

The Menace of The Almajiri System

At First, We all thought it was A Northern 'Thing'

Before now, every traveller voyaging through the Northern part of Nigeria usually has an unsolicited encounter with groups of 3-4 young, handsome, but unkempt boys dressed in clothes with the similitude of rags.

These juveniles parade travellers with plastic bowls seeking alms to feed or simply get by every day. Even when they are disappointed by the people they think can help them with some of the smaller Nigerian currencies, they retire to some light child plays, and sometimes, 'dividing the spoils'

The Cancer Rose to Stage Four

At first, it appeared as though the cancerous practice was only a northern thing. In recent years, we see that the same scenario is obtainable in all other parts of Nigeria where these children have either willingly or compulsorily immigrated. The sight pierces the heart of every Nigerian with some humanity in them.

During his administration, Former President, His Excellency. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took a deep dive into this child-damning practice and after much consideration and counsel, built schools to accommodate, educate and liberate these children.

However, due to poor maintenance culture (an endemic Nigerian character), the schools have become a haven for some form of political 'get-rich-quick' enterprises.

As a result, the Almajiris are back on the streets, roaming motor parks, mosques, markets, and so on, repeating the cycle of begging and pillaging the spoils (food and cash) of a successful day.

National Psychosocial and Economical funeral

The negligence of politicians, traditional leaders, religious heads and associations, child foundations and so on, is amassing damning national and international disgrace for Nigeria.

Among these juveniles could be the only child talented enough to huddle the country to massive wealth, or showcase Nigeria to the world in Sports and intellectual competitions, for example, spelling bees and chess games.

Untapped, untamed, unhinged, these little wonders are deprived of being national solutions, rather, they remain a national psychosocial menace instead, and the eventual death and funeral of meaningful intellectual economic assets

It is Never Too Late or Too Little

Occasionally giving these minors food to eat and some cash to keep in their bowls is not the best way to address the system. The effort has to be collaborative, comprising all the people mentioned above.

Child Foundations should draft a workable solution and work them out. Politicians should subject proposals for Almajiri eradication to feasibility studies and implement what they can. Religious heads and traditional figures should educate parents on parenting and family planning.

If the broomsticks are brought together, they stand a better chance of making the room free of dirt while instilling hospitality confidence in homeowners.