

**Action  
Health Incorporated**



# *Matan Kwarai*

Insights into Early Marriage and Girls' Education in Northern Nigeria

This publication is based on a study conducted by Action Health Incorporated (AHI), a Nigerian nongovernmental organization dedicated to improving adolescents' well-being and development.

The study was initiated to broaden understanding about the context of early marriage and girl's education to serve as a guide for evidence-based advocacy and intervention planning for improved education, health, and livelihood outcomes for married adolescent girls in Northern Nigeria.

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# Matan Kwarai

Insights into Early Marriage and Girls' Education in  
Northern Nigeria

Edited by Paulina Makinwa Adebuseye



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## Foreword

**T**he nineteenth century Islamic reformer and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, Sheikh Usman Danfodio invested in the education of girl children and left us a legacy of women scholarship. He educated all the women of his household to the highest level and one of them, Nana Asmau was a teacher, linguist, administrator, author of fifty-five works and founder of a women's education movement Yan Taru, remnants of which still exist in Sokoto today. Given the low level of education of women in Northern Nigeria, it is appropriate to ask what happened to that commitment to women's education.

This publication is unique and timely. Coming at a time when education of girl children is beginning to attract some attention in Northern Nigeria. In the pre-independence era when formal education was first introduced in Northern Nigeria, the government through the Native Authority (NA) (which transformed to Local Government Authority) had to force parents to send their girl children to enroll their girls in formal schools. The NA fully funded the education of these girls who were conscripted to various school often located outside their province. An escort would collect them and from their homes and accompanied them to their schools. When the schools closed for holidays they were also transported from the school and delivered them to their homes by escorts.

Today the story has changed from conscription to acceptance and parents now take the initiative. They enroll girls in primary schools. When they complete their primary education, parents also make an effort to seek secondary school admission for their girl children. However socio-cultural practices are still strong and the Northern states, particularly the North East and North West still have the highest number of girl children who are not enrolled in school and those who drop out to get married. The majority of these never return to school to complete their education, learn a trade, or acquire vocational skills that would economically empower and make them self-reliant.

The first part of this report is an analysis of the data from the National Demographic Health Survey NDHS. The focus is on the age of marriage in the core Northern states. The verdict is that 'remarkable changes are occurring in the median age at first marriage and in women's educational attainment in Northern Nigeria. The median age at first marriage has risen and there is an increasing tendency for young women to attain higher levels of education

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after marriage.’

The next section of the report is a highlight of the special survey conducted by Action Health Incorporated AHI, a foremost organisation that is known as an advocate for youth. The organisation which has implemented ground breaking projects on married adolescents in the North East sees the potential in women and believes that ‘women are powerful catalysts for change.’ In the course of project implementation, it identified the strategies that could be adopted to ensure that women realise their full potential. Foremost among these is providing the women with knowledge and practical skills that would enable them to mobilise their communities to address issues affecting women. The most important issues are education, economic empowerment and provision of knowledge on reproductive health services which will enable them take informed decisions, enhance their ability to leverage resources and participate in community decision making.

The specialised survey undertaken by AHI showed that despite the odds militating against the education of girl children, a limited number of women who were married as adolescents returned to school and achieved their goals in life. They acquired academic qualifications that enabled them to take up a profession/career, leadership in diverse fields and even ventured into politics. Others acquired training and vocational skills that made them business entrepreneurs thereby contributing to their community’s economic development. These role models are singled out and named ‘innovators’. The story of these innovators form the body of this report. About 100 were identified from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Yobe States and the impressive accounts of their determination to succeed and the path they walked on their way to success should serve as an inspiration to girl children in Northern Nigeria.

The strategic move from this project is making the innovators the role models, mentors of adolescents and community advocates for girl child education. As they engage with policy, they become credible voices for addressing the challenges that married adolescents face in Northern Nigeria.

Their demands would include advocating for their state governments to designate schools for married adolescents and make other provisions such as vocational training available to those who might wish to combine schooling with marriage and family life. Their demand should not be difficult for their state governments to understand as these innovators would only be amplifying the strategies already outlined in the Framework for Implementation of Girl Child Education by the Federal Government. The emergence of these innovators is also a constant reminder that Northern Nigeria must return to its heritage of promoting women’s scholarship for only then can it produce the human resources it urgently requires to develop and bridge the widening education gap between it and the other parts of the country.

*Bilkisu Yusuf (mni)*  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Advocacy Nigeria, Kaduna

## Introduction

**T**his report, *Matan Quarai*, is about the inspirational life stories of a group of women hailing from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Yobe states in Northern Nigeria. These women are called “innovators” because of their novel ‘win-win’ methods of achieving major life goals – motherhood, higher education, career and leadership. *They have demonstrated that compliance with the tenets of tradition cannot become a deterrent to women’s attainment of high levels of education and success in business and the professions.*

The innovators had all married at young ages without attaining their desired educational level; many were withdrawn from school to marry according to prevailing tradition. Yet, most of them attained higher education after marriage with the financial and moral support of husbands, relatives or government scholarships. Their life stories and their paths to higher education, irrespective of age and the number of children born, command attention and are worthy of emulation. These women have demonstrated the dynamism of tradition by combining motherhood with higher education and have become successful leaders and professionals in different fields of endeavor. They have surpassed the earlier practice of education ending with motherhood

The report is organized in two parts. Following the foregoing introduction, the first part discusses differences in educational attainment and timing of first marriage between Northern and Southern Nigeria, and some notable changes. It also recounts the research and intervention programme of Action Health Incorporated (AHI) in Northern Nigeria which led to the identification of a sizeable group of married women who had attained higher education after marriage- the innovators. The second part presents summaries of the life stories of innovators and their reflections on the importance of female education.

... inspirational  
life stories...

# *Part One*

## EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE DIFFERENTIALS IN NIGERIA

It is widely known that women in Northern Nigeria, especially the core North (North East and North West) have lower levels of educational attainment than women in the Southern zones. This feature is evident from the latest national sample survey, the 2008 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2008).

**TABLE 1:**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND MEDIAN AGE\* AT FIRST MARRIAGE: WOMEN**

Percent distribution of women age 15-49 by highest level of schooling attended or completed and Median age at first marriage among women age 20-49 by five-year age groups, according to Zone, Nigeria 2008

	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Total
<b>Highest level of schooling</b>							
No education	35.5	68.1	74.2	6.3	6.0	12.0	35.8
Some primary	8.3	6.9	3.8	8.1	7.6	4.3	6.1
Completed primary	16.8	8.5	8.1	15.3	17.7	16.7	13.6
Some secondary	18.5	9.3	6.1	28.8	30.4	21.3	18.1
Completed secondary	12.9	5.0	5.3	28.6	26.1	29.6	17.5
More than secondary	8.0	2.2	2.5	13.0	12.2	16.2	8.9

>> Source: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2008. Table 3.2.1.

Table 1 shows that 68 percent of women in North East and 74 percent of women in the North West have no formal education. In sharp contrast, only 6 percent of women in each of the South East and the South South, and 12 percent in the South West have no formal education. While only 5 percent of women in the two Northern zones, North East and North West, have completed secondary school, over 25 percent of girls in the southern zones have completed secondary school. The proportions completing higher educational levels, (more than secondary) are much lower; 3 percent of women in the northern zones compared with 13 percent in the South East and 16 percent in the South West.

The tradition of early marriage persists in Northern Nigeria as confirmed by the latest data from NDHS 2008. Data on Table 2 indicate that young women in the core North (the North East and the North West) marry (for the first time) about four years earlier than their Southern counterparts. Table 2 shows that the median age at marriage -among young women in the age group 20-25- hovers around 16 years in the core Northern zones compared with the national median age of about 20 years.



**TABLE 2**  
**MEDIAN AGE\* AT FIRST MARRIAGE: WOMEN**

Median age at first marriage among women age 20-49 by five-year age groups, and percentage of women age 15-19 who have begun childbearing according to Zone, Nigeria 2008

	Nigeria	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West
20-24	19.8	a	15.9	15.7	a	a	a
25-29	19.3	18.6	15.9	15.6	24.5	22.8	22.8
30-34	18.4	18.4	15.4	15.1	24.4	22.2	22.1
35-39	18.2	18.3	15.6	15.3	22.3	20.0	21.6
40-44	17.5	18.1	15.3	14.8	21.5	18.7	21.0
45-49	17.3	17.8	15.5	14.6	19.6	18.3	20.4
Women age 20-49	18.6	18.7	15.6	15.3	a	a	a
Women age 25-49	18.3	18.3	15.6	15.2	22.8	20.9	21.8
<b>Women age 15-19 who have begun childbearing</b>	22.9	22.2	39.3	44.6	8.1	11.9	8.8

>> Source: NDHS 2008. Table 6.4.1

\*The Median age is the age when half of the women in the age group would have married for the first time.

a = omitted - less than 50% of the women married for the first time before reaching the beginning of the age group.

Northern women also begin childbearing at much earlier ages. The last row in Table 2 shows that nationwide, about 30 percent of teenagers aged 15-19 had begun childbearing in sharp contrast to 39 percent and 44.6 percent of teenagers aged 15-19 in the North East and in the North West respectively.

## NOTABLE CHANGES

Remarkable changes are occurring in the median age at first marriage and in women's educational attainment in Northern Nigeria. The median age at first marriage has risen and there is an increasing tendency for young women to attain higher levels of education after marriage.

### A rise in median age at marriage

A closer study of Table 2 shows some notable changes in median age at marriage. A comparison of median age at first marriage of women aged 45-49 with the median age at first marriage of women aged 20-24 and 25-29 shows that women are marrying at later ages in every

geopolitical zone of Nigeria. In the core Northern zones, North East and North West, younger women aged 20-24 have median ages closer to 16 years (15.9 in the North East and 15.7 in the North West) as compared with the situation among older women aged 45-49 (married 20 to 25 years previously) whose median age at marriage was closer to 15 years (15.5 in the North East and 14.6 in the North West). These data signify an increase of a whole year in the median age at first marriage among girls in northern Nigeria. The comparable nationwide data are median age at first marriage of 19.8 years among young women aged 20-24 and median age at first marriage of 17.3 years among older women aged 45-49 signifying an increase of 2.5 years. While the increase in median age at marriage is lower in the north than nationwide, the important fact is that the North has recorded a significant increase of 1 year.

The change in age at marriage among Northern women is instructive. Future statements on the persistence of early age at marriage should carry an addendum to highlight the fact that while remaining early relative to the rest of the country, age at first marriage in northern Nigeria has not remained static; it is rising.

### Higher education within marriage

While rising median age at marriage in Northern Nigeria is readily detectable from national sample data such as from the 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey, data on higher education for Northern married women is not readily available. Such evidence can only be produced by *ad hoc* surveys. Evidence that girls' education in Northern Nigeria does not necessarily end with marriage as gleaned from a local survey of married adolescent women in Bauchi and Borno states which was conducted by AHI in 2007<sup>1</sup>.

### ACTION HEALTH INCORPORATED (AHI) IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Women are powerful catalysts for change. The challenge is how to ensure that women have the knowledge and practical skills to mobilize communities around local issues affecting women and the ability to leverage organizational resources. Women in Northern Nigeria because of obvious challenges they are faced with are generally less educated than women in Southern Nigeria. Yet, no woman should be left behind particularly in education which is key to enjoyment of good health and personal and societal development. To this end, painstaking, knowledge-based intervention has been the hallmark of AHI's approach to the challenges faced by married and unmarried adolescents in Northern Nigeria.

A comprehensive overview of current knowledge gleaned from a review of secondary data and other sources on the sexual and reproductive health experiences of married adolescents in Northern Nigeria was the starting point for AHI's intervention. The review focused on Bauchi and Borno states in core North, the North-East and North West geo-political zones. The review highlighted early marriage, marriage to older husbands, low educational attainment, low

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1 Action Health Incorporated. 2007. *Success Despite The Odds: Lessons on Early Marriage in Northern Nigeria*.

social status, heightened risk of maternal and infant mortality, increased vulnerability to STI/ HIV, low knowledge of contraception and large unmet need for contraception as characteristics of married adolescents in Northern Nigeria<sup>2</sup>.

As a follow up, AHI commissioned a specialized survey which collected primary data on aspects of early marriage in two communities in Bauchi and Borno States. The pilot survey sought to answer several questions pertaining to early marriage: Do traditional and community elders still maintain that all girls marry early? Are there signals of an upward revision of 'early' so that girls nowadays may marry later than

earlier cohorts? What reasons account for the persistence of this practice? Given the greater susceptibility of younger women to HIV and the Quaranic injunction of 'disclosure', to what extent is disclosure being used to protect young brides (usually of older men) against the HIV infection? Does marriage during adolescence always result in truncation of education girls? Or are there adolescent brides who successfully continued their education within marriage? In other words, are there some 'innovators' in this regard? If yes, what are there unique characteristics?

Primary data obtained from the Bauchi and Borno survey confirmed earlier findings: Married and unmarried women shared the following characteristics: marriage to older husbands, low educational attainment, low social status, limited access to health services, increased risk of maternal and infant mortality, and increased vulnerability to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV. However the survey revealed that a limited number of women who were married as adolescents subsequently accomplished major life goals- motherhood, higher education, and resulting profession/career and leadership

These women were dubbed 'innovators' breaking new grounds in women's education in Northern Nigeria. These women are called innovators because of their novel 'win-win' methods of achieving major life goals – motherhood, higher education, career and leadership. *They have demonstrated that compliance with the tenets of tradition cannot become a deterrent to women's attainment of high levels of education and success in business and the professions.*

This revelation resulted in a detailed study of innovators in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Yobe states. Utilizing the 'snowball' sampling technique, AHI obtained information on personal characteristics, educational history, family life and current occupation from a sample of 100 innovators.

These women are called  
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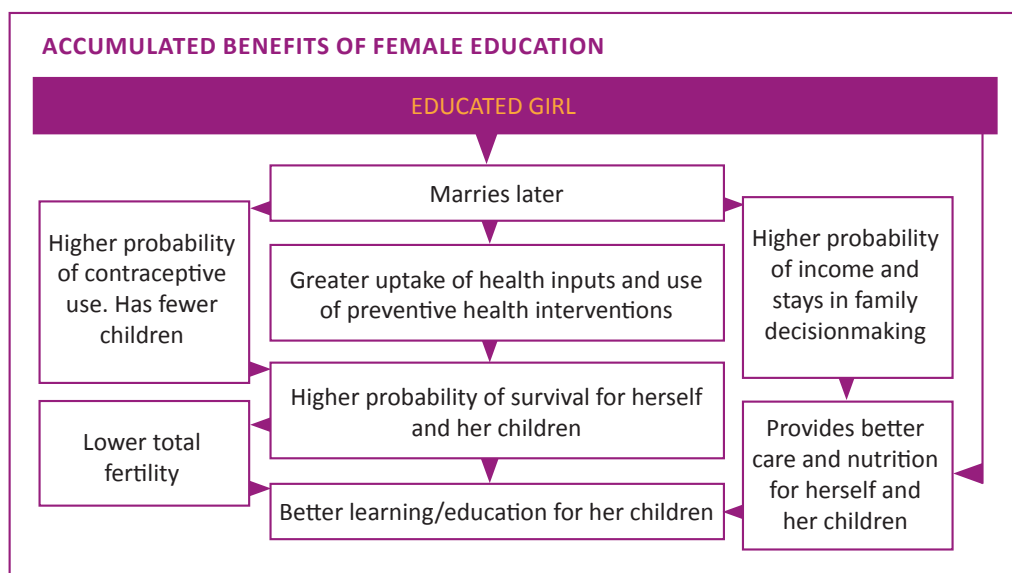
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2 Makinwa-Adebusoye P 2006: *Hidden: A Profile of Married Adolescents in Northern Nigeria*. Action Health Incorporated.

## INNOVATORS AND BENEFITS OF FEMALE EDUCATION

### Marriage before Education

Findings from the survey of innovators revealed the innovators' appreciation of the benefits of female education. However, the innovators are selective of those benefits, highlighted in the diagram below, that reflect the unique tradition of early marriage in Northern Nigeria where emphasis is on marriage before education.



Study after study has shown that girls' education yields both private and social benefits that accrue to individuals, families, and society at large. However, these well-documented benefits are premised on the axiomatic fact that girls' education precedes first marriage. The survey of innovators reveals that this premise is not true for Northern Nigeria.

While no definitive or generalizable conclusions can be deduced from the present study which is based on a non-random sample of 100 innovators across four states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Yobe), it is reasonable to conclude that, in Northern Nigeria, the greater part of girls' education takes place after marriage. It would appear that the widely-accepted tradition of early marriage often necessitating girls' withdrawal from schools, pre-nuptial arrangements that commit husbands to ensuring continuation of their young brides' education, and the growing desire for higher education among adolescent girls are major reasons why the bulk of girls' education comes after marriage.

As exemplified by the innovators whose inspirational life experiences are summarized in this report, it appears that the tradition of attainment of higher education for women be postponed until after marriage is an acceptable practice.. This tradition persists despite governments' policy of free and universal basic education. Indeed, parents and guardians who may be strongly in support of post primary/secondary education for their daughters would insist on marriage first and further education "under the husbands' roof." Parents prefer to guarantee

further education for daughters by executing pre-nuptial agreements that commit husbands to their young wives' education after marriage.

Furthermore, many of the innovators had reportedly completed childbearing before receiving their husbands' support to return to school. Thus, the synergistic influence of early marriage and completion of childbearing before further education obliterates some important benefits of female education (represented by non-highlighted boxes in the diagram). Persistently high fertility rate among northern women is the inevitable corollary of the North's unique tradition of "marriage before education".

The accumulated benefits of female education, including those that appear obliterated by the current marriage and childbearing patterns in Northern Nigeria are:

- Lowering women's total fertility: Women with formal education are much more likely to use reliable family planning methods, delay marriage and childbearing, and have fewer and healthier babies than women with no formal education
- lowering maternal mortality rates as women with formal education tend to have better knowledge about health care practices, and seek pre- and post-natal care
- lowering infant and child mortality rates as women with some formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure their children are immunized, be better informed about their children's nutritional requirements, and adopt improved sanitation practices. As a result, their infants and children have higher survival rates and tend to be healthier and better nourished
- increasing women's labor force participation and improvement of family income as education has been proven to increase income for wage earners yielding benefits for the family, community and society
- creating intergenerational education benefits as mothers' education is a significant variable affecting children's education attainment and opportunities. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school; and be in position to stimulate them by reading to them and help her children with their school work
- creating awareness and participation in family and community decision-making as the educated woman who can contribute to her family's earnings and general well-being are more likely to gain in stature and be empowered to participate in family decision-making
- giving the educated woman greater opportunities and life choices by equipping her to succeed in any endeavour including becoming a very good farmer or a successful professional or business woman

The accumulated benefits of female education that are considered most relevant by northern women are best expressed in the words of the innovators themselves as reproduced in Part 2 of the report.

### Education before Marriage

One major benefit of female education - high probability of contraceptive use- which is associated with high levels of female education is evident in northern Nigeria. The 2008 NDHS obtained information from women aged 15-49 on their knowledge and use of contraceptives.

TABLE 3

#### KNOWLEDGE AND CURRENT USE OF CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 by knowledge and current use of contraceptive, Nigeria 2008

	Nigeria	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West
<b>Knowledge</b>							
Heard of any method	68.4	64.3	58.6	45.1	85.5	89.9	95.0
Heard of any modern method	67.0	63.2	57.2	43.1	84.3	88.2	94.4
<b>Current use</b>							
Any method	14.6	13.0	4.0	2.8	23.4	26.2	31.7
Any modern method	9.7	10.5	3.5	2.5	11.8	15.5	21.0

>> Source: 2008 NDHS, Tables 5.2 and 5.5

Table 3 shows that 58.6 percent of women in the North East and 45.1 percent of women in the North West had heard of at least one method of contraceptives; about the same percentages of women in both northern zones also knew at least one modern method. Nearly 4 percent and 3 percent of women in the North East and North West zone respectively were currently using a contraceptive method at the time of the 2008 NDHS. Moreover the survey of women in communities in Bauchi and Borno states which was conducted by AHI had revealed that contraceptive use was a distinguishing characteristic of innovators identified in that survey. The Pill was mentioned as the leading method of contraceptive used<sup>1</sup>. While the small sample size does not permit generalization, the Bauchi and Borno survey provides evidence that innovators do know of and use methods of contraception. That is, innovators are also trail blazers in contraceptive use.

1 Ibid. *Success Despite The Odds: Lessons on Early Marriage in Northern Nigeria*.

In the present survey, some innovators had also expressed the desire to have completed their education before marriage if only such opportunity were available to them. Of innovators who were asked the question, “If you were given the chance would you have married at that age?” eight had responded as reproduced below.

1. *No, because I had planned to go the Nursing School instead.*
  2. *I would not have married because I wanted to complete my University.*
  3. *No I had wanted to complete my school especially seeing my classmate completing the primary and secondary schools.*
  4. *No, because I was too small*
  5. *Of course, provided my husband will allow me continue with my education.*
  6. *No. I had wanted to continue with my education. But my parents sad so and I have to obey.*
  7. *If I had the opportunity, I would have gone to school before I get married, though it was also the decision of my parents*
- #8** *Yes, because to me, I was fully matured then, and old enough to have a decision of my own. So I chose to marry him*

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Six of the eight respondents gave a negative reply and only one gave a categorical “Yes”. It is a small sample but nonetheless points to signs of what may be expected in future.

In summary, the tradition of early marriage is no longer static . There are signs of change. One innovator summarized the changes that are taking place among women in Northern Nigeria in the following words:

“Honestly, in our society especially in the North, women just have very little to say. But recently things are improving with enlightenment campaigns, orientation, women empowerment etc. Women have started understanding that they have role to play in the society. The men also are now realizing the importance of women participation. As you know, Islam has given the right but men always abuse this right.”

## INNOVATORS AS ADVOCATES

Action Health Incorporated is currently collaborating with the Ministries of Education, Health,

Women Affairs, and the Universal Basic Education Boards in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, and Yobe States so that schools could be designated as “*Married Adolescents’-Friendly Schools*” in the capital city of each state, after which these girls can be reintegrated into formal education.

In 2008, the 100 innovators were trained in “*Skills and Strategies for Effective Advocacy*”. With their first-hand experience

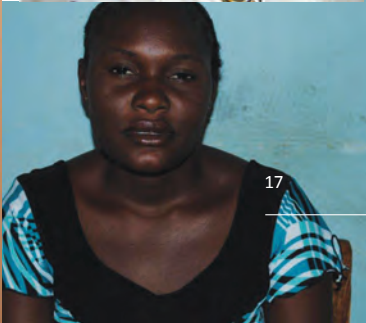
and knowledge of the challenges of teenage marriage and pregnancy, having gotten married as adolescents themselves and having within marriage, been able to make headway in life they are considered suitable mentors for other women particularly married adolescent girls. The innovators achieved their breakthroughs by continuing formal education and others by acquiring training in vocational skills and business enterprises. These women have distinguished themselves in various fields like Law, Nursing, Politics, etcetera, thus overcoming the challenges that faced and still face married adolescent girls today.

They were trained so they could be competent in advocating to their state governments to designate schools for married adolescents and also establish more structured programming that will make the journey to acquiring and completing education easier for those that seek to follow the footsteps of the innovators. In addition, they stand as role models, policy champions and mentors who have been encouraging these girls towards a positive change in value systems and most especially, in any field they pursue.

The innovators are enthusiastic about their new roles as advocates for women particularly married adolescents. They have gained the attention of state governments who are setting aside special schools for willing, married adolescents to continue their education.

The innovators are enthusiastic about their new roles as advocates for women





# *Part Two*

## Life Stories and Reflections of Women Innovators

The following are the summaries of the life stories and reflections of women from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Yobe States of Northern Nigeria on the benefits of female education. They include lawyers and magistrates, school principals and university lecturers, laboratory technologists and nurse-midwives, as well as business women and politicians.

### *Turai A. A. Kadir*

“The little they (girls) have, they want to share it with their parents. The little the man has, he wants to share with his wife and family.”



Turai A. A. Kadir got married at 18 after her secondary education. Although she had initially succumbed to her husband's insistence and truncated her studies at the Kaduna polytechnic, she later obtained a divorce. She worked hard to further her education and lacking outside support she struggled on her own and earned a diploma in education. She is a women's rights activist who now advocates for the education of adolescents. She is also an experienced grassroots politician and mobiliser. Her wealth of knowledge and experience is widely recognized and utilized not only by people in her state- Adamawa but many others in communities across the country.

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### *Eunice Adeniran*

“When I have extra time on my hands, I play with my children, I read books and I help them to do their homework and everything that they gave them to do at school.”

Married at 17 after completing primary school, Eunice Adeniran is currently working in the bookshop of the Federal College of Education. According to her, she returned to school after marriage because I know that education is the best and it is the only thing in life that can help you”. Her husband agreed and gave her full support. In her opinion: “Education is the only thing in life and it's the thing that will not put you to shame... If you are educated you too can move any where to find yourself in the world.”



### *Kaltume Musa*

“Now if you want to enjoy your life you must have education... So parents should leave their children especially girls to go back to school or to have a little education before giving them out for marriage.”



Kaltume Musa married at 15 after completing primary school. A divorced mother of 5 children, she did not allow life's circumstances in which she found herself to deter her from achieving her goal in life. She began her working career with a primary school certificate and went on to obtain her NCE. She is enrolled in a University and has almost completed her undergraduate studies. Kaltume strongly supports and advocates for the education of girls as a valuable possession that anyone could give to them. She is currently a teacher in Toungo primary school, Yola South.

### *Mercy Larai Dahiru*

“Of course we can marry early, that doesn't stop us from going to school. Even if she will marry at the age of thirteen, the husband should take the responsibility of training her.”

Mercy Larai Dahiru married at 18 after she completed her secondary education. She became pregnant immediately after marriage and could not continue her education. Although her husband expected her to be content with her new status as mother and housewife, she longed for higher education and had to divorce her uncooperative husband. Because her husband reneged on a pre-nuptial completion arrangement that she would continue her education, she had her parents' support. Her second husband has been supportive. She is a registered Nurse and Midwife presently employed at the Federal Medical Center, Yola.





### *Zainab Ahmadu Ribadu Tukur*

“...One income can no longer take care of a family any longer.... So then they are having children... on the street. But if you have educated (her) she will know how to organize herself; how to help you.”



Zainab Ahmadu Ribadu Tukur got married at 14 after her primary education. Although her father, a renowned educationist had wanted to send her to secondary school, he bowed to the wishes of his conservative mother, (Zainab's grandmother) for Zainab's early marriage. Continuing her education after marriage, she obtained the NCE and taught for some time before she switched her profession to catering. In order to be self-employed she obtained the OND and HND in catering from the Kaduna Polytechnic. She became the first Muslim, Fulani woman to be appointed by the governor as chairman of a Local government Area. She is currently the Chairman of Fufore Local Government.

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### *Jamaila Nasiru Malafa*

“For Allah's and Prophet's sake... allow daughters to acquire education. If you withdraw (the girl from school to marry) let there be a contractual agreement that she will continue pursuing her education.”

Jamila Naisiru Malafa married at 16 after completion of secondary school. After 16 years of married life and when the last of her five children was already in primary four, she returned to school. Although she found learning arduous and she was discouraged by persons who considered her too old, she persisted. But with the financial and moral support of her husband she acquired the NCE. She is currently a teacher At Ladi Atiku Girls Primary School, Jimeta.



### *Dudu Sa'idu Audu*

“Without school, life cannot be successful ... because even if you are a farmer with education, you farm better.”

Dudu Sa'idu Audu married at 18 after completion of secondary education. Although she had to remain at home for several years in order to look after her children, she eventually returned to school. She holds a diploma in Social Administration of the Kaduna Polytechnic. She is currently an assistant youth development officer at the ministry of Youth Development, Youth and Sports. Her advice to parents: “It is better if someone wants to marry your daughter at the early age, you should go into agreement; I want your wife, my daughter to continue with her education so have to promise me you will continue with her education in your house.”



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### *Aishatu Ahmad*

“If they (married adolescents) get back to school ... (they) shouldn't go and waste their time and come back without doing anything. Let them have the mind that they are ready to study, and they should study well and pass their examinations then make use of what they have studied.”



Aishatu Ahmad married at 18 after completion of her secondary school education. In her quest to continue her education, she broke up with her first husband. Supported by her uncle she obtained the NCE and a bachelor's degree. She remarried and her second husband had no choice but to let her follow her academic pursuits. She succeeded and today she holds the NCE, a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Master of Arts degree and is thinking of studying for a Ph.D. She is currently a lecturer at the Federal College of Education, Yola.

### *Fadimatu Mohammed Marafa*

“Being ignorant is really bad and you should learn skills in order to be a productive member of the society. Seek knowledge so that you can help your children and family.”

Fadimatu Mohammed Marafa got married at 14 after primary education. Encouraged by the financial and moral support of her husband, she returned to school. She enrolled first in an Islamiya school where her talent and commitment was rewarded by her sponsorship to the school of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Child bearing was not an impediment as she forged ahead and obtained a Grade II teachers' certificate and later the NCE. She is currently a teacher in Bekaji primary school, Jimeta, Yola and she is an undergraduate of the National Open University.



23

### *Halima Shu'aibu*

“... Even after university you can get husband. If you are a graduate in fact, you get more enlightened, more educated, and more well-to-do husband rather than somebody who has not been to school.”



Halima Shu'aibu got married at 18 after obtaining the Grade II Teacher's certificate. Although her husband had preferred that she remain a housewife, she overcame his initial opposition and returned to the University after eight years of being married and raising four children. With dint of hard work and determination she succeeded and now holds both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education. She is currently Director Social Mobilization, Agency for Mass Education of the Adamawa Primary Education Board.

### *Habsatu Dahiru*

“The mother is the teacher, the role model, the mentor. If we better the women, we have improved the society, relegate her then you have hoodlums, armed robbers and all bad eggs in the society.”



Habsatu Dahiru got married at 17 after her secondary education to a man chosen by her father. She considers herself lucky to have an exacting job to which she devoted much time and which offered her opportunity for further professional training. She holds a Diploma in Mass Communication from Bayero University and has attended courses at the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria Training School in Lagos. She also holds a specialized Reporting certificate from the B.B.C. She is currently a broadcaster with the Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation. At her spare time she also contributes to intervention activities on the promotion and protection of the rights of women.

### *Aishatu Ahmed Hamman*

“Let them not ... try to stop their wards doing what they want to do in life. If they don't have the money, let them give the moral support.”

Aishatu Ahmed Hamman got married at 23, while she was already an undergraduate at the University of Maiduguri. With moral and financial support of her husband, she completed her first degree in education and is planning to pursue a Masters degree. Today she is happy in the teaching profession. She is currently a lecturer at the Federal College of Education, Yola.





### *Binta B. Baruwa*

“It is not like before, you lock the woman in the house, not doing anything, the husband will be taking care of her, ... that one is in the olden days. But today..., every woman has to go out to look for something ... to support the family.”



Binta B. Baruwa got married at 15 after her primary education. She was encouraged by her husband who supported her both morally and financially to further her education. Today, she holds the NCE in Nutrition. She is currently a Nutrition Officer working with the Primary Health Care Department in Yola South.

25

### *Aishatu Mohammodu Ajuji*

“Let them fear Allah and stop preventing their daughters from acquiring knowledge... Let them be productive not to depend solely on their husbands.”

Aishatu Mohammodu Ajuji got married at 18 while in form 3 in secondary school. She was encouraged by her husband to go back to school. After spending one year in de level five and then resigned from the service. Today, she has been able to sustain her family through her petty trading. She advises married adolescents to acquire skills if they can not continue their education.



### *Hauwa Hamman Joda*

“If you are not educated, in next ten years to come, even sweeping in offices you cannot get it because the certificates are now what people look upon.”

Hauwa Hamman Joda got married at 18 after completing secondary school. Thanks to the prenuptial agreement reached between her parents and her in-laws regarding her education, Hauwa was finally able to secure her husband's reluctant support to commence undergraduate studies at the University of Maiduguri. On a number of occasions she has encouraged young girls to get basic education. She is a trainer on women's leadership and violence against women at the grassroot level. She also offers counseling support to young girls whenever the need arises. She is currently working with the Adamawa State Judiciary.



26

### *Rabi Nasiru Ahmed*

“Parents(should)allow their daughters to acquire primary, secondary or even advance certificate before marrying them off. ... (This) generation needs an educated mother who will be able to help her children and family.”



Rabi Nasiru Ahmed got married at 18 after completing secondary school. After 17 years of marriage, she received her husband's financial support to enter the Federal College of Education, Yola. Her natal family who were initially opposed to her continuing education after so many years of marriage now praise her decision. Apart from the formal education which she pursued, she also acquired skills including sewing, trading and fish farming. She is currently a teacher at Daigira primary school.

### *Rukayya Aminu Bamanga*

“...Remember everything you do ... has to do with education; even conversing; conversation with an illiterate differs from conversation with an educated person.”

Rukayya Aminu Bamanga got married at 15 after completing Islamic education but with She no western education. After marriage she furthered her education at Elkenemi College where she earned a diploma in Islamic Studies. Subsequently, she obtained a bachelor's degree in Arabic Language at the University of Maiduguri. With her husband's moral and financial support she is planning to continue her studies to obtain a Masters degree. She currently assists Islamiya schools in her neighborhood.



27

### *Victoria Eric Taiye*

“No time is too late for women to go to school... You can imagine an illiterate man saying, I don't want a woman that I have to give her money for maggi and salt every day which means even the illiterate ... now understand the importance and appreciate the fact that their wives go to school.”



Victoria Eric Taiye trained as a teacher and holds the NCE. She did some part time teaching in a girls' school. She is currently the producer of “Ladies World” with the Adamawa Television Corporation, Yola.

### *Larai Yahya Adamu*

“Every woman should be prepared for a bad time. Had it been that I have not improved myself, and my salary increased what could have happened after the demise of my husband?”



Larai Yahya Adamu got married at 17 after secondary school. After marriage, she was encouraged by a neighbor and her husband to continue her education. She enrolled at the Federal College of Education where she obtained the NCE. She is currently a teacher at Ladi Atiku School. Now widowed, she is pleased that being educated and working has provided her with sufficient means to look after herself and her children.

28

### *Fadimatu Wakili Boya*

“Education has no age limit except you are lazy. I am trying to obtain my PhD in my late forties... Whatever a man can do, I believe... with determination ...they (women) can do even better.”

Fadimatu Wakili Boya got married at 19 after completion of her secondary education. After marriage she did a pivotal grade II course and was employed as a teacher. After teaching for five years she enrolled for her first degree at the Federal University of Technology and later proceeded to the University of Ibadan for a Master's degree. She hopes to obtain a Ph D in the near future. She is currently a lecturer at the Federal College of Education, Yola.



### *Hauwa Hussaini*

They (married adolescents) should be serious and try to achieve their goals; they should set goals and try to achieve it.”



Hauwa Hussaini was married at 13 when she had only attained grade 3 in primary school. Because her husband would not allow her to return to school to take advantage of the newly introduced U.P.E., she obtained a divorce. With the financial support of her father and encouragement from neighbours, Hauwa left her young children in care of her mother and pursued her dream to become a school teacher. She is currently Principal of the Women Development Centre which is the designated secondary school for married adolescents in Bauchi.

29

### *Khadijat Abdullahi*

Khadijat Abdullahi got married at 13 after primary school education. Her husband supported her desire to further her education but she had to be self supporting as her husband had only a meager income with which he catered for the family. She started her studies at an Islamiya school and subsequently obtained a diploma in Islamic studies. She is currently a teacher. She asks married adolescents not to be contented with being full-time housewives, but to seek opportunities for improvement.



### *Maryam Mahmood*

“Even if you are 20 and above you can still go back to school and you will be useful to yourself and to your family...”

Maryam Mahmood was married at 16 after her secondary school education. She was inspired by her neighbor who was a Nurse to develop interest in the nursing profession. With her husband's support, she successfully completed her studies at the Bauchi School of Nursing and Midwifery and qualified as a Nurse/Midwife. She is currently a practicing Midwife at the Bauchi Specialist Hospital. She continues to be a major source of financial support for her parents, brothers and sisters.



30

### *Asma'u Tahir*

“Go back to school and work hard to earn a living instead of relying on ...husbands to always give them.”



Asmau Tahir was married at 17. She returned to school when her husband left home for further studies and she felt 'redundant'. She attended the School of Health Technology at Ningi with the financial support of her father and sponsorship of the Bauchi Local Government. Asmau is currently working as a certified Midwife.

### *Gimiya Iliya*

Married at 16 when her education was truncated due to an unexpected pregnancy Gimiya Iliya determined to continue her education after the delivery of her baby. However, her parents-in-law would only pay for her to complete secondary school. She turned to a sister who enrolled her as an apprentice in a hair dressing. She plans to own a saloon and pursue higher education.



### *Doris Andrew*

“I am victim of circumstances so if you encounter problem along the way, wake up and struggle to finish your studies.”



Doris Andrew had to marry at 16 when she was suspended from secondary school as a result of an un-intended pregnancy for a classmate. After the birth of her child, and the death of her parents, she managed to support her educational pursuits and her child with the partial support from her uncle and extra income from petty trade selling ‘pure water’ and akara (bean cake). Today, Doris owns a beauty salon and she is in school.

31

### *Justina Istifanus*

“Life is wonderful today. As a mother and as a housewife, I can comfortably give my own contribution to the family. In fact, I am happy. It makes me have a sense of belonging; makes me feel to be somebody.”

Justina Istifanus was married at 17. She encountered financial difficulties and her desire to assist her husband and make financial contributions for the support of her children and relations made her desire to further her education. She succeeded in convincing her reluctant husband to support her ambition. Both her husband and the government supported her training at the Bauchi School of Nursing and Midwifery. She currently works as a Nurse at Under Five Clinic, Jahun Bauchi.





### *Saratu Garba Aminu*

“Since there is life, there is hope. They (married adolescents) can make it if they want.”

Saratu Garba Aminu got married at 17 after secondary education. Because she accompanied her husband, a Civil Servant, on his frequent transfers, she had to postpone her return to school for eight years after her marriage. She was awarded a government scholarship and she also received her husband's support to study Laboratory Technology. She subsequently enrolled in a degree program at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University.. She is currently a laboratory technologist at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University.



32

### *Aishatu Musa Hassan*

“If anybody wants to go further with her education I advice her to go further because the education ... assists a lot.”



Aishatu Musa Hassan was married at 18. In her early years of marriage she was a full-time housewife who relied solely on her husband for all her needs. According to her, being jobless she must wait for her husband to return from work before she solve whatever problems she had. She decided to train as a Nurse at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Bauchi. She received moral and financial support from her husband and parents as well as scholarship from the State Government.



### *Ramla Sani*

“Life has been good because as a teacher you become exposed because everyday you keep studying ... because there are a lot of challenges. So I am happy to be a teacher.”

Ramla Sani was married at 18 after secondary school. Initially she was a full time housewife who relied solely on her husband to provide all her needs. Noting that she could not always get all the money she needed from her husband who was unhappy with her requests she decided to further her education. Her husband and her parents supported her decision. She studied at the Federal College of Education in Kano. She is currently a teacher.



33

### *Lydia Joel*

“My husband is late. Supposing ... I did not have the zeal to go to school, he would have just left me in condition that I will not be able to manage the house”



Lydia Joel was married at 20 after secondary school. Following her husband's suggestion, she trained as a nurse/midwife at the school of Nursing and Midwifery Bauchi. Though Lydia is now a widow, she remains grateful to her husband for supporting her education. Lydia works with the Bauchi State Specialist Hospital. Her advice to adolescents: I will advise them to further their education.

### *Binta Musa*

“Gone are the days when women expected their husbands to do everything for them and my believe is that no religion preaches laziness so women should wake up and assist themselves even not for their husbands but assisting themselves, their children and the society at large.”



Binta Musa was married at 18. Her father was impressed with her decision to further her education, and her husband overcame his initial opposition and supported her. She obtained a degree in Education at the University of Maiduguri. She feels “great and happy” and her family members are also happy for the support she gives them. She is currently a secondary school teacher.

34

### *Vicky John*

Vicky who got married at 19 decided to seek higher education so she could be relevant in life. With support from her husband and relatives, she has enrolled into the State Polytechnic Bauchi. Though she is still in school, she dreams of “becoming an officer with my own office”. She says to married adolescents: “go to school and avoid idleness.”



### *Khadija Inuwa*

“Education is ... the best because there is always an improvement in education.”

Khadija Inuwa was married at 18. She returned to school after 2 years of married life because she could see many of her friends who were continuing their education. With the support of her husband and family as well as State scholarship she is currently undergoing courses leading to the National Certificate of Education.



### *Ladi Joseph*

“If one finds herself in such a circumstance, she should get up and fight against illiteracy as it will give you the opportunity to interact well with your husband; ... and even your children you can give them good positive advice that can help them in life. So I advice my colleagues who have not further their education to do so.”



Ladi Joseph was married at 19. She used to enjoy being a full time housewife until increasing household expenses made her take up paid employment. She was cleaner in a girls' hostel at ATBU. Her encounter with female students who were older than her motivated her to change her status from cleaner to student. She enrolled for an Adult Education Programme in Kangere, Bauchi and despite the fact that (in her words) “I was confronted with problems of not picking up quickly in class, I was not as sharp as other students” she persevered and learnt to read and write.

### *Halima Yusuf*



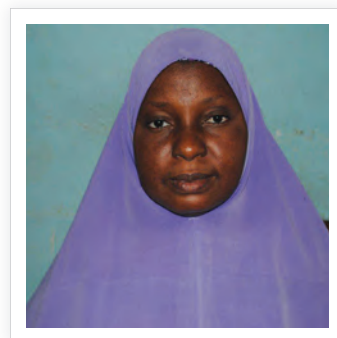
Shortly after her marriage at 19, Halima Yusuf continued with her education. In addition to the financial and moral support which she received from her husband and relations she also gained a State scholarship. She obtained degree in Animal Science from ATBU Bauchi. Although she initially chose not to take up any formal employment, Halima is currently a teacher. She has also returned to the University and is undergoing a Masters Degree programme in Animal Science. Her advice to married adolescents: 'They should make up their minds toward positive living in the sense that they should think of something good for them to acquire at least minimum qualification. They should strive to further their education.'

36

### *Hashiya Abubakar*

*“There is no age limit to education despite the fact that they are married, this does not stop them from furthering their education.”*

Hashiya Abubakar was married at 19. Her choice of profession was influenced by her father who is a Medical Personnel. Effective planning and good time management are the strategies that she employed in overcoming the challenges of having to combine schooling with childrearing. Moreover, she had the full backing of her husband and this was a good motivation for her. Hashiya is a Chief Midwife Educator at the Bauchi School of Midwifery.



### *Aishatu Tahir*

“No matter how long they have spent in their husbands’ house and no matter how many children they have given birth to, they should try to go back to school ... or they should identify a vocational training that will enable them to get something to build up their children”.

Aishatu Tahir was married at 19 after her secondary school education. Most members of her wealthy family are educated. Hence, education and resulting employment was not only a means of reducing her dependence on her husband but also of maintaining the family status. With the support of her husband and her family she was able to further her education. She holds a diploma in Business Administration and Management and is currently a Civil Servant.



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### *Fura'atu Ahmad Mohammad*

“Try to go to school as the outcome of education will help them (married adolescents), their families and the whole community.”

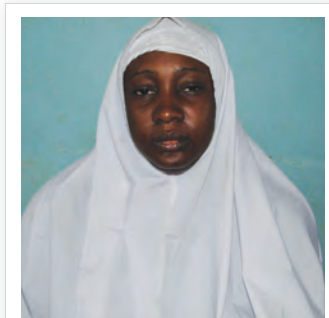


Fura'atu Ahmad Mohammad was married at 19 after her secondary school education. She is currently enrolled in the College of Education for the NCE. She is supported in her educational pursuits by her husband and she also has government scholarship. She combines her education with knitting which enables her with to contribute to the family income.

### *Aishatu I. Garba*

“Education never ends, those that have certificate and those that did not have... should try ... they can start from adult education before they know they will obtained their certificate, diploma, degree, even masters”

Aishatu Garba was married at 19 after her secondary education in petty trading. However when trading was no longer lucrative she decided to further her education. With the support of her husband and relatives and financial assistance from the Local Government Aishatu trained as a Community Health Extension Worker at the Gombe School of Health Technology and later became a certified Community Health Officer (CHO).



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### *Hadiza Shehu*

Hadiza Shehu was married at 19. Her parents had a pre-nuptial arrangement with her husband to allow her continue her education after marriage. Her husband reneged on the arrangement but she insisted on her right to further education. Eventually, instead of studying Law as she had earlier desired, she became a teacher after obtaining the National Certificate in Education which was her husband's preference. She is currently the Principal, Women's Secondary School, Ningi. She cites the example of a young girl who married at 13 and could only return to her studies after five children but nonetheless has a Doctorate Degree as someone to be emulated by all adolescent married girls.



### *Asabe Abubakar*

Asabe Abubakar is a nurse at the Bauchi Specialist Hospital. She was a school teacher before becoming a Nurse at the instance of her father-in-law who needed a staff nurse to work in his clinic. In his own self interest, her father-in-law supported her even though her mother in-law was vehemently opposed to her furthering her education. After her training she refused to work for her father-in-law who wanted her to work without any pay. Today, she works at the Youth-Friendly Clinic, Bauchi State Specialist Hospital. According to her: "I always advise them (married adolescent girls who frequent her Clinic), telling them that this is the right time for you to ask your husbands to allow you to continue your education because if you stay after three or four years you could have may be two kids. Then when you ask him to go back to school, he will say 'no, who will take care of your kids for you?' But as early as possible this is the right time for you, you are pregnant (for the first time) there is nobody that will prevent you..."

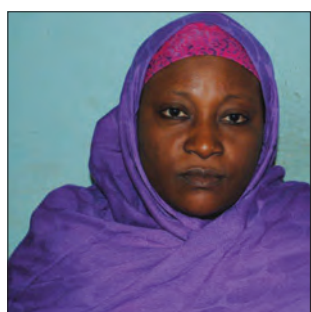


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### *Jummai Haruna*

"I feel good in my profession – there is a saying in my profession that nurses are beautiful."

"A married woman who is educated knows how to manage her home and how to take care of her children in a moral way."



Jummai Haruna was married at 19. In deference to her husband who dislikes undergraduate life on a university campus, she chose to train as a Nurse. She eventually enrolled in the School of Nursing and Midwifery Bauchi State. Today, she enjoys her profession;; sometimes if I come to work when the place is clean up, my colleagues have worn their white dresses, everybody is up and doing, trying to help in one way or the other, I feel great". Her advice to married adolescents: "Married adolescents should never give up. They should always make sure that whatever they are doing they should seek for education because going to school doesn't mean you must work. You have to be educated in order to help the society."





### *Nana Shetima Liberty*

Nana Shetima was married at 19. She is a housewife, a lawyer, school proprietress and patron of the Borno State Women Innovators. She was a full time home maker for about 23 years until her desire to learn more about the Muslim religion made her join the weekend classes of the Borno College of Legal and Islamic Studies (BOCOLIS). With her husband's support she continued further Islamic studies at the Borno College of Education where she obtained a diploma in Sharia Law. Subsequently she enrolled at the University of Maiduguri where she graduated with an LLB degree in Sharia Law. She was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2007. She is also a certified Associate member of Mediators of the Institute of Chartered Mediators And Counselors. From her home base, Nana Shetima is involved in many outside activities. She was supervisory counselor for the erstwhile Better Life for Rural Women Programme overseeing the educational policies of her local government especially as they affect women. She is the Legal Adviser of the Fish Sellers Association of Borno and member of the Alternative Conflict Resolution (ADR). She is an active member of the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) Borno State branch of which she was formerly treasurer. In addition, she runs a private Islamic school for women and for young children in her large compound. She has received awards from several women organizations. She believes that the younger generation of women must be educated to advance in life.



### *Hajja Falmata Ali*

Hajja Falmata Ali was married at age 13 when she was at Yerwa Central Primary School Maiduguri. She realized that she needed to further her education so she enrolled into Day Women Teachers College Maiduguri where she obtained the Grade II Teachers certificate. With the support of her husband she started teaching in Shehu Garbai School where she is currently the School Librarian.



### *Hauwa Abba Ahmed*

Hauwa Abba Ahmed was married at 14 without completing secondary school. When her ambition to continue her studies was not supported by her husband, she opted to end the six-year marriage. First she enrolled into community Midwifery Bauchi, then School of Nursing in Maiduguri and became a Staff Nurse. Subsequently she obtained a diploma in Public Health and became a Community Health Officer (CHO) certificate for Health and Social Administration from the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital. She also holds a certificate of Health and Social Administration and advance Diploma in Public Administration from the University of Maiduguri. She joined the administrative cadre of the State Civil Service and was appointed Deputy Director Research and Planning, Women Commission. Between 1997 and 2003, Hauwa was Local Government Secretary to Monguno, Kondouga, Gwoza and Magumeri. She is currently the President, Borno State Women Innovators. She strongly believes that women should be given the chance to continue their education even after marriage.



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### *Hajja Yagana Modu*

Hajja Yagana Modu was married at 15 after her primary education. She began teaching in a primary school where her husband worked. On learning about the newly opened Women's Day Teachers' College her interest in furthering her education was rekindled. Her husband neither opposed the idea nor sponsored her; she sponsored herself. She graduated five years later at the higher levels. She graduated five years later earning a Grade Two Teachers' Certificate and began teaching in Yerwa Practice Primary School in Maiduguri. She later switched jobs earning a secretarial certificate at CONSEC in Potiskum and a diploma in Secretarial Studies in Ramat Polytechnic in Maiduguri. She currently works with the Local Education Authority in the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council. She is also a politician and holds the position of Lamisula Jabarmari Ward Womens' Leader for ANPP. She is the spokesperson for women and youth of her ward.

### *Falmatu Bukar Kadai*

Falmatu Bukar Kadai was married at 17 while still in secondary school. With the support of her husband she trained at the Nursing Preliminary Training School in Kano. As a result of her outstanding performance she was transferred to Maiduguri School of Nursing where she qualified as a Nurse/Midwife. She also obtained a Diploma as a Community Health Officer. With this additional qualification, she was appointed Deputy Head of Department of the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council. She has since retired from the Council and she is the assistant secretary of the Borno Women Innovators.



### *Gumsu Modu. Bulama*

Gumsu Modu. Bulama was married at 18 immediately she completed her Secondary School education. After marriage, her husband did not allow her to pursue her education and did not agree to her taking up an employment. She respected his wishes, remained at home ever since, and engages herself in sewing dresses for her daughters and other women in her community. Recently, she traveled to the Cameroon Republic where she was introduced to the soap-making business in which she is currently engaged. Although, this is on a small scale, she hopes to expand in the near future.

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### *Maimuna Abba Kawu*

Maimuna Abba Kawu was married at 15 after completion of her primary school. When her husband refused to let her further her education, she divorced him and returned to her father's house with her four children. Encouraged by an uncle and aided by the principal of the School of Midwifery, Maimuna graduated as a staff Mid-Wife. She also attended the school of Nursing Maiduguri where she obtained certificate in Nursing. Although her second husband has only Quranic education, he has supported her; he enrolls his children in school because of her example. She is a Midwife in charge of the Youth Friendly Clinic of the Borno State Specialist Hospital.



### *Yagana Yakubu Zannah*

While in her third year in secondary school Yagana Yakubu Zannah was married at 17. Nonetheless she returned to school and obtained the Grade Two Teachers' Certificate at the Day Women Teachers' College. After a brief stint as classroom teacher she enrolled at the Borno College of Education and earned the National Certificate of Education (NCE). She also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from the University of Maiduguri. She is currently the Headmistress and Principal of Mafoni-Galtimari School. The school's population jumped from two hundred pupils to over two thousand enrollments in nine years. She is acclaimed for her successful sensitization of parents in her community on the importance of education.



### *Hajja Maimuna Umaru*

Hajja Maimuna Umaru was married at 17 when she was in her final year in the secondary school. Seeing all her former school mates making progress in academic and other pursuits, she decided to enroll at the University of Maiduguri for a B.Sc degree in Education. Subsequently, she earned an M.Sc degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She is now a PHD student in the University of Maiduguri. Besides being a lecturer at the Kashim Ibrahim College of Education, she is also an advocate for women's education and is personally involved in the follow-up and encouragement of her students ensuring that they receive necessary support to successfully complete their studies. She also heads two non-profit, cooperative societies, Omo Legbe and Oko Lashe which ensure that members save a portion of their income on a daily or weekly basis. Her pet project is to teach women to dye clothes on a large scale. Maimuna Umaru is the treasurer of the Borno Women Innovators.





### *Fati Mohammed*

Fati Mohammed was withdrawn from primary school in her fourth year and married at 14. After 19 years of marriage without children, she divorced her husband and enrolled in the Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri. She is currently a Sociology student and plans to proceed to the University on completion of her course. Besides being a full-time student she owns a catering outfit which is patronized for weddings, naming ceremonies and other occasions. She radiates confidence and determination and encourages young women to seek education for self empowerment.

### *Hajja Dudu Abdulsalam*

Hajja Dudu Abdulsalam married at 16 years just after completing primary school. When she decided to further her education she gained her husband's support and enrolled at the Agency for Mass Literacy where she completed a course in Adult Education. She was then offered a teaching position at the Agency. Subsequently she enrolled for the basic course and received a certificate in Adult Education at the Adult Education Institute in Maiduguri. She is currently undergoing Diploma course in Adult Education. With necessary government permits, Dudu Abdulsalam started an adult education school in her home. The school caters for about 50 women who have never received any formal education. Government funds the school and she is supported and encouraged by her husband in whose compound the school is cited. She is the school's head teacher and in this way, she is educating married women free of charge. Dudu Abdulsalam currently works with the Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy.



### *Ya Gambo Maina*

Ya Gambo Maina was married at 18 after completing secondary school. She was encouraged by her husband to learn sewing at the Maiduguri Women Development Center. Thereafter, she enrolled at the Ramat Polytechnic where she earned a diploma in Social Work. She is an advocate for female education. She currently works at the Community Development Center under the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.





### *Falmata Abdulsalam*

Falmata Abdulsalam was married at 16 after completing secondary school. After marriage, she enrolled at the Maiduguri School of Midwifery where she qualified as a Staff Nurse.. She encourages young women to continue with their education or engage in handcraft to help themselves. She currently works with Yerwa Clinic at the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

### *Aishatu Mohammed Sanda*

Aishatu Mohammed Sanda was married at age 18 after completing her secondary school. She later went to Day Women Teachers College Maiduguri as a Pivotal student where she graduated as Grade II Teacher. She proceeded to Kashim College of Education Maiduguri for her NCE programme. She is currently working with Maiduguri Metropolitan Council Department as a class teacher in Yerwa Practising Primary School Maiduguri



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### *Ladidi Sheu Haruna*

Ladidi Sheu Haruna was married at 19 after secondary school. After three children, and with her husband's financial support, she enrolled for a diploma course at the Sir Kashim Ibrahim College of Education. She recently completed her studies and hopes to further her education in the future. She is the only daughter of her mother's to go to a conventional school. She currently works as Senior Store keeper at the Technical Facility Center, Ministry of Education.



### *Kucheli Janko Jarfa*

Kucheli Tanko Tarfa got married at 16 after primary school. She qualified as a Clerical Officer at the Staff Training Center, Potiskum. Subsequently she attended a course in Account and Audit at the Ramat Polytechnic, and a diploma course in Accounting of the University of Maiduguri. Because she could not enroll in a University degree course without a secondary school certificate, she combined studying secondary school subjects with her undergraduate studies. She successfully passed the required WAEC subjects. She eventually graduated with a BSc degree in Banking and Finance, and an MSc degree in Business Management of the University of Maiduguri. She currently works with the University of Maiduguri and she is the general secretary of the Borno State Women Innovators (BOSWIN).



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### *Ajide Mustapha*

Ajide Mustapha was married at 18 after the completion of her secondary school. She has since been a full time home-maker in deference to the wishes of her husband who did not want her going to school or engaging in outside work. Her husband's death made her venture into trading to support her five children. From a small beginning she has expanded her trading to importation of goods from other countries and cities for sale in Maiduguri. Today, she can boast of a large clientele for her imported carpets, general household materials including foreign beds, Italian crystals, incense and a host of other items.



### *Moram Kaumi*

When Moram Kaumi was married at 12. At the time, she had received Qu'ranic education which was the only type of education that her parents favoured. Blessed with 13 children, she is a successful trader. She deals in local mats and cow fats brought in from Kaduna which she retails in Maiduguri.





### *Yakaka Mai Jir*

Yakaka Mai Jir was married at age 14 while she was in form three in Yerwa Government Secondary School Maiduguri. Afterwards I went for training in Health technology Maiduguri where she obtain a certificate in Primary Health Care. She has also undergone trainings in Paralegal and Mediator. She is looking forward to furthering her education at the University of Maiduguri.



### *Hajiya Iyabo J. Adebunmi*

Hajiya Iyabo J. Adebunmi was married at 17 after secondary school education. Because her husband did not like the idea of her continuing with her studies she left him and enrolled at the School of Midwifery, Bauchi where she qualified as Staff Mid-wife. Her second husband encouraged her to further her education and she enrolled at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital where she graduated as a Community Health Officer. She became the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Primary Health Care Activities and Coordinator of the Helen Keller Organization. She was also a former Assistant Director of Nursing in Borno State. Now retired, she is a business woman.



### *Maryam Ngileruma*

Maryam Ngileruma was married at 15 while still a fourth-year student in the secondary school. Her husband allowed her to complete her secondary education. She got a job after her graduation and was sent on a course in social administration. Subsequently, she enrolled in the Kaduna Polytechnic and earned a diploma in Social Administration. She later studied at the University of Maiduguri and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science. All the while she rose steadily in the Civil Service to the post of a director. She has recently retired from the Borno State Civil Service where she was the Director, Social Welfare at the Ministry of Women's Affairs. She believes that women should be ready to face challenges in order to make it in life.





### *Mrs. Salamatu Musa*

Mrs. Salamatu Musa married at 19 after secondary school. Without the knowledge of her husband who opposed her further education, she attended a course on store keeping at the Central Store in Maiduguri. She later followed this with a second course which enabled her to qualify as a senior Store Keeper. When her husband finally became aware of her achievements he was won over by her determination and has remained supportive. Salamatu currently works with the Borno State Ministry of Education as Principal Store Officer I.

### *Asabe Yohana Mshelia*

Asabe Yohana Mshelia was married at 16 after primary school. After the marriage with the moral and financial support of her husband she attended the school of Midwifery and graduated as a Staff Midwife after which she proceeded to School of Nursing and graduated as a staff Nurse while simultaneously attending evening classes for her General school Certificate.. She subsequently enrolled at the University of Maiduguri and graduated with a diploma in Health Administration, and later a BSc degree in Sociology. She is currently a senior tutor with Borno State Ministry of Health. She is also the Vice President of the Borno State Women Innovators (BOSWIN).



### *Hauwa Abdullahi*

Married at 17 while she was still in her third year in the secondary school, Hauwa Abdullahi is currently a Nurse in charge of children and their immunization programme at the Yerwa Maternal and Child Clinic in Maiduguri. Shortly after her marriage she returned to secondary school on the insistence of her senior brothers. She later got an admission to the school of Nursing and Midwifery and she graduated as a Staff Mid-wife. She also studied nursing at the Maiduguri School of Nursing.



### *Hadiza Saje Abba*

Hadiza Saje Abba was married at 14 while in her third year in the secondary school. After six years of marriage, her husband allowed her to continue her schooling at the Day Women Teachers' College from which she graduated with a Grade Two Teachers' Certificate. She accepted a teaching appointment with the Jere Local government authority as a teacher in the primary school soon afterwards. The death of her husband shortly afterwards made her realize the need to further her education. She first enrolled in a diploma course before continuing to earn a University degree. She faced so many challenges including rejection by friends and family but she was focused on her academic pursuits. She is currently working as Assistant Chief Education Officer (Schools) under Jere Local Education Authority.



### *Mrs. Burbur J. Medugu*

Mrs. Burbur J. Medugu was married at 16 after obtaining the Teachers' Grade Two Certificate. After two children, she decided to further her education. She enrolled in the pre-degree programme and later obtained a B.A, Industrial Design from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. After serving in the compulsory NYSC she taught in various secondary schools as well as the Women Teachers' College. All the while she engaged in petty trading selling groundnut oil and cake in order to help support her dependants. She received scholarship from the Borno State Teaching Service Board to read for a Masters Degree in Industrial Design at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. She is presently a lecturer at the Department of Creative Arts, University of Maiduguri. Alewai is the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Borno Sate Women Innovators (BOSWIN). She is presently pursuing her PHD programme in Industrial Design in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### *Fati Abba Goni*

Fati Abba Goni was married at 13 after completing primary school. She was satisfied with her life as a homemaker but twelve years after marriage at her husband's insistence, she enrolled in the Day Women Teachers' College and obtained a Grade Two Teachers' Certificate. After this experience, she went to the Sir Kashim College of Education for a National Certificate in Education (NCE) programme which qualified her for admission to the University of Maiduguri. She graduated with BA in Kanuri Linguistics. She currently teaches at the Government Girls' Secondary School Maiduguri. She is the only educated member of her father's family. And she is very grateful to her husband for his encouragement and financial support.



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### *Uwani Alkali*

Uwani Alkali married at the age of 16. With the support of her husband she proceeded to College of Agriculture where she graduated with a National Diploma in Home Economics. She started her profession with the Ministry of Education and was posted to Mafoni Day Secondary School. In her academic pursuits, she enrolled at the University of Maiduguri and graduated with BA degree in Creative Art, and later a Masters Degree in Art Education. She currently lectures at the Department of Fine Art University of Maiduguri.





### *Zara Musa*

Zara Musa was married at 22 in her third year in the university to the man chosen for her by her father. She was maltreated by her husband; “may be because of my resistance to the marriage initially”. She divorced him and subsequently returned to school to obtain a BSC degree in Sociology and Anthropolgy. She later went for Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), an added advantage for her career as a teacher. She is currently a lecturer in Yobe State University.

### *Gambo Aji Suleiman*

Gambo Aji Suleiman was married at 18 to the man her parents chose for her. The man already had a wife with children. Her husband who initially refused her request for further education later acquiesced because he did not want her to “revolt”. She also had her father’s support. After obtaining a diploma, she had worked for the State government. She is currently an Assistant Director, Programme in the Agency for Mass Education.



### *Hauwa B. Gwary*

Hauwa B. Gwary was married at 16. Although her husband was initially reluctant to let her further her education, he was persuaded by her educated brothers to support Hauwa in her educational pursuits. She now holds both an NCE and a B.A degree in Education. She is presently a Deputy Director, Guidance and Counseling in the Education Resource Centre Damaturu.





### *Ramatu Isa Muhammed*

Ramatu Isa Muhammed was married at 18. She holds certificates from the College of Education and School of Administrative Studies as well as a University degree. She was first employed as an instructor in the Agency for Mass Education and is currently working with UNICEF as a focal officer in charge of girls' education. Her zeal to engage in business like poultry, animal rearing, and trading in addition to her office work, made her self-dependent.

### *Fati Ibrahim*

Fati Ibrahim had only 2 years of primary education when she decided to get married at 13. She chose to marry because she was not allowed to continue school. She wanted to further her education especially seeing her classmates completing the primary and secondary schools. She was divorced and remarried twice. She returned to school after her third divorce because her husband had two wives and many children and could not provide adequately for them. This experience made her struggle hard to get a Grade II diploma. Today, she is a social development worker.



### *Habiba Suleiman*

Habiba Suleiman lost her mother when she was just 2 years old. She was in her fourth year in primary school when, without her consent, her brother gave her in marriage, at age 13, to a man who was a drunkard. She was divorced twice but was motivated to return to school. She is currently in JSS3 in a secondary school. She has been able to send her children to school and sustain her family with proceeds from trading.



### *Fatima Shettima*

Fati Shettima had to truncate her schooling in primary class 4 when her father died. Her brother who became her guardian arranged her marriage to an elderly man with a wife and 2 children. Her husband enrolled her in evening classes and later she learnt tailoring. She remarried after his death. Her second husband encouraged her to engage in business. She is currently a radio operator with the Broadcasting House.



### *Nana Ibrahim Makintami*

Nana Ibrahim Makintami was married at 18. She received moral and financial support from her husband for her education. She earned a basic certificate in social work and later earned a degree in sociology. She also holds a Masters degree in Public Administration. She started work in the Ministry of Social Development and later as Chief Medical social worker. She was once appointed as Sole Administrator for Bursari Local Government Area, and she rose to the position of Deputy Permanent Secretary, women's affairs and later Director, before she retired from the State Civil Service.

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### *Goje Bukar Dadima (Uja Goje Mohammed)*

Goje Bukar Dadima (Yagoje Mohammed) was married at 21 to a 50-year old man who had 2 other wives and 7 children. Her husband's unwillingness to let her go to school led to their separation. But with the support of her father and brother she attended the College of Administrative and Business Studies, Potiskum to study Audit and Accounts. She also obtained a diploma from the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu. From an initial position as a clerk, she is currently an Auditor at the Local Education Authority (LEA), Damaturu.



### *Jummai Hussaini Masaya*

Jummai Hussaini Masaya married at 17. Her husband and her mother contributed a lot to her education because her father died when she was very young. She attended Waka Teachers' College and taught at Shehu Garba primary school. Later she obtained a diploma from Ramat Polytechnic and later the HND. She is currently Assistant Chief Executive Officer in the State Ministry of Finance.



### *Dadiya Bako*

Dadiya Bako first married at 25. After her marriage and with the moral and financial support of her husband and her parents, she attended STC Potiskum for a clerical assistant course and later the Kaduna Polytechnic where she received a diploma in Accounts and Audit. She is presently the women leader in her constituency in government.



### *Fatsuma Buba Jajere*

Fatsuma Buba Jajere married at 20 after secondary school. She was encouraged by her husband to further her education and she obtained a diploma from the Kaduna Polytechnic. She was also trained in hotel management and catering. She worked with the Catering Rest House in Maiduguri under the Ministry of Information and Social Welfare. Later she worked with state Hotels Board. She retired in 2008 from her position as dietitian at the Yobe Hospital Management Board.







### *Hadiza Ahmed Abubakar*

Hadiza Ahmed Abubakar was married at 17. Her parents and husband supported her to pursue higher education. She attended Bauchi Teachers' College and then Advanced Teachers' College, Maiduguri. She also earned a degree in Home Economics from Ahmadu Bello University. She started work as a primary school teacher and after obtaining a University degree she taught in a secondary school and served as Vice Principal in three different secondary schools. At some point in her career, she was seconded and appointed as a Special Assistant to Her Excellency wife of the Cross-Rivers state governor. After years of meritorious service she attained the position of Director, Teaching Service Board Damaturu from which she retired.

### *Hauwa Mamman Musa*

Hauwa Maamman Musa was married at 19. She was supported by her husband to continue her education. She attended Women's Teachers' College Azare and later earned the NCE. After teaching in various schools she returned to the University of Maiduguri for a degree course. She transferred to the Yobe Broadcasting Centre and subsequently worked for the Ministry of Integrated Rural Development. She currently works for the Board for Arabic studies.



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### *Aisha Ahmed Dagona*

Aisha Ahmed Dagona, first married at the age of 19. Her husband encouraged her education and she obtained the Grade II Teachers' Certificate. She started work as a teacher with Bade Local Education Authority (LEA) and is currently working with the Ministry of Religious Affairs on secondment from the LEA.





### *Da Iya Mohammed Bande*

Da Iya Mohammed Bande was married at 17. Because her parents' opposition she was unable to continue her education. Undaunted, she forged ahead with vocational training. First she learnt tailoring. Subsequently, she attended a training course in Biu where she learnt to read and write and how to weave bags, purses and make beds and chairs which she sells. She was employed by the Ministry of Youth and Home Affairs as the first tailoring instructor and she helped to train many women. In addition, she is a successful petty trader who has successfully transformed a small shop in a kiosk into a big store.



### *Chakwa Kaku*

Chakwa Kaku was first married at 18. Although her parents wanted her to continue with her education, they felt her marriage came first. Her husband later supported her to earn first, a Certificate in Adult Education and later, a diploma in Public Administration from the University of Maiduguri. Subsequently she earned an advanced Diploma in Adult Education from the Federal Polytechnic. She started working at the registry of the Agency for Mass Literacy in Maiduguri and Damaturu and later moved to the Adult Education section. She moved to Administration after obtaining the Higher Diploma.



### *Hauwa Baba Gadaka*

Hauwa Baba Gadaka married after completion of secondary school. After marriage her husband gave her moral and financial support to continue her education. After secretarial training, she became a Confidential Secretary. She rose through the ranks becoming Confidential Secretary I, II and III and later attained her current position as the Director, Personnel Management in the Ministry of Youth and Social development, Damaturu.



### *Kuburat Oginni Adesina*

Kuburat Oginni Adesina was married at 19. Her first husband neither allowed her to further her education nor to work as a Civil Servant. She divorced and enrolled for further training. She obtained a certificate in catering from the Women's Training Center. She later moved to Maiduguri where she remarried. She is currently a business woman.



### *Mal- Lam*

Mal- Lam was married at 20. Her husband has continued to fund her education. She attended the College of Business and Administrative Studies Potiskum and obtained a certificate in Accounting. Later, she attended the Federal Polytechnic and obtained both the OND and HND. She started work as a clerk in the Yobe State Council for Arts and Culture and was later posted to the Ministry of Finance. She is currently a Project Finance officer with the Yobe State Agency Control on AIDS (YOSACA).



### *Maimuna Ladan Waziri*

Maimuna Ladan Waziri married at 19. Her husband gave her financial and moral support to continue her education. She completed a course in Adult Education and later obtained a diploma. She started work as a clerical assistant. After her first course, she became Adult Education supervisor and was promoted to senior education supervisor after her diploma. She was promoted to chief adult education officer after she obtained a University degree. She is currently an Assistant Director with the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics.





### *Hauwa Suleiman*

Hauwa Suleiman married at 15. She did not have any western education, but attended an Arabic School. After marriage her husband gave her financial support to start a petty trade to improve her economic status. She is currently a business woman.

### *Dije Ibrahim Madaki*

Dije Ibrahim Madaki married at 17 after her secondary school. She continued her education after marriage with the support of her husband. First she did a certificate course and later a diploma in social administration at the Kaduna Polytechnic. Subsequently she enrolled in the University and earned the BSc degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Maiduguri. She started working as a binding assistant at the government Printing Press after secondary school. After her higher diploma and degree she worked with the state as principal social officer. She was later posted to the Commission for Women in charge of child welfare. When the commission became the Ministry of Women Affairs, she rose to the post of director and recently retired as the Director, child Development.







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