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VIABILITY OF WAQF FOR THE REALIZATION OF SDG-4 (QUALITY EDUCATION) IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Delving into the context of Sokoto State's educational landscape, it is identified that some challenges such as low enrolment rates, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities affecting access to quality education in the state. More importantly, despite the Sokoto State Zakat and Waqf Commission (SOZECOM) as a significant institution that facilitates waqf promotion in the State, it is established that an alarming number of 776,000 children are not in school throughout the 23 local government areas of the State. This phenomenon indicates a significant setback in implementing inclusive education in the state. Thus, this paper examined the potential viability of Waqf, an Islamic endowment, as a strategic instrument for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) in Sokoto State, Nigeria. It examined the historical role of Waqf in supporting education in Islamic history, providing a foundation for assessing its relevance in contemporary Sokoto State. Adopting a combination of doctrinal, and empirical research methods, the paper explored the gaps in the educational sector, scrutinized the potential contributions of Waqf funds to address challenges in education and analysed the Sokoto State Endowment Law, 2022. Stakeholder insights, gathered through interviews and questionnaire administration, offered nuanced perspectives on the dynamics at play in Sokoto State. The paper found that the state faces constraints such as inadequate funding, a lack of inclusive education policies, and a shortage of trained teachers, contributing to the failure in achieving SDG-4. Aiming at tackling funding inadequacies in education and offering consistent support for quality education programs, the paper strongly recommended special creation of a Waqf fund exclusively for education in Sokoto State. Additionally, the paper proposed fostering collaboration between Waqf authorities and educational institutions in Sokoto State. This partnership can involve direct financial support for schools, scholarships, and the provision of essential educational resources, thereby contributing to improvement of quality education.

Keywords: Viability, Waqf, Quality Education, Sokoto State

Introduction

The United Nations (UN), in the year 2015, made significant decision by adopting the Sustainable Development Agenda resolution during its General Assembly comprising many Heads of State and Representatives drawn from various nations. This resolution aims at addressing global challenges to wit insecurity, poverty and hunger. It is equally expected to promote prosperity for people worldwide by 2030. The goal is to encourage collective action to tackle these pressing issues on a

global scale. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted as an alternative to address the limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); as it failed to achieve many of its development goals in several countries, particularly in the aspect of education of most African countries. The UN has acknowledged this deficit in one of its reports.¹

The deficit recorded in the MDGs led the UN to introduce the SDGs, which comprise certain 17 goals to realize. The fourth of the goals (SDG-4) is specifically focused on quality education. This goal is placed as the fourth of the 17 programs, emphasizing its importance in achieving other SDGs. Corroborating this position, the UN has stated that education is the key to unlocking the potential of many other SDGs; as it empowers individuals to lift themselves out of poverty, function effectively in various situations, and live healthier and more sustainable lives. Education also fosters tolerance among diverse people, contributing to more peaceful societies.

The significance of SDG-4 manifests in the fact that quality education is *sine qua non* to the transformation of societies. Equally, education plays a crucial role in imparting knowledge to people, particularly on how to alleviate poverty and protect themselves from vulnerabilities, manipulation, and disease, as well as training necessary skills and instil in them confidence to reach their full potential.² Therefore, SDG-4, which has eight targets and three means of implementation, seeks to promote inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Consequently, education is crucial for achieving a sustainable world and effectively implementing other SDGs programs. Through education, people get knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes required for promotion of economic growth and advancement. The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) approach allows learners to make appropriate decisions and actions in respect of environmental integrity, economic sustainability, and an unbiased society for present and future generations.³ The UN has given the UNESCO mandate to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is committed to achieving quality education by 2030. Education is considered as basic human right and the bedrock for engendering peace and promoting sustainable development. Each of the SDGs is intertwined, and none can be achieved without education, making quality education essential for the success and realization of all sustainable development agenda. Therefore, education remains indispensable goal for all other sustainable development goals.

However, achieving SDG-4 in Nigeria, a developing country, might be challenging due to the lack of a development process compared to some of its contemporaries that gained independence in the 1960s. While in recent years, an improvement has been recorded in school enrolment in Nigeria, a considerable number of children are still not in school.⁴ According to UNICEF, when reviewing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, 40% of Nigerian children

¹Adeleke Adegami and Olubunmi Adesanmi. *Nigeria's Educational System and Sustainable Development Goals' Attainment: 'A Wild Goose Chase'* (2018), 3 <<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329140179>> accessed 10 December, 2023.

² Audrey Hepburn, 'Audrey Hepburn Quotes' (2022), 1 <<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/234257-a-quality-education-has-the-power-to-transform-societies-in>> accessed 10 December, 2023.

³ UNESDOC, *Education for Sustainable Development Goals Learning Objectives*, (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, 2017), 30

⁴ UNDP, 'Goal 4: Quality Education.' (2023), 1 <<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/quality-education>> accessed 10 December, 2023.

between 6 and 11 age brackets were unable to attend primary school.⁵ Despite a remarkable rise in enrolment rates, it is estimated that about 20 million children of primary school age in Nigeria are still out of school.⁶ This situation poses a challenge to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly as education is crucial for achieving other goals of sustainable development. Additionally, the lack of education contributes to conflicts in various parts of Nigeria, as educated youths are less likely to be recruited into insurgent groups.⁷ Therefore, the high percentage of out-of-school children and idle people in Nigeria can be a source of conflict and hinder the nation's peace and development.⁸

Essentially, Sokoto is one of the oldest and largest states in Nigeria. The realization of SDG-4 in Sokoto State has faced several loopholes that hinder its progress. One of the main constraints is inadequate funding earmarked for the education sector, resulting in poor infrastructure and inadequate teaching staff. Other challenges include low enrolment rates, low literacy levels, and lack of access to quality education due to socio-economic disparities. The significance of the research on the viability of *Waqf* for the realization of Goal 4 (Quality Education) in Sokoto State lies in its potential to address the challenges facing the education sector in the state.

Thus, this article is divided into six sections. After this introductory section, second section takes a look at a brief overview of the SDGs particularly goal 4 in Nigeria. When section three examines gaps in the implementation of SDG-4 in Sokoto State, section four makes a case for *waqf* as a viable tool for the realization of SDG-4 in the State. In section five, Sokoto State Endowment Law, 2022 is analyzed. Finally, section six concludes with the findings of the paper and makes relevant recommendations thereto.

Overview of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

The SDGs were conceived and adopted by the UN in 2015 as a collective call to action to put paid to poverty, safeguard the planet, and guarantee that by 2030 prosperity and peace reign among all people.⁹ There are 17 SDGs, which are incorporated and acknowledged that action in one area will predictably have impacts on others, and that development must stabilize and sustain social, economic, and environmental visions. The goals cover a wide range of interconnected and ambitious objectives, including ending poverty, ensuring healthy lives, promoting well-being, and protecting the planet.¹⁰ They equally offer a broad vision for sustainable development, aiming to transform the world by addressing various universal challenges to wit inequality, poverty, and environmental degradation.¹¹

⁵ UNESDOC, (n4),30

⁶ Deborah Tolu-Kolawole, *Nigeria needs 20,000 schools to absorb out-of-school children*- UBEC. Punch News, <<https://punchng.com/nigeria-needs-20000-schools-to-absorb-out-of-school-children-ubec/#:~:text=Though%20the%20official%20number%20of,has%20approximately%2020%20million%20out->>>; UNESCO, 'LeadingSDG4.' (2023),1 <<https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en>> accessed 10 December, 2023,

⁷ Iniobong Ekong Nkang and Christopher S. Uwah. 'Managing Tertiary Education for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria.' *International Journal of Higher Education* 10(3):295 10.5430/ijhe.v10n3p295, 295

⁸ *ibid*,296

⁹ United Nations Development Programme, 'Sustainable Development Goals' (Sustainable Development Goals2023),1 <<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>> accessed 23 December 2023.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 1.

¹¹ WHO, 'Sustainable Development Goals' (www.who.int2022),1 <<https://www.who.int/europe/about-us/our-work/sustainable-development-goals>> accessed 23 December 2023.

In a bid to link the issues of economic development and environmental stability, the Bruntland Commission published its report in 1987. It is instructive to state that it is this report which gave the popular definition of sustainable development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.¹² The 17 SDG include Goal 4 which is to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education and advance constant learning opportunities for all.¹³

The SDGs were formed through the largest ever participatory process carried out by the UN, comprising 10 million people from diverse parts of the world. The whole idea of sustainable development was conceived and adopted as a shared universal concept during the “Earth Summit” in the year 1992. However, during the 20th anniversary of the Earth Summit, when the UN member states converged in the “Rio +20 conference in 2012, there was an unimpressive report that the concept of sustainable development has not been achieved nor cautioned by scientists and researchers, the other serious reality was that the world can’t move forward continuing to have unsustainable practices. So, they resolved to choose the concept of goal-oriented development to assist orientate the behavior of businesses, governments, and civil society in a shared direction.¹⁴

Nigeria, a country with a rich cultural heritage, diverse natural resources, and a rapidly growing population, has made a commitment to reach its SDGs by 2030. This commitment is vital for the country to provide a stable and sustainable future for its people. By addressing issues like poverty, health, education, climate change, and urbanization, Nigeria can build a brighter and more sustainable future for its citizens.¹⁵

Implementations of SDGs are of great importance to Nigeria; as they provide a framework for the country to address its most pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. By focusing on the SDGs, Nigeria can make significant progress in areas such as poverty reduction, access to healthcare, gender equality, and environmental sustainability, more importantly adequate access to quality education. The SDGs also provide an opportunity for Nigeria to diversify its economy, reduce its reliance on oil and gas, and promote inclusive and sustainable growth.¹⁶ It must be noted that SDG-4 (Quality Education) is one of the goals prioritized by Nigerian government to be realized by 2030.¹⁷

A Discourse on SDG-4 (Quality Education)

¹² Rachel Emas, ‘Brief for GSDR 2015 The Concept of Sustainable Development: Definition and Defining Principles’ Florida International University,1.

¹³ United Nations, (n1) ,1

¹⁴ Shervin Ghorbani, ‘The History of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)’ (The Sustainable Mag15 October 2020),1 <<https://thesustainablemag.com/environment/the-history-of-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/>> accessed 23 December 2023.

¹⁵ United Nations, ‘Nigeria ... Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform’ (sustainabledevelopment.un.org2020),1 <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/nigeria>> accessed 26 December 2023.

¹⁶ United Nations Nigeria, ‘FG, UN Sign Cooperation Framework 2023-2027, in Support of Nigeria’s Sustainable Development’ (Nigeria2023),1 <<https://nigeria.un.org/en/214635-fg-un-sign-cooperation-framework-2023-2027-support-nigeria%E2%80%99s-sustainable-development>> accessed 1 February 2024.

¹⁷ UNDP, ‘Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme’ (UNDP2023),22 <<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/quality-education>> accessed 23 December 2023.

At all times for all individuals, education has been considered as an integral part of the agenda for sustainable development.¹⁸ Globally, according to Wals and Kieft's view, as an integral component of excellent education and a vibrant facilitator of sustainable development, recognition of education for sustainable development (ESD) is on rise.¹⁹ SDG-4 is aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for every people, and it includes eight objectives and three methods of implementation.²⁰ The goals were designed through an extensive consultation process championed by member countries. In addition, civil society, the private sector, educators, unions, regional organizations, research organizations, and so on, all were engaged in the process.²¹ Thereafter, the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) was created as a supporter of various sponsoring UN entities such as United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Global Compact, and United Nations University (UNU), to spur commitments from higher academic institutions to promote research on sustainable development.²² This includes greening campuses and helping with regional sustainable practices. Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI) is aimed at assisting institution of higher education in developing sustainability plans in conjunction with the larger community, as well as assisting institutions in actualizing sustainability into academic activities, management, strategy and administration.

Aside, it is instructive to mention that defining 'quality education' is not an easy task. This is hinged on different angles from which the diverse settings and stakeholders involving in education perceived it. However, from general perspective, quality education may be described as actualization of one's desired standards and goals. According to Education International, quality education lays emphasis on the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of every learner not minding of socioeconomic status, geographic location, gender, race, or ethnicity. It grooms the child for how to live a meaningful life and not just for testing.²³ According to UNESCO, quality education is the process of creating enabling environment for learning or the acquisition of skills, knowledge, beliefs, values, and habits.²⁴ Quality education essentially involves issues such as suitable skills development, gender equality, provision of required school infrastructure, educational materials and resources, equipment, scholarships or teaching force. Academic

¹⁸ Agbedahin, A. V. (2019). *Sustainable development, Education for Sustainable Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Emergence, efficacy, eminence, and future*. *Sustainable Development*, 27(4), 669–680

¹⁹ Arjen EJ Wals and others, *Education for Sustainable Development: Research Overview* (Sida 2010), 11

²⁰ Therese Ferguson and Carmel Geneva Rooft, 'SDG 4 in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities' (2020)

²¹ International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education 959; Veronica McKay, 'Literacy, Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Development.' (2018) 58 *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 390. Veronica McKay, 'Literacy, Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Development.' (2018) 58 *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 390.

²² Suzanna Elmassah, Marwa Biltagy and Doaa Gamal, 'Framing the Role of Higher Education in Sustainable Development: A Case Study Analysis' (2021) ahead-of-print *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 456

²³ B Paulette, 'The Strategic Role of Higher Education in the Sustainable Development of the Caribbean.' (2019) 31 *Higher Education and Society*, 60.

²⁴ UNICEF, 'Defining Quality in Education' (2000), 1 <https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/UNICEF_Defining_Quality_Education_2000.PDF> accessed 23 December 2023.

²⁵ UNESCO, 'SDG Resources for Educators - Quality Education' (UNESCO 9 October 2018), 1 <<https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/sdgs/material/04>> accessed 23 December 2023.

achievement is often used as a benchmark to measure quality education. This is so because it is straightforwardly measurable using standardized tests, while other results may be more challenging to measure. There are five indicators of quality education. These are that: education must be effective, efficient, accessible equally, relevant and finally sustainable.²⁵

Quality education is of paramount importance to national development for several reasons. Firstly, it is considered as a fundamental human right and is required for the exercise of the remaining human rights. Secondly, it is a key driver for reducing poverty, promoting health, and fostering economic growth. Additionally, quality education plays an important role in ensuring gender equality, reducing inequalities, and fostering peace and sustainable development.²⁶

The UNs' SDG-4 focuses on ensuring inclusive and quality education for every individual, underscoring the significance of making provision for free primary and secondary schooling, equal access to affordable vocational training, and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities.²⁷ The goal also highlights the need to address disparities and inequities in education, especially for vulnerable populations such as girls, children dwelling in rural areas, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and refugee children.²⁸

To achieve the SDG-4, various measures are essential. This involves making education compulsory and free, increment teachers' number, providing school infrastructure, embracing digital transformation, and ensuring access to quality higher education.²⁹ By investing in quality education, countries will thereby empowering their citizens, driving sustainable development, and contributing to the overall well-being of their societies.

Furthermore, SDG-4 consists of 8 outcome targets which form the foundation of the Global Campaign for Education's (GCE) policy and advocacy work since 2015. The 8 targets are:

- 1) Universal Primary and Secondary Education: Ensure all girls and boys complete 12 years of free, inclusive, and quality primary and secondary education, leading to relevant learning outcomes, by 2030.
- 2) Early Childhood Development and Universal Pre-Primary Education: Ensure all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education, preparing them for primary education, by 2030.

²⁵ Concernusa, 'What Does Quality Education Mean? Breaking down SDG #4' (concernusa.org),1 <<https://concernusa.org/news/quality-education-explained/>> accessed 26 December 2023; Arundhati Thangeda, Bakisanani Baratiseng and Thatoyamodimomompati, 'Education for Sustainability: Quality Education Is a Necessity in Modern Day. How Far Do the Educational Institutions Facilitate Quality Education?' (2016) 7 Journal of Education and Practice, 10-11 <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1089752.pdf>>; Liam Shields, Anne Newman and Debra Satz, 'Equality of Educational Opportunity (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)' (Stanford.edu2017),1 <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equal-ed-opportunity/>> accessed 26 December 2023.

²⁶ JointSDGsFund, 'Goal 4: Quality Education' (Goal 4: Quality education | Joint SDG Fund2021),1 <<https://joinsdgsfund.org/sustainable-development-goals/goal-4-quality-education>> accessed 23 December 2023.

²⁷ UNDP, 'Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme' (UNDP2023),1 <<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/quality-education>> accessed 23 December 2023.

²⁸ UNICEF 'SDG Goal 4: Quality Education' (UNICEF DATA2023),1 <<https://data.unicef.org/sdgs/goal-4-quality-education/>> accessed 23 December 2023.

²⁹ United Nations, —, 'Education - United Nations Sustainable Development' (United Nations Sustainable Development2023),2< <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education> accessed 23 December 2023>.

- 3) Equal Access to Technical/Vocational and Higher Education: Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university, by 2030.
- 4) Appropriate Skills for Decent Work: Significantly increase the number of youth and adults with appropriate skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship, by 2030.
- 5) Gender Equality and Inclusion: Eradicate gender inequalities in education and guarantee equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations, by 2030.
- 6) Universal Youth Literacy: Ensure all youth and a substantial proportion of adults achieve literacy and numeracy, by 2030.
- 7) Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: Ensure all learners attain knowledge and skills to assist in the promotion of sustainable development, including education for sustainable development, human rights, gender parity, and international citizenship, by 2030.
- 8) Scholarships: Ensure learners acquire knowledge through scholarships most especially less privilege people.

Gaps in the Implementation of SDG-4 in Sokoto State

a. The Context of Sokoto State

In 1976, Sokoto State was established. It spans a land area of 28,232.37 square kilometers. Situated between longitudes 11° 30" to 13° 50" East and latitudes 4° to 6° North, it shares borders with Niger Republic to the North, Zamfara State to the East, and Kebbi State to the South and West. The region experiences distinct dry and wet seasons. The dry season, lasting from October to April (and possibly extending to May or June in some areas), is marked by intense heat around March/April and dry, cold, and dusty Harmattan conditions from November to February. The wet season typically occurs from May to September, bringing rainfall ranging between 500mm and 1,300 mm.³⁰ Sokoto State lies within the Savannah region, characterized by cold mornings and hot afternoons, except during Harmattan. The topography is dominated by the renowned Hausa of Northern Nigeria, intersected by the vast Fadama land of the Sokoto-Rima River systems, offering fertile alluvial soil suitable for diverse crop cultivation. The state also features isolated hills and mountain ranges. Agriculture engages over 80% of the population, involving the cultivation of crops like millet, guinea corn, rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, groundnuts, and beans for subsistence. Cash crops such as wheat, cotton, and vegetables are also produced. Local crafts, including blacksmithing, weaving, carving, and leatherwork, contribute significantly to the state's economy. Fishing is another economic activity, particularly in river basin areas.³¹

Sokoto State boasts abundant natural and mineral resources, including kaolin, gypsum, limestone, red mills, phosphate, yellow and green shade clay, and sand. The Tsetse fly-free grassland creates a favorable environment for animal husbandry, making the state a major player in livestock production nationwide.³² The population, according to the 2006 census, stands at 3,696,999,

³⁰ Britanica, 'Sokoto | Location, History, Facts, & Population | Britannica' (www.britannica.com),¹ <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Sokoto-Nigeria>> accessed 1 May 2024.

³¹ *ibid*,¹

³² *ibid*

predominantly comprising the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups. Minority groups such as the Zabarmawa and Tuaregs reside in the border local government areas. Culturally homogeneous, the state's inhabitants are predominantly Muslims, with Islam influencing their daily lives. Islamic education plays a crucial role, leading to the proliferation of Qur'anic Schools owned by private individuals across the state.³³

b. Education in Sokoto State

Sokoto State, encompassing a population of approximately 4 million, faces educational challenges. Despite having 1,963 public schools and an enrollment of 610,886 (comprising 400,381 males and 210,505 females), the Net Enrolment Rate is 55.5%, with a Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of 71%.³⁴ The recent survey conducted by the Sokoto State Government has unveiled a concerning estimate of 776,000 out-of-school children dispersed across the 23 Local Government Areas within the State. Furthermore, survey findings disclosed the presence of 7,000 Almajiri pupils loitering on the major streets of the state metropolis, engaged in begging activities both during the day and night. The State Commissioner for Religious Affairs, asserted that officials from his ministry were instrumental in executing the survey to facilitate the return of these children to educational institutions.³⁵

Efforts to address educational gaps include initiatives like Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE), with 65,351 (34,301 females) currently enrolled. Integrated Qur'anic Education (IQE) and Non-Formal Education (NFE) aim to reach out-of-school children, including Almajiris and street hawking girls. The Women Centre for Continuing Education (WCCE) targets women, offering a second chance for basic education up to Senior Secondary level, alongside literacy and income generation skills training. Plans for additional women's centers and girls-only boarding primary schools are underway.³⁶

Over the years, philosophical shifts in children's education with physical disabilities have occurred, influenced by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Salamanca statement of 1994. Countries like Nigeria have implemented policies to integrate learners with physical disabilities into mainstream educational settings, aligning with the global movement towards integration and inclusive education.³⁷ However, the implementation of these recommendations varies across countries and institutions. In many developing nations, including Nigeria, challenges arise due to factors such as poverty, misplaced priorities, and insufficient consideration for the educational needs of disabled pupils. Despite supportive laws, the actualization of equitable, accessible, and quality education for physically challenged students often faces hindrances, notably inadequate budget allocations.

³³ *ibid*,5

³⁴ City Mirror News, 'Out of School Children in Sokoto State' (Bing26 October 2023),1 <https://www.bing.com/search?q=out+of+school+children+in+Sokoto+State&cvid=6dd9e1f866ac42baa34800401d3972c8&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIGCAEQABhAMgYIAhAAGEAyBggDEAAAYQDIGCAQQABhAMgYIBRAAGEAyBggGEAAAYQDIGCacQABhAMgYICBAAGEDSAQkxMDc3NWowajmoAgCwAgA&FORM=ANAB01&PC=U531> accessed 14 January 2024.

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ *ibid*,1

³⁷ UNESCO, 'Inclusive Education: Children with Disabilities' (Unesco.org2022),1 <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373662>>.

Examining the education sector in Sokoto State, the 2010 State Strategic Education Sector Plan reveals concerning statistics. Despite a population of about 4 million, the primary school-age population is approximately 1,100,000, with a significant number out of school. The Net Enrolment Rate is 55.5%, and the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is 71%, reflecting a gap in qualified teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:47 for qualified teachers, but a concerning 1:144 for total teachers. The Net Attendance Rate is 68%, with completion and gender gap rates at 40% each.³⁸ These figures indicate that a substantial portion of school-age children, including those with orthopedic and visual impairments, are not enrolled in formal schooling, complicating access to special and inclusive schools in Sokoto Central Educational Zones in Sokoto State.³⁹ Thus, addressing these challenges is crucial for the realization of Education for All (EFA) goals, which in this context tantamount to the realization of SDG-4 in the state.

It must be noted here that barely eight (8) years now after the introduction of the SDGs, Nigeria in general and Sokoto state in particular is yet to make considerable effort in achieving SDG-4. The failure to achieve SDG-4 in Sokoto State is arguably attributed to various factors which include:

- 1) Gender Disparities: There are significant challenges related to girl child education, with a high percentage of school-age girls being out of school, and factors such as dropout syndrome, religious misconceptions, and economic problems contributing to this issue.⁴⁰
- 2) Poor Infrastructure and Funding: Inadequate funding and poor infrastructure in schools contribute to the low quality of education in the state.
- 3) Integration of Almajiri Educational System: The integration of the Almajiri educational system into the Universal Basic Education program poses a challenge, as it requires significant efforts to ensure that all children have access to quality education.
- 4) Poverty and Social Exclusion: Sokoto State faces high poverty rates, which are linked to the challenges of providing quality education. Social exclusion and the vulnerability of certain groups, such as children with disabilities, also impact the implementation of quality education.⁴¹

Be that as it may, closing the gaps in the implementation of SDG-4 requires a multifaceted approach, including increased investment in education, infrastructure development, targeted initiatives to promote girl child education, and the integration of diverse educational systems to ensure that all children have access to quality education.⁴² Therefore, this paper searches for other alternatives towards achieving the goal of quality education as encapsulated by the SDG-4. Arguably, *Waqf* which is one of the Islamic social finance schemes put in place by Islamic law to address all sorts of socio-economic challenges including education is viable in this respect.

³⁸ Sokoto State Government, 'State Strategic Education Sector Plan (SESP)' (Sokoto State Ministry of Education 2020),44.

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ B. Musa and M. Hakimi, 'Revitalizing Education for National Development: Issues and Challenges of out of School Children in Sokoto State, Nigeria' (2017) 1 International Journal of Topical Educational Issues 375,6 <http://oer.udusok.edu.ng:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/823/1509985944.pdf?sequence=1&tnqh_xo026%3BisAllowed=y> accessed 23 December 2023.

⁴¹ Shehu S and others, 'At-Risk Children in Sokoto State: Causes and Challenges' (2023) 8 Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,146-151 <https://saudijournals.com/media/articles/SJHSS_86_146-151.pdf> accessed 23 December 2023.

⁴² Haruna, MJ and Nafisa A, 'The Challenges of Girl Child Education in Sokoto State, Nigeria and Its Implications for National Development' (springerprofessional.de2021),32-42 <<https://www.springerprofessional.de/en/the-challenges-of-girl-child-education-in-sokoto-state-nigeria-a/19076804>> accessed 23 December 2023.

Viability Of Waqf for the Realization of SDG-4

The Concept of Waqf

The donor of *Waqf* donates his property in permanency to continue in charity for free services. *Waqf* is charitable endowment that may be harnessed for the public and community services such as construction of mosque, centers of learnings, accommodation, hospital, and education purpose. It is noteworthy to mention that the property so endowed cannot be gifted, sold, inherited, or bequeathed to someone else. In this line, the difference between *Waqf* and *sadaqah* manifests. *Sadaqah* is a charitable act that involves giving or donating to someone in charity. By nature, *sadaqah* is not compulsory by Shari'ah but it is a meritorious act in Islam. In contrast, *Waqf* is a continuous charity that comes from established act of giving or donating while *sadaqah* is private charity that can be given or assigned to people out rightly without minding the establishment of a legal entity. Noticeably, *Waqf* is an institutionalized *sadaqah* while ordinary *sadaqah* is not.

The commonly used terms for trusts in the fundamental texts of Shariah are *sadaqah* and *habs*. However, jurists also employ the term *Waqf*, which is occasionally written as *wakaf* or *wakap* in Southeast Asia. In Northern Africa, jurists continue to use *habs* or *tasbīl* to denote the same concept. Notably, Shi'i scholars make a distinction between *Waqf* and *habs*, both of which are charitable but carry slightly different implications.⁴³

The terms *Waqf* and *habs* are both literally interpreted to mean 'to prevent' or 'to restrain'. In legal terms, they refer to the protection of certain thing by precluding it from becoming the property of a third person.⁴⁴ Classically, Imam Abu Hanifah, when providing the definition of *Waqf*, states that it is the appropriation of a particular thing in such a way that the donor's right in it is not forfeited, and its usufruct goes to a charitable object. However, this definition is not preferred by some jurists, such as Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, both of who happen to be his famous disciples, as well as those in the Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Imami schools.⁴⁵ The point of divergence among the Muslim jurists is withholding of the title by the donor, which gives them the discretion to rescind the *Waqf* anytime during their lifetime, as they wish, as long as *Waqf* is not effective after the donor's death or as a result of a decision handed down by a competent court.⁴⁶ The majority of Muslim jurists are of the view that the donor has forfeited his right in the *Waqf* property; as the property, after the promise or after the promise and possession, becomes Allah's property (i.e., ownerless). Consequently, the donor has neither owned title in the property so donated as *Waqf* nor the power to cancel the *Waqf*.⁴⁷

⁴³ See Yahya bin Sa'id al-Hilli, *al-Jami' li al-Shara'i'*, Qum: Musassas al-Shuhada' al-'Ilmiyyah, 1405 A.H., 368.

⁴⁴ Al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsut*, Cairo, 1956, (12), 27, translation by Mohd. Zain b. Haji Othman, *Islamic Law with special Reference to the Institution of Waqf*, Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Department, Religious Affairs Division, 1982, 21. See the definition of *waqf* in al-Hilli, *al-Jami'*, 369.

⁴⁵ see Abu Zahrah, *Muhadarat*, p39-40, 62-69, for Shafi'ies views see al-Sharbini, *Mughni al-Muhtaj*, *kitab al-waqf*, for hanbalies, see ibn Qudamah, *al-Mughni*, (6), 185. Note an opinion of Amad ibn Hanbal and the majority of the Malikis seem to agree with the view of Abu Hanifah except the latter give option to the donor to revoke the trust whenever he wishes so.

⁴⁶ see case

⁴⁷ Kasani, *Badai'*, (6), 346-347. this view of Abu Hanifah has been accepted by Sudanes legislation for the benefit of owners when they need the donated property for themselves: Hasan Abdullah al-Amin, "al-Waqf fi Fiqh al-Islami", 129.

Moreover, Abu Zahrah defined *Waqf* as "the prevention of a benefit-generating estate from corporal disposal but using its usufruct and benefit in charity, intended so at the time of creation and thereafter."⁴⁸ It is observed that Abu Zahra's definition of *Waqf* is comprehensive, as it incorporates the fundamental ideas upheld and proposed by various Muslim jurists, and still maintains that the donation must be of immovable property, giving the impression that the property so declared as *Waqf* should be in perpetuity.⁴⁹ However, after considering the practice during and after the Prophet's lifetime, this definition may be seen as too restrictive, and thereby leading to the stagnation of *Waqf* properties due to a lack of financing for their development.⁵⁰

A more recent and more inclusive definition of *Waqf* is "the holding of certain property and preserving it for the confined benefit of certain philanthropy and prohibiting any use or disposition of it outside that specific objective."⁵¹ This definition widens the concept of *Waqf* to include virtually all elements that were excluded by some classical Muslim jurists in their concept and definitions of *Waqf*, such as immovable property as the subject of the *Waqf*, the donation of movable property and usufruct and cash.

Historical Perspective of *Waqf* in Education

During the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, the practice of *Waqf* witnessed a significant expansion, prompting Muslims to dedicate their properties as *Waqf*. This led to a broadening of endowments beyond mere distribution to the poor, encompassing the establishment of worship facilities, refuges, libraries, and educational institutions. According to Syalabi, Caliph al-Ma'mun played a pioneering role in advocating for the establishment of endowment agencies. He emphasized that the sustainability of scientific activities should not rely solely on state subsidies and philanthropic rulers but also necessitates public awareness to collectively bear the implementation costs of education. Al-Ma'mun's initiative was subsequently embraced by his successors and the country's princes, becoming a perceived necessity in establishing scientific and cultural institutions funded by permanent endowments.

Waqf was not confined to Baghdad but extended to various Islamic regions. Under the Fatimid rule in Egypt, Ibn Killis emerged as a notable patron of learning, establishing an academy and allocating a thousand dinars per month for its support.⁵² Similar to caliphs in Baghdad and Cordova, Al-Aziz established the Al-Azhar Mosque and an academy. Caliph Al-Hakim, in 1005, founded *Dar al-Hikmah* (Hall of Wisdom or Science), instituting a fund for copying manuscripts, repairing books, and general maintenance.

In Cordova, Nu'ami, the author of *Daris*, a history of institutions of learning in Damascus, documented a *kuttab al-Sabil* founded by Prince Fakhr al-Din b. Qazal. This school, categorized as *al-Sabil*, denoted an institution based on charitable trust, with the staff and students benefiting from its endowment income.⁵³

⁴⁸ Abu Zahrah, Muhadarat, 5.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 69

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 69

⁵¹ *ibid*, 69

⁵² Philip. K Hitti., *History of the Arab*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1974), 627-628

⁵³ George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 48.

In Khurasan, Transoxania, and Afghanistan, madrasas were also endowed with permanent sources of income, such as land or rent-bearing urban property, set aside in perpetuity. These *Waqf* funds facilitated the payment of faculty salaries and stipends for students.⁵⁴

From the foregoing, it is discernable that *waqf* has potential to be explored for the following:

Infrastructure Development

Waqf funds can be utilized to construct and maintain educational infrastructure, including schools, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other essential facilities. This contributes to the creation of a conducive learning environment for students. The role of *Waqf* in improving the quality of education is mostly purchasing land and building construction.⁵⁵ *Waqf* can be used to fund the construction and improvement of schools, providing children with access to better learning environments. By funding the establishment of schools and educational facilities in underserved areas, *Waqf* can help improve access to quality education for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background.⁵⁶ *Waqf* can also provide financial support for various educational initiatives, such as scholarships, fellowships, and research projects, which can help improve the quality of education and promote human development.⁵⁷ The availability of a constant and stable flow of funds received by educational institutions is one of the most important factors in maintaining the sustainability of an educational institution. The idea of *Waqf* on education emerged to ensure that higher education institutions continue to function smoothly and efficiently.⁵⁸ The sustainable nature of *Waqf* aligns with various countries' programs to mobilize development towards SDGs. Therefore, *Waqf* funds can be utilized to construct and maintain educational infrastructure, including schools, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other essential facilities, which contributes to the creation of a conducive learning environment for students.⁵⁹

Teacher Training

Waqf funds can be allocated to training and professional development programs for teachers, ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality education. *Waqf* funds can be used to establish and maintain teacher training institutions, providing educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach in the classroom.⁶⁰ *Waqf* can fund professional development programs, such as workshops, seminars, and conferences, allowing teachers to stay up-to-date with the latest educational research and methodologies.⁶¹ Moreover, *Waqf* funds can be allocated to provide teachers with the necessary

⁵⁴ Ira M Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56.

⁵⁵ Habeebah Simisola Fa-Yusuf, Saheed Busari and Lawal Shuaibu, 'Waqf Effectiveness in Nigeria: Problems and Solutions' (2021) 10 *Journal of Islamic Finance* 79, 45 <<https://journals.iium.edu.my/iiibf-journal/index.php/jif/article/download/598/269>> accessed 14 January 2024.

⁵⁶ Baryalai Baryal, Mahmood Mehraein and Ghazi Patang, 'The Role of Cash Waqf Model in Education Development- Evidence from Afghanistan' (2022) 2 *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 158.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 4

⁵⁸ Rusydiana, Aam Slamet; Sukmana, Raditya; and Laila, Nisful, "Waqf on Education: A Bibliometric Review based on Scopus" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). 5537, 6 <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/5537>>.

⁵⁹ Reza Arjmand, 'Waqf and Financing Islamic Education' (2017) 1 *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* 1 <https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-53620-0_5-1> accessed 7 May 2019.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 5

⁶¹ *ibid*, 4

resources, such as textbooks, educational materials, and technology, to support their teaching practice.⁶²

Additionally, *Waqf* funds can be used to provide scholarships and financial aid to teachers pursuing further education or professional development opportunities.⁶³ *Waqf* funds can be used to support collaborations between educational institutions, allowing teachers to learn from and share experiences with their peers.⁶⁴ *Waqf* funds can also be allocated to support educational research, which can help inform teaching practices and improve the quality of education. Therefore, *Waqf* funds can be allocated to training and professional development programs for teachers, ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality education. By investing in teacher training and development, *Waqf* can contribute to the overall improvement of the educational system and the quality of education provided to students.

Scholarship and Financial Aid

Waqf plays a significant role in providing scholarships and financial aid, particularly for economically disadvantaged students. It has been used to fund educational scholarships, facilitate access to education, and address financial barriers. Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and universities have been historically financed by *Waqf* assets. *Waqf* funds have been utilized to provide scholarships, finance research projects, and strengthen academic quality. Additionally, *Waqf* can reduce the dependence of universities on government grants and help generate independent research and scholarships.⁶⁵ Furthermore, *Waqf* is an ongoing, sustainable charitable donation that has been used throughout Islamic history to benefit and support communities and aid community development.⁶⁶ Various *Waqf* boards and organizations have implemented schemes and programs to provide educational scholarships and financial assistance to eligible beneficiaries, thereby contributing to increased access to education for economically disadvantaged students.⁶⁷

Educational Materials and Technology

Waqf funds can play a significant role in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes by directing resources towards educational materials and technology. *Waqf* funds can be used to purchase essential textbooks and learning materials for students, ensuring that they have access to up-to-date and high-quality resources. This can enhance the quality of teaching and learning processes.⁶⁸ *Waqf* funds can be directed towards the purchase of modern educational technology,

⁶² Aam Rusydiana, Raditya Sukmana and Nisful Laila, 'Waqf on Education: A Bibliometric Review Based on Scopus Waqf on Education: A Bibliometric Review Based on Scopus' (2021),1 <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10234&context=libphilprac>> accessed 14 January 2024.

⁶³ Baryalai Baryal, Mahmood Mehraaein and Ghazi Patang, 'The Role of Cash Waqf Model in Education Development- Evidence from Afghanistan' (2022) 2 Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities,158.

⁶⁴ *ibid*,159

⁶⁵ *ibid*,160

⁶⁶ Yana Rohmana, 'University Funding through Waqf: Lesson from Indonesia and Selected Countries' [2023] 4th International Conference on Islamic Economics, Business, Philanthropy, and PhD Colloquium (ICIEBP) 2022 218,3 <<https://www.atlantispress.com/article/125987861.pdf>> accessed 14 January 2024.

⁶⁷ Kerala Waqf Board, 'Wakf Inner' (www.keralastatewakfboard.in2015) <<http://www.keralastatewakfboard.in/revolvingloan.html>> accessed 14 January 2024.

⁶⁸ Yana, *ibid*, 3.

such as computers, laptops, tablets, and other devices. This can help integrate technology into the educational process, making it more interactive and engaging for students.⁶⁹

Inclusive Education

Waqf can play a significant role in supporting initiatives for inclusive education, ensuring that children with disabilities have access to specialized facilities, trained teachers, and resources that cater to their unique needs. Waqf funds can be directed towards building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability, and gender-sensitive, providing a safe, non-violent, and inclusive learning environment.⁷⁰ Additionally, Waqf funds can be utilized to provide financial assistance to students with disabilities, enabling them to access specialized facilities and resources that cater to their unique needs.⁷¹ Waqf can also be used to finance research projects and scholarships that focus on inclusive education, promoting academic excellence and innovation in this area.⁷² Furthermore, Waqf can reduce the dependence of educational institutions on government grants, making them more financially stable and independent.⁷³ In summary, Waqf can be a valuable tool in promoting inclusive education and ensuring that all children have access to quality education, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.⁷⁴

Maintenance of Educational Facilities

Waqf funds can be dedicated to the regular maintenance and renovation of existing educational facilities, ensuring that schools remain in good condition, providing a safe and comfortable space for learning. Waqf funds can be used to maintain and upgrade educational facilities, ensuring that they are safe, comfortable, and conducive to learning.⁷⁵ Also, by investing in the maintenance and renovation of schools, Waqf can contribute to the creation of a clean, green, and healthy learning environment, promoting the overall well-being of students.⁷⁶ Moreover, Waqf funds can help educational institutions reduce their reliance on government grants, making them more financially stable and independent.⁷⁷

In addition to supporting educational facilities, Waqf funds can also be used to maintain and restore historical sites, monuments, and religious buildings, safeguarding them for future generations to appreciate and learn from.⁷⁸ Moreover, Waqf serves as a powerful tool for promoting social justice, community empowerment, and sustainable development. Its historical significance and adaptability to the modern world make it an effective means to address various socioeconomic issues.⁷⁹ In summary, Waqf can play a significant role in supporting the

⁶⁹ Syed Khalid Rashid Syed Khalid Rashid, 'Potential of Waqf in Contemporary World' (2018) 31 *Journal of King Abdulaziz University Islamic Economics*, 53.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 54

⁷¹ Waqf Liason Office, '2020-05 Inclusive Education Challenges in Building a Coherent Understanding | Waqf Liaison Forum' (<https://www.Waqfliason.com/2020>) <<https://www.Waqfliason.com/2020-05-inclusive-education-challenges-in-building-a-coherent-understanding/>> accessed 14 January 2024.

⁷² Kerala, 5

⁷³ Yana, 44

⁷⁴ Yana, 44

⁷⁵ Ibrahim Mohamed and Negasi, 'Financing Higher Education in the Islamic World through Waqf (Endowment)' (2017), 1 <https://revistia.com/files/articles/ejms_v2_i5_17/Mohamed.pdf> accessed 14 January 2024.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 5

⁷⁷ *ibid*, 5

⁷⁸ *ibid*, 6

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 5

maintenance and renovation of educational facilities, ensuring that they remain in good condition and provide a safe and comfortable space for learning.

Data Analysis on the Viability of *Waqf* in Achieving SDG-4 in Sokoto State, Nigeria and Results

There have been assumptions in the foregoing that *Waqf* is a viable tool to help in the realization of SDG-4 in other jurisdictions including Muslim nations and Western world. However, rather than placing much reliance on the assumptions contained in the literatures, this paper humbly submits that it is imperative to analyze data with a view to ascertaining the extent to which *Waqf* is viable to realise the SDG-4 in the enhancement of educational infrastructure, accessibility, and overall educational outcomes in Sokoto State.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect relevant data on this. Eight (8) questionnaire items, which were adapted from the targets for SDGs 4, measured on a 5-Point Likert Scale was used. The items captured questions on viability of *waqf* for quality of education in Sokoto State. The paper covered whether *waqf* is used to promote access to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, increase access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, facilitate access to affordable, quality, technical, vocational and tertiary education, help to develop in the citizens relevant skills for employment, entrepreneurship and decent job, assist poor and disable persons to have equal access to education and vocational training, promote literacy and numeracy among youths and adults, acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge for promoting sustainable development and provision of educational scholarships for citizens of the state.

Respondents' Opinion on the Viability of *Waqf* for Quality Education in Sokoto State

Table 4.1: *Waqf* is used to gain access to free, equitable, quality primary and secondary education in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
Disagree	191	53.8	53.8	57.2
Agree	78	22.0	22.0	79.2
Strongly Agree	74	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 4.1 above represents data gathered on whether *waqf* is used for creation of gainful access to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education in Sokoto State. Information presented in the table revealed that 12(3.4%) of the study respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 191(53.8%) also, disagreed, 78(22%) agreed, while the remaining 74(20.8%) strongly agreed. This shows that more than half of the study respondents were not in support of this statement, hence, *waqf* has not been used in Sokoto State for creation of access to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education in the state.

Table 4.2: *Waqf* is used to gain access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	7	2.0	2.0	2.0
Disagree	186	52.4	52.4	54.4
Agree	114	32.1	32.1	86.5
Strongly Agree	48	13.5	13.5	100.0

Total	355	100.0	100.0
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Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Based on the data presented in table 4.2, 7(2%) of the study audience strongly disagreed that *waqf* is used to gain access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education in Sokoto State and 186(52.4%) also disagreed. On the contrary, 114(32.1%) agreed, while the remaining 48(13.5%) strongly agreed. Majority of the study audience were not in support of this statement, Therefore, *waqf* is not used in Sokoto State to gain access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education in the state.

Table 4.3: *Waqf* is used to facilitate access to affordable, quality, technical, vocational and tertiary education in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	6	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	41	11.5	11.5	13.2
Agree	241	67.9	67.9	81.1
Strongly Agree	67	18.9	18.9	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Data presented in Table 4.3 revealed that 6(1.7%) of the respondents used in this study strongly disagreed that *waqf* is used to facilitate access to affordable, quality, technical, vocational and tertiary education in Sokoto State and another 41(11.5%) disagreed. On the contrary, 241(67.9%) agreed, while the remaining 67(18.9%) strongly agreed. The larger majority of the study respondents were in support of this statement implies that *waqf* is used in Sokoto State to facilitate access to affordable, quality, technical, vocational and tertiary education in the state.

Table 4.4: *Waqf* helps in acquiring relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	6	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	43	12.1	12.1	13.8
Agree	228	64.2	64.2	78.0
Strongly Agree	78	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 4.4 above shows that 6(1.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that *waqf* helps in acquiring relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship in Sokoto State and another 43(12.1%) disagreed. However, 228(64.1%) agreed, while the remaining 78(22.0%) strongly agreed. Majority of the study audience respondents responded affirmatively to the statement, hence, by implication *waqf* helps in acquiring relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship in the state.

Table 4.5: *Waqf* assists the poor and persons with health challenges to have equal access to all levels of education and vocational training in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	7	2.0	2.0	2.0
Disagree	15	4.2	4.2	6.2
Agree	240	67.6	67.6	73.8
Strongly Agree	93	26.2	26.2	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Data presented in Table 4.5 shows that 7(2%) of the study respondents strongly disagreed that *waqf* assists the poor and persons with health challenges to have equal access to all levels of education and vocational training in the state and 15(4.2%) disagreed with this assertion. On the contrary, 240(67.6%) agreed, while the remaining 93(26.2%) strongly agreed. This implies that larger majority of the study respondents were in support of this statement. By implication, *waqf* assists the poor and persons with health challenges to have equal access to all levels of education and vocational training in Sokoto State.

Table 4.6: *Waqf* assists youths and adults to achieve literacy and numeracy in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
Disagree	207	58.3	58.3	61.7
Agree	67	18.9	18.9	80.6
Strongly Agree	69	19.4	19.4	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The above Table 4.6 presents data gathered on whether *waqf* assists the youths and adults to achieve literacy and numeracy in Sokoto State. Data elicited revealed that 12(3.4%) of the respondents used in this study strongly disagreed with this statement and 207(58.3%) disagreed. However, 67(18.9%) agreed, while the remaining 69(19.4%) strongly agreed. Since more than half of the study audience were not in support of this statement, it means that *waqf* therefore has not been used in Sokoto State to assist all youths and adults to achieve literacy and numeracy.

Table 4.7: *Waqf* is used to ensure that deserving persons acquire knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.1	1.1	1.1
Disagree	217	61.1	61.1	62.3
Agree	70	19.7	19.7	82.0
Strongly Agree	64	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The above Table 4.7 presents data gathered on whether *waqf* is used in Sokoto State to ensure that all persons that deserve to acquire knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development in the state acquire same through the use of *waqf*. Findings revealed that 4(1.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 217(61.1%), 70(19.7%) agreed, and the remaining 64(18%) strongly agreed. This indicates that majority of the study audience were not in support of this assertion. The implication of this is that *waqf* is not used in Sokoto State to ensure that all persons acquire knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development in the state.

Table 4.8: *Waqf* is used to provide scholarships for Students in the state

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	24	6.8	6.8	6.8
Disagree	33	9.3	9.3	16.1
Agree	222	62.5	62.5	78.6
Strongly Agree	76	21.4	21.4	100.0
Total	355	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

The data presented in table 4.8 above shows that 24(6.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that *waqf* is used to provide scholarships for students in Sokoto State, another 33(9.3%) disagreed. Meanwhile, 222(62.5%) agreed, while the remaining 76(21.4%) strongly agreed. That majority of the study audience responded affirmatively to this statement indicates that *waqf* is used to provide scholarships for students in the state. In support of this finding, some students, who were sponsored through *waqf*, departed to Malaysia in order to pursue their various Bachelor's Degree courses in Al-Bukhari International University.⁸⁰ When interviewing some SOZECOM officials on the use *Waqf* to provide scholarships for students in the state, one responded "Yes, absolutely." All other respondents equally agreed with this. For instance, SOZECOM have sponsored some students to go and study in some countries such as Malaysia and Egypt.

Interpretation of the data presented revealed that while half of the question items attracted affirmative responses, the remaining four (4) items were negative responses. This is an indication that *Waqf* has been used partially to achieve SDG 4 in the state. Therefore, *Waqf* has a moderate effect on the achievement of SDG 4 in the state. This finding is corroborated by the 2020 national review where the Nigeria Economic Recovery & Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020 reported that the country's educational system still faces myriads of challenges.⁸¹ In addition, an evaluation report released by the Nigerian government in August 2022, the country still faces challenges as regards the implementation of SDG 4.⁸²

Despite the viability of *waqf* as a tool for the realization of SDG-4 in Sokoto State, it is imperative to examine the favorability of the extant Sokoto State Endowment Law. This is because without responsive and robust legislation, exploration of *Waqf* for realizing SDG-4 would be difficult. The next section deals with analysis of relevant Sokoto State Endowment Law.

Analysing The Sokoto State Endowment Law, 2022

Sokoto State Zakat and *Waqf* Commission (SOZECOM) was established in 1997 by the Sokoto State Government. The SOZECOM stands as a governmental agency tasked with the regulation, enhancement, and oversight of the comprehensive processes involved in the collection, administration, and equitable distribution of Zakat and *Waqf* in Sokoto, Nigeria.⁸³ The enactment of the Sokoto State Zakat and *Waqf* Commission Law in 2015, subsequently amended in 2022, delineates the legal framework for the establishment and operation of the Commission. Entrusted with the pivotal responsibilities of managing, collecting, and distributing Zakat and *Waqf* funds within Sokoto State, the Commission operates as a perpetual corporate entity in accordance with Section 3 of the Law.

The composition of the Commission, as stipulated in section 4 of the Law, encompasses key roles. These include the Executive Chairman, Islamic scholars representing each senatorial district, a representative from the Ministry of Justice, a representative from the Ministry for Religious Affairs,

⁸⁰Musa Na Allah Sokoto, 'Sokoto Endowment Student Depart to Malaysian University' the Stallion Times (Nigeria 17 2023) <<https://stalliontimes.com/2023/11/17/sokoto-endowment-students-depart-to-malaysian-university/>> accessed on 9 January 2024.

⁸¹Nigeria Integration of the SDGs into National Development Planning: A Second Voluntary National Review 2020, p. 39.

⁸²The Office of the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Launch of the Reports of the Independent Evaluation of SDG-3 and SGD-4 in Nigeria.

⁸³ Sokoto State Zakat and *Waqf* Commission, 'Home' (SOZECOM 14 August 2021),43 <<https://sozecom.org.ng>> accessed 17 January 2024.

the Commission's secretary, a representative from the organized private sector, and a delegate from the Sultanate Council.

Section 5 underscores the imperative for the governor to appoint an individual of impeccable character as the Chairman of the Commission. Furthermore, Section 6 elucidates provisions concerning the removal and tenure of the Chairman, specifying a tenure of four years, with the option of renewal for an additional period. Remuneration for Commission members is outlined in Section 7.

Moreover, part II of the Law comprehensively outlines the functions and duties incumbent upon the Commission. These duties encompass a range of responsibilities that the Commission is mandated to discharge in its role as custodian and administrator of Zakat and *Waqf* funds within Sokoto State. These include: To establish general policies aligning with international Zakat and *Waqf* best practices; creation of awareness on Zakat, *Waqf*, charity, and Islamic finance; administration of the Law, including the registration, regulation, and supervision of Zakat and *Waqf* funds; accreditation and issuance of licenses to Private Zakat and *Waqf* Practitioners; organization or collaboration for training, seminars, conferences, workshops, and enlightenment activities; publication of registered *Waqf* in the State Gazette; investigation into mismanagement allegations related to *Waqf* affairs; and collaboration with individuals, organizations, and governments for Zakat and *Waqf* awareness and advancement.

Section 13 of the law provided for the powers of the commission. Its powers include the following;

- 1) Collection, administration, and distribution of Zakat and *Waqf*.
- 2) Establishment of partnerships with government agencies or private organizations.
- 3) Creation of regulations for the realization of functions and exercise of powers.
- 4) Promotion of training programs and capacity development for staff.
- 5) Establishment and management of training centers for Zakat and *Waqf* studies.
- 6) Formulation of policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines for effective Zakat and *Waqf* management.
- 7) Incorporation and registration of entities under relevant laws as deemed necessary by the Commission.
- 8) Investment of monies through *Waqf* for general or special purposes.
- 9) Prosecution of individuals eligible to pay Zakat but refuse to do so.
- 10) Exercise of powers necessary for the due discharge of its functions in accordance with Shariah.

Having analysed the relevant provisions of the Law on *Waqf*, it is humbly submitted that the extant Law is adequate to help in the realization of SDG-4 in Sokoto State.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing discussions, the paper has found that Sokoto State has failed to implement SDG-4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, as report has it that there are 776,000 out-of-school children across the 23 local government areas of the state Sokoto. And that the State failed in this respect due to several constraints and bottlenecks, including inadequate funding for education, a lack of inclusive education policies, and a shortage of trained teachers. The paper equally found that the challenges facing Nigeria in achieving SDG4 included inadequate funding for education, a lack of inclusive education policies, and a shortage of trained teachers. The paper revealed that *Waqf* is viable in

facilitating the realization of SDG-4 targets in Sokoto State. More importantly, it is established that the extant Endowment Law of the State is adequate.

In view of the foregoing findings, it is recommended as follows:

- 1) The paper advocates the establishment of a dedicated *Waqf* fund specifically for education in Sokoto State. This fund will be invested in Shari'ah compliant businesses and utilized its proceeds to address the inadequacies in education funding and provide sustained support for quality education initiatives.
- 2) Encourage collaboration between *Waqf* authorities and educational institutions in Sokoto State. This partnership can involve the direct funding of schools, scholarships, and the provision of necessary educational resources, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education.
- 3) The study suggest that Awqaf institution should collaborate with the Sokoto State Zakat and *Waqf* Commission (SOZECOM) to create targeted *Waqf* projects specifically addressing education challenges. SOZECOM's expertise should be leveraged to ensure efficient implementation and impact of the education project in the state. For instance, SOZECOM should explore innovative initiatives like cash *Waqf* wherein individuals contribute financial resources earmarked for educational projects to enhance immediate financial support for educational projects.