

Challenges of Integrating Qur'anic Schools (Al-Majiri Perspective) Into the Universal Basic Education (Ube) Programme in Borno State: A Study of Maiduguri Zone

Kasim Alkali^{1*}, Abubakar Shettima², Adam Muhammad Ajiri³ and Ibrahim Ali Kalama⁴

Nigerian Arabic Language Village Ngala, Borno State, Nigeria¹

Kashim Ibrahim College of Education, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria²

University of Maiduguri, Nigeria³

Mogcolis, Maiduguri⁴

Corresponding Author email: [*kasimalkali9@gmail.com](mailto:kasimalkali9@gmail.com)

Abstract

This paper assessed the Al-majiris (students) perspective on the challenges encountered on the process of integrating Qur'anic schools into UBE programme in Borno state with reference to Maiduguri Zone. Al-majiris are the key players of this current programme which is a re-attempt by Federal government of Nigeria in 1999 to integrate them. The objectives of the study are to examine the challenges of integrating Qur'anic schools into Universal Basic Education; UBE; Identify the importance or otherwise of the integration programme so that the society will feel its impact. Structured questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected 70 Qur'anic school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Jere and Kaga Local government Areas. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and simple percentages. The findings of this research revealed that, most of the students (67.1%) were not aware of the integration program. However, many of the Al-majiris (57.1%) show non-readiness to participate in the integration programme. Notwithstanding, majority of the students (65.7%) stated that the expansion of their curriculum to accommodate western education subjects will affect their studies. Other challenges include inadequate funding in the provision of feeding, accommodation and teaching facilities. Therefore, with constant mobilization of Al-majiris to enlighten them on the aims of the programme, provision of adequate funding and maintenance of the Qur'anic schools are necessary. These recommendations may grantee proper integration of the systems.

Key word: Almajiri, UBE Integration, Qur'anic school

INTRODUCTION

Integration of the Qur'anic schools into Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is the process of introducing elements of western education into traditional Qur'anic school system. This was aimed at making the Qur'anic schools effective avenues for the promotion of basic education. This would also make the products (*Al-Majiri*) more useful to themselves and the entire society. Not only this, the programme will give the (*Al-majiri*) access to basic education as their basic right. The programme was launched in 1999 by the Federal government of Nigeria. However, the implementation was adopted by Borno state government in 2006 (El-Nur, 2006) UBE was designed to inculcate western education subjects like literacy, numeracy, general knowledge, social sciences and vocational skills to the *Al-Majiri*. However, the *Al-majiris* are the key players of the programme who constitute the largest group of out-of-school children in Borno State. The three (3) Local Governments

under study has an estimated population of 2.2 million *Al-Majiri* (Ali, 2012). Apparently, Qur'anic education was the only educational system that exists in Borno prior to the advent of colonial administration. Qur'anic schools enjoyed numerous privileges and patronages from the Sayfawa and El-Kanemi dynasties. The funding, regulations, management and control were facilitated by the government. However, with the advent of colonial administration the previous privileges and patronages were not adequate and impending. This is because colonial administration focused their in facilitating western education financially and otherwise. Therefore, when colonial and post-colonial administrations attempted to integrate Qur'anic schools into the conventional school, it confronted with stiff resistance from the teachers, parents and students of the Qur'anic schools. Meanwhile, UBE is one of the recent attempts by federal government to integrate Qur'anicSchool with the conventional school system, but still faces numerous challenges. Therefore, this research attempts to investigate the challenges of integrating Qur'anic schools into UBE programme in Maiduguri zone with reference to Al-Majiri perspective. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Identify the structure and the organization of *Qur'anic* schools.
- ii. Critically examine the challenges of integrating *Qur'anic* Schools into Universal Basic Education (UBE).
- iii. Identify the importance or otherwise of integrating *Qur'anic* Schools into the UBE Programme so that the society will feel its importance.
- iii. Proffer solutions to the problems of integrating *Qur'anic* Schools into UBE.

METHODOLOGY

Borno state Universal Basic Education (SUBEB) is divided into seven zones to enable it co-ordinate its activities effectively. These zones are *Maiduguri* Metropolis, *Monguno*, *Gubio*, *Gwoza*, *Biu*, *Dikwa* and *Askira*. This research intends to show the following Local Government areas, *Maiduguri* Metropolis, *Jere* and *Kaga*. The population of this research consists of the *Al-Majiri* (Qur'anic school students) of *Maiduguri* zone. 70 questionnaires were administered to 70 *Al-Majiri* (*Qur'anic* school students) from *Maiduguri* Metropolis, *Jere* and *Kaga* Local Government Areas. The data collected from the research were analysed using simple statistical tools of frequency and simple percentages.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of age of the Al-Majiri of the Qur'anic Schools responding on the challenges of integrating Qur'anic Schools into Universal Basic Education UBE Programme in Borno State with specific reference to Maiduguri Zone

AGE	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
5-10	2	4	4	10	14.3
11 – 15	21	14	5	40	57.1
16 – 20	7	7	6	20	28.6
Total	30	25	15		100%

Source: Field Survey

RESULTS

Table: 1 shows the percentage distribution of the age of the *Al-Majiri* of the Qur'anic Schools in Maiduguri zone. The result indicated that majority (57.1%) of the *Al-Majiri* of *Qur'anic* Schools of the zone were around the age of 11 to 15. MMC has the highest number of pupils that were around the age of 11 – 15 years having 21 out of the 30 respondents. It was then followed by *Jere* which has 14 out of 25 responses.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of the level of Qur’anic Education of the Al-Majiri of Qur’anic Schools responding on the challenges of integrating Qur’anic Schools into UBE programme

Level of Qur’anic	EDU	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
1 -10		11	10	2	23	32.86
11 -20		8	5	7	20	28.57
21-30		5	3	3	11	15.71
31 – 40		2	2	2	6	8.57
41- 50		2	2	0	4	5.71
51- 60		2	3	1	6	8.57
Total		30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table: 2 indicate the level of *Qur’anic* Education of the *Al-Majiri* of *Qur’anic* Schools in *Maiduguri* Zone. It shows the *Hizb* (1/60) of the Glorious Qur’an that they read and memorized. Majority (32.3%) of the pupils memorized from *Hizbs* 1 – 10 of the Glorious Quran, followed by *Hizbs* 11 – 20 of the Glorious Quran. However the zone has lowest level (5.7%) of pupils that read and memorized from 41 – 50 *Hizbs*. of the Al-Majiri of the Zone read and memorized from 41 – 50 only.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of the Al-Majiri of Qur’anic Schools responding on their awareness of the integration of Qur’anic Schools into UBE Programme in Maiduguri zone, Borno State

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	12	5	6	23	32.9
NO	18	20	9	47	67.1
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 3 show the level of awareness of the pupils of *Qur’anic* Schools of *Maiduguri* zone about the integration of *Qur’anic* Schools into UBE programme. The result indicated that majority (67.1%) of the *Al-Majiris* of the Qur’anic Schools were not aware of the integration programme. Jere has the highest number of pupils that were not aware of the integration programme.

Table 4: Percentage distributions of the Al-Majiri of Qur’anic Schools responding on their acceptance and willingness to participate in the integration of Qur’anic Schools into UBE programme

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	17	10	3	30	42.9%
NO	13	15	12	40	57.1%
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 4 show the level of willingness of the *Al-Majiris* of Qur’anic Schools of *Maiduguri* Zone to participate in the integration of Qur’anic Schools into UBE programme. About 57.1% of the *Al-Majiris* of in the Zone shows their non-readiness to participate in the integration programme. *Kaga* has the highest number of rejecters.

Table 5: Shows the Percentage distribution of the Al-Majiri of Qur'anic Schools responding, does the inclusion of Western Education subjects into their Qur'anic Schools curriculum affect their studies?

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	19	16	11	46	65.7%
NO	11	9	4	24	34.3%
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 5 shows whether the expansion of the *Qur'anic* Schools curriculum to accommodate Western Education subjects, affect their studies or not. The result indicated that Majority (65.7%) of the *Al-Majiris* responded negatively that the expansion of the *Qur'anic* Schools curriculum affect their studies.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of the Al-Majiris responding on the provision of accommodation, classrooms and feeding to the Qur'anic Schools pupils provided by Borno State Government.

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	5	0	2	7	10%
NO	25	25	13	63	90%
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 6 indicates the provision of accommodation, classroom and feeding of the *Al-Majiri* of *Qur'anic* Schools of *Maiduguri* Zone. The result shows that majority (90%) of the *Al-Majiri* do not have enough accommodation, classrooms and feeding. It is only MMC that has 5 accommodation/classrooms; while *Kaga* Local Government has 2 *Qur'anic* Schools that have classrooms.

Table 7: Percentage distributions of Al-Majiri responding whether the accommodations, classrooms and feedings are provided by Borno State Government or not.

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	0	0	0	0	0%
NO	30	25	15	70	100%
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 7 shows whether the accommodations, classrooms and feedings provided to the *Al-Majiri* of *Qur'anic* Schools in *Maiduguri* Zone is adequate or not. The result indicated that accommodations and classrooms are not adequate to the *Al-Majiri* of *Qur'anic* Schools in *Maiduguri* Zone

Table 8: Percentage distributions of Al-Majiri responding on their willingness of mainstreaming into formal school system after their successful graduation from Qur'anic Schools

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	18	13	5	36	51.4%
NO	12	12	10	34	48.6%
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 8 shows the level of readiness and willingness of the *Al-Majiri* of *Qur'anic* Schools in *Maiduguri* Zone to be mainstreamed into Western oriented Schools after their successful

graduation from Qur'anic Schools. Majority (51.4%) of the *Al-Majiri* agreed to join Western oriented schools after their graduation. *Jere* L.G has the highest level of *Al-Majiri* willing to join western education, followed by MMC.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of Al-Majiri responding whether they will like to participate in leadership in the society through democratic election and others

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	14	11	6	31	44.3%
NO	16	14	9	39	55.7%
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 9 indicate the level of willingness of the *Qur'anic* Schools *Al-Majiri* to participate in the leadership in the society, through democratic election or to participate in governmental work. About 55.7% of the *Al-Majiri* indicated their non-readiness and non-willingness to be part of the government as their employees.

Table 10: Percentage distribution of Al-Majiri responding on the provision of vocational activities in the respective Qur'anic Schools of Maiduguri zone that were provided to them by government

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	2	1	0	3	4.3
NO	28	24	15	67	95.7
Total	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 10 shows the provision of Western oriented vocational skills provided to the *Qur'anic* Schools pupils by the government. A vocational skill is one of the pillars of the integration of Qur'anic Schools into UBE, so that the Qur'anic School *Al-Majiri* would be self-reliant. The result indicated that majority (95.7%) of the *Al-Majiri* responded the inadequate of vocational skills such as carpentry, painting, mechanic and others.

Table 11: Percentage distribution of the Al-Majiri responding about their willingness to participate in Western oriented vocational activities, such as carpentering, panting, building, machine mechanic and others

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
YES	14	13	6	33	47.1
NO	16	12	9	37	52.9
TOTAL	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 11 indicates the willingness of the pupils of Qur'anic Schools that have interest to participate in the Western oriented vocational activities in the zone. Majority (52.9) of the *Al-Majiri* show non readiness and non- willingness to participate in Western oriented vocational activities.

Table 12: Percentage Distribution of Al-Majiri Qur'anic Schools suggesting for a proper ways through which the integration of Qur'anic Schools into Universal Basic Education Programme could be achieved

OPTION	MMC	JERE	KAGA	FRQ	PERCENTAGE
FUNDING	0	1	0	1	1.4
BUILDING	15	6	5	26	37.1
NILL	15	18	10	43	61.4
TOTAL	30	25	15	70	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table: 12 show the suggestions of *Al-Majiri* of *Qur'anic* School for proper ways of improving the integration of *Qur'anic* Schools into Universal Basic Education Programme. About 37.1% suggested for building more classrooms and hostels, while 61.4% responses of the *Al-Majiri* were undecided.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study revealed that majority of the *Al-Majiri* in *Maiduguri* Zone of Borno State were not aware on the integration of *Qur'anic* Schools into UBE programme. This is in line with the research conducted by Umar (2003) which stated that government has not adequately articulated the concept of the integration programme, particularly to the direct beneficiaries of the programme (*Al-Majiri*) of the *Qur'anic* Schools.

Consequently, the result of this research also indicated the non-readiness of the majority of *Al-Majiri* to participate in the integration programme. This poses a great challenge to the current government initiative. As it was highlighted by the research conducted by Akko (2003), which indicates that the *Al-Majiri* were not willing to integrate the *Qur'anic* Schools with the conventional Schools. This is because the *Al-Majiri* considered Western School as fake education. In addition to this, Madawaki (2002:34) Rufa'I (2003) and Dogo (2008) also observed that many *Mallams* and *Al-Majiris* resisted the integration of *Qur'anic* Schools into UBE for the fear of conversion into Christianity.

However, in regards to the expansion of the *Qur'anic* Schools curriculum to accommodate western educational subjects, the findings of this research show total rejection from the majority of the *Al-Majiris* from *Maiduguri* Zone. It was pointed out by Umar (2003) and Akko (2003) that the expansion of the *Qur'anic* Schools curriculum was rejected on the basis of its duality period. Therefore; it would be difficult for the *Al-Majiri* to integrate the textual study of the Glorious *Qur'an* and other subjects. This is so because emphasis was highly restricted to the memorization of the Glorious *Qur'an*. Akinigbagbe (1997) added that the curriculum of Western education was religiously biased. It is however more of Christian activities when it was introduced, so Muslims found it inappropriate to integrate into the *Qur'anic* Schools curriculum.

Furthermore, this research indicated that, there were no adequate provisions of accommodation, conducive learning atmosphere, portable water, feeding facilities and other social amenities prepared for the *Al-Majiri* of the *Qur'anic* Schools in the *Maiduguri* Zone. This is in agreement with the research carried out by Dogo (2008), Biu (2008), Rufa'I (2003), Tijjani (2008), Abubakar (nd) and Umar (2003) stated that the *Al-Majiri* were less privilege to social amenities, health services, inadequate water, poor feeding facilities, poor accommodation arrangement for both the teachers and the students and inadequate learning atmosphere.

Notwithstanding, the findings of the study revealed a great willingness from the majority of the *Al-Majiris* to mainstream into Western oriented Schools after their successful graduation from the *Qur'anic* schools. This is similar to the research conducted by Hassan (2007), Makarfi (2004) and Dogo (2008) which stated that, there are positive gestures towards the mainstreaming of the *Al-Majiris* into the formal school system. So far, Borno have mainstreamed over 2,000 (*Al-Majiris*) into the Western oriented schools in the State. Thus, as indicated in this research the willingness of the *Almajiri* to participate in the leadership of

the society, through democratic election or to be a public servant in any Governmental agencies. This is the same with the earlier findings of the research conducted by Dambo and Mubi, (1994) and Lemu (1994). The efforts of Government in Northern Nigeria on the integration programme in 70s have created opportunity for the graduate of such integrated Islamic schools (Higher Islamic College). It is glad to mention that today products of the Islamic Integrated schools are lawyers, teachers, Professors, Qadis Ambassadors and others.

CONCLUSIONS

It is worth noting that Government has made some efforts on the integration of the Qur'anic schools in the past and currently is making efforts to integrate Qur'anic schools into UBE. However, the challenges and thorny issues revealed in this research are lack of awareness of the integration programme on the side of the *Al-majiris* who are the direct beneficiaries of the programme, Government's inability to build conducive atmosphere for the students, lack of adequate water, poor accommodation arrangement, poor feeding facilities and poor policies of integration on one hand and suspicious attitude of the *Al-majiristo* participate in the integration programme and vehemently the resistance of *Al-majirison* the expansion of their curriculum on the other hand. However, it is also observed that the number of *Al-majiris* attending Qur'anic schools outnumbered those students from primary schools. Therefore, if education is a right for every child and subsequently if UBE is to succeed it is certain that no child is to be left without giving adequate education to them. The *Al-majiris* must be cared for such and to ensure equal opportunity to prepare a brighter future for the *Almajiri*. To achieve this, Government should create awareness to the *Al-majiris*, provide adequate water supply, feeding facilities and also provide conducive atmosphere (accommodation, classroom and modern teaching aids) for the *Al-majiris*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to:
 Create awareness between the key players (*Al-majiris* and their teachers) to know more on the benefit of the integration. Government should be committed in including such schools to the budgetary provision in line with the national policy on Education to enable the organization of such schools to provide accommodation, feeding and infrastructure.
 Explore that all branches of knowledge are important to mankind in one way or the other.
 Provide health facilities e.g. clinic and dispensary to ease the hardship of the *Almajiri* and their teachers.
 Provide modern teaching aids to enable the students get motivated.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, Z.(nd) An Overview Qur'anic/Islamiyya System and development of *Almajiri* Child. State Agency for Mass Education Sokoto.
- Akko, G.B. (2003), Towards Developing an effective Curriculum for Integrated Islamiyya Schools. A paper presented at pre Summit Workshop on the Integration of Qur'anic/Islamiyya Schools system with Conventional System. Arewa House Kaduna.
- Ali, T. A. (2012) Borno State framework for the Development and Integration of *Al-majiri* Education into U.B.E Scheme.
- Biu, H.A. And Muhammad, D.S. (2008) The trends towards the enhancement of Tsangaya system in Borno State. Presented at two-day workshop for Imams and Proprietors of in sangaya education Organized by Borno State Universal Basic Education Board. On 4th -5th December, 2008.
- Dogo, A.B. (2008 a) Guidelines for implementing Qur'anic education as a policy. Paper Presented at two day workshop on implementation of gender policy on Basic education, IECD, IQE. Guidelines and School health policy. Organized by Borno State Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF. On 20th - 21st May, 2008 at conference Hall Education Resource Centre, Maiduguri.

- Dambo and Mubi M,H,M. (1994) Qar'anic system need for intervention. A draft working paper prepared and submitted to Unicep Basic Education Section (SAFA FORUM).
- EL-Nur, M.D. (2006) Boron Merges UBE, *Sangaya Education System DailyIndependence Newspaper*, Monday 14th August, 2006.
- F.G.N. (2006) Federal Government of Nigeria Universal Basic Education Commission (2004) 40 frequently asked questions (FAQs) on Universal Basic Education Issued by the Office of Executive Secretary.
- Hassan, A. (2007) *Borno GEP Bi-Annual magazine* of the Girl Education Project Vol:1 No:1 June-December, 2007.
- Kure, Z.A. (2004) Speech of her Excellency the Wife of Niger State Governor and the initiator of Youth Employment Scheme (YES)at Two-day National Workshop on the Qur'anic system of Education. Organized by Arewa House, on 27th -28th at Shehu Musa Yar adua Centre, Abuja.
- Lemu, S.A (1994) An approach to the Development of Qur'anic Schools in the Contemporary Society. Being a Paper at National Conference on Qur'anic Education at National Teachers Institute Kaduna.
- Madawaki, A,W. (2002) Report of the Inaugural Ceremony of the Technical Committee on the integration of Qur'anic Schools into Universal Basic Education Program. UBE Headquarters, Abuja.
- Makarfi, A.A (2004) Speech of her Excellency, the Wife of Kaduna State Governor and the initiator of Millennium Hope Programme (MHP) at Two-day National Workshop on the Qur'anic system of Education, organized by Arewa House, on 27th -28th July, at Shehu Musa Yar adua Centre, Abuja.
- Shehu, S (2000), Islamizing Education System, Towards an Alternative Education Theory and Agenda for Muslim Ummah in Nigeria. Being a paper presented at a Two day National Workshop on Islamization of Knowledge at Usmanu Danfodio University Sokoto.
- Tijjani, A.G. (2008) The integration of Qur'anic Education in Borno State: Rationality and Islamic Perspectives. Being a lead paper for Two-day workshop on the policy of integration of Qur'anic Education. Organized by BornoState Universal Basic Education Board, 4th -5th December, 2008.
- Umar, B.A.(2003a)Appraising the condition of integrated Quranic / Islamiyya Schools in Northern Nigeria: A case study of Borno, Kano, Kwara and Sokoto States*Journal of Islamization of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues*Vol.4 No2. January, 2003.
- Umar , A.B. (2003b) Integration of Qur'anic Islamiyya School Curriculumwith modern disciplines thorny issues and case studies. *The Journal of Islamization of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues*Vol.4 No2. January,2003.