THE ALMAJIRI SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF YOUYH POLICY IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR TIMES

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the principles of Youth development policy implementation at the local government level of Yobe state by focusing on the Almajiri system of education, i.e. Through observing steps and strategies adopted in the implementation of youth development policy in the state. This is pursued through applying some methods and styles in executing the policy principles. This involves monitoring and supervising the Almajiri system of education, which is attached with societal values and reflected in government programs. The paper discusses the strategies surrounding youth development and the problems involved in this development projects. The Methods adopted in this study is the survey design through data collection on the youth, who constitute half of the Yobe state population. Sampling and sampling techniques were adopted in this study. The output of the study indicates that the Almajiri youth in the society are severally neglected by parents and in government policy and programs. The study recommended to youth workers and stakeholders how to achieve this mission of youth development on the Almajiri system of education and how it can be pursued.
Keywords: *policy implementation, youth development, implementation tools, laws and programs*

INTRODUCTION

From the outset, before anything else is written, we need to openly acknowledge the importance of the youth in Nigeria. Prior to the development of a national youth policy in 1981, the role of the youth, especially the Almajiri, was taken for granted, with very little support from the government. Yet the youth constitute a special segment of the human population because the country relies on them for its future development. The youth possess some characteristics that identify them differently from the rest of human species. These characteristics include ambition, determination, energy, enthusiasm, promise and creativity in performing their duties and responsibilities in the society. These special characteristics help to guide the youth in carrying out the most difficult and physically demanding tasks in Nigerian society and enable them as the bedrock of development in our society, without whom the future of the society can suffer setbacks.

In Nigeria, it is because of these characteristics, that the youth are regarded as the potential pillars of the country's development. The National Youth Policy (2009), proclaims that the "Youth are the potential and actually the greatest investment for a country's development." They

are special assets and pillars of development and stability in nation building, because they constitute 60% of the country's population, as indicated by the headcount of 2006, and they provide 75% of the work force. Such numbers, therefore, cannot be easily ignored in any exercise aimed at the country's progress.

In this research, the central theme of the study is the implementation of youth policy, and how effectively the policy is implemented and reflected on the Almajiri. It also looks at the contributions of the youth to the development of every society. In other words, this study is to navigate the process that can lead to the smooth growth and development of young people into becoming active and useful adults in the Local Government of Yobe State. However, the problems of youth development in the African context are tumultuous and are described by Catrine (2006), as "a generation of people who have been born into a social environment in which their possibilities of living decent lives is negligible and in which many have found themselves stuck in positions of inadequate life chances and bleak prospects." Working from this viewpoint, the researcher focuses on the problems of being young in Africa and growing into acceptable adults. In the Nigerian context, the issue of youth growth and development has been the concern of every government since that policy was formulated.

It is generally accepted that young people all over the world and in every societies, whether simple or complex, make important contributions towards the development of their society. But whether they perform these roles in conformity with the rules of the society or not depends on the nature of their association with that society. Elegbele (2005) observed that "young people all over the world are a vital and important segment of the society in which they live. A disciplined, focused, and law-abiding youth can create a brighter future for any nation. Conversely, a lawless, indulgent, and violent youth is a great threat to a nation's peace and security." These views therefore, highlight youth contributions to societal development, and the need for youth policies designed towards a positive direction.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was specifically conducted to:-
1. Examine the actual tools used to determine youth development as against the designed implementation strategies in Yobe State.
2. Identify the challenges that are responsible for creating a gap between expected and actual results in the policy implementation styles in the local government areas of Yobe state.
3. To recommend new measures that can improved the performance of local governments areas in the implementation of youth development policy styles in Yobe State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this study are as follows: -

1. What are the actual tools used to determine youth development as against the designed policy implementation strategies in Yobe state?

2. What are the challenges faced in youth development that are responsible for creating a gap between expected and the actual results in the policy implementation in the local government areas of Yobe State?

3. What are the recommendations for improving youth development policy in the local government areas in Yobe state?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted is the survey design to examine the relationship between policy implementation strategy and the result recorded in the performances of policy implementers and the result of the performance on the beneficiaries. Three research questions were assessed in the study. Five categories of respondents were randomly picked from three local governments in the seventeen local government areas of Yobe State. The instruments used in collecting data are the primary and secondary sources. In the primary sources or methods of data collection the observation, and focused group discussions were the methods adopted to describe the Almajiri system of Education and Youth Policy implementation in our Local Government Areas, while in the secondary sources reviews various documents of different categories which were verified and applied. The total sample of respondents used in the primary data numbered 450 youth, parents and youth workers. These numbers represented the respondent's total number of the population and the observed values stand as input for this study.

The study discusses the result of the findings by viewing characteristics of policy implementation strategy and the activities of some youth and the relationship of these youth to the policy implementation styles and the Almajiri system of education, by observing the roles of others, like parents, society and government youth workers in actions.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results are presented in the tables below in line with the research questions.

Research Question One: What are the actual tools used to determine youth development as against the designed policy implementation strategies in Yobe State?

Determining the Value of tools	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondent
Disagreeing with tools	205	82%
Disagreeing with performance	192	76.8%
Disagreeing with facilities	242	96.8%
Disagreeing with obstacles	210	84%

In determining the tools applied in the policy implementation, we observed rewards, punishments, and the state laws (Edicts) on this category of youth, the Almajiri. 82% of the respondents do not agree that the process considered in the implementation of the policy does not

apply these tools appropriately on the Almajiri system of education, he does not know any reward, punishment or laws that favors their educations. 76.8% of the respondents consider that Almajiri youth are not considered in the implementation of policy practices and thus, the almajiri youth is seen as a nuisance on all aspects of youth development. 96.8% believes that the facilities applied in the implementation of a policy such as school buildings, accommodations, play ground etc are not provide for Almajiri by any tier of government in its system of education. 84% of the respondents believe that there is no obstacle in the policy and the strategies for implementation, but the obstacles appear due to carelessness and neglect of the government, this therefore, generate general reactions from the Almajiri, in the forms of hatred around people in the society, to which they considered them as bias to their growth and development. Generally most of the people believes that there is no fairness in the in the policy implementation styles on these categories of young people, the Almajiri.

Research question two: What factors can we hold is responsible for the gap in the implementation of this youth development policy in Yobe State?

TABLE 2: Responses of Respondents on the factors challenging the implementation of youth development and the Almajiri system of Education

Challenges of Machineries on implementation styles	Respondents	Percentage of Response	Degree of Responses
tools	24	26.6%	95.76^0
Methods	22	24.4%	87.84^0
Facilities	21	23.3%	83.88^0
Obstacles	23	25.5%	91.8^0
Total	90	100%	360°

Table 2 above indicates the responses of 90 respondents regarding the relationship of youth in public schools and their attitude, behavior and habits towards youth development and the machinery of youth development, and the possible challenges faced in the process of implementation. Those who agree with the challenges of the implementation through the following: the implementation working tools, the methods of implementation, the facilities used in the implementation and the obstacles faced by workers during the youth development implementation process, such as the use of wrong information on the policy, lack of awareness in relations to the performances of the policy implementation machinery etc. This study indicates that the relationship between the policy implementers and the use of tools, such as school programs, clubs and associations etc, in the performances of the youth work shows that 26.6% of the responses opined that the tools offered for policy implementation are the best measure of youth development, but the problems is that they are not respected. These include the use of rules and regulations, rewards offered for excellent performances, punishment meted out to law breakers and offenders, and constant supervision and monitoring on the tools are not meted. 24.4% agreed that the method of implementation should involve the participation of all participants who will benefit the policy; this includes sincere government commitments to youth

development projects, as well as parental and societal encouragement to support it but it is not carried out. 23.3% of other respondents insisted that youth development target for proper human development through the use of facilities such as training youth workers and discouraging the exit of experienced ones with appropriate and good reimbursement towards societal goals, but they insist that this is not done. And finally the remaining 25.5% of the respondents believe that youth development project faces number of obstacles that must be tackled first. For example in the words of Onyekpe (2007) "Nigeria did not allocate much to the needs of the youth, and the meager allocations were diverted by government officials into private accounts" and this lead to what Todaro (2009) perceived as a way to poverty, unemployment and inequality, and if these are not overcome, the problems of development cannot be solved. These clearly shows that youth development faced serious obstacles that are not addressed, thus how can youth development exercises succeed? These indicate that the factors we hold responsible for development has a series of gap in the implementation.

Research Question Three: What steps or measures can our local government take to reduce these gaps in the implementation and promotions of this policy?

Table 2

PIE CHART
DEGREE OF PERFORMANCE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

95.76   87.84

Tools   facilities

91.8   83.88 obstacles   methods

mmm88

87.84

97.8

83.88

From the chart above, which indicates the four characteristics involved in the policy implementation process, it reflected the policy implementation tools, the methods or strategies required in the implementation, facilities involved and the possible obstacles that can be identified in the process of implementation. In this regard all these characteristics must be observed and married with different degrees of acceptance, it reflects the opinion and views of respondents, with varied degree of implementation, and the steps agreed upon on this degee, with both the norms and values of the society in order to succeed. In other words it is a combination of agreed related parts organized into a complex whole. The detachment of any part from the system in the operation of the policy implementation will generate failure in the mission of youth development implementation exercise, this subsequently can lead to a continuous demand for more strategies in order to always to solve it.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The numerous initiatives, reviews, reforms and updating of youth policy undertaken in this country and reflected at various levels of governance were meant to moderate the instinctual responses and actions of the youth and to positively enhance their status in the discharge of their assigned roles, functions and responsibilities, so as to ensure their self development. In other words, it is meant to influence the youth to achieve the societal goals. But unfortunately, these objectives seem unattainable both by the youth, the society and the government. This is because the implementation machinery at the local government level in Yobe State is confronted by peculiar problems such as the acceptability of the youth Almajiri, the role of tools in the implementation of youth policy, the facilities applicable to the agreed terms with norms, tradition, values and beliefs of the society which sometimes are in direct contradiction with youth policies. For example, it is difficult to reconcile the uncertain relationships between social

beliefs such as Islam, Christianity and traditionalism with regard to youth development, policy implementation and the actions of the youth relating to those beliefs. These problems make it difficult to implement the policy effectively. Hence, this measures for government intervention to assist the youth; they foment more upheavals and create further confusions among the youth. As a result of this, therefore, in executing and implementing the policy implementation machinery appropriately in the society, it faces many challenges. For example, the laws seem to become stagnant in the society either due to societal beliefs regarding the implementing machinery or the level of ignorance in the society. These problems, therefore, generate rebellious reaction from the youth and as a result create a poor relationship between the youth, stakeholders and the society to the extent that opportunistic youth workers see youth development programs as an opening or chance to benefit from the facilities earmarked for youth work and so embezzles the funds. This creates an unfortunate situation and disparity between the elites and their families on one hand and the remaining population on the other. Because the society continues to believe that nothing in government and youth programs can benefit them. This therefore, gives a wrong impression to the majority of the population, specifically the poor and the unemployed and those treated with disrespect. They see the program as an intrusion of the society and instead they attach themselves more firmly to their beliefs, e.g. the almajiri system of education, rather than recognizing the value and importance of youth development programs they attaches themselves more to their beliefs.

The study discovered that efforts at preparing the youth for a smooth future life face a number of obstacles in the society, as put forward by Seers in the work of Todaro (2009); he observed that the obstacles to development are summed up in three questions that must be answered positively. These questions are "what is happening to unemployment? What is happening to poverty? And what is happening to inequality?" If the three questions are answered in the affirmative that shows there is development. However from the literature reviews in this write up (which are reflections of the research hypothesis), it has shown that man is a selfish animal in the struggle for survival. His political and economic desires for power influence him to create problems of domination in many things in life just to justify his wants. This makes him to act contrary to rules and regulations. So he never cares for the suffering of others, in fact, in the words of Dr. Garba, A (1998), this encourages and makes him to become a "clever devil" because of his desire.

The youth policy implementation process, as earlier recorded, has mixed results in Yobe as proven by the test of the hypotheses above. This results in the neglect of implementation process, which generated the rise of reactive and restive groups like the Duan, Orgy and Katafawa who challenge all forms of authority in the state. It is indicative of the failures of the programme. For example, 25.5% of the youth responded that there is a problem about policy implementation tools, which result in poverty and unemployment among the youth which become a dominant factor. This has forced some people in the society to neglect their roles and responsibility over their wards. For example, every father knows his functions, responsibilities and roles in child upbringing, yet some send the children off to almajiri centers of education at a tender age; there the child starts feeding and clothing himself, while the parents hardly care to know how this

child survives. Unfortunately no law in Yobe state binds them (the almajiri parents) or deters them from such acts. In this way, the ALMAJIRI (i.e. Qur'an reciting student) system education and youth development process creates a lot of challenges. For example, the children survive on wasted and discarded food, they live and work in the most wretched environments imaginable which never cares about their survival. Besides they are excluded by government from many development programmes and projects such as public schools and recreational centers where the government provides conducive environment for studies and other recreational activities and neglected them in their career endeavors, as these sets of youth, the almajiri graduate, cannot work in the police, army, offices or participate in politics as it requires certificate.

These actions of neglect make them (the almajiri) an easy institution and victim to all forms of manipulation by degenerate people such as prostitute; garage touts into committing all forms of despicable acts. The neglected youth in the society are forced to remain ignorant of many things about government programmes and deliberately break laws. They act contrary to many laws because of their orientation and negative notions, and are on the other hand, partially discouraged from politics and social relations with other categories of youth in the society, on the advice of their instructors (MALLAMS). Finally, because they are poor they are unable to participate in many economic activities. Yet paradoxically the neglected youth surreptitiously envy government programmes which provide employment chances for many other categories of youth who had opportunities and good western education, which they, e.g. the almajiri who had MAKARANTAR ALLO i.e. a rote learning school, are lacking. Hence poverty and unemployment become increasingly rampant among them. This makes them to believe that they were deliberately neglected and isolated from the several government programmes, but the truth is that their stubborn beliefs and refusal to accept modernization training are the causes of the state they find themselves in. Although the policy implementation process observed above, is designed with a sincere intention to improve the development of the youth, not all envisaged benefiting from the exercise do so, as can be seen in the case of the almajiri. This system, therefore, is partially a failure in the local governments under studies in Yobe state as can be deduced from the views and opinions of participants presented above. This generates more problems of hatred and the desire to destroy government property as a kind of revenge on the society at large, especially the wealthy and the western educated elite.

The almajiri youth, among the neglected youth, on the other hand, consider and see those Muslims who had western education as well as the Christian religion as being loved, trusted and pampered with employment chances by the government, while they are completely neglected, isolated and relegated. Thus a conflict of thoughts arises among the two categories of youth in the society and generates a silent hatred. This unfortunately encourages those who had western education not to act positively towards the neglected youth with love i.e. by providing a fair distribution of resources; instead they swindle government resources and incentives and act as local elites eager to feather their own nest at the expense of all others. And they make the social stratification more confusing and pronounced by their taste e.g. cherishing the European dress,

language, economic system, political education and social policy. This therefore, has produced different classes of people in our society and thus intensified the stratification of the society the more. It has made those who had western education abandon their farm to become slaves of their taste, even if there is no employment for them. And illiteracy, hunger, poverty and ignorance among those who had no means of government employment devastate many in the society and make them act contrary to societal ethics. The question is "if two people of different status are living together in the same environment, one in a beautiful house with a beautiful wife and loved children who attend private schools, ride in cars, while the other sets of youth are seen in shabby and, rough dresses and live in rented and poorly built homes with his children, who if they have the chance, attend poor public school, with uncared for teachers. What will happen? The instinct that urges a slave to massacre his master can urge the oppressed to attack the oppressors, an instinct to fight poverty for the fear of losing dear life. Hence poverty to them is a license to indulge in crime, and is sufficient reason for not having a cared education. It is only under a calm atmosphere of security that human society develops. This proves that the youth are the tools and instruments of development.

In a nutshell, the policy is drawn with accompanying laws, and strategies as incentives to guide youth workers and stakeholders to make the youth feel the impact of government programs that are intended for their development and that of the society. But now the question is, have these inputs had any impact on youth development? The answer is no, because reviews of records on youth development in Yobe State local government indicate that there is a problem on youth development. Unfortunately the results of the research have proven that there is no significant relationship between the records and the actual performance of youth in their development, because records are manufactured by greedy workers to accumulate money. This was shown in the changes identified in different categories of youth, with some pampered while others were left to struggle through life with pain and hardship. In this concluding chapter, the study presents a summary of the findings, conclusion.

CONCLUSION
The study discusses the result of the findings by viewing characteristics of policy implementation strategy and the activities of some youth and their relationship to policy implementation styles through the roles of others, like parents, society and government actions. Therefore, there is one sufficient evidence in this study that explain that a positive results on policy implementation depend on the performance of stakeholders who use all the characteristics of policy implementation machineries

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings in this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations to policy users as well as youth stakeholders in all the local government areas under the state governments. For example, the study discover that there are five stages in policy implementation and recommends these five stages as steps in the youth development policy implementation and that society should adhere to it. They are as follows:-

Step 1:The policy should have in place, an action plan with a set up theoretical proposals on how to reach a target or set up goals on the reason why a policy is formulated.

Step 2: the policy should accomodate laws on how to support the goals of the policy and these laws should interpreted the policy into rules and regulations on how it will (be required to) help in pursuing the goals of the environment.

Step 3: also there should be designed programs accompanying the law, that is in order for the law in the policy to support youth development in the society. This will guide stakeholders in pursuing the policy goals through the designed programs.

Step 4: In this step and with the aid of the two steps above i.e. step two and three, there should be designed schedules of duties in this step in order to place personnel's appropriately on the policy implementation exercise. This will help in directing them (the personnel) in implementing the policy, i.e. through the use of rules and regulations in step two and the use of sufficient programs as earmarked in step three above, this will ensure the progress of the policy programs.

Step 5: In this step and the final stage of the implementation, there should be designed methods of evaluation of the personnel or workers, which should include monitoring and supervisions of their roles and functions in the work, and that is by offering rewards and punishment where appropriate.

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