommitted the government officials are to reforming Almajiranci. Concerns that must be addressed are the mass media's capacity to uphold social responsibility through avoiding the use of stereotypes which contradicts efforts towards Almajiri system reform. The use of stereotypes gives the notion that most media organisations oppose Almajiri system, an attitude



which has led to antipathy and resistance towards mass media by supporters of Almajiranci as indicated in Chapter 5 findings. As stipulated by the social responsibility principle, the mass media must periodically assess its own performance in terms of fulfilling its societal obligations. Consequently, this aspect of social responsibility is necessary since the media must reconsider how it frames language in its portrayal of Almajiri. Additionally, findings also show that in addition to the use of stereotypes to characterise Almajirai, the mass media is guilty of reporting out of context through blaming the Almajiri, who are the victims in this case. This is implied in this sentence: “..scruffy children with dirty begging bowls who swarm over the streets and motor-parks in the northern part of the nation, begging for a living and making a nuisance of themselves” (*The Nation*, April, 23, 2017 paragraph 6). The phrase, “making a nuisance of themselves” apportion blame to the Almajiri, a mass media attitude that needs to change. Similarly, the findings of Chapter 5 (interviewees opinions) demonstrate that the mass media's reporting on issues is biased, a mindset that needs modification. Overall, the results demonstrate the importance of reforming both the mass media and Almajiri system.

To address the implications of the current representation of Almajiri by Bauchi media, Advocacy Journalism is presented next as the potential means of addressing the problems. Put simply, AJ has the potential to make better the future relationship between the Almajiri and the media.

### **8.3 Addressing the Implications of the Current Representation of Almajiri by Bauchi Media Through Advocacy Journalism (AJ)**

As indicated, this thesis yielded some important findings from the data analysed in Chapters Five and Six. The findings indicate the need for a two-dimensional change in the portrayal of Almajirai in Bauchi society. First, the way Almajiranci is portrayed in the mass media needs to alter, and second, there is need to advocate for change to the current Almajiri mode of operation. These needed changes can be accomplished through Advocacy Journalism (AJ). Based on the evidence of this research, AJ makes us understand that a new direction is needed in journalistic coverage of the Almajiri. AJ tells us that the current methods of journalism on Almajiri representation must be modified. AJ leads to the understanding that there is a need for reform of both mass media representations and the Almajiri system's current mode of operation. Therefore, AJ has a twofold role in this research: first, it is a potential means to bring about change in journalistic practices concerning Almajiri representation; and second, it can

aim to change the current operational methods of Almajiranci by mobilising government, religious and traditional leaders, influential persons, groups and institutions to assist in Almajiri reform. Journalism should take the following steps going forward on Almajiri representation:

### **8.3.1 Change of Perspective in Newspapers**

To reform the Almajiri system, newspapers need to alter the current frames they deploy to portray Almajirai. Doing this will make the process of reform much simpler as Mallamai, and Almajiri parents will embrace media advocacy messages. If newspapers do not change their negative stereotypical portrayals, there will be ongoing distrust between Almajiri supporters and the media, hindering advocacy efforts. Here are proposed methods for newspapers to alter their viewpoints on Almajiri representation:

First, a new model of representation for Almajirai should take the shape of setting reformative agendas and using non-stereotypical frames by newspapers to achieve them. For instance, newspapers must avoid using frames such as provided in this example from *The Nation*:

*“The Almajiri, by contrast, are poverty and wretchedness heading nowhere but south, and rapidly. They are children who will grow up soon to become untrained and un-trainable young men.... They will roam the streets with hunger in their eyes and anger in their hearts, young folks unfit for any meaningful occupation in the age of the internet, holding a grudge against everyone, including the religious leaders who purport to be their sponsors, teachers, or supporters”* (*The Nation*, April 23, 2017, paragraph 15).

The use of language in this way to describe Almajirai is offensive.

Shaw (2012) argues that the mainstream British press employed a language that was rife with stereotypes in their reporting of the July 7, 2005, London terrorist attacks. Such biased word choice, in his opinion, does not advance cross-cultural dialogue or counterterrorism efforts. Similarly, Rehman (2007:198) cited in Shaw (2012) contends that, “a reckless and uncaring usage of words could jeopardise relations between various communities and societies and can easily provoke anger and resentment”. As a result, such terms can generate antagonism against people depicted by mass media (Shaw, 2012). As previously mentioned, Mallamai and other supporters of Almajiri system despise the mass media because of its use of negative stereotypes to characterise them. While it is acknowledged that there are problems with Almajiri system, newspapers use of stereotypes to describe them will not help efforts to bring the needed reform

into the system. Although, during the data collection phase, some journalists argued that the way they represent Almajiri in the media is based on reliable facts. However, a distinction between factual reporting in the media and the framing of the news story must be established. In other words, there is a distinction between reporting facts and the choice of language to report such facts. Therefore, it is advised that stereotypes such as “the Almajiri threat”, “the Almajiri phenomenon” “Almajiri nuisance” "beggars," “miscreants”, “criminals” common in newspapers description of Almajirai be avoided.

Second, findings also show that in addition to the use of stereotypes to characterise Almajirai, newspapers are guilty of reporting out of context. Newspapers must stop blaming Almajirai for the issues in Almajiranci since it is deeply flawed to do so. Going forward, newspapers need to focus on depicting Almajirai as victims, rather than the problem. That even in the event it is discovered that they have engaged in criminal activity, newspapers should refrain from blaming them, and instead focus on examining the underlying circumstances and elements that led to their involvement with criminals. Put simply, they should not be held accountable because as adolescents they have not yet reached the stage of cognitive development where they have the ability to discern between right and wrong compared to adults. That as teenagers, they are susceptible to manipulation by selfish individuals and criminals, who could take advantage of their vulnerability and their lack of basic resources, to accomplish their objectives or involve them in their plans.

Third, newspapers need to emphasise the need for empathy by society towards Almajirai more than they currently do. Almajirai should be depicted as vulnerable children who deserve sympathy, while mobilising all members of society to contribute in any possible way to enhance their conditions. Newspapers should strive to set reformative agendas on Almajirai and use appropriate frames to accomplish them. Newspapers should strongly condemn, with greater emphasis than they presently do, the situation in which children are born into poverty and subsequently abandoned.

Fourth, it is imperative for newspapers to depict Almajiranci as a concern that extends beyond the confines of northern Nigeria. While Almajirai have their roots in Northern Nigeria, it is imperative for media, irrespective of their geographical location, whether it is in the north or south, to view Almajiranci as a national issue rather than a regional one.

### **8.3.2 Change in Almajiri Mode of Operation**

AJ has the potential to change the way Almajiranci currently operates. This is because AJ can serve as a helpful instrument for developing advocacy programmes focused at reorientating the present beliefs of Mallamai and Almajiri parents. As stated in Chapter 4, one of the elements of AJ is its ability to ‘evaluate and advise’ on issues. Therefore, since findings through data analysis revealed problems like child exploitation, child destitution and neglect, and lack of formal education in the Almajiri system, AJ could advise on the current operational methods of Almajiranci through the following approaches:

First, AJ programmes should advise on the importance of incorporating Almajiranci with formal education. The aim is to achieve the educational model that is currently available for children from wealthy and middle-class families. These educational institutions offer a dual curriculum that combines formal education with Islamic religious instruction. To accomplish this, AJ programmes should specifically aim at Mallamai and Almajiri parents, highlighting the significance of obtaining both formal and religious education concurrently, while underlining that both are essential for the future of their children. It is crucial that AJ programmes emphasise that Almajiranci, which prioritises solely religious instruction, though important, is inadequate. The deficiency in Almajiranci should be highlighted, which lies on lack of future job opportunities, a chance formal schooling guarantee. On the part of government, AJ programmes should prioritise exerting pressure on Bauchi State government to actively implement Almajiri reform by fulfilling the provisions outlined in the Child Rights Act, 2003. This legislation requires, among other provisions, mandatory education for all children in formal schools, provision of infrastructure such as classrooms, accommodation, nutrition, medication, books, and qualified teachers by government. To ensure Mallamai's inclusion in these reforms, AJ programmes could suggest that government should employ them, provide further training for them in Islamic studies, then deploy them to teach Islamic religious instructions in formal educational institutions.

Second, AJ programming should prioritise the task of portraying failures in governance and corruption in Bauchi State, and the effects of polygamy practice as the cause of issues associated with Almajiranci. AJ programmes should portray the chain of causality as follows: that corruption in governance and the practice of polygamy brought about high prevalence of poverty in Bauchi; that polygamous families give birth to children they are unable to care for;

that Bauchi government fails to prioritise child welfare or to support these polygamous families due to misappropriation of government resources; polygamous families then resort to the option of sending their children to Almajiranci; that being far from their parents, lacking food, adequate housing and medical care, Almajirai, resort to begging on the streets for their needs; that while on the streets, and lacking basic needs, they are at the mercy of northern politicians and criminals who promise them basic resources, and then recruit some of them for anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

Third, AJ mobilises for action for what it advocates for. AJ programming should suggest that cooperation between mass media and government can be explored to responsibly reform Almajiranci, while maintaining tolerance and respect for religious choices. That this collaboration is possible, to work towards bringing about the needed reform in the Almajiri system. The significance of this collaboration, or its benefits which is attaining a more affluent Bauchi society, should be emphasised. Specifically, that it would result in a decrease to the number of uninformed and jobless individuals, hence, positively influencing Bauchi's security.

The viewpoints outlined above represent the several aspects of AJ that have the capacity to enhance the relationship between Almajiri and mass media, ultimately resulting in Almajiri reform. Overall, for AJ to succeed, it is imperative to consider and comprehend the wider concerns, as well as the significance of the major factors influencing potential solutions to the Almajiri schools' issues. Government officials, the mass media, religious and traditional leaders are considered essential players in accurately defining the extent of the issue and the degree of commitment to change. Legal frameworks should be reinforced by government and followed as well. AJ programmes should make it clear that acquiring Islamic education is not the problem per se but it is the way it is carried out to the detriment of formal education that is the concern. Therefore, the cornerstone of media advocacy reorientation is to focus on the importance of acquiring both Islamic and formal education. The goal should be sincere and ambitious to address the Almajiri problem. AJ should ensure a more thorough examination of the facts and the development of an interpretive stance that considers all points of view. Without doubt, related problems like widespread poverty and economic hardship also need to be addressed. The harm inflicted by the neglect of Almajiri pupils is immense, as is the long-term implications of government negligence. The most crucial reform should be to ensure that all children have equal access to both formal and Islamic education, regardless of their parents' socioeconomic status or class to guarantee a better future through career opportunities. In order

words, all children should have access to the same educational paradigm currently accessed by children of middle-class and wealthy Muslims. It is envisaged that when this is achieved, Bauchi society would not have idle youth who would be prone to crime or those who could be employed by avaricious people to wreak havoc during political disputes. Furthermore, with formal education, the current scourge of poverty and ignorance experienced in Bauchi will be reduced to a manageable level, then peace and prosperity can be witnessed, followed by growth and development which had eluded Bauchi for decades.

## **8.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

The findings obtained from interviews with Bauchi residents, and analysis of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers and literature review has made this study to contribute to knowledge in three core ways, namely, empirical contribution, conceptual contribution, and practical contribution.

### **8.4.1 Empirical Contribution**

This study has unearthed new evidence on the representation of the Almajiri by mass media in Bauchi state. Evidence showed that inaccurate stereotypes that describe Almajiri as criminals and gang members are used in the media to represent them. The current perception held by some inhabitants of Bauchi, who associate them with the state's insecurity, originated from this stereotype. It has been determined, therefore, that the Almajiri are not the primary actors in the ethno-religious disputes in Bauchi, even though they may be involved. The current perception which blames them for Bauchi insecurity is the creation of the mass media. The problem of Bauchi insecurity is due to struggle for political relevance among the various ethnic groups, and the quest for religious superiority among the two major religions, Christianity, and Islam. Again, Bauchi insecurity is caused by widespread poverty and ignorance among Bauchi populace. These issues of poverty and ignorance exist due to embezzlement of public funds by government officials leading to inequitable distribution of resources. The practice of polygamy has led to overpopulation as too many human beings are produced for scarce resources leading to an unhealthy competition and anger among the populace. Often, violent conflicts break out among this irate and frustrated populace, usually fought under ethnic and religious garb. Furthermore, the issue of corruption and polygamy are generally not given much attention by Bauchi media for two apparent reasons: corruption involves government officials who have the power to withdraw a media organisation licence; while polygamy is a contentious religious

matter since Islam allows it. Although these are the causes of Bauchi insecurity, the mass media is reluctant to report on them. Regretfully, Almajiri, a victim of corruption and polygamy, is the focus of the media's attention, blaming them for Bauchi ethno-religious tension, which is a misrepresentation.

Furthermore, this study's empirical findings have demonstrated that, to effectively address socio-economic and/or socio-political issues, particularly as demonstrated by issues around Almajiri, it is advisable to look beyond the perspective of how mass media represents these issues and instead seek to understand the genesis of media contents and the degree of correlation between media narratives and the empirical sources of mass media information. Within the context of this thesis, the sources included Mallamai (Almajiri teachers), government officials, and the personal opinions of the individuals who compile and portrayed the information, namely, journalists, and other media workers collectively referred to as "media professionals".

#### **8.4.2 Conceptual Contribution**

This research has brought together conceptual work in three distinct yet complementary areas of communication research to form the study's analytical and explanatory lens: news framing and agenda-setting; social responsibility media theory; and advocacy journalism. The research has shown how these theories can be effectively combined in a research project. First, an analytical lens of news framing theory was applied to the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers' contents to understand the character of Almajiri representation in Bauchi society. Second, evidence from news frames analysis, when considered in the light of agenda-setting theory led to the conclusion that there is evidence of a clear and sustained negative news agenda in the reporting of the Almajiri over time. Third, the social responsibility theory was utilised to consider further the significance of the evidence regarding news frames and the agendas, to assert that in its work the mass media created a mixed picture with a considerable lack of social responsibility in it. Finally, advocacy journalism was used in the research to draw on the findings of the application of social responsibility theory to propose solutions to the problem of mass media portrayal of the Almajiri in Bauchi state. In devising and applying this analytical and explanatory lens, the thesis has been able to provide a richer understanding of the character of the representation of the Almajiri in Bauchi media, the reasons for this and how to change it in a more progressive direction.

### **8.4.3 Advocacy Journalism as a Strategy for Reform**

The most crucial component of advocacy journalism drawn upon in this research relates to its capacity to evaluate and advise, as stated earlier. In other words, this genre of journalism assesses problems and offers a solution that it is argued will benefit society. This is carried out even if it implies that it must adopt a subjective point of view. Here, the goal of media advocacy should be to aim for an increase in enrolment for formal education in Bauchi State and to make sure that people who want to attend Almajiri system are aware of the distinctions between formal and religious education and the importance of obtaining both. The broader plan of advocacy or coverage of Almajiri issues must consider certain peculiarities of Bauchi state, such as poverty, unemployment, general illiteracy, polygamous practices, poor child planning, and stereotypes (particularly around formal education, which is wrongly perceived to be un-Islamic). The media should portray this with caution or consideration, just as the link between crime and out-of-school children should be portrayed correctly avoiding the fallacy of generalisation that all Almajiri get involved with crime. Furthermore, apart from Almajirai, the mass media should also focus on other victims of inadequate school administration made possible by governmental corruption and properly providing remedies. This is because it is not only Almajirai who suffer from poor school management, but so do children who attend formal schools that fall short of expectations in terms of inadequate facilities, lack of textbooks, with teachers who are only marginally trained. Although, the goals and objectives of various media organisations are not always in agreement, social responsibility provisions provide a useful framework for information dissemination conduct. Overall, group efforts to resolve the Almajiri challenges is crucial.

## **8.5 Recommendations**

### **8.5.1 The Bauchi Radio Corporation as a Medium for Almajiri Advocacy**

To practically implement the proposed guidelines above, AJ needs a platform to efficiently disseminate its messaging to its intended audience. The radio as a medium of communication is chosen to accomplish this task. The rationales behind this selection are: first, Almajirai, Mallamai, and Almajiri parents are illiterate, and this means they cannot read print publications. Thus, broadcast stations are a better medium for disseminating any message specifically meant for them. Once more, many rural residents of Bauchi cannot afford televisions, and even in cases where they do, there are issues with insufficient power supply. This implies that there is no 24-hour guarantee for electricity. Most people in Bauchi State, particularly the



impoverished, rely on radios for information and entertainment. Having a radio solves the problem of lack of electricity since radios can run on dry battery cells. Having a radio also addresses the financial issue of not having enough money to purchase a television. Overall, as indicated in Chapter One, the best medium for communication in Bauchi State and throughout Nigeria is the radio. To support the claim that radio is more popular, it was reported that during the data collection phase, Mallamai accused western-based radio stations such as BBC Hausa, VOA Hausa, and DW Hausa of using stereotypes to refer to Almajirai. However, as it was stated, the researcher was unable to obtain the proof that supported their assertions. Hence, content analysis of radio content was not considered for this research.

The Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) is the recommended medium for practical implementation of AJ recommendations and for this communication. The reason for the choice of BRC is its moderate level of acceptance in Bauchi society especially among Mallamai and the rural poor. Furthermore, BRC is owned by the Bauchi State government and has wider coverage beyond Bauchi borders than some Bauchi privately owned radio stations like Albarka radio, Globe FM or Ray Power FM. Once again, the preferred mode of communication is the Hausa language. The reason for this is that the Hausa language serves as the lingua franca, or the predominant language spoken, throughout northern Nigeria. The BRC could pursue Almajiri reform through the following ways:

First, BRC could create advocacy programmes targeting parents of Almajirai, Mallamai, and Almajirai themselves, to reorient them towards accepting formal education. These advocacy programmes should aim to counteract the misconceptions they have about Islamic teachings as regards formal schooling. These radio programmes should emphasise the advantages of acquiring both formal and Islamic religious education simultaneously. Stating that while Islamic knowledge yields religious or spiritual advantages, formal education presents prospects for future employment options. These advocacy programmes should emphasise that neither of the two modes of education is adequate on its own, but rather that both are necessary for a more promising future for children. What these advocacy programmes should not do is to attempt to belittle the importance of either style of education. Related to realising Almajiri reform through integrating it with formal education, is the need for some advocacy programmes to specifically target government officials. BRC could prepare programmes that highlight the role of government in the provision of classrooms, dormitories, books, and other school infrastructure and teachers that meets standards. Bauchi government officials should be

reminded over and over on the need to implement the provisions of the Child Rights Act, 2003. These programmes should aim to exert pressure on government officials to act. To avoid causing offence to Mallamai, whose jobs may be at risk due to the merging of the two educational forms, advocacy initiatives could recommend that the Bauchi state government consider employing them, without immediately involving them. They should get additional training in a recognisable Islamic religious knowledge institute of repute, after which they should be integrated into the formal education system solely as religious instructors.

Second, BRC advocacy programmes should aim to suggest ways on how to tackle poverty and unemployment among Bauchi citizens. In Bauchi society, unemployment and poverty are major problems. However, it should be noted that this is not exclusive to Almajiri graduates. The fact that even people with formal education are unemployed is a bigger issue. BRC could include as part of its advocacy to suggest ways in which people could be empowered to minimise unemployment and poverty. BRC could suggest skills like carpentry, or masonry, for young people who could use such skills to earn a living. Therefore, BRC needs to perform the key role of educational programming.

Third, the success of BRC's advocacy activities may be contingent upon the endorsement of government officials, traditional rulers, and Islamic religious leaders. Thus, BRC should first seek for government support to bolster its advocacy endeavours since it needs financial support and endorsement by government. Currently, religious, and traditional leaders hold a high level of respect in Bauchi society. BRC might leverage the positive reputation that these categories of leaders have among the public by actively seeking their endorsement for their advocacy initiatives. Government authorities, religious leaders, and traditional leaders should be invited to express their viewpoints on the necessity of Almajiri reform through on-air interviews. During the analysis of the mass media content for this research in Chapter 6, it was made known that Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, the Sultan of Sokoto, declared that Almajiri needs reform. Similarly, during the literature review in Chapter 2, a prominent traditional leader like the Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi II condemned the practice of polygamy among poor Muslims. He restated that polygamy is the root cause of the issues linked to Almajiranci. BRC could consider inviting renowned Islamic scholars and traditional leaders for on-air interviews focused on Almajiri reform.

Fourth, BRC should ensure that advocacy programmes are not designed to offend anyone's religious or ethnic preferences. The goal of all advocacy initiatives should be tailored towards eradication of misconceptions. Overall, BRC should be socially responsible to Bauchi society while carrying out this advocacy. All journalists, working with BRC regardless of their political, religious, or ethnic inclinations, should bear in mind that the main objective of this advocacy is to promote the welfare of Bauchi state, and not to undermine any group.

Fifth, to ensure the credibility of BRC's advocacy messaging, it is essential for BRC to maintain its independence from state influence, given that the Bauchi State Government owns it. The independence of BRC from government is essential, as demonstrated earlier in the analysis of the role of the radio in historical conflicts (detailed in Chapter 4). For instance, the Nazi radio in World War II, RTLM or 'Hate Radio' during the Rwanda genocide, Biafran Radio in the Nigerian civil war, and Vernacular radios in Kenya highlight the detrimental effects of government control over the radio. These radios were used to disseminate falsehoods and act as propaganda machines, resulting in catastrophic consequences during these conflicts. Therefore, BRC should refrain from functioning as a tool for propaganda.



**Figure 8.1: In Northern Nigeria, Health-Related Advocacy is Conducted Through the Radio or Megaphone (BBC Hausa: <https://www.bbc.com/hausa>)**

### **8.5.2 Mass Media Should Expose Governmental Corruption**

The root cause of all Bauchi issues is government corruption. The mass media needs to focus on exposing corruption in governance and should not be seen to be complicit in corrupt

practices. Also, mass media should regularly monitor and report the performance of government budgets to see that whatever monies are allocated to a particular sector such as education, health, security, and road infrastructure are utilised for such sectors. Where government fails to utilise such monies, and instead stolen, the mass media should investigate and report it to the public with facts.

### **8.5.3 Keeping to Journalism Ethics**

It is imperative that the mass media conforms to the journalism ethics or code of conduct when disseminating information to the public. When journalism ethics are not followed, abuses do occur, for instance, the use of stereotypes to misrepresent issues, persons, or groups. Therefore, sanctions ought to be applied to media organisations that fail to meet standard operating procedures. According to its website (<https://new.presscouncil.gov.ng>) the Nigeria Press Council (NPC) was founded to ensure ethical standards in mass media. Its responsibilities include research, training journalists, and maintaining moral principles. However, it appears to be inactive now and needs to awaken to its responsibilities.

### **8.5.4 Building Media-Public Trust**

Antagonism between the public and the media could result from a lack of trust. A lack of trust arises when news reports arise from lies and deception. When news media agendas are set to deceive, and frames chosen to further this agenda, this leads to distrust. Thus, to earn the trust of Bauchi citizens, it is imperative that mass media presents news with facts. To build trust between the media and the public in Bauchi, journalists should prioritise unbiased reporting over their political, religious, or ethnic interests.

### **8.5.5 The Need for Caution in Conflict Reports**

The role of the news media in conflicts, their settlement, and peace processes has been extensively researched by scholars such as Virgil (2002), Hamelink (2008), Lynch & McGoldrick (2005), and Howard, (2002). Although they hold similar and distinct opinions, these scholars agree that the media significantly influences conflicts through the information it disseminates to its audience, the shaping of opinions through the agendas it sets. Akpan et al. (2013) argues that media manipulation is conceivable, regardless of place or scenario, which is why media-conflict research is becoming more and more significant. Sanguru (2017) contends that Nigeria's multiculturalism raises security issues for the nation. This manifests itself as agitations and demands for political relevance from different tribes, regional control

over resources, and dominance over other cultures or religions. Considering this situation, the mass media must exercise prudence when covering contentious topics in a volatile setting like Bauchi, and by extension, Nigeria. The agenda set and the frames chosen to achieve such agendas should be with the sole aim of achieving peaceful coexistence.

#### **8.5.6 Building Better Government-Media Relations**

According to Aداوگو and Roper (2021), the Nigerian press and the government have had a historical tense relationship. This is because the government frequently accuses the press of portraying the country negatively, which has had a harmful effect on the country's international reputation. Additionally, they argue that Nigeria is among the nations where journalists face arrests, physical abuse, attacks, and confiscation or destruction of their equipment, when they report on corruption. Furthermore, Aداوگو and Roper (2021) reported that in 2021, the Nigerian legislative arm of government considered enacting a law to allow the federal government enforce internet shutdowns and restrict access to social media platforms. However, the law faced opposition from the public and was never enacted. During military dictatorships in the country, the situation was quite harsh, and with the restoration of democracy in 1999, the anticipation was for a better media-government relationship. However, recent happenings show that relations have not improved thus far. The Almajiri reform might not be achieved without the cooperation and support of the Bauchi State government. First, the mass media might not have the resources to embark on advocacy programmes; and second, the mass media lacks the capacity to implement the provisions of Child Rights Act, 2003, or to initiate legal procedures against parents who fail to comply with its requirement especially enrolling children for formal education. Therefore, to ensure the success of Almajiri reform, it is crucial for government to be open to a better relationship with the mass media. The mass media should be seen as collaborator rather than an adversary of the government, working together towards the common goal of achieving a stable and prosperous society in Bauchi through Almajiri reform.

#### **8.5.7 Bauchi Government Should Punish Child Exploitation**

Currently, most of the elite do not practise polygamy, but most of the poor do, and the northern elite encourage polygamy by misinterpreting Islamic teachings on the subject. Thus, many people are born into poverty. Unable to support so many children, poverty-stricken parents send them to Almajiranci where they remain ignorant. The logic is that polygamy produces many people leading to large voting populations, and the elite bribe the ignorant poor with money to vote for them during elections. The likelihood of the elite gaining political power

rises as a result. Upon assuming political office, the elite face reduced opposition as most of their voters are illiterates, gullible and easily swayed. Again, if an elite loses an election, they can easily mobilise Almajirai to engage in electoral violence as witnessed many times in Bauchi state. Therefore, the Bauchi State Government should mete out appropriate sanctions to individuals who engage in the exploitation of minors. Put simply, it is important that government uses legal means to prosecute those who take advantage of children.

## **8.6 Limitations and Future Research**

This study restricted its analysis of media content to that of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. These two newspapers are in no way the only newspapers that are read in Bauchi. Future studies could broaden the study's purview to include other newspapers like, *The Guardian*, *Aminiya*, *Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *This Day*.

This investigation did not analyse broadcast content. As previously mentioned, Mallamai claimed that western radio stations do portray them negatively. It was the intention of this researcher to get evidence regarding their claims. Regretfully, the researcher's attempts to get in touch with the relevant radio stations proved fruitless. Future studies may include broadcast media in its analysis, including television and radio.

The two newspapers whose content was investigated are Nigerian publications. Future research might explore how the media portrays the Almajiri outside of Nigeria, especially in other African nations like Senegal, Mali, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, and The Gambia, where Almajiranci is known by the name Talibe.

Only one interviewee claimed that Sahara Reporters, an online news outlet, had disparaged Almajiranci by using offensive language. Again, there are videos on the internet that present Almajirai in various contexts. Future studies could expand the scope of this research to include an investigation of internet news sources and videos.

For this study, only the views of three interviewee categories—government officials, Mallamai, and media professionals—were sampled. Subsequent investigations may expand to encompass parents of Almajiri, prominent Islamic scholars in Northern Nigeria, representatives of civil society organisations, and traditional leaders.

Constructivism, inductive reasoning, qualitative research methods, and thematic analysis research alternatives were all used in this study. Future research could consider the other options—such as positivism, deductive reasoning, mixed or quantitative methodology. Similarly, other interview formats—structured or unstructured—could be deployed for data collection.

In conclusion, the utilisation of news framing theory has resulted in the realisation that stereotypes have been employed over a period to portray Almajirai. Agenda-setting theory revealed that the consequences of the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* actions using stereotypical news frames to shape the portrayal of Almajirai, resulted in the establishment of agendas over time. The social responsibility theory assessed the actions of the two publications and determined them to be lacking in social responsibility. Then, Advocacy Journalism suggested strategies for future involvement of mass media with Almajirai in Bauchi society. It is pertinent to state that the degree to which news framing, agenda-setting and social responsibility theories' principles are sincerely applied to the problems highlighted in this research continues to be the most important and crucial success factor for effective and much needed Advocacy Journalism. In this case, much needed, high-quality AJ can be effective at resolving the Almajiri problem in northern Nigeria, particularly in Bauchi state.

## **Appendix One**

### **Ethics Approval Letter**

ethics

Tue 28/09/2021 12:30

To: Andrew Batare

Cc: Seamus Simpson

The Ethics Panel has reviewed your application: Examining the nexus between the Almajiri system of education and insecurity issues in Bauchi State, Nigeria: Advocacy journalism as a conflict-prevention strategy

Application ID: 3100

The decision is: Application Approved.



## Appendix Two

### CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: An Investigation Into The Representation of The Almajiri System of Education In Bauchi State, Nigeria

UNIVERSITY: University of Salford, Manchester, United Kingdom

NAME OF RESEARCHER: Andrew Batare

STUDENT NUMBER: @00612622

SCHOOL: School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology

QUALIFICATION IN VIEW: PhD

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated..... for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I agree that quotes from the interview will be anonymised in the study

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant's Name .....

Participant's Signature .....

Researcher's Name .....

Researcher's Signature .....

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1. *Former child soldiers fighting bigger battle than Boko Haram* 28 January 2017
2. *The Vexed Question of The Almajiri* November 5, 2019
3. *Almajirci, A Ticking Time Bomb*, 9 March, 2019
4. *Almajiri Menace: Silence and Complacency of the North*, 26 February 2019
5. *Almajiri and the Lugard Connection*, 24 June 2019
6. *Boko Haram Recruiting Almajirai-Ganduje*, 15 December 2020
7. *Senate Wants Almajiri Education Integrated into Formal System* July 22, 2020
8. *Tackle the Almajiri Menace in the North*, 7 February 2021
9. *Insecurity: Northern Leaders Must Address Almajiri System-Okorochoa*, 14 September 2021
10. *Pain, Tortiure as Almajiri System of Education Fails*, 7 May 2022
11. *Reforming the Almajiri System of Education: Restoring Glory, Empowering the Future* December 6, 2023
12. *Addressing the Plight of The Almajiri System* Jun 21 2023

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1. *Three Million Almajiris Roam Kano Streets – Ganduje*, April 6,2017

2. *Find Solution to Almajiris, Herdsmen Threat, Gov. Bagudu Urges FG*, March 30 2017
3. *Beggars, Almajiri and the Future of the Nigerian Nation* April 23, 2017
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5. *Almajiri Is Unislamic, Says Sultan* May 21, 2017
6. *Banishing 'Almajiri'* June 2, 2017
7. *Almajiri: Open letter to Northern Governors* August 16, 2019
8. *Almajiri or Economic Migrants*, 21 June 2020
9. *Almajirai and home delivery of coronavirus* May 14, 2020
10. *Almajiri's Next Level* March 28, 2020
11. *'COVID-19: Almajiri and Northern Leaders* April 22, 2020
12. *Untold Story of Ogun Almajiri Colony*, 31 January, 2021
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14. *Almajiri: Nigeria's Ticking Time Bomb*, 26 December, 2022
15. *Getting Nigeria's 20 Million Out-of-School Children Back to School* September 5, 2022
16. *Bill on Commission for Almajiri Education, Out-of-School Kids Scales Second Reading* November 24, 2022
17. *Kano and the Almajirci Menace*, 13 October, 2022
18. *Nigeria Has 90 Million Unemployed Youths, 10 Million Almajiri* March 28, 2022
19. *Concerns as 'Almajiri' Children Flood Lagos Suburbs* October 7, 2023
20. *Banning Street Begging in Maiduguri* November 1, 2023
21. *Laudable, but...* October 4, 2023
22. *Reps to Return 14m Out-of-School Kids to Classroom* September 25, 2023
23. *CSO Coalition Kicks Against Establishment of Almajirai Education Commission* April 1, 2023