

**TITLE PAGE**

**THE POLITICS OF STREET BEGGING IN NIGERIA  
(A Case Study of Sokoto North Local Government)**

**BY**

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, USMANU  
DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN  
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**OCTOBER, 2015.**

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

This is to certify that this research work has been carefully supervised and approved as meeting part of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Degree in Political Science, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my beloved uncle, Dr. Tajudeen Bolajoko, for his support throughout my degree programme and for his efforts towards the completion of this project. May almighty Allah continue to bless him and protect him.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

All praise is accorded to Almighty Allah (SWT) for giving me life and seeing me through this academic hurdle successfully. My appreciation and gratitude goes to my project supervisor – Prof. S.S. Muhammad and Mallam Danjuma for the utmost supervision and necessary supports and encouragement I enjoyed from them which indeed gave birth to the successful completion of this research work. Your contributions towards adding sauce to my work would forever be remembered.

My profound gratitude and sincere appreciation goes to my parent- Alhaji Abdulhamid Usman and Hajiya Aulat Usman for bringing me to the surface of this earth and offering unquantifiable guidance towards making me a useful and reasonable being to the womenfolk. For your supports-spiritually, morally and financially, I offer a great deal of appreciation.

Also worthy of my acknowledgement is the superb mentorship I enjoyed from the world best uncle – Dr. Tajudeen Bolajoko for standing by me whenever the need arises. His supports and advice have been an active ingredients towards the attainment of this academic feat. Also to his lovely wife- Mrs. Rashidat Bolajoko and their entire household. May almighty Allah in His infinite mercies continue to be with them, perfect their ways and bless them all. I am indeed grateful.

Courtesy would not forgive me if I fail to acknowledge the support of my fiancé –Sa’eed Yusuf for his valuable advise and

encouragement. I pray may the bond of love the bind us together never fade out amin.

I would also not fail to acknowledge the wonderful company I have enjoyed from my brothers and sisters who are with no atom of doubt the true definition of brotherhood. The likes of Abdullahi Usman, Sheriffdeen Usman, Basirat Usman, Nafisat Usman, Sekinat Usman, Lawal Bolajoko, Munirat, Ibrahim Bolajoko among others can never be forgotten in my life. My late sister- Hanifat Hamza is also remembered, may almighty Allah forgives her transgressions and make Jannatul Firadaus her final abode. Amin.

The warmth and hospitable treatments I enjoyed from friends, colleagues, lovely ones and well-wishers also deserve my acknowledge. These incredible individuals among others are Samira Isiaka, Sulaiman Aliyu Ka'oje, Rabiya Ishola, Faruk Yusuf, Zainab Ibrahim, Fatima S. Bello, Saidat Adeboye, Adamu Adamu, Musa Aliyu, Binta Yakubu, Abdul Sobur Adamu and Zakariyyahu Azumi My profound gratitude goes to my uncle Dr. Tajudeen Bolajoko and his wife Mrs. Rashidat Bolajoko

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Begging on the streets, in the urban centers is one of the age-long activities and perhaps occupations of the highly vulnerable, poverty-ridden individuals in the society. This is particularly not limited to the developing countries alone. As revealed in the studies of different scholars, begging is not peculiar to developing countries; it is a universal phenomenon (Ado, 1997) and a global urban problem. While a considerable number of cities were identified in the US and Mexico as having a significant level of begging activity (Smith, 2005), cities in China, especially Shanghai, have been described as homes of different categories of beggars (including the poor, the disabled, the homeless and professional beggars), which are described as “liumin” (floating people) or “youmin”(wandering people) (Hanchao, Lu, 1999).

In India, begging is seen as a pride as beggars are seen posing as someone famous. The situation is not so different in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa, where beggars are seen at junctions all over the city. In cities of Britain and similar industrialized



countries in the recent years, begging has become highly visible (Jordan, 1999). Those of Mexico, as reported by Fabriga (1971) and cited in Adedibu (1989) are not left out in this negative scenario.

The situation in Nigerian cities as observed everyday is perhaps worse with different categories of beggars found at motor parks, religious centers, markets, road junctions, venues of ceremonies, among other public places begging for alms (Ojo, 2005). Cities across the world are confronted with diverse and complex problems which have socio-economic and physical implications for cities' dwellers. These problems as experienced by cities of less developed countries are enormous and multidimensional in nature. One obvious manifestation of these problems, especially in Nigeria, is begging, that is the act of asking people for money, food, clothes, etc. (Jelili, 2006).

The problem of begging is a social menace which has a negative implication not only for cities' economies, socio-physical environment but also for beggars themselves. The increasing population of beggars in Nigerian cities constitute an eyesore or environmental nuisance and health hazards, particularly those carrying infectious and contagious diseases (Egeonu, 1988).

Begging has serious implication for the city and national economy as beggars are not economically productive in any way since they contribute nothing to the economy. It leads not only to social relegation of the city but also to that of beggars as well as stigmatization of the class of people and their relatives. The problem has also arrested the attention of governments at various levels. For instance, the Lagos state government made efforts to tackle the problem of begging in Lagos by building rehabilitation centres to cater for beggars (Okoli, 1993). The media is not left out in this war against this menace as Newspapers occasionally report the problems associated with begging in lead articles (The Associated Press, 2008; Daily Triumph, 2010).

From the commercial city of Kano it was reported that the government was concluding arrangements to storm the streets in search of a particular set of individuals who are after all not elusive(The Associated Press, 2008; Daily Triumph, 2010). The government is fashioning out necessary legal backing to legitimize its audacious pursuit which will kick-start any moment from now. Thus, the government is doing, by sending and executive bill to the state legislative arm; initiating a process that will culminates in

probable enactment of a law criminalizing the said practice, (The Royal Times, 2014).

It is unfortunate, however, that despite the effort of scholars, governments, media and national and international organizations, the problem of begging continues unabated in Nigerian cities. Although, the problem of begging is a worldwide phenomenon, it is more pronounced in the third world countries. This is true of Nigeria where different categories of beggars are conspicuously found in motor parks, religious worship, markets, road junctions, venues of ceremonies among other public places begging for alms (Jelili, 2006).

These categories of beggars include the disabled, the poor, and the destitute and to a considerable extent the able-bodied, healthy and physically strong individuals who take the advantage of the sympathy of the society for them to remain jobless and at times perpetrate evils (like crime) in the name of begging in the street. The issue is that those who engage in begging have one reason or the other to support their stand. To the easily recognized beggars, however, the problem of socio-economic maladies and physical

disability are often the claim as articulated or implied in their approach to begging.

However, of all those identified factors, poverty and physical disability are most visible in Nigeria. For instance, an estimate by World Bank indicates that over 45% of the country's population live below poverty level while about two-third (2/3) of this group are extremely poor. Therefore, in order to meet their basic needs, some of the poverty stricken people resort into begging as a major means of livelihood. Also from empirical evidences, physically disabled beggars constitute the bulk of identified beggars in Nigeria (Ogunkan, 2009).

However, it is imperative to state that the increasing incidence of beggars in Nigerian cities is not only due to poverty and physical disability but also to the fact that majority of the beggars are satisfied with the "job" (Jelili, 2006). Some have become very rich from begging, that they have acquired buses and houses, yet they always appear wretched so as to draw sympathy from the general public (KSRB, 1997). The presence of fake beggars and begging criminals has not helped the situation and may be dangerous to the society.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The attentions of Political Scientists, Sociologists, Geographers, Urban Economists, and other policy formulators have been drawn to the problem of begging in Nigeria. The population of beggars on Nigerian streets is growing exponentially. Beggars are highly visible in public places, commercial centers, residential neighbourhood (Osagbemi, 2001) and worse still on campuses and inside buses. The potential threat of begging to Nigerian societal fabric is obvious in its negative implications to social, environmental and economic survival of the country.

Beggars constitute social threat to Nigerian society especially in the cities. They portray a bad image to outsiders or strangers. Some criminals hide under the guise of begging to perpetrate their evil deeds. They are at times used as instruments by mischief makers, who use them to vandalise public properties and utilities built with nation's resources (NCFWD, 2001). The nefarious activities of those fake beggars such as criminals, area boys and thugs constitute one of the sources of civil unrest to the city dwellers. Begging also constitutes economic threat to the society as

beggars are not economically productive in any way since they contribute nothing to national economy (Adedibu, 1989).

The city and national economy is retarded as considerable proportion of beggars population depend on the already overstretched workforce. The environmental implications of begging is made manifest not only in beggars' tendency to obstruct free flow of human and vehicular traffic but also their high tendency to generate dirty materials either as waste or as part of their belongings to their regular routes and stations. Although, the negative implications of begging discussed above have generated research efforts of various scholars, much has not been done on the social aetiology of this social phenomenon.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- i. What factors can be held responsible for begging in Sokoto North Local Government Area?
- ii. To what extent does begging constitutes a social problem in Sokoto North Local Government Area?
- iii. What categories of people mostly engage in the street begging?
- iv. Are there any concrete efforts from the stakeholders in addressing the menace of begging in the society?

- v. What other effective means of solving street begging are there for the society to rid itself of the menace?

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The major aim of this study is to explore the nature of begging as it constitutes a social problem in Nigeria as a whole and Sokoto North Local Government Area in particular. Other objectives of the study are identified as follows;

- i. To find out the main factors responsible for street begging in Sokoto North Local Government Area.
- ii. To identify the extent to which street begging constitutes a social problem in Sokoto North Local Government Area.
- iii. To know the categories of people mostly engaged in street begging.
- iv. To find out efforts by stakeholders in addressing the menace of street begging in the society.
- v. To suggest effective means of solving street begging and beggars problem in the society as a whole.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study on street begging and how it constitutes a social problem is of great importance to the society as a whole. This study

will dig deep into the menace of begging and its attendant problems with the aim of developing alternative solutions to reform the structure of the society. But more precisely, the study is significant to policy makers at all level as it will provides them with sound insight into the socio-economic political implication of the street begging in the society. It will also significant to the academic cycles as some research gaps are covered. The study will equally be beneficial to the researcher as will widen his understanding of the nature, category, dimension as well as the attendant problems do arises from street begging.

## **1.6 Literature Review**

Literature review focuses on the review relevant works of studies conducted in the area by different scholars with the sole aim of begging of generating rich information on the social problem associated with street begging in general. Other relevant concepts associated with street begging are also captured and discussed.

A convenient starting point for discussing issues on begging is to attempt, define and clarify the ambiguity associated with the definitions of begging. Generally speaking, “To beg” is to approach somebody for help. Though, this definition provides a foundation



meaning of begging, it cannot be passed for a working definition begging.

Kennedy and Fitzpatrick (2001) define begging simply as “asking passersby for money in a public place”. This definition is not comprehensive enough to reflect all activities of the beggars. For instance, beggars may approach people not necessarily for money alone but also for food, clothes etc and this activity may not necessarily take place in public places, it may take place anywhere.

Jelili (2006) presents begging as the act of asking people for money, food, and clothes etc as gifts or charity. He conceptualizes begging to involve not only individual but also organizations or countries which he tags “corporate begging”. For the purpose of this study, we shall rely on this definition, however, the conceptualized here as street and house to house begging. This will assist in reflecting the image of begging and its implication for the social, economic and environmental survival of the country.

The existing literature on poverty has it that a universally acceptable definition of poverty remains elusive, because it is more easily recognized than defined (Mafimisebi, 2002).

This is why a wide variety of definitions have been put forward to reflect different dimensions or contexts within which it is defined. In general, however, two approaches of defining the concept are observed in the literature. First, poverty is observed in either absolute sense or relative sense. In absolute sense, poverty is seen, according to Akinbola (2002), as a state of not having or not being able to get the necessities of life; it is the situation of lack of access to resources needed to obtain the minimum necessities required to maintain physical efficiency (Okunmadewa, 2001).

Second, from its multidimensional perspectives, poverty is seen as a physiological deprivation, a social deprivation refers to poverty of income and basic human needs. Social deprivation, on the other hand, refers to the lack of basic capabilities to live along and healthy life with freedom or lack of resources required for participation in social activities. Human deprivation, on the other hand, is denial of right and freedom or lack of dignity, self-respect, security and justice (Mafimisebi, 2002).

Due to the interrelationships among these various dimensions and approaches to defining poverty and for comparison purpose, the global community has adopted income as a measure; and by

this measure, an income of one US dollar per day per person is observed to indicate poverty. Begging has been variously conceptualized by scholars to reflect different ways and reasons for begging.

In the words of Jelili (2006) “to beg” is to simply ask people – for money, food, clothes etc as a gift or charity. He conceptualizes begging to involve not only individuals but organizations or countries. In Wikipedia (2009), begging is presented as requesting something in a supplicating manner with the implication that person who is begging will suffer emotional or physical harm. Like Jelili (2006), Wikipedia (2009) also agrees that the term is applicable not only to individuals but to groups. Some scholars use the term mendicancy, vagrancy, panhandling, sponging to reflect means and for begging. While panhandling and sponging are synonymous with street begging, mendicancy and vagrancy connote more than street begging. Mendicancy refers to an act of begging usually associated with religious belief; vagrancy is used to describe the begging activities of jobless, homeless, and wanderers or vagabond (Hanchao, 1999).

Whatever term used: street begging, panhandling, sponging, mendicancy or vagrancy, it has its root in the general idea of asking people for money, food, clothes etc. the problem of begging is a universal phenomenon which has generated issues both in developed and developing countries but it is prevalent and least attended to in developing countries (Adedibu, 1989). The situation in Nigeria is appreciated with different categories of beggars found at motor parts, religious worship centers, markets, road junctions, venue of ceremonies and worst still on the campuses (Jelili, 2006).

The problems of begging in the third worlds are similar and a thorough knowledge of one may lead to understanding of the situation in another. For example, the situation in Nigeria and Mexico reveal similarities in problems and reasons for begging (Adedibu, 1989).

A considerable number of factors have been identified by different schools of thoughts in begging as influencing begging in cities. These factors identified at different times and in different localities are closely related to one another (Jelili, 2006).

In China, a Chinese Shanghai based Christian organization identified five major factors influencing begging as: national

disaster; civil war; handicaps and diseases; bad habits, and family heritage (Hanchao Lu, 1999), while Jiang and Wu (1933) observe such factors as uncontrolled rural-urban migration; national disaster; war banditry; bankruptcy; unemployment; disabilities; dysfunctional family and so on may lead to begging.

In Mexico, begging is seen as a result of economic necessity and as a traditional activity associated with the city's religion and political life (Adedibu, 1989). Fabregas (1971) in his research identified reasons for begging as physical deformities or incapacitation, medical illness, laziness, psychiatric disabilities and old age.

In Nigeria, Adedibu (1989) identifies thirteen closely related factors influencing begging in Nigerian cities. These include: physical disability, unemployment, religious belief, old age, lack of caring relatives, and lack of rehabilitation centre. Others are poverty, uncontrolled migration, lack of education, place of origin, lack of adequate residence, accident, and acceptability of begging in society. Jelili (2006) identifies physical disability, unemployment, and old age as factors influencing begging. NCFWD (2001) also identifies six reasons for begging. These are lack of

parental/guardian support, lack of parental/guardian neglect, poverty, disability, socio-cultural misconception, and lack of parental education.

A close examination of these factors reveals that they appear similar and one or more of them may be reason(s) for taking to begging. However, these vary among beggars to reflect different categories of beggars. Scholars have made suggestions in combating the menace of begging in cities of Nigeria in particular and third world countries in general.

While Okediji and Sofolu (1972) suggests rehabilitation, Adedibu makes case for anti begging regulations, shelter and productive employment in the cities. Oladepo (2006) canvasses for the involvement of government and non-government agencies in tackling the problem of begging. Jelili (2006) makes an all embracing suggestions as he calls on government, corporate organizations, individuals, religious groups and community associations to rise together and tackle the menace of begging.

Ogunkan (2009) emphasizes the roles of individuals and mass media in educating and sensitizing the public on the negative consequences of begging. While, those suggestions are laudable, the

achievements recorded in implementing them are minimal. This is because begging has taken a new dimension. Rather than seeing begging as a product of chronic poverty or physical handicap, some people take begging as a profession-a means of earning livelihood.

Begging has gone beyond seeing pitiable wretched, poverty ridden and physically handicapped street person begging for alms to survive. It has also involved a well-dressed, able bodied men and women in street and at public places using different styles to beg for alms. Jelili (2006) observes that these people have relatively stable and family ties but see begging as a profitable business or profession. Some have even gone to the extent of creating a personal websites to beg for alms (Ogunkan, 2009).

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this study, Marxian theory will be adopted as the theoretical framework upon which the whole work will be based. This theory is founded by Karl Marx and Engels in their attempt to study the social relation among men from a class perspective. They identified the class of the haves and that is the have not. From this perspective, poverty in capitalist society like Nigeria is a manifestation of system of inequality – an inherent

feature of capitalism. Karl Marx's works provide a philosophy upon which conflict theory rests.

According to Marx, in a capitalist society, wealth is concentrated in the hands of a minority class while the laboring classes are forced to sell their power in return for wages in the open market. It is through the expansion of Marx's work that sociologists now apply conflict theory to all aspects of society. Marx's analysis of capitalism society was modified to apply to modern capitalism by Dahrendorf (1959).

In modern capitalism, he classifies not only the bourgeoisie, legislators, the judiciary and heads of government bureaucracies and other as the most powerful groups in the society thereby merging Marx's emphasis on class conflict with Weber recognition of power as an important element of stratification (Cuff *et al.*, 1990).

Marxist approach to the study of class is useful in stressing the important of stratification as a determinant of social behavior and as observed by Gerth and Mills (1958), the existence of social problems, like begging, is a product of unequal access to life chances that is, people's opportunities to provide themselves with material goods, positive living. By implication, the existence of



beggars in Nigeria reflects inequality generated by capitalism. Then, the question is, what are the governments doing to address the problem of begging in Nigeria? Adedibu (1989) answers this question when he affirms that government has not made any meaningful provision to address the problem of begging in Nigeria. He observes that instead of government to rehabilitate beggars by offering them shelter and productive employment, they are cleared off the streets during international meetings which brings nationals from developed countries to Nigeria. But after such meetings, beggars return to streets.

It is unfortunate that government could not take care of the socio-economic, health and mental rehabilitations of beggars while expending huge amount of funds to programmes that benefit the rich and political class. This treatment of the beggars by the government gives credence to the belief of the Marxists that the existence of social problem is the reflection of exploitation and oppression of the powerful class over the disadvantaged.

### **1.8 Assumption of the Study**

- i. Illiteracy level in the Nigeria contributes to the precipitation of street begging in the Sokoto North Local Government Area.

- ii. There is manipulation of religion to encourage street begging in Sokoto North Local Government Area.
- iii. Street begging is the only chance of survival to the beggars.

## **1.9 Methodology**

The study employs the interview for data collection. Interview is a face to face conversation used to gather information in a survey. According to Kennedy (2001), Interview is a face to face conversation between or more people.

This research will depend on both primary and secondary source of data collection. Primary source are data obtained either through interview or questionnaire the secondary sources are data obtained from publications such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines and articles etc.

## **1.10 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study covers a period of ten years from 2003-2013. The major focus of the study is to examine the factors that influence street begging in Hausa societies in general and Zaria local government in particular.

The research is expected to face limitations in the course of conducting it. The researcher is faced with the difficulty of drafting

questionnaire that is administered to street beggars most of whom could neither read nor write. The researcher therefore has to embark on reading out the questionnaire to them and also filled in with the information sourced from them. There is equally the financial limitation encountered by the researcher in travelling from school to the area under study (Zaria) with the sole aim of generating first hand information from the street beggars there. In so doing, other academic schedules has to be sacrificed. That notwithstanding, the study on the topic is a great success.

### **1.11 Chapterisation**

The entire study comprises of four chapters. In chapter one, the research topic is introduced, statement of the problems, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, assumption of the study, methodology, scope and limitation of the study, definition and operationalisation of concepts, and chapterisation. Chapter two digs into the historical background of Zaria being the area under study. While the final chapter covers the summary of the study, its conclusion and recommendation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.1 Historical Background of Sokoto North Local Government Area**

Sokoto North Local Government area was created on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1996, along with other 182 local governments nationwide. It was carved out of the present Sokoto State and it shares boundaries with Wurno, Sokoto South, Wamakko, and Kware. Sokoto North like any other local governments in Nigeria emerged as a result of change and reforms made by the Federal government. It is one of the local government created by the former Head of State Late General Sani Abacha, following the submission of the report of the committee for the creation of state and local government areas and adjustment headed by Chief Arthur Mbanefo. Sokoto North Local Government is characterized by dense population of 232,846 as at 2006 census, well defined territory, home for other tribes and religions other than Islam and living at harmony with one another. Also, the local government is one of the commercial centres in the State with the presence of small and medium scale enterprises in the area.

However, 99% of the population in the local government are Muslims, whose major tribes includes Hausa, Fulani's, Adamawa, as well as Zabarmawa.

The administrative arrangement of Sokoto North local government is hierarchical in nature; the office of the chairman is the highest administrative office that controls the entire administrative activities of the local government, hence all the affairs concerning local government are presided over by the chairman of the local government. Other officials who help him in carrying out the day to day activities include the Deputy Chairman, Secretary who serves as the administrative adviser and coordinator of the local government activities and Director of personnel management who is in charge of all matters concerning workers of the local government authority.

The local government has six departments which include the administrative department, health department, finance department, works department, and agricultural department. In each of the departments, there is a supervisory councilor who serves as the supervisor of the department and Deputy Director who can act on behalf of the Director when the need arises.

### **2.1.1 Political Wards of Sokoto North LGA**

Politically, Sokoto North Local Government Area is made up of Shiyar Faru, Shiyar S/Fawa, Yarsakke, Assada, Nufawa, Helele, S/anda, S/Dankura, S/Saraki, S/Tako, Unguwar Makafi, and Zoramawa. Political activities in this area are conducted or divided among wards line namely;

- Sarkin Muslim A
- Sarkin Muslim B
- Waziri A
- Waziri B
- Waziri C
- Magajin Gari A
- Magajin Gari B
- Magajin Rafi A
- Magajin Rafi B
- Sarkin Adar Gandu
- Sarkin Adar Gidan Igwai

At each ward, there is a ward head known as Hakimi or Mal. Unguwa and one councilor to represent each ward.

### **2.1.2 Health**

Official sources from the local government area reveals that the local government is served by 12 hospitals, some of which are privately owned with maternity clinics, while some are state government owned, like one of the good hospitals in the state is women children welfare clinic (WCWC), Noma Children Hospital, Runjin Sambo within the local government. However, the local government are said to have very few medical personnel being served by about 126 staffs of different categories. The local government is blessed with some pharmacies patronize as health centres. Attempts have been made by the local government area to improve the status of the available primary health centres by providing drugs which are grossly inadequate. At the time of the stakeholders meeting, the representative of the health sector argued that drugs were supplied twice in 2011 and 2012 to the health centres of the local government area.

### **2.1.3 Economic Activities**

Majority of the populace in Sokoto North Local Government Area are traders while about 20% are farmers, with the availability of fertile soil for cultivation and other economic activities like dyeing

and tanning. Agricultural products in Sokoto North Local Government area include, millet, beans, hide and skins, tomatoes, livestock, and vegetables, potatoes, onion, maize, cassava etc. discussions with officials of the department of agriculture in the local government area and some farmers showed that there is reasonable use of fertilizer by reasonable number of farmers in the local government area, all thanks to present and past administrations for the provision of fertilizer to reasonable number of farmers in the local government area at the rate of N2,000 per bag with the option of paying by providing N2000 worth of whatever the farmer produces, to be kept in government stores for recycling during food scarcity. Most of the farmers produce in excess, but do not have the storage facilities to preserve their grains, farmers produce in modern equipment to use in their farms and majority of the farmers are old and weak while the youths are in the urban centres in search of jobs that are not readily available.

Other economic activities as mentioned earlier include tanning, dyeing. Like the typical small scale and informal sector in the country, this sector in Sokoto North local government area suffers from neglect, lack of finance, shortage of raw materials, lack



of basic management and accounting skills, outdated production methods, lack of machinery, lack of adequate power and water scarcity.

#### **2.1.4 Education**

Sokoto North Local Government Area has 21 primary schools made up 11 private primary schools, and 10 public primary schools; 10 secondary schools according to figures obtained from the local government authority with the presence of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto which made Sokoto North local Government area one of the institutional centres in the state.

#### **2.1.5 Tourist Attraction**

There are a number of tourist locations in Sokoto North Local Government Area, namely; Hubbaren Shehu (the tomb of Usman Danfodiyo and tomb of past sultans of Sokoto and Shehu's allies. Muslims come from all over the world to pay homage to the late Shehu Usman Danfodiyo's tomb up till date. And some of the reconstructed gates of an ancient Sokoto city like the Kofar Rini, Kofar Kware, Kofar Marke.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **BEGGING IN SOKOTO NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT: ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE FIELD WORK**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Begging is an age-long social problem in Sokoto North Local Government. As Maishanu (2006) puts it, the issue of street begging is more common among indigenes of the far North in general and those of Sokoto State in particular. The begging syndrome in Sokoto North area is not only that of young school boys going in the evenings to get their plates of food filled just for that evenings and retire peacefully to their abodes but also that of adult destitute from all the major roads in the area.

Teenage beggars or Almajiris is very rampant in Sokoto North Local Government. These teenage beggars attend school in the morning and take to the streets in the afternoon and evening for begging.

In the view of Galadanci (2007) Islam lays much emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and encourages students to go out in search of knowledge and this explains why Muslim parent send their children from different parts of the state to Sokoto North area

to learn Islamic and Arabic education. Though Islam instructs followers to go and seek for knowledge far and near. It didn't say parent should neglect their children who are seeking this knowledge, since these parents do not make feeding arrangement for their children and the Malams (their teachers) are not rich enough to provide accommodation as well as food, these teenagers take to the streets as the last options.

In this chapter, data collected from the interview is analysed.

Begging has been turned as a means of earning income for the people who engaged in the practice. From all indication, some of the beggars prepare to remain in the business even if their socio-economic condition improves. Some of the beggars have stayed in the occupation and even recruit young ones to join them. They come from different backgrounds. Some of the respondents from this study are Islamic school teachers in Sokoto North Local Government area, whose ages range from 39-42, all are married with children, they are all Muslim from the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group.

### **3.1 Factors Responsible for Street Begging in Sokoto North Local Government**

The individuals who engage in begging are doing so due to different factors. While some are doing so in order to earn income to support their family members, others are doing begging for leisure. To this extent, poverty as well as other factors are responsible for begging in Sokoto North Local Government. Malam Bala Haruna (interview, 2015) a politician maintains that “there are many beggars on the streets due to poverty and lack of economic empowerment. I don’t think anybody would want their children on the street to beg. Poverty is a major cause, once that can be solved, societal ills such as begging would be eradicated. The response above emphasizes on poverty as a major cause of street begging and also shows that if poverty can be arrested in our society, the issue of begging would be a thing of history.

In addition, Amina Mai Damma (interview, 2015) says “I have been begging for almost 10years now, it was during this time I gave birth to my children, their father is also a beggar. If I have the opportunity, I would like to send my children to school, both Arabic and model schools, but I don’t have the money. I feel sad, when I

see more privileged people driving big cars and sending their children to school. Adding that the money they both get from begging is used for feeding, clothing and buying necessary things such as soap for bating and washing.

The above response implied that this woman also begs because of poverty and she remains in the profession for it is the only alternative she was able to have as a means of their sustenance.

### **3.2 Categories of People that Engage in Street Begging**

Different categories of people can be found in begging profession in Sokoto North Local Government. Some are males and females, some are married and unmarried.

In some cases, some beggars are richer than one another base on the property they have acquired. Furthermore, the beggars come from different languages like Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo etc. Mallam Abdullahi Aliyu (Interview, 20015) who is an Islamic school teacher has this to say “Beggars cut across all genders and age group and from all indications, if the relevant authorities fail to tackle the root cause of begging, such as poverty, illiteracy, greediness, neglect of children by parents and lack of employment,

etc. this problem of begging will persist in our society with dire consequence. This is because, it appears that government and other stakeholders have failed to confront the issue from the right perspective. Giving out monthly allowance is not the only solution. This is because begging cuts across all genders, age groups and social background. Hence, a single solution cannot be applicable to all categories for instance, an abandoned child of school age not only needs monthly allowance but should be enrolled in school”.

The response above implied that beggars encompasses all genders, age groups and social backgrounds and to combat the ugly situation, a single solution cannot be applicable therefore, according to him, government and other relevant authorities should apply different strategies in order to tackle the menace of street begging in the local government area.

### **3.3 Religions Underpinning and Begging**

Salihu Sani (Interview, 2015), a beggar from the area agrees that begging is contrary to the teaching of Islam. But he also re-affirms that he has no option with regard to earning a living. He is therefore willing to quit begging if provided with alternative means of livelihood.

Virtually, every religion abhors begging and encourages charity giving. In Islam, Zakat (alms giving) is so weighty that it is one of the five pillars of the religion. Thus, Allah says “And in their properties there was the right of the beggar and the mahruum (the poor). It is believed that every “penny” spent for the poor is spent for the poor is spent for the cause of almighty Allah. It is evident in the Qur’an and of course, Islam not to repulse beggars (Qur’an 93:10)”

### **3.4 The Impact of Street Begging in Sokoto North Local Government Area**

Street begging leads to a dire consequence when it becomes prevalent among the people as a segment of the society becomes inactive, accustomed to laziness and comfortable lifestyle and having their needs meet easily and without shedding a single drop of sweat. The worst thing in begging is that with the passage of time, those who resort to begging become incapable of working or shouldering any responsibility as a result, a group of people becomes unproductive.

Mallam Usman Abubakar (Interview, 2015), a politician, married with children and a resident in Sokoto North Local

Government area has this to say about the impact of street begging in the area.

It is a matter of shame that even after many years of independence, our roads and streets are still infested with beggars. One cannot escape their pleading for alms. It is a great nuisance to have beggars around you.

Even when one tries to avoid them, it is difficult to get them out of their clutches. Sometimes these beggars embarrass you and you have to part with some coins even against your will. Some of these beggars appear to be quite healthy.

As a result of these, many people don't want to go to some places in the local government area because they have false understanding about the places. These beggars also contribute to the rise in social vices such as stealing because many thieves do disguise themselves and appear as beggars to steal people's properties in the area.

From the above mentioned response, one can deduce the fact that the begging phenomenon has several implications not only on the individuals who practice it as they become a nuisance, lazy and



unproductive and disable to shoulder any responsibilities but also on the wider level of the society as a whole.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **4.1 Summary**

This study was attempted to find out if, street begging really get to the extent of qualifying it as a social problem in Sokoto North local government. It also tries to evaluate the influence of factors responsible for street begging in Nigeria and Sokoto North in particular. It has also attempted to find out whether or not begging in the street is unique to only the disabled people or that truly encourage it among its adherents. In the course of this research, it is believed that Hausa societies are more prone to begging in the Northern part of Nigeria which also brings more backwardness than any good to the people. In the course of this research, it has also been discovered that the implication of begging leads to so many social evils and other numerous threat to the social security of the people generally. Efforts of the government and other stakeholders are not adequate and that more is expected to be done for the menace to fade.

Consequently, the major finding of the research believe to be responsible for the street begging include poverty, illiteracy,

greediness, neglect of parent, lack or non implementation of government banning begging.

## **4.2 Conclusion**

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that street begging has been an age-long problem in Sokoto North local government areas and the efforts made by the government in several instances involved giving beggars monthly survival allowance and enlightenment campaign to combat this ugly situation. But this has often proved to be a short term solution. The researchers is fully convinced that if the government and other relevant authorities should apply different strategies in order to tackle the menace of street begging in the local government area, street begging will be a thing of the past. In addition, it is important for the members of the society to understand the plight of the disabled members of the society and come to their assistance by providing gainful employment to them.

## **4.3 Recommendations**

As mentioned earlier in my introductory chapter, the study intends to find out some possible ways through which street begging could be addressed or even completely eradicated.

The beggars who found themselves in such conditions either as a result of poverty, or unemployment, beggars should learn how to be productive in the society so that street begging can be eradicated, because there are other means of survival, that could not only support them economically, but other too could depend on them for livelihood. Government can come forward to empower them through craft works and other small scale business.

The religions of the beggars should increase the level of assistance rendered to such people that are incapacitated, old age, or disabled in one way or the other to curb them running on the streets. The abled ones in this condition should be encouraged to take available jobs to start with and realize their dreams of a better life. The relations should also warn the beggars against the implications of the begging and motivate them on the need for self reliance.

The society on its part should assist those that are handicapped, disabled and even old age people, by showing them care and concern about their conditions. The society should help the beggars discover their hidden latent and potentials which the general public would benefit from.

Non-governmental organizations such as philanthropist and donors should visit communities where begging is rampant and invest in the beggars so as to redress or completely eradicate street begging. The non-governmental bodies should embark on a sensitization campaign on social vices of the issues of street begging through either electronic or print media and also to provide other options for survival to the beggars.

The government should embark on programmes that will provide more employment opportunities for the people.

The private sectors participation in the economy should also be encouraged to contribute in absorbing the unemployed Nigerians into their organizations. The banking industry should be strengthened to provide the necessary facilities for the industrialist and industrial training for the beggars too. The agricultural sectors should be reactivated, in that way food production will be improved and production activities will be created for more citizens to participate and therefore minimize the practice of street begging. Secondly, government should embark on a serious in habilitation programs for beggars. A law should be promulgated banning the practice of street begging nationwide and entirely, especially abled-

bodied persons. Enlightenment campaign to expose the evils of street begging should also be intensified and print and electronic media should be mobilized and to sell the programmes to the public and to inform them on the implications of street begging. Thirdly, the police and the road Marshall should be located in our various highways for the enforcement of the promulgated laws. They should also be deployed to avoid rampant occurrence of accident that could lead to death or deformity. Also medical facilities should be provided to reduce the spread of diseases which also leads to deformity, most especially in our rural areas.

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### **INTERVIEW AT SOKOTO NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>
Mal. Bala Haruna	Politician	15/09/15 at 11:30am
Amina Mai Damma	Beggar	16/09/15 at 12:15pm
Mal. Abdullahi Aliyu	Islamic Sch. Teacher	17/09/15 at 10:00am
Salihu Sani	Beggar	16/09/15 at 2:30pm
Mal. Usman Abubakar	Politician	15/09/15 at 10:15am