

## CHILD ABUSE AMONG MUSLIM FAMILIES AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Child abuse is a social Phenomenon that has attracted so much attention all over the world including Nigeria. The practice of child abuse is becoming very common in many villages, towns and cities in Northern Nigeria. In this paper, attempt is made to highlights some practices of child abuse which include among other things; child hawking, rape and incest, begging (almajiranci) and denying the child the right to education. The study depends on primary and secondary sources for its data collection. The paper identifies the factors encouraging the trend and analyses the implication of such practices on youth development in Northern Nigeria. Findings from the interviews conducted indicated that the major causes of child abuse among Muslim families in Northern Nigeria are poverty and ignorance of Islamic education. The paper recommends that there should be public enlightenment programme to educate the Muslim parents on the causes and implication of child abuse on children.*

**Keywords:** Child, Child abuse, education , Islam, Muslim, Parents, Youths

### INTRODUCTION

The Convention on the rights of children defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. (Convention on the rights of child [www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding_Principles.pdf)).

The late Islamic scholar, Al Uthaymeen, described children as a trust given to parents by God. He asserted that children are to be well fed, well-groomed, properly dressed for seasons and appearance. He stressed that, children are entitled to education, religious learning, and spiritual guidance (Al Uthaymeen The rights of children in Islam <http://www.missionislam.com/family/childrenrights.htm>).

Children are argued to be leaders of the future, but at present they are very vulnerable and very susceptible to abuse by the family and even the larger society. According to Falayi K (2015) The United Nations Children's Fund explains that child abuse includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. He added that UNICEF report on violence against children on average, about six in 10 children worldwide (almost 1 billion) between the ages of two and 14 are subjected to physical (corporal) punishment by their caregivers on a regular basis, many of which lead to death.

According to UNICEF, Nigeria had the highest number of such deaths (due to intentional injuries) in 2012 with almost 13000 deaths followed by Brazil with approximately 11,000. UNICEF agrees that reliable data on violence against children in Nigeria is scare "because violence is often not reported as it occurs mostly within the context where it is regarded as 'normal' such as within the family circle or behind the privacy of homes" The family as a micro unit of the society is therefore important in child development. The family is the single most important factor and need in child development. A Muslim family consists of a legally

married couple (husband and wife) and their children. It also includes their parents, siblings and other relatives. A Muslim family comes into existence through two means: blood relationship and marriage. Allah (SWT) says, “And it is He Who has made man from water: Then He has set up relationships of family and marriage: And your Lord is ever All Powerful (over all things)” (Q25:54). Islam paid a great deal of attention to the establishment of strong families and protecting them from things that could harm them, and preserving family ties whilst giving each member of the family an important role in life. In Islam, children are entitled to various rights.

According to the Islamic world view, the rights of a child begin even before birth, in fact they begin before conception. There are references in both the Quran and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad(SAW) which make it clear that two people should not enter into a marriage carelessly. Hence, a great deal of thought and preparation is necessary before a man and woman commit to each other and to the family that may result from their union.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said:

A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. You should marry the religious woman (lest) your hand be covered with dust (i.e. you will be a loser). (Ibn Majah, Vol. II, 2008, Hadith No.1858).

Through marriage, the couple has already begun to secure the rights of their future children. For instance, a child has the right to know and understand his or her lineage and only marriage will enable him or her to secure such right. It is worthy of note that in Islam, having a child is a blessing from God. However, children are not toys or possessions. With them comes great responsibility which every parent is expected to discharge. Islam has made it mandatory upon the believers to raise and care for children by bringing them up as moral, righteous human beings. Neglecting this duty could potentially lead a person away from the path of righteousness and away from God. Thus, parents, families, and communities have certain responsibilities to discharge on their children. Many of these rights are mandatory, and on the Day of Judgement, God will question them about the treatment of their children. The first and foremost of these rights is the right to be properly brought up, raised and educated. The Muslim family is held responsible before God for the correct upbringing of its children. This means that children should be given suitable sufficient, sound and adequate religious, ethical and moral guidance to last them for their entire lives. They should be engraved with true values, they should be taught the meaning of right and wrong, true and false, correct and incorrect, appropriate and inappropriate value.

Unfortunately, many families from every walk of life, in every society, regardless of creed, origin, social and economic status have neglected this very important responsibility to their own children. Such individuals have indeed abuse and lost their children as a result of their own negligence, given that child abuse is any act of ill treatment of a child by his parents or any other adult.

On the other hand, Islam has given parents so much right over their children. But it does not mean that the parents have been given liberty to ill-treat their children. Such as neglecting their character building, putting so much burden on their children beyond what they can bear, etc. Islam sees that if parents fulfill their duties towards all their children in terms of providing them with necessary training, educational backing, moral, ethical and religious education, this will definitely lead to a more caring child, a better family atmosphere and a better social environment and awareness. Above all they will be rewarded by God. The Qur'an says:

And those who believe and whose families follow them in Faith, to them shall We join their families: Nor shall We deprive them (of the fruit) of aught of their works: (Yet) is each individual in pledge for his deeds (Q.52:21).

In addition, the Prophet (SAW) said:

Upon death man's deeds will (definitely) stop except for three deeds, namely: a continuous charitable fund, endowment or goodwill; knowledge left for people to benefit from; and pious righteous and God fearing child who continuously prays Allah, the Almighty, for the soul of his parents. (Muslim, Vol. 5, Hadith No. 4310)

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical position adopted for this study is the Ecological theory. The study argues that abuse and neglect result from a number of factors. These are divided into four systems: they are: individual, family, community and culture (We are survivors Blog<https://www.edeinstitute.org/>) In addition, the 90 by 30 socio-economic model prevention, originated from the centers for disease control and prevention (CDC) and the one adopted by the Oregon Attorney General's sexual Assault Task force in its 2006 sexual violence prevention plan ([http://90 by 30. Uorgo.edu/socio-ecological model](http://90by30.uoregon.edu/socio-ecological-model)). This model gives a description of the interplay between individual, relationship, community, institutional and social factors that relate to child abuse and neglect. It provides an avenue to address the factors that put people at risk for experiencing perpetrating abuse or neglect. (Uorgo.edu/socio-ecological model).

Marce F. Maden (1975) argues that on all measures of socio economic status child abusing families have low achievement and face the challenges of poverty and its associated conditions. He went further to state that abusing families are recognized by their transience and inability to maintain social contact with the community or affliction with social organizations (Maden, 1975) Maden in his analysis of Gil's socio cultural theory of child abuse posits that his (Gil) theory in general predicts a set of social and economic factors that are specifically related to violence against children. Gil according to Maden, focuses on culturally sanctioned attitude towards the use of physical force in the care and discipline of children. Maden states that, Gil also explains child (in part of) as a result of environmental factors e.g. inadequate housing, unemployment, etc. which according to Gil are significant precipitating factors in child abuse (Maden 19). Thus, the socio-economic theory of child abuse posits that the abuse is linked to social deprivation, poverty and poor housing.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study adopts the descriptive method. Data for the study were derived from both primary and secondary sources. Its primary sources included the Qur'an, Hadith, Personal observations and interviews with parents, guidance, caretakers and scholars within the study area. All other relevant library sources are the secondary sources of the study

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary the term "abuse" connotes an unfair or illegal practice or cruel treatment of a person (and animal). Edu and Edu (1999:1) describe child abuse as willful maltreatment of a child. They argued that such maltreatment includes those acts of commission (abuse) and omission (neglect). Thus, when a person uses his or her power wrongly or excessively on a child or treats him unfairly, he or she is engaged in child abuse. Abusers can be men or women; they can be of any age from elderly person to someone

of the same age as the child or young person. Often abuser is known to the child and may be a member of the family or family friend. Sometimes, they are not related at all.

The protection of the children from such abuse is an important feature of the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC). Article 19 requires states parties to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse, while in the care of parents or others responsible for the care of the child. Additionally, in Nigeria the rights of citizens in chapter 4 section 30, 40 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees every citizen's basic and fundamental human rights. Here, the constitution does not make any distinction between the rights of adults and children. Hence it is not surprising that Islamic law pays utmost attention to securing all that is needed to guarantee a wholesome psychological climate for the rearing of children, a climate wherein they learn about the world and good Islamic and moral custom and norms. As such Islam affirms:

- i. A child's right to good health and life
- ii. A child's right to family, kindred, name, property and inheritance
- iii. A child's right to healthcare and proper nutrition
- iv. A child's right to education and acquisition of talent
- v. A child right to live in peace and security and enjoy human dignity and protection Under the responsibility of the parents
- vi. The caring role of society and the state to support all rights and support families incapable of providing appropriate conditions for their children (UNICEF, 2005:2).

The Nigerian child in general is not exempted from the above rights and privileges. Unfortunately with the increase of child abuse in the country, children are being denied some of these rights. AbdulHamid cited the statement of the social empowerment advocate and Researcher with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF, 2005:2) Mr. Taiwo Akinlami, who says that, the constant abuse of children in the Nigerian homes and the school system remains a major and disturbing setback in child protection efforts. He said this during the 2014 yearly Conference of the Association of the International School Educators of Nigeria (AISEN), which had as its theme "Child Protection: securing our Children in a Changing World" Akinlami submitted that Children were mostly and likely abused and molested by those, who are closest to them and who also claim to protect them and not by strangers as most people erroneously believe. The culprits in this scenario he said include primary care givers like parents and guardians as well as secondary care givers like nannies, teachers and others(4)..

The AISEN President and Administrator, Greenwood House School, Ekuah Abudu, expressed worries that Nigerian children were exposed to unnecessary hardships even as their abuse is in the hands of people who are supposed to be protecting them. In her words: "In Nigeria, we have of recent witnessed all forms of atrocities, the worst being the merciless and needless massacre of innocent school children..." (AbdulHamid, 2014: 4).

Child Abuse represents a serious threat to the development and rights of today's Nigerian children and those of tomorrow. Islam however, preaches distributional justice, fairness and social equality amongst the human race. This study therefore examines child hawking, rape/Incest, begging and denying the child the right to education as forms of abuse among some Muslim families in Northern Nigeria with a view to identifying their impact on youth .

Northern Nigeria is a home to numerous ethnic groups and religious communities. It consist of both rural and urban centers which include Kano, Sokoto, Zaria, Maiduguri, Zamfara, Bauchi, Yobe, Katsina, Gombe, Jigawa, Niger, Kaduna, etc

They lived in small units under the leadership of a clan-head who was called “*Maianguwa*”. Several such small units in compounds, hamlets and villages in the same vicinity were headed by a monarch usually referred to “*Sarki*” (Olayiwola, 2007:5). The *Sarki* is usually very powerful. He is highly respected by all and sundry. Cities such as Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri have been famous centres of learning in the Islamic world for centuries. The predominant groups are the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, but there are also smaller groups. Muslims are the majority in most of the far northern states, in some cases (Sokoto, Borno). The Sokoto Caliphate occupies an important, but ambivalent, position in the consciousness of Muslims in northern Nigeria. ([www.crisisgroup.org/.../nigeria/](http://www.crisisgroup.org/.../nigeria/))

### **Forms of Child Abuse**

There are different types or forms of child abuse. These include the following:

#### **Hawking ( *Talla* )**

Children especially girls, who are supposed to be in school are seen in the streets or markets hawking different kinds of items because their families need the extra income. Street hawking is common in Northern Nigeria like any other Nigerian cities. Articles sold by these hawkers include bananas, fried and boiled groundnut, oranges to mention but few. The ages of these Juvenile hawkers ranges between twelve and seventeen years. In an interview with *Lami Bala* a house wife in Kawo Kaduna, she states that, a mother may not hesitate to send her daughter out for hawking from house to house, from motor parks to mechanics workshop, with the instruction to “sellout the items by all means”. Poverty and culture are among the factors identified as responsible for street hawking in Northern Nigeria. According to Sada et al, majority of Muslim women in the North West zone are dependent on their daughters to buy and sell goods for them from the market (25). The income generated from hawking or *Talla* is used to buy *kayandaki*, the furniture and other utensils the girl takes to her husband’s house. Sometime the practice receives tacit approval of father, while in some other times, the mother may refuse to respect the disapproval of such practice especially if the father is poor and cannot take over the responsibility of meeting all the expenses of the family in general and expenses of his daughter’s marriage in particular. This shows that, the practice enjoys widespread support and acceptance since it has been in existence for such a long time. The actors according to them, are always female members of the immediate or extended family responsible for the upbringing of the girl. However, Islam does not accept this practice of sending the girl to hawk in the street since it exposes her to danger of sexual exploitation by morally bankrupt members of the society. In Qur’an Allah says:

...but force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in other that you may make a gain in the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, yet after such compulsion is God off-forgiving, most merciful to them (Q24:33).

Although boys in some cases are found in street hawking, but they are in the minority when compared to that of girls in Northern Nigeria. In any case Child hawking irrespective of sex or gender is highly discouraged in Islam.

#### ***Almajiri* (Child Begging)**

Three categories of child beggars are found in the Urban cities of Northern Nigeria, those who lead blind parents or relatives, those who act as fronts for parents, and those who beg for

themselves (*Almajiri*). These children are among the vulnerable in Nigeria coming from the families that are among the poorest of the poor. The national Council for the Welfare of destitute in Nigeria says there are about seven million children and teenage beggars or “Almajiri”, in the North of the country. Kano State accounts for more than a million (AbdulHamid5). “Almajiri” is derived from the Arabic word “*Al-Muhajirun*” which literally means “the emigrants” and colloquially means “seekers of Islamic knowledge”. It refers to a traditional method of acquiring and memorizing the Glorious Qur’an in Hausa/Fulani land where boys at their tender ages are sent out by their parents or guardians to other villages, towns or cities for Qur’an education under a knowledgeable Islamic scholar called *Malam*. At first, it was so perfect and rewarding that highly educated Sheikhs and *Mallams* who became successful in life by holding positions of judges and teacher and were moulding the minds of the young on how to become righteous and exemplary in their future lives. However, the system that was hitherto organized and well charted has now been bastardized and abused to the extent of letting our children roam streets and picking remnants of food leftover from dustbins. The children move around from door to door, street to street begging for food and other necessities of life; they move either singly or in group. Some of them attach themselves to seller of food items like Massa (*waina*), beans cake (*kosai*) or groundnut cake (*kulikuli*), moving about looking for buyer who will share to them voluntarily.

The issue of *Almajirai* has remained worrisome in the minds of concern Muslims. This is because the practice has been a source of embarrassment to the region.

Parental goals and poverty were found to be the reasons for sending them far away from home to study Qur’an. Some left home because of parental belief while others is due to poverty situation. However, the establishment of *Almajiri* Integrated Schools (AIS) across the country is one of the governments’ intervention strategies to curtail the menace of street begging by children and youth in the name of pursuing Qur’anic Education. The school is to accommodate the *Almajiri* who are coming to the city from far and near villages for Qur’anic knowledge. The purpose of the integration of the two system of education is to provide educational opportunities for these categories of children to acquire Traditional Qur’anic Education and Basic Western Education so as to improve their living condition and empower the *Almajirai* and their *mallams*. This will also enable each State of the federation to achieve Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ([sjournals.com/index.php/SJPAS/article/view/637](http://sjournals.com/index.php/SJPAS/article/view/637)). Thus, various efforts had been made over the years by groups, individuals, organizations and governments towards a successful integration of the Qur’anic school or Islamic education into the Western Education System, such attempts had achieved varying degrees of success. The then Government of President Jonathan had tried to eradicate the problem in the North through the provision of formal and Islamic education to *Almajiris* ([sjournals.com/index.php/SJPAS/article/view/637](http://sjournals.com/index.php/SJPAS/article/view/637)). Furthermore, in an NTA Abuja Network discussion with Vice-President Arc. Namadi Sambo on Monday 28-March, 2011, on how Nigeria will achieve her aims in 2020, in his speech, he declared that every child of Nigeria has equal right to all aspect of life especially education through Universal Basic Education and that 9.5 million Nigerian children that are selling pure water on the street and begging are *Almajiri* children of Qur’anic traditional schools, so according to him, to eradicate the problem, their administration has started building boarding *Almajiri* integrated model schools in which they enroll these children and give them both Islamic education together with western education with their *mallams* (teachers) being employed to teach Qur’anic and other Islamic tenet subjects in the schools. In recent times Kaduna, Kano, Borno, Niger, Adamawa, Sokoto and other states in regions have started given the *Almajiri* system the required attention. They (*Almajiri*) are a social menace and a

liability on the Nigerian populace, and they help sustain a misconception—that Muslims are uncivilized and backward.

Frankly speaking, Islam as a religion strongly prohibits begging except in special circumstances such as, a man's loss of property in a disaster. As indicated earlier, children in their dozens are not only found roaming the streets in the North, but have also been taken to other towns around the country. For instance three *almajiris* namely Habu Bashiru and Yusuf Ayuba both from Tilkawa village in Zamfara state and Sadiq Umar who came from Sheka Gidan Leda in Kano were found in the cause of this research in Maraba Gurku, Nasarawa State going from house to house begging for food. According to them, their parents could not provide them with anything when they were sent to the *Mallam*. Car parks, sidewalks, filling stations and other public places have since been taken over by such children who are deprived of any form of formal education or skill acquisition to ensure successful adulthood. Infact, such children are vulnerable to diseases and social crimes. The view of the Islamic studies lecturer with Abba Bukar Ibrahim University, Damaturu, Yobe State, *Mallam* Abdur-Raheem Sanusi, was sought on why some parents prefer sending their children to learn Qur'an through such method. In his response, some parents lack the understanding of the true teaching of Islam, they believe that *Almajiri* is not only allowed but reward able. They argue that such act has its origin with the migration of the prophet (S A W) and his companions from Makkah to Madinah. The practice of begging under the name of *Almajiri* according to him is against the teaching of Islam which emphasizes that training of children is the responsibility of parents and by sending them to *Almajiri*, such parent have relinquish their responsibility of training and maintenance. He further stated that Qur'an: 66:6 threatens parents with great punishment if they fail to shoulder their children's responsibility.

O! ye who believed! Save ourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is mankind and stones, (and) over which are harsh severe angels, who do not disobey Allah in whatsoever He commands them and who perform whatsoever they are commanded to (Q.66:6).

He also cited the Prophetic tradition where he (S.A.W) said:

Every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is responsible for whatever falls under his responsibility. A man is a guardian of his family (household) and is responsible for his subjects and a woman is a guardian in her husband's home, and is responsible for her subjects.

He therefore called upon Muslim families to fear Allah and discharge their responsibilities by given their children proper education as enshrined by Islam. Thus, parental illiteracy and ignorance can accelerate the problem of child abuse as parents cannot reason well to understand the Islamic implications of not giving their children proper educational training but prefer to send them to *Almajiri*.

### **Rape/Incest**

Sexual abuse is any misuse of a child for sexual pleasure or gratification. It is the involvement of children in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, that they are unable to give informed consent to and/or that violates societal taboos. In nearly all cases, the molester is either a family member or a close family acquaintance e.g. close relatives, including cousins, uncles, and even grandfathers. In some other cases it could be outsiders completely. Rape of women and girls within their homes and community, is acknowledged to be endemic in Nigeria – not only by human rights defenders but also by some government officials at both federal and state levels .([www.refworld.org/pdfid/45a2479c2S](http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/45a2479c2S)). Under the Criminal Code of Nigeria, Rape is defined, as having unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman

or girl, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind, or by fear of harm, or by means of false act, or, in case of a married woman, be personating her husband. This offence is punishable by imprisonment for life, with or without caning (Section 357 and 358 of the Criminal Code Cap "C38", Laws of the Federation, 2004). Though rape as over the years been categorized into various categories namely acquaintance rape, command rape, date rape, incestuous rape, fraud rape, underage rape, statutory rape, gang rape and marital rape just to mention a few". ([www.arabianjbm.com//OM\\_VOL\\_4\\_\(12\)](http://www.arabianjbm.com//OM_VOL_4_(12))). Factors encouraging the trend include: Inability of victims to report cases to the police, In some cultures, some are even seen as having brought shame and dishonor to the family, Lack of proper investigation due to the fact that both human and material resources are not adequately equipped to effectively investigate rape cases, etc. Many more victims live in silence; either too scared of reprisal or too ashamed to talk. Haruna, (2014) a Leadership Newspaper Correspondent, towed this line of thought. He argued that "there may be hundreds of more women out there that have been raped in their homes or in various camps of the Boko Haram; some may have been inflicted with HIV/AIDS, or left with undesirable pregnancies or children which they have to care for alone, or even claim it belongs to their husbands. So many of them have been jaundiced psychologically and may not be able to get remedy till they die". ([www.arabianjbm.com//OM\\_VOL\\_4\\_\(12\)](http://www.arabianjbm.com//OM_VOL_4_(12))). Buba cited the statement of Pen and Nardos saying: "Because northern Nigerian women's value is still so closely associated with virginity, wifehood, and bearing children, rape can and often does result ins "social murder". ([www.arabianjbm.com//OM\\_VOL\\_4\\_\(12\)](http://www.arabianjbm.com//OM_VOL_4_(12))). This practice is a big atrocity and a monstrous crime, that is fornication, and worse than that is his committing this crime with his daughters and his relatives and near ones (incest). Committing fornication with such people is the worse kind of sin and offence. It is greater than committing fornication with other than them. Allah says:

And those who invoke not, with Allah any other god, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this (not only) meets punishment. (But) the penalty on the Day of Judgment will be double to him, and he will dwell therein ignominy..... (Q25:58).

### **Denial of the Child Right to Education**

Nigeria has a huge population of out of school children. About 10.5 million Nigeria are out of school (Abdu3). In today's Nigeria, there are children who are homeless and streets in Urban areas are their source of livelihood, where they sleep and make links. This group is called children of the street. While some other children work and lie on the streets in daytime but return back home at night where they sleep, even though some of them occasionally sleep on the street they are called children on the street (Abdu 2) furthermore some "children of the street" may still have links with their families, yet they sleep on the street. Abdu asserted that, out of school children may not necessarily constitute the number of children in the street, however, the more the number of out of school children, the higher the number of the street children (2) Nevertheless, the challenge of child abuse in Nigeria is not simply about street presence, but systematic exclusion and exploitation that leads to denial of children's right to education. An estimated 15 million children work in Nigeria, most of them in the informal sector. Children are often forced to work long hours in dangerous situations that are not appropriate to their stage in the life-cycle (Abdu 2). In particular, they are more exposed to accidents, violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking. Domestic workers, mostly girls, work long hours, are denied education and often their freedom of speech. They are also vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, as they are often invisible to the larger community and



wholly dependent on a single family. Some parents in Northern Nigeria display a Luke-warm attitude towards the education of their female children. This practice is repugnant to the principles of Islam. They are made to believe that their education is not important and that the western education is a waste irrelevant to their wellbeing. This negative attitude already instilled in the girls does not make them perform well academically even when they have the opportunities of going to school. Home helpers syndrome is another practice that denied the girl -child her right to education. This happens when the male member cannot discharge his financial responsibility on his family. The girls mostly from rural areas are taken to cities in order to offer domestic services, in private households for an agreed amount of money. One of the major challenges of girl child education is the poor or little knowledge of Islam among Muslim in rural areas. Some parents in Northern Nigeria (rural areas especially) are not aware of the Islamic injunction to seek for knowledge and so don't support their girls to seek for the knowledge. Another challenge that militates against girls education especially among rural communities of Northern Nigeria is the high incidence of poverty. Halimat Jibril (2010:121) mentioned that the "Action Aid stated that poverty in the region is estimated at an average of 70% as compared to 34.93% for the southern states. These factors constitute a major hindrance to girls transition in our schools .Although the practice of denying the girl child education is gradually being eradicated its existence still warrants considerable attention because it affects attitudes and behaviour to the issue of development. Therefore, the fact still remains that we need more female doctors, pharmacists, engineers, lecturers, bankers, editors, writers, women scholars especially in the knowledge of Qur'an to be able to read, translate and interpret Qur'anic injunctions.

Islam considers the right to education, a fundamental Human right that should never be denied to any person. It confers on every child, male or female an equal right to basic education and cultural orientation. A male or a female child must be helped to develop his/her mental, psychological and physical capabilities. The position of the Qur'an makes it an uncontested right of every Muslim child boy or girl to the opportunity for self-development. Islam encourages the pursuit of knowledge by all Muslims regardless of their sex. In fact, the search for knowledge is the first thing the prophet of Islam was commanded to do. This is clearly indicated in the Qur'an: "Proclaim! (or Read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher who created. Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful. He who taught (the use of) the Pen. Taught man that which he knew not" (Q 96:1-5)

The verses above show the importance of knowledge not just to the prophet but to the generality of the people (male and female).

### **Impact of Child Abuse on Youth**

The youth form the essential segment of every society .Any human society devoid of the youth is bound to collapse. Hence youth remain the life wire of the society. Thus, the child who grows to become a youth requires utmost attention of the family, religious institutions, educational institution, and state. This becomes very necessary because the consequences of child abuse can be profound and may endure long after the abuse occurs. The effects can appear in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, and may affect various aspects of an individual's development (e.g., physical, cognitive, psychological, and behavioral). Where abuses are extensive in the society it could have negative impact on national development.

The impacts of child abuse are many. Observations during the fieldwork and from the data collected have shown a number of consequences of child abuse (Hawking, Begging or *Almajiri*, Rape/ Incest and the denial to Education) on youth. These included the following:

Most of the hawkers have permanently lost the chances of becoming literate. They engage in hawking on the streets from morning till evening and as a result of this, they do not have the time to enroll in schools. Most of them have attended schools but dropped out as a result of their inability to pay the required fees. Girls that hawk are seriously prone to sexual abuse.

Some of the sexually abused juvenile may end up contacting sexually transmitted diseases. There is therefore, the tendency for some of them to be infected with HIV/AIDS. Another very serious consequence of hawking is unwanted pregnancies. Some of the female juvenile hawkers who come around the motor parks have befriended some bad characters and they have made them semi-prostitutes. They engage in indiscriminate sex as a result of which they sometimes become pregnant. In an interview with Hamdatu Bulala, a teacher in LEA primary school, Minna, Niger state, she stated that, a number of female juvenile hawkers that became pregnant took to abortion. It is no gain saying that socially and ethically, abortion is considered an evil act by the society. These girls risk premature death when they engage in abortion. Usually, they found it difficult to identify who actually impregnated them. Even when they identified such persons, these persons deny getting the girl pregnant. Some sustained life-long injuries which would hinder them from contributing meaningfully to development when they are expected to.

The *almajiris* are denied of basic education, parental care, love and support; In a study conducted by Zakir et al *Almajiris* are prone to skin rashes, cholera and most of them are treated in a chemist, because they cannot afford hospital treatment. Sometimes, they bath in stagnant lake or rivers which could expose them to water born disease. The *almajiris* are living and sleeping in congested rooms, This could lead to spread of communicable diseases like tuberculosis etc. ([www.academicjournals.org/.../article1411547270\\_Zakir.](http://www.academicjournals.org/.../article1411547270_Zakir))

The sexually abused children are prone to infection, illnesses and injuries such as HIV, hepatitis, and sexually transmitted diseases. Psychologically, female children who have been raped are traumatized and may become substance addicts (Liman, 2014: 6).

Finally, lack of education can have serious effects on children and adults and can affect health, living conditions and social situations. Uneducated mothers are also not aware of the nutritional choices for their children. This leads to problems like malnutrition and anemia among the children. They are less likely to send their own children to school and often do not participate in the labour force or the political process. They rarely have any say in the household affairs. Above all, uneducated children are not useful to themselves their community and their society.

## CONCLUSION

Families are important tool for protecting children and promoting sustainable development. The Increasing level of street children is not only undermining national development, but a huge threat to national security. Child illiteracy, poverty and unemployment have produced a huge army of youth, ready to be used for violence. Lack of proper Islamic education, illiteracy and ignorance on the part of Muslim families are the greatest causes of child abuse followed by economic reasons. hardship this is as a result of bad leadership and poor governance. The more attention we give the family the better for the society. Our family orientation will help in managing our social stress, develop children properly and help in nurturing patriotic and committed leaders of the future.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should strive to actively monitor their children and ensure they are kept under close watch.
2. Religious orientations, seminars, conferences should be organized to the people to clarify the misinterpretation of the word “Almajiri” and its practice.
3. There should be public enlightenment programmes to educate the Muslim families on the causes and implication of child abuse on the child.
4. Government should sensitize parents on the importance of child education.
5. Children should be sensitized of their fundamental human rights to enable them know when they are denied these rights.
6. The government should come to the aid of the masses by improving their lots economically as this would discourage them from abusing their children.
7. Nigeria should therefore, practically demonstrate her commitment to the global fight against child abuse in all its ramifications

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