

**The Re-implementation of Sharia in Northern Nigeria and the  
Education of Muslim Women 1999-2007**

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## **Dedication**

Dedicated to my mother Mrs. Rachel Nabang Danfulani  
For your dreams Mama.

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## List of Acronyms

ANPP	All Nigerian People's party
ATR	African Traditional Religion
BASEEDS	Bauchi State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
DFID	Department for International Development
ECWA	Evangelical Church of West Africa
EFA	Education For All
FEB	Female Education Board
FGC	Federal Government College
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women's Association of Nigeria
FPS	Focal Primary Schools
GEP	Girls Education Project
JNI	Jama'at Nasr al-Islam
JSCE	Junior Secondary Certificate Examination
JSS	Junior Secondary School
K-SEEDS	Kano State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
KADSEEDS	Kaduna State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
LGA	Local Government Authority
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSA	Muslim Sisters Association
MSS	Muslim Students Society
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NEC	National Examination council
NCE	National Certificate of Education
NECO	National Examination Council
NGO	Nod-Governmental Organization
NPEC	National Primary Education Commission
NPE	National Policy on Education
NTA	National Television Authority
NYSC	National Youth Service Corp
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PPFN	Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SSCE	Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
SSMB	Special Schools Management Board
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WCEC	Women Continuing Education Center
WAEC	West African Examination Council
WIN	Women in Nigeria
ZASIDEP	Zamfara State Intergraded Development Program

## Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie untersucht die Auswirkungen der Re-Implementierung der Scharia auf die Bildung muslimischer Frauen zwischen 1999 und 2007 in vier Bundesstaaten in Nordnigeria. Es handelt sich hierbei um die Bundesstaaten Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi und Kaduna. Ziel ist es eine Forschungslücke hinsichtlich der Stellung der Frau in Bezug auf das Bildungswesen unter dem Eindruck der Wiedereinführung der Scharia im Jahr 1999 zu schließen. Frühere wissenschaftliche Arbeiten haben zwar den Zustand der Frauenbildung in Nordnigeria thematisiert, doch meines Wissens ist keine Untersuchung vorhanden, die sich direkt mit dem Zeitraum nach der Re-Implementierung der Scharia und deren Auswirkungen auf die Bildung muslimischer Frauen beschäftigt. Dieser Zeitraum ist besonders interessant, weil er mit der Rückkehr des Landes zur Demokratie nach einer Reihe von Militärregimen zusammenfällt.

Grundlagen für diese Studie sind Interviews mit Scharia-Befürwortern und Berichte von Scharia-Ausschüssen dieser vier Bundesstaaten. Während in Zamfara und Kano der Wandel im Bildungsbereich durch Programme der Scharia-Regierungen verursacht wurde, sind die Änderungen im Bildungswesen von Bauchi und Kaduna vor allem eine Folge der Rückkehr der Demokratie nach Jahrzehnten der Militärherrschaft. Obwohl die Scharia seit 1999 in 12 Bundesstaaten Nigerias re-implementiert wurde, sind aus den folgenden Gründen vier Bundesstaaten als Fallbeispiele ausgewählt worden:

1. Der Bundesstaat Zamfara , obwohl einer der weniger bekannten Staaten Nigerias vor dieser Zeit, gab das Tempo für die Re-Implementierung der Scharia im Norden Nigerias vor. Dadurch ist er bedeutend für die Untersuchung des Wandels des Bildungswesens für muslimische Frauen im Lichte der Re-Implementierung der Scharia. Die in Zamfara implementierte Variante der Scharia diente als Model für nahezu alle anderen Staaten, die ebenfalls die Scharia einführten. Im Bereich der Scharia Politik trifft dies vor allem für die Frauenbildung zu.
2. Beim Bundesstaat Kano handelt es sich um das Herzstück von Nordnigeria und um die Heimat der zahlenmäßig bedeutendsten muslimischen Bevölkerung von ganz Nigeria. Durch seine Größe und seine kulturelle Bedeutung für den Islam in Nordnigeria ist Kano zentral für eine Untersuchung, die sich zum Ziel gesetzt hat, das Funktionieren der Scharia zu verstehen. Zudem beleuchtet sie aufgrund der Bedeutung und dem Einfluss Kanos die Chance einer Weiterverbreitung der in Kano praktizierten Variante der Scharia in andere Bundesstaaten. Der Fokus ist hier natürlich auf die staatliche Politik hinsichtlich der Bildung von Frauen gerichtet.

3. Die Bundesstaaten Kaduna und Bauchi wurden ausgewählt, weil die Bevölkerung beider Staaten zu fast gleichen Teilen zwischen Christen und Muslimen aufgeteilt ist. Eine Fragestellung der Untersuchung ist, ob die multi-religiöse Natur dieser Bundesstaaten einen Einfluss auf die Re-Implementierung der Scharia und vor allem auf ihre Frauenbildungspolitik hatte.

Die Hauptmotivation hinter dieser Arbeit war die Tatsache, dass es seit jeher einen großen Unterschied im Bildungsniveau und der Alphabetisierungsrate zwischen Männern und Frauen im Norden Nigerias gegeben hat. Diese Ungleichheit erstreckt sich auch auf Frauen aus den nördlichen und südlichen Landesteilen. Wissenschaftler haben nahezu gleichlautende Gründe für diesen Zustand vorgebracht. Einerseits handelt es sich um das klassische kulturell und religiös bedingte Rollenverhalten, das Frauen an den Herd bindet, andererseits der Einfluss des britischen Kolonialismus, der ermöglichte, dass sich diese Traditionen ungehindert entwickeln konnten. Was die Religion betrifft, so hatte der islamische Norden über Jahrhunderte formale, westliche Erziehung mit Argwohn betrachtet. Nach Ansicht der Bewohner Nordnigerias verfügt diese Art der Bildung nicht über die notwendigen religiösen Grundlagen, die zur Schaffung der entsprechenden moralischen Umgebung zur Erziehung von Schülerinnen erforderlich ist. Die Eltern befürchten, ihre weiblichen Kinder könnten in koedukativen Schulen in sexuelle Beziehungen verwickelt werden. Dies hätte erhebliche Einschränkungen für die spätere Verheiratung der Mädchen zur Folge. Nachdem diese Form der Bildung ursprünglich von christlichen Missionaren verbreitet wurde, erachteten islamische Entscheidungsträger westliche Erziehung als ein trickreiches Mittel zur Christianisierung des Nordens.

Was die Kolonialpolitik betrifft, bevorzugten die Briten im Norden das islamische Bildungswesen. Dadurch wollten sie eine Wiederholung der Ereignisse im Süden verhindern: gebildete Südnigerianer leisteten gegenüber der Kolonialmacht starken Widerstand und forderten bereits die Unabhängigkeit des Landes. Diese Faktoren trugen substantiell zur aktuellen Situation bei, in der muslimischen Frauen kein Zugang zu westlicher Bildung gewährt wird. Sie werden vielmehr ermutigt oder sogar gezwungen sich für das islamische Bildungswesen zu entscheiden. Dadurch ist ihre bildungsmäßige Benachteiligung festgeschrieben.

Mit der Re-Implementierung der Scharia wurde Frauenbildung für die Scharia-Staaten jedoch zur obersten Priorität. Der Hauptgrund hierfür ist, dass die Scharia-Staaten das islamische Strafrecht häufig hart und ungerecht gegen die arme, ländliche Bevölkerung einsetzte. Dadurch ging der Rückhalt in der Bevölkerung allmählich verloren. Um ihre Popularität zurückzugewinnen, verlagerten die Ausschüsse ihr Augenmerk auf die Frauenbildung. Ihrem Verständnis nach ist Bildung eine religiöse und keine säkulare Handlung. Deshalb wurden für Frauen hybride Bildungseinrichtungen, die eine formale westliche mit islamischer Bildung

verbinden, geschaffen. Um den Einfluss dieser Einrichtungen auf die Erziehung der muslimischen Frauen zu verstehen, wurden drei Fragestellungen aufgeworfen:

1. Was sind die Lehren des Islam in Bezug auf Bildung im Allgemeinen und in Bezug auf weibliche Bildung im Besonderen?
2. Welchen Einfluss hatten die unterschiedlichen Varianten der reimplementierten Scharia in Nordnigeria seit 1999 auf die Bildung von Musliminnen?
3. Wie interagieren und vor allem wie reagieren muslimische Frauen auf die neugeschaffenen Strukturen der Scharia im Bereich des Bildungswesens?

Zur Beantwortung dieser Fragen sind unterschiedliche Datenquellen herangezogen worden. Die Studie stützt sich hauptsächlich auf zwischen März 2007 und März 2009 gesammelte ethnographische Daten. Das wichtigste Instrument zur Sammlung von Daten waren Interviews. Es wurden zwei Arten von Interviews geführt: offene, narrative Interviews und Leitfadeninterviews. Die in den Interviews Befragten stammten in erster Linie aus den vier untersuchten Bundesstaaten. Hinzu kommen noch Bildungsexperten und Vertreter von Frauenorganisationen. Diese Personengruppe war zum Interviewzeitpunkt nicht in diesen Staaten ansässig. Sie wurden in folgenden Bundesstaaten befragt: Niger, Sokoto, Lagos und Katsina.

Die Gruppe der auf Basis narrativer Interviews Befragten setzte sich zusammen aus Scharia-Experten, politischen Entscheidungsträgern, Mitgliedern von Scharia-Ausschüssen, für Bildung zuständige Ministerialbeamte der Bundesstaaten, Schulleitern von „Women Continuing Education Centers“ und Sekundarschulen unter der Kontrolle der Regierungen sowie einige einflussreiche und gebildete muslimische Frauen. Um ein repräsentatives Sample zu erhalten, wurden einige der Befragten nach dem Zufallsprinzip, andere wiederum unter Verwendung eines Stickprobenverfahrens, der Schneeballauswahltechnik, ausgewählt. Ziel der Interviews war die Konzeptualisierungen und die Auswirkungen der Scharia auf die Bildung der Frauen zu verstehen. Dies sollte sowohl von Seite der Fürsprecher als auch von Seite des Personenkreises, die diese Politik umsetzen, erfolgen. Die Interviews wurden anschließend transkribiert. Relevante Ausschnitte dieser Interviews wurden zur Bestätigung qualitativer Forschungsergebnisse sowie zur Untermauerung quantitativer Statistiken herangezogen.

Die Leitfadeninterviews wurden mit Frauen, die an „Women Continuing Education Centers“ in Kano und Zamfara eingeschrieben waren, durchgeführt. Für diese Gruppe wurden Fragen in englischer Sprache entworfen. Interviewsprachen waren jedoch sowohl Englisch als auch Hausa. Die Antworten erfolgen meistens in Hausa. Die Interviews wurden von mir ins Englische übersetzt unter enger Beibehaltung der sprachlichen Eigentümlichkeiten der Befragten. Weitere

wichtige Datenquellen waren die Ministerien für Bildung in den vier Staaten, öffentlich zugängliche Dokumente zu Scharia, Frauenbildung sowie verwandte Themen. Die Auswahl der Dokumente umfasste Broschüren, Magazine, Newsletter, Veranstaltungsprogramme, Lehrpläne und Reden von verschiedenen staatlichen Persönlichkeiten, die mit der Scharia beschäftigt sind sowie Berichte von Scharia-Kommissionen und anderen im Bereich der (Frauen-) Bildung tätigen Behörden der vier beteiligten Staaten.

Die aus diesen Quellen gesammelten Statistiken behandelten die Anzahl dieser neuen Schulen für Frauen sowie der „Women Continuing Education Centers“. Zudem konnten Statistiken über die Anzahl der eingeschriebenen Studenten, Anzahl und Geschlecht der in diesen Schulen und Zentren angestellten Lehrer, sowie über die Akzeptanz dieser Schulen in den Jahren 1999-2007 gesammelt werden. Die Akzeptanz wurde anhand von Anwesenheitsstatistiken an diesen Bildungseinrichtungen ermittelt. Diese Statistiken wurden ferner verwendet, um die Behauptungen und Gegenbehauptungen der Interviewten zu untermauern. Abgesehen von den bereits erwähnten Quellen, habe ich auch im beschränkten Umfang informelle Gespräche verwendet. Diese informellen Gespräche wurden mit weiblichen Studenten an Sekundarschulen in Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna und Bauchi geführt. Diese Gespräche haben Einblicke in den tatsächlichen Zustand der Frauenbildung in diesen Staaten gewährt.

Obwohl die hier verwendeten Daten für diese Staaten repräsentativ sind, konnte ich für die Bundesstaaten Bauchi und Kaduna keine Statistiken aus erster Hand erhalten. Der Grund hierfür war, dass ich bis zur Schreibphase dieser Forschung nicht dazu in der Lage war, diese Daten zu bekommen. Allerdings ist die beschränkte Menge von Informationen, die zur Verfügung stand, in die Analyse eingebunden und wird durch die aus den narrativen und semi-strukturierten Interviews gewonnenen qualitativen Daten gestützt.

Die in dieser Studie gewonnenen Ergebnisse zeigen interessante Facetten der Beziehung zwischen Scharia und der Bildung von muslimischen Frauen. Die Forschung zeigt, dass die Befürworter der Scharia sich auf die Prämisse stützen – sie wird durch Koranverse und durch die Lehren des Propheten Mohammed unterstützt – dass Bildung ein wichtiger Bestandteil des Islam ist. Sowohl Männer als auch Frauen hätten einen gleichberechtigten Zugang hierzu. Mit dieser Prämisse machen sie der Öffentlichkeit die durch die Scharia Regierungen eingeführten und auf islamischer Grundlage gestalteten Bildungsprogramme schmackhaft. Die überwiegend von Männern besetzten Scharia-Gremien benutzen die Religion, um diese Programme zu fördern. Damit schwächen sie die häufig harten, kulturell bedingten Praktiken und religiösen Dogmen ab, die Frauen daran gehindert haben, einen vollen Zugang zu formaler, westlicher Bildung zu erhalten. Allerdings ist die Art der Bildung, die Frauen im Zuge dieser Scharia Programme angeboten wird, eine Mischung von formaler und islamischer Bildung. Diese Programme legen

zudem strengen Wert auf die Einhaltung gewisser kultureller und religiöser Praktiken, wie das Tragen des Hijab, die Segregation von Männern und Frauen in den Schulen, die Vermittlung praktischer und für den Haushalt nützlicher Fertigkeiten, wie Stricken und Backen. Das bedeutet interessanterweise, dass Bildung diese Frauen keineswegs aus dem häuslichen Bereich auf den sie in der Vergangenheit beschränkt waren herauslöst, sondern vielmehr die bestehenden Verhältnisse zementiert. Ihr Zugang zu formaler Bildung ist kaum nutzbringend für eine vom Haushalt losgelöste Karriere in der Öffentlichkeit.

Diese Arbeit verdeutlicht auch, dass die Interpretation der Koranverse, die gleiche Rechte für Männer und Frauen vorgeben, häufig zugunsten des vorherrschenden Geschlechts, den Männern, erfolgt. Desweiteren führt sie das Machtspiel vor Augen das die Re-Implementierung der Scharia in Nigeria begleitet hat und in der Begeisterung der Massen und der Eliten sowie letztendlich im Taumel der Re-Implementierung gipfelte. Außerdem enthüllt sie die Beweggründe der verschiedenen von Muslimen bzw. Christen vorgebrachten Argumente für und gegen die Scharia. Die Studie unterstreicht den Wandel in der Haltung gegenüber der Scharia – vom Strafrecht zu anderen Angelegenheit. Als Beispiel für diese Entwicklung eignet sich das Bildungswesen muslimischer Frauen. Mit derartigen Entwicklungen versuchen die Scharia-Befürworter alle Bereiche der Gesellschaft islamischen Standards zu unterwerfen.

Diese Studie zeigt ferner, dass seit der Re-Implementierung der Scharia die vier untersuchten Bundesstaaten Bildungsprogramme für Frauen initiiert haben. Ein Beispiel für solche Programme ist die Errichtung von Modell Schulen, die in den Bundesstaaten Zamfara und Bauchi auch unter der Bezeichnung „Focal Schools“ oder „Special Schools for Girls“ bekannt sind. Hierbei handelt es sich um ausschließlich für Mädchen geschaffene Sekundarschulen in denen sie nicht nur eine formale Erziehung erfahren, sondern auch künftig zu verantwortungsbewussten, religiösen und unterwürfigen Frauen geformt werden. Darüber hinaus haben diese vier Bundesstaaten im Rahmen ihrer Scharia Programme auch „Women Continuing Education Centers“ für Frauen eingerichtet, die durch Verheiratung ihre Schulkarriere beendet haben. In diesen Einrichtungen können sie ihre Bildung an dem Punkt fortsetzen, an dem sie vormals die Schule verlassen haben. Im Rahmen dieser Studie werden lediglich zwei Zentren im Bundesstaat Kano, eine im Bundesstaat Zamfara und eine im Bundesstaat Bauchi diskutiert. Die Untersuchung dieser Zentren war für diese Studie signifikant, weil sie den Geist, der hinter diesen Programmen steht, verdeutlicht. Nach Ansicht der Scharia Befürworter sind diese Schulen ideale Bildungszentren für verheiratete Frauen. Die Scharia Befürworter betonen mittels dieser Schulen auch ihre Vorstellungen von Bildungseinrichtungen exklusiv für Frauen. Wie bereits zuvor ausgeführt, konzentrieren sich diese Schulen auf religiöses und moralisches Training für Frauen, damit diese sich in ihre vorbestimmte kulturelle Rolle als Mütter, erste Lehrer ihrer Kinder und Haushälterinnen einfügen. Sie werden dadurch nicht für Aufgaben vorbereitet, die

sie als Arbeitnehmer in öffentlichen Bereichen erwarten würden. Abgesehen von ihrem Engagement im Bereich formaler Bildung und hybriden Bildungseinrichtungen für Frauen haben die Scharia-Regierungen in den vier untersuchten Staaten ihre Scharia Ausschüsse direkt damit beauftragt Islamiyyah Schulen einzurichten bzw. die bestehenden zu reformieren. Diese Islamiyyah Schulen verbinden westliche und islamische Lehrpläne. Diese Schulen haben einen direkten Einfluss auf die Bildung von Frauen und ihr ganzes Leben. Im Rahmen dieser Art von Bildung haben die Befürworter der Scharia es gezielt auf Frauen abgesehen, damit sie auf ihre Rolle als Mütter und erste Lehrer ihrer Kinder vorbereitet werden.

Die Studie zeigt auch die positive Rolle, die religiöse Organisationen beim Lösen einiger im Zusammenhang mit weiblicher Bildung in Nordnigeria stehender Probleme spielen. Zwei muslimische Organisationen, die „Federation of Muslim Women’s Organization in Nigeria“ (FOMWAN) und die „Izala“, gehören zu den wenigen islamischen Organisationen in Nigeria, die mit spezifischen Programmen zur Bildung von Frauen aufwarten. Izala und FOMWAN Schulen sind in ganz Nigeria verbreitet. Ihr Hauptziel ist es, das geschlechtsspezifische Bildungsgefälle in den muslimisch geprägten nördlichen Bundesstaaten Nigerias zu überwinden.

Diese Arbeit greift langjährige Gender-Debatten zum Bildungswesen wieder auf, indem es faszinierende zeitgenössische Ansichten von weiblichen und männlichen Muslimen auf die Bildung im Allgemeinen und auf islamische Bildung im Besonderen bietet. In den Interviews legen sowohl männliche als auch weibliche Muslime Wert auf islamisch motivierte Bildung. Beide Geschlechter stimmen zu, dass der Islam sowohl Frauen als auch Männern die gleichen Rechte auf Bildung zubillige. Aus dieser Perspektive akzeptieren Frauen sofort die von den Scharia-Programmen vorgeschlagenen Bildungseinrichtungen, weil sie den im Qur’an niedergelegten Willen Gottes erfüllen.

Schließlich zeigt die Studie, dass Faktoren die in früheren Untersuchungen als Stolpersteine für die Bildung von Frauen identifiziert wurden, auch heute noch ihre Gültigkeit haben und dies obwohl die Zentralregierung Nigerias sich jahrelang bemüht, hat mehr Frauen eine Bildung zu gewähren um damit die Lücke zwischen der männlichen und weiblichen Alphabetisierungsrate zu schließen. Der offensichtlichste Stolperstein ist die Praxis der frühen Verheiratung, die weiterhin besteht. Sie scheint tief in die kulturelle Psyche der nördlichen Staaten eingebrannt zu sein. Es wurde erwartet, dass die Re-Implementierung der Scharia dieses Problem angehen würde, aber die Studie belegt, dass gerade die starke Betonung von Frauen Zentren die Tendenz früher Verheiratung perpetuiert, da die Mädchen die Schulausbildung an jeder beliebigen Stelle unterbrechen und diese nach einigen Jahren am heimischen Herd schließlich in den „Women Continuing Education Centers“ wieder aufnehmen können.

Diese Forschung leistet einen Beitrag zur zunehmenden Literatur über die Re-Implementierung der Scharia im Norden Nigerias. Allerdings war diese Literatur bislang auf andere Lebensaspekte der Frau fokussiert. Durch die Konzentration auf die Auswirkungen der Scharia auf die Bildung muslimischer Frauen, öffnet diese Untersuchung ein neues Feld der Forschung über die bildungsmäßige Lage der Frauen unter der neuen Scharia Gesetzgebung. Dies war bislang unerforscht. Sie eröffnet eine neue Dimension in einem Forschungsgebiet das in den Sozialwissenschaften *en vogue* ist, aber unbedingt auch aus der Perspektive der Religionswissenschaft untersucht werden muss. Einige interessante Bereiche wurden in dieser Arbeit nicht erschöpfend untersucht. Sie könnten erfolgversprechende Themen für weitere Forschung abgeben. Hierzu zählt der Übergang der Frauen von einem zum anderen Bildungsniveau, die Chancen von Frauen, die ihre Bildung in diesen Scharia-Institutionen erhalten haben, im öffentlichen Wettbewerb und der Einfluss dieser Bildung auf kulturelle und religiöse Praktiken wie die Seklusion von Frauen, der Straßenhandel durch junge Mädchen, und, natürlich, die frühe Verheiratung.

## Summary

This study is an investigation into the impact of the re-implementation of Sharia on the education of Muslim women between 1999 and 2007 in four states in northern Nigeria namely, Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi and Kaduna. The objective is to fill a research gap in the description of the status of women as far as education is concerned and also under the dispensation of Sharia re-introduced in 1999. Earlier scholarly works have documented the state of female education in northern Nigeria before the re-implementation of Sharia, but, from the best of my knowledge, none deals directly with post re-implementation period and its impact on Muslim women's education. This period is particularly interesting because it coincides with the return of the country to democratic rule after a string of military rules.

Using interviews with Sharia proponents and reports from Sharia Commissions in these states, the work establishes that while Zamfara and Kano underwent transformations in the educational sector as a result of the programs introduced by the Sharia governments, the changes in the educational domain in Bauchi and Kaduna were exceedingly triggered by the return of democracy in Nigeria after decades of military rule. Although 12 states in Nigeria have re-implemented Sharia since 1999, four were selected as case studies for this thesis for the following reasons:

1. Zamfara state, although one of the lesser-known states in Nigeria before this period, set the pace for the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, thereby becoming important for investigating the changing state of Muslim women's education in the light of the re-implementation of Sharia. Its version of Sharia, being the first, served as the model for most of the other states that joined in later, especially its Sharia policies on women's education.
2. Kano state is the heart of northern Nigeria and home to the largest population of Muslims in the whole of Nigeria. With its size and cultural importance to Islam, Kano state is central for a study that seeks to understand the functioning of Sharia and the possibility of Kano's version of Sharia spreading to other states given its centrality and influence. Of interest here, of course, is the state's policies on women's education.
3. Kaduna and Bauchi states were chosen because the population of both states is split almost equally between Christians and Muslims. The aim is to investigate if the multi-

religious nature of these states influences the re-implementation of Sharia and particularly its policies on the education of women.

The major motivation behind this work was the fact that there has always been a huge educational and literacy disparity between males and females in northern Nigerian and also between northern and southern females. Researchers have advanced almost similar reasons for this, the most recurrent being, the cultural and religious traditions of the people which assign domestic roles to the women, and the impact of British colonialism which allowed these traditions to flourish unperturbed. As far as religion is concerned, the Islamic north had over the centuries regarded formal, western education with suspicion. For them, this type of education lacked the religious foundation to provide a moral environment for students, especially the females. Parents feared their female children could be drawn into sexual relationships in the mixed-sex schools, and hence thereafter be unmarriageable. Again, the Islamic authority regarded western education as a ploy to the Christianization of the north, since it was initially spread by Christian missionaries.

On the colonial front, the British preferred to allow Islamic education in the north in a bid to avoid a repetition of what was happening in the south: educated southern Nigerians were putting a tough resistance to colonial rule and were already asking for independence. These factors contributed enormously to the current situation where Muslim women are not granted access to western education; are rather encouraged and often obliged to attend Islamic education; and have hence remained educationally disadvantaged.

However, with the re-implementation of Sharia, the education of women became top priority for the Sharia states. The main reason for this is that the Sharia states were losing public support due to their tough and often unjust application of criminal laws which led to the condemnation of mostly poor, harmless rural citizens. In order to regain popularity, the Commissions shifted their focus to the education of women. Education, as they understood it, is a religious and not a secular activity. The women were, therefore, introduced to newly created hybrid educational institutions that merged formal western education with Islamic education. In order to understand the impact of these institutions on the education of Muslim women, three research questions were posed:

1. What is the teaching of Islam on education in general and female education in particular?
2. How have the different versions of the re-implemented Sharia influenced education in northern Nigeria and especially Muslim women's education since 1999?
3. How do Muslim women interact with, and respond to, the new structures of Sharia especially in relation to their education?

Answers to these questions were sought after using various sources of data. The study relies mainly on ethnographic data, collected between March 2007 and March 2009. The main tool used was interviews. Two types of interviews were conducted: the open, narrative interviews and semi-structured interviews. The interview respondents were mostly drawn from the four focal states, but experts in the field of education and representatives of women's organizations who were not based in these states at the time of data collection were interviewed in other places, i.e. Niger, Sokoto, Lagos and Katsina states.

The respondents for the narrative interviews were Sharia experts and policy makers, members of Sharia Commissions, state government officials of the ministries of education, principals of Women Continuing Education Centers and Government Secondary Schools and some educated influential Muslim women. To achieve a representative sample, some respondents were selected randomly while others were identified using the snowballing technique. The aim of the interviews was to understand the conceptualizations and impact of Sharia on women's education both by the proponents and implementers. The interviews were then transcribed and relevant portions of them used to corroborate the qualitative findings and quantitative statistics arrived at in the work.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with women enrolled at Women Continuing Education Centers in Kano and Zamfara states. For this group, questions were designed in English but were asked in both English and Hausa, while answers were provided mainly in Hausa. I translated into English, staying close to the respondents' style and choices as much as possible. Other major sources of data were the ministries of education in the four states; publicly available documents on Sharia, female education and related topics such as pamphlets, magazines, newsletters, program of events, curriculums and speeches by various state personalities involved with Sharia; and reports by Sharia Commissions and other agencies

involved in (women's) education in the four states. The statistics collected from these sources were on the number of, and enrolment in, new female schools and Women's Centers; the number and gender of teacher employed in these schools and centers; and the evolution of attendance in these schools in the period 1999-2007. These statistics are further used to corroborate claims and counter claims made by the interviewees. Besides the above sources, I also made limited use of informal discussions I had with the principals and some female students of secondary schools in Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna and Bauchi which provided insights into the actual state of female education in these states.

Although the data used here is representative of these states, I was unable to get first hand access to statistics from Bauchi and Kaduna states because these were not immediately available until the write up phase of this research. However, the limited set of information that was available has been incorporated into the analysis and is supported by qualitative data from the narrative and semi-structured interviews.

The results arrived at in this study reveal interesting facets of the relationship between Sharia and the education of Muslim women. The research reveals that proponents of Sharia use the premise (also supported by verses from the Qur'an and Prophet Mohammed's teachings) that education is an important part of Islam to which both males and females have equal rights, to sell the Islamic-based educational programs introduced by the Sharia governments. Using religion to promote these programs, the predominantly male Sharia bodies, mitigate the often tough cultural practices and religious dogmas that have prevented women from having full access to formal, western education. However, the type of education offered to women under these Sharia programs is a hybrid of formal education and Islamic education which pays strict attention to such cultural and religious practices like the wearing of the *hijab*, the separation of males and females in schools, the teaching of practical, home craft skills such as knitting and baking to the women. So, interestingly, instead of the education taking women out of the home domain in which they have been restricted in the past, it rather further maintains them while providing them access to formal education which they will hardly use in any public career.

The work also illustrates how the interpretations of the Qur'anic verses that give equal rights to education for both males and females are often done in favor of the dominant gender, that is, the males. This further shows the power play surrounding the re-implementation of Sharia in Nigeria

and the agitations by both the masses and the elites which culminated into the frenzy for the re-implementation. It also lays bare the motivations of the different arguments advanced for and against Sharia by Muslims and Christians respectively. The study highlights emerging shifts in the Sharia approach from the criminal code to other issues, for example, Muslim women's education, which the proponents of Sharia argue were geared towards the development of all spheres of society to conform to Islamic standards.

This study further reveals that since the re-implementation of Sharia, the four focal states have initiated educational programs for women. One example of such programs is the establishment model schools also known as Focal Schools or Special Schools for girls as they are referred to in Zamfara and Bauchi states. These are girls-only secondary schools in which the students are educated not only in formal education but also to become responsible, religious and submissive wives in the future. Furthermore, the Sharia programs of the four states also created Women Continuing Education Centers for women who dropped out of school to get married. Here, they can continue their education from the level they stopped. For this study, only two centers in Kano state, one in Zamfara state and one in Bauchi state were discussed. Examining these centers were significant for this study because it reveals the inspiration behind what proponents of Sharia maintain are ideal centers of learning for married women, and emphasize the idea of a women-only institutions. These schools, as said above, focus elaborately on religious and moral training for women in their cultural role as mothers, first teachers of children, and home keepers, but not as workers in public official domains.

Besides formal educational and hybrid institutions of learning for women, the Sharia governments of the four states directly involved Sharia Commissions of each state in establishing and reforming existing Islamiyyah schools which integrate western and Islamic educational curricula. These schools have had a direct impact on women's education and their entire lives. The proponents of Sharia specifically targeted women in this form of education because it is designed to prepare them for their roles as mothers and first teachers to their children.

The study also reveals the positive role played by religious organizations in sorting out some of the problems associated with women's education in northern Nigeria. Two Muslim organizations, The Federation of Muslim Women's Organization in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and The Izala, are among few Islamic organizations in Nigeria with specific programs on education

and particularly the education of women. Izala and FOMWAN schools are spread all over Nigeria. Their main aim is to close the educational disparity between the genders in the predominantly Muslim northern states of Nigeria.

The work revisits the longstanding gender debate on education by revealing fascinating contemporary views of both female and male Muslims on education in general and Islamic education in particular. In the interviews, both genders place importance on education being backed by Islam. Both genders agree Islam grants women the same rights to education as the men. From this perspective, women immediately accept the educational institutions proposed by the Sharia programs because they fulfill the will of Allah as stated in the Qur'an.

Lastly, the study portrays that factors identified in earlier research as stumbling blocks to the education of women still exist today despite years of efforts by the central government to get more women educated and to bridge the gap between male female literacy rates. The most obvious of these is early marriage which continued steadily perhaps because it is strongly ingrained in the cultural psyche of the northern states. It was expected that the re-implementation of Sharia would tackle this problem, but the serious emphasis placed on women centers, as the study shows, has the propensity of perpetuating early marriages since girls can drop out of school at any point and continue in Women Continuing Education Centers after many years of staying at home.

This research has contributed to the growing literature on the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, which has largely focused on other aspects of women's life. By focusing mainly on the impact of Sharia on the education of Muslim women, the investigation opens a new field of research on the educational status of women under the new Sharia dispensation. This has hitherto not been researched. It contributes a fresh dimension to a domain that is topical in the social sciences and which needs to be thoroughly researched from a religious studies perspective. Several interesting areas have not been exhaustively studied in this work and could constitute fruitful topics for further, longitudinal research. These include transition of women from one level of education to another, women's appraisals of their competition in the public sphere after education in these Sharia institutions, and the impact of this education on such cultural and religious practices such as wife seclusion, street hawking by young girls, and, of course, early marriage.

## **Introduction**

### **0.1 Background and Context**

This study investigates and documents the changing status of women and the reinvigorating gender dynamics in four states of northern Nigeria since the re-implementation of Sharia in 1999. The expansion of Sharia started with Zamfara state, and was later followed by 11 other states, which adopted it to varying degrees and in different versions. This development altered the state of affairs in the region; for instance, it led to the modifications of the penal codes of these states which have engendered wide social, religious, political, educational and psychological ramifications. Particularly, its implication on the lives of women has been enormous, as Kalu (2003 298-399) implies; some of these women became immediate victims of the law. However, at the level of education, as the data and the respondents' views indicate, women have been granted more access to formal education and under learning conditions that suit their status as wives, mothers and home-keepers. This has been through the creation or expansion of Women Continuing Education Centers and single sex schools (see Chapter 3 and 4).

Sharia has always had implication on the way women live in the context of a Muslim community and the ways in which they negotiate meaning within their social circumstances. This study is an empirical research into the concrete developments in the domain of women's education in selected Sharia states of Nigeria since 1999. It seeks to analyze relevant scholarly discussions on women's education, comparing them with the actual development on Muslim women's education in northern Nigeria using data gathered from various actors, since the re-introduction of Sharia in the four selected Sharia states of northern Nigeria namely; Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi and Kaduna.

The debates surrounding the re-introduction of Sharia law in northern Nigeria have been very controversial in contemporary Nigeria. Over the years, Nigeria has been meshed in arguments about, debates on, and mixed reactions to, the role and place of religiously-backed laws, such as Sharia, on multi-religious states like those of northern Nigeria. The potential consequences of Sharia on the national polity and consequently on certain segments of the society such as non-Muslims, children and women have been at the centre of these debates. These issues have

attracted critical comments and reactions from the international community, particularly through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), most of which have cautioned on the consequences of Sharia on women and the underprivileged. In addition to these reactions, research studies and conferences by both local and foreign academics and as well as NGOs have engaged with the issues in order to properly understand the unfolding state of affairs in the Sharia states. Some of the outcomes of these studies, for instance, Ezeilo (2003), Kalu (2003), Sanusi (2000), Nasir (1999), and Gwamna (2004), clearly demonstrate that the implementation of Sharia negatively affects women. These studies deal exceedingly with women's access to justice under Sharia (Ezeilo 2003), women's rights under Sharia (Sada, Adamu and Ahmed 2005), women and development in northern Nigeria, and a host of other topics dealing with the status of women under Sharia (Sanusi 2000). However, apart from the general nature of the previous conferences on Sharia, very few academic works exist on the changing status of Muslim women's education since the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> The current research is intended to fill this gap and to draw researchers' attention to the educational status of Muslim women under a Sharia system.

## **0.2 Aims**

The overall aim of this research is to investigate whether the re-implementation of Sharia has made any appreciable difference on the educational space of the four Sharia states investigated here, and in particular, whether the education of women has improved. Focus on women is partly because of the strong gender separation of these predominantly Muslim states. Also, statistics on education in northern Nigeria indicate that women are highly uneducated in western education, as confirmed by Table 1 and Figure 1 below. Furthermore, the Nigerian Federal governments' role in specifying gender equity under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is an indication to the gender disparity existing between males and females in Northern Nigeria and between females in the Northern and the Southern regions of the country. The research, therefore, describes and documents current educational policies, the innovations, reforms, processes and

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<sup>1</sup> Since 1999, most of the studies done on women in relation to the re-introduction of Sharia focused on other aspects of women's lives with a few exceptions such as the works of Umar (2004), whose work focused on new trends on Islamic education, and Nasir (2007) who made impressive study on the general situation of females in northern Nigeria with reference to their educational status and their impact on the reimplementation process. .

strategies of change initiated by the re-implementation of Sharia, and how these have influenced on women's education.

In order to arrive at a representative overview of Sharia and education, the work compares data and statistics gathered from the four states, Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna and Bauchi states from 1999 to 2007. The overall objective is to give a reliable assessment of recent developmental trends on Muslim female education in the four states.

Another focal point in this research is to document the activities of certain Islamic organizations in especially female education, with a view to finding out what roles they have played in influencing the policies and practices of the Sharia states since 1999. These Islamic organizations include The Federation of Muslim Women's Organization in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the *Jama't Izalat al Bid'a Wa Iqamat as Sunnah* -known as the Izala movement.

### **0.3 Brief Overview of Northern Nigeria**

Northern Nigeria has the lowest percentages for formal (western) education and general literacy rate. Umar (2004), Ketefe (2006), and Nasir (2007) have advanced, as possible reasons, the impact of colonialism and the historical and religious development of northern Nigeria. When western education was first introduced in northern Nigeria during the colonial years (around 1900), the emirs were resistant to it since they viewed it as an intrusion of western values brought by missionaries into their cultural and religious set up. They feared it could eventually lead to the Christianization of the region through the missionary activities (Graham 1966). Fredrick Lugard, the British High Commissioner for northern Nigeria (1900-1906) and later Governor General of Nigeria (1912-1919), actively shielded the north from the educational initiatives pioneered by Christian missionaries till the early 1930s. According to Danfulani (2004:5-6), Lugard's aim was to create an intermediary period during which the emirs of the Muslim north could be educated on the principles of religious tolerance before Christian missionary activities could be allowed into the Muslim emirates of northern Nigeria. By the early 1930s, these restrictions were lifted and missionaries were allowed in to spread Christianity and to also provide social services such as health and education.

However, before the introduction of missionary schools in the Muslim emirates, British Colonial Administration had introduced government schools known as the Native Administrative schools

around the 1920s (Tibenderana 1985:95). The sole goal of these schools was to provide education to the sons of the Muslim native rulers who were trained for administrative positions in the British government (Lugard 1965: 426). The daughters of these rulers were not allowed to attend these schools for cultural reasons,<sup>2</sup> for example, the traditional role of the women was to stay at home and take care of children. By the 1940s, the emirs had finally agreed to let their children attend the missionary schools, meant only for their children and the children of other political figures. The rest of the children in the emirates could only go to the traditional *madrassa* schools (see Umar 2004, Clarke 1978). When formal education was finally made available to the general populace of the northern region after Nigeria's independence in 1960, and with the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in the mid 1970's, the formal educational gap and level of literacy between the northern and the southern part of Nigeria was already very wide. There is therefore a huge educational disparity between northern and southern Nigeria, as succinctly portrayed by Callaway (1987), Knipp (1987), and Hubbard (2000).

According to a survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2006, adult female literacy rate in north-western Nigeria is put at 15.4% as against 31.0% for adult male literacy rate (Ketefe 2006). This is by far the lowest figure for both adult literacy rates and adult female literacy rates for the whole country. These percentages indicate that the immense educational disparity exists not only between the southern and northern regions of Nigeria but also between males and females in northern Nigeria (Table 1).

Table 1: Male and female education in the four regions of Nigeria

Region	Male %	Female %
South-East	73.2	56.9
North –East	34.5	24.5
South –West	82.2	70.3
North –West	18.0	13.4

Source: National Population Commission (1991)

Statistics from the National Population Commission (1991) prior to the re-implementation of Sharia shows that only about 20% of Muslim women in northern Nigeria have western

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<sup>2</sup> The aims and objectives of education as provided by the colonial administration has been extensively discussed in (Lugard 1926 :425-460)

education. A similar statistics in 2003 shows that as high as 78.1 and 72. 8% of women in the northwest and north eastern region are out of school. The two documents put the percentages of education between males and females in the two regions as follows (see Tables 1 and 2)

Table 2: Educational attainment of female adult household population 2003

Regions	No schooling	Some Primary	Completed primary	Some Secondary	Completed secondary	More than secondary	Don't know /missing	Total	Number	Mean of years of schooling
North Central	47.9	10.2	13.4	17.8	6.4	3.2	1.1	100	1,226	4.0
North East	72.8	8.2	6.0	7.3	3.4	2.0	0.4	100	1,390	2.1
North West	78.1	4.6	5.6	5.1	3.0	2.1	1.5	100	1977	1.6
South East	17.0	11.9	15.5	25.9	17.8	8.4	3.4	100	588	7.5
South South	21.9	11.5	16.9	31.4	11.8	6.1	1.0	100	1,348	6.5
South west	27.9	5.0	18.6	28.5	11.8	7.7	0.4	100	890	6.6

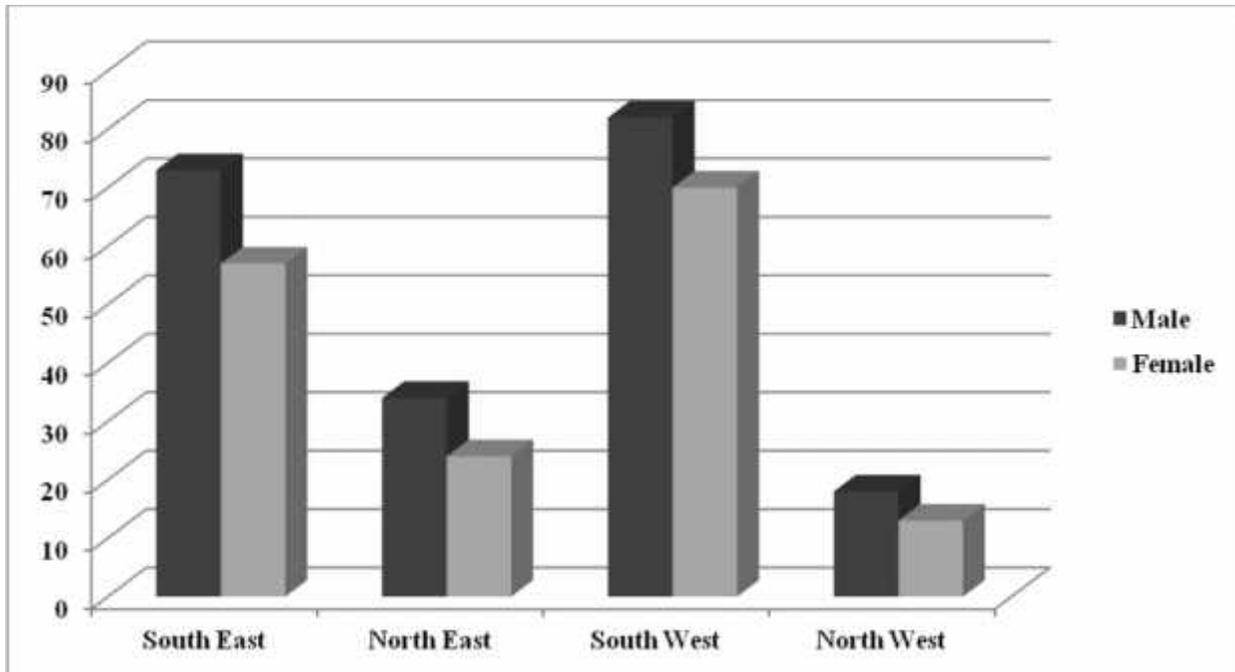
Source: Summarized from Demographic Health Survey EDdata, 2003, [http://population.gov.ng/dhs\\_ed\\_data\\_survey\\_2004.htm](http://population.gov.ng/dhs_ed_data_survey_2004.htm), 12.04.12

As shown graphically in Figure 1 below, the North East and the North West regions have the lowest educational attendances and hence literacy rates. The factors responsible for this have been extensively discussed by several authors among them, Clarke (1978) whose work examines the role of Islam in the process of nation building in Nigeria in terms of its reaction to the Universal Primary Education, Tibenderana (1983, 1985) on political representation, Callaway (1986, 1987, Callaway and Creevy (1994), Knipp (1987), Coles and Mack (1991), and Umar (2001, 2004). These studies all agree that political, economic, religious, social and cultural factors have been responsible for this state of affairs. One of the cultural factors which have perpetually kept the female population from education is early marriage, i.e. the cultural practice of sending girls into marriage at puberty. This practice is given closer attention in this study. The cultural reasons have been more influential than the other factors because they have often been given religious reconfiguration or interpretation within these communities.

The low level of female literacy in northern Nigeria has given rise to a number of questions such as: What is the impact of the teaching of Islam on education in general and female education in particular? How are the different versions of the re-implemented Sharia influencing education in

northern Nigeria and especially Muslim women’s education since 1999? How do Muslim women interact and respond to the new structures of Sharia especially in relation to their education? Answers to these questions will be provided later in the work with the evidence from the data and especially the views of the women themselves and the experts who have been involved in the education policies of the four states (Chapters 3 and 4).

Figure 1: Formal education among Muslim men and women (1991)



#### 0.4 Scope and limitation of the Study

Scholarly discussions on the re-implementation of Sharia revolve around the twelve Sharia states of northern Nigeria namely; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara states. However, the twelve could not all be studied within the time frame of this research. The study, therefore, concentrates on four of these Sharia states, specifically; Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi and Kaduna. The choice of these states was based by the following reasons:

- 1) Zamfara state, although one of the lesser- known states in Nigeria before this period, set the pace for the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, thereby becoming

important for investigating the changing state of Muslim women's education in the light of the re-implementation of Sharia. Its version of Sharia, being the first, served as the model for most of the other states that joined in later, especially its Sharia policies on women's education.

- 1) Kano state is the heart of northern Nigeria and home to the largest population of Muslims in the whole of Nigeria. With its size and cultural importance to Islam, Kano state is central for a study that seeks to understand the functioning of Sharia and the possibility of Kano's version of Sharia spreading to other states given its centrality and influence. Of interest here, of course, is the state's policies on women's education.
- 2) Kaduna and Bauchi states were chosen because the population of both states is split almost equally between Christians and Muslims.<sup>3</sup> The aim is to investigate if the multi-religious nature of these states influences the re-implementation of Sharia and particularly its policies on the education of women.

The choice of these states, with their varying statuses, is significant for this study since it uses multiple case studies to investigate variations and contrasts across and within Sharia implementing states. The four states are put into groups of two, based on the reasons above, and compared: Kano and Zamfara versus Kaduna and Bauchi. The study is limited to the period 1999 to 2007, although references are also made to pre-1999 and post-2007 policies. Although the re-implementation of Sharia ended in 2003 with Borno state being the last state to re-implement Sharia, extending the period further to 2007 was important since a number of the governors of the affected states were re-elected in 2003, thereby continuing their regimes. The period under study is important because it is a watershed in the history of Nigeria as a whole and northern Nigeria in particular. It was during this period that Nigeria returned to a democratically elected civilian rule, marking an end to a prolonged period of military rule (about 29 years). The new civilian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, was re-elected into office for another term, 2003-2007, hence marking eight years of an administration characterized by a number of societal transformations including the re-introduction of Sharia. Therefore, the period 1999-2007 is central to examining some of the socio-economic and political developments in the northern

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<sup>3</sup> See Pew Forum on Religion and the Public Life, <http://www.pewforum.org/world-affairs/countries/?countryID=150> Accessed 13.08.2010

states in the light of the re-implementation of Sharia.

The research process experienced some limitations which have had an impact on the extent of the data collected and the analysis carried out here. These limitations are embedded in the major challenges faced in the process of collecting data which include the fact that some interview informants were not comfortable in providing answers to some of the questions raised. Also, lack of first-hand access to information from the statistics department of the ministry of education in Bauchi state was major impediments to some analysis of the findings. However, relying on second-hand well, documented statistics from Bauchi state and the interviews conducted in Bauchi formed the basis of some of the arguments made in chapter four. One major limitation of the study is the inability to conduct interview with the affected women in WCECs in Kaduna and Bauchi state, thus limiting our access to valuable data which could have been relevant to the analysis as only a few voices of these category of women were represented in chapter four. These limitations notwithstanding, the analysis gives a reliable picture of events and changes in these four states after the re-implementation Sharia.

This study is located within the broader field of women studies and women in Islam and its impact on their practical lives. It is further situated within vast range of academic works existing on the impact of Sharia on women's lives generally. The work is limited to the impact of Sharia on Muslim women's western education under a Sharia dispensation in four states of northern Nigeria.

### **0.5 Data Sources and Methodology**

In order to collect useful data for answering the research questions raised above, two sources of data were used: primary data and secondary sources. The secondary data was collected mostly in published works, and involves existing scholarly literature on the basic Islamic teachings on education in general and women's education in particular. General issues on education in Nigeria and by extension northern Nigeria were also given serious attention. Literature on gender in Islam as documented in books, articles and workshop proceedings, published and unpublished doctoral dissertations before and after 1999 were also consulted. These secondary sources are

used in the analysis to discern strands of thoughts relating to the education of women in general and how it applies to the new Sharia regimes in northern Nigeria. The study examines the state of research on Muslim women's education, tracing its development from the early days of Islam to the period shortly before the re-implementation of Sharia. The goal is to properly circumscribe changes that have been introduced or motivated by the re-implementation of Sharia.

The primary sources include population censuses, literacy figures, enrolment figures, speeches and curriculums from the various institutions concerned. Field interviews were major sources of data for this study. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with five categories of informants in the four states: Zamfara, Bauchi, Kano, and Kaduna states. These categories are: policy makers, government officials, heads of schools, a group of educated and uneducated women, and representatives of Muslim women NGOs. Some women informants were members of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria, and have all been active in the field of women's education in northern Nigeria. Additionally, some informants were located in Katsina, Sokoto, Lagos and Niger States, some of them representing various women's organizations and coordinating some educational government projects; and some highly influential Muslim scholars often included in decision making in the focal states. Two types of interviews were used with these respondents: narrative interviews and semi-structured interviews.

### **0.5.1 Narrative Interviews**

Narrative interviews were conducted with 20 informants drawn across these states. These include

- 2 directors of Sharia Commissions in Kano and Zamfara states
- 6 officials in the ministries of education in Sokoto, Zamfara, Kaduna and Bauchi states
- 4 principals of Girls' Secondary Schools and women centers in Zamfara, Kano and Kaduna states
- 1 public relations officer of Bauchi state Sharia Commission
- 1 FOMWAN official in Lagos
- 2 directors of Women Education/ Arabic and Islamic Boards in Zamfara states
- 1 coordinator Girl's Education Program (GEP) in Katsina state

- 1 female University lecturer in Sokoto state
- 2 directors of Education Centers in Niger state.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. They were then grouped according to themes and are used later in to confirm findings made from the investigation of Sharia policies on female education.

### **0.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 28 women drawn from Women Continuing Education Centers in Kano and Zamfara states. This was a follow-up to some of the programs identified by earlier interviews with policy makers. In all, three women centers were central to the study: Kano City Women Center and *Goran Dutse* Women Center, both in the metropolis of Kano state; and Women Continuing Education Center Gusau, in Zamfara state. The women were categorized according to age, marital status and level of education.

In addition to the interviews, statistics on population censuses, literacy rates, number of educational institutions, etc. were also collected from the statistics departments of the ministries of education in all four states. The data collected in these ministries included summaries of enrolment figures, statistics on Qur'anic, Islamiyya and Arabic secondary schools, and statistics of new schools created during the period of the re-implementation of Sharia. In some states, pamphlets, curriculums, magazines, speeches, program of events and newsletters were also collected. All of these documents served as source materials for some of the analysis and claims made in this study.

## **0.6 Summary of Chapters**

Chapter one deals with general introduction to the study, paying close attention to the main research questions, objectives of the study, theoretical consideration, the scope and limitation of the study and concludes with a brief summary of selected studies on education in northern Nigeria, with particular reference to scholars' views on basic Islamic teaching on education.

Chapter two explores the power play surrounding the re-implementation of Sharia in Nigeria and specifically examines the agitations by both the masses and the elites, which culminated into the frenzy for the re-implementation as well as the various arguments pressed forward for and against such an exercise by both Christians and Muslims. It also reviews emerging new shifts and emphases from the criminal code to other issues which the proponents argue was geared towards the development of all spheres of society to conform to Islamic standards. Among other objectives, this chapter investigates such claims and counter-claims from other stakeholders in the states.

Chapter three examines the numerous programs introduced in two Sharia states namely Kano and Zamfara. Specifically it discusses policies/programs on education since the re-implementation of Sharia and specific programs introduced by Kano and Zamfara states for women. One example of such programs is the establishment of Women Continuing Education Centers in some parts of the states. Although a number of such centers exist in most local government of the states, two centers in Kano state and one in Zamfara state were selected. These centers are important in this study because they help in understanding the inspiration behind what some of the proponents of Sharia term ideal center of learning for married women. Another important reform program is the establishment and reformation of Islamiyyah schools which integrates western and Islamic educational curriculums. These programs have direct impact on women's education in Zamfara and Kano states.

Chapter four describes new programs on women's education in Bauchi and Kaduna states. Bauchi and Kaduna states have introduced several programs since the re-introduction of Sharia. However, according to interview analyses, because the population of these states is divided almost equally between Christians and Muslims, the states are also divided into Sharia and non-Sharia parts. One of such important programs is the renovation and reformation of Islamiyya schools by Kaduna state. This school incorporates western and Islamiyya education and calls for women to participate actively in acquiring education in these schools. In Bauchi state, a project in collaboration with UNICEF led to the establishment of women schools in all 21 local governments of the state. The state also established Women Center for Continuing Education and began an awareness program on female education.

Chapter five analyses the roles of two Islamic organizations in sorting out some of the problems associated with women's education in northern Nigeria. Particularly, it focuses on Islamic organizations such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Organization in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the Izala movement, which have remained among the most influential organizations in northern Nigeria in the area of propagation of women's education (Adeboye 2009: 244-246). FOMWAN and Izala have been selected as important to this study because the two are among few Islamic organizations in Nigeria with specific programs on education and particular emphasis on the education of women. The chapter further discusses some contemporary views of Muslims on education in general and Islamic education in particular as presented by several informants during the interviews. Particularly, it focuses on predominantly male view on Muslim women's education in northern Nigeria as well as some women's views on education. This dual outlook on women's education, to a large extent, represents a gendered debate on the question of the rights of women to all forms of education as defined by Islam. The active role of Islamic organizations as well as the diverse views on women's education has grave impact on the way women respond to issues relating to their development and empowerment particularly in the area of education.

Chapter six gives a summary and conclusion of the thesis. Particularly, it discusses women's education in northern Nigeria in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of the field, capital and symbolic violence. The chapter shows that the transformations recorded in the area of women's education since the re-implementation of Sharia in the four focal states deserves a longitudinal study. This is to ascertain sustainability of the programs studies and the impacts they have on women.

## **Chapter One**

### **Theoretical Framework and a Brief History of Sharia and Women's Education in Nigeria**

This opening chapter lays the foundation for the discussion and analysis in the subsequent chapters. It introduces the theoretical framework used to analyze the data, i.e. Bourdieu's (1990) work on the logic of practice and how it will be applied to the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria. To illustrate clearly how this has influenced the education of Muslim women, this chapter provides a brief historical account of Sharia in Nigeria and the state of education prior to its re-implementation. Also, it makes a brief review of Islam's teaching on education and the acquisition of knowledge as understood by Islamic scholars and other researchers in the field of religious studies.

#### **1.1. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used in this research is Bourdieu's theory of practice: Practice here is defined as subjective or objective theories of actions and performance. This includes everyday practices that involve strategies of achievement. Pierre Bourdieu is a French sociologist and anthropologist who lived from 1930 to 2001. In his *Genesis of the Concepts of Habitus and of Field*, Bourdieu shows how relations within societies are established and balanced and how social agents operate within it. In this regard, he emphasizes on the relational mode of thinking in place of structuralism (Bourdieu 1985: 16), which he believes tends to rely strongly on the philosophy of action in which agents are reduced to the role of the bearer of the structure (Bourdieu 1985: 13). Therefore, his theory of practice differs from structuralist theories and is, as he reveals, a breakaway from the structuralist's paradigm when he states "... at the time the notion of habitus allowed me to break away from the structuralist paradigm without falling back into old philosophy of the subject...by taking up the old Aristotelian notion of *hexis*, converted by scholasticism into habitus, I wish to react against structuralism and its old philosophy of action..."(Bourdieu 1985: 13). Bourdieu succeeds in doing this by developing several concepts in relation to the negotiation of power and relations in society, namely: capital, habitus, field and symbolic violence. Three of these concepts, the notions of field, symbolic violence and capital

have been selected for the purpose of this study. These three concepts are chosen here because they are applicable to various aspects of the programs of the Sharia states discussed in this study.

Specifically, the concepts of *field* and *symbolic violence* (also referred to as modes of domination) are used in this study for two reasons; firstly, they can be used to explain how social relations are carried out in everyday life in northern Nigeria; secondly, they fit very much into the analyses of the situation of Muslim women in northern Nigeria especially with regards to their educational status within the context of the innovative programs initiated by the Sharia states. Although Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) think the concepts of the field, habitus and capital cannot be defined in isolation except within their theoretical concepts (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 96), these concepts have attracted the attention of several scholars within the field of anthropology, sociology and religion. They are explained below:

### **1.1.2. Bourdieu and the Notion of Field**

According Bourdieu, the field is a contested arena within which struggles and maneuvers take place over specific resources or stakes or access to them; a social disposition occupied by individuals or institutions, the nature of which defines the situation of the occupants. The analogy of the field has been further explained using the metaphor of a game. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:98-105) explain, in this regard, that unlike a game, a field is not the product of a deliberate act. In a field, they say, there are many players competing over a particular stake. So, a field usually consists of agents and actors who could be individual or collective, i.e. individual persons or institutions. These agents and actors have different forms of capital and are predisposed to have different kinds of habitus. In a nutshell, for Bourdieu and Wacquant (1991: 97), the field is

... a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their objective relation to the other positions (domination, subordination, homology and etc.).

The field also requires knowledge and capital to operate. As examples of fields, Bourdieu makes references to the artistic, economic, literary and religious field. He describes the Field of religion as an objective relation between positions which exists independently of individual

consciousness and will. Drawing inspiration from the works of Max Weber, especially his notion of the interactional view of the relationship between religious agents, Bourdieu (1985: 18) applies the concept of the game to different fields.

In using Bourdieu's concept of the field as basis of analyses, the study falls within two fields, namely the religious and educational fields. The re-introduction of Sharia in twelve states of northern Nigeria has carved out a religious field with different players and actors. On the one hand, there are actors such as religious scholars, individual Muslims, religious institutions and organizations who control various capitals, all contributing towards the success of the game, i.e. Sharia policies. The field of education in northern Nigeria, situated within a religious field also consists of agents such as the states and their respective policy makers, religious leaders, individuals with private schools; students, teachers and non-teaching staff who serve as implementers. On the other hand, there are education-based actors, mostly institutional actors like schools, Sharia Commissions, ministries of education, and also Islamic organizations such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Society for the victory of Islam (Arabic: *Jama'at Nasr al-Islam* (JNI) ) and the Izala movements. Thus, the educational field in northern Nigeria is a contested arena and since the fields and actors are connected to each other, in this case the fields of religion and education which although are different, both function in the same social space. How these interactions are played out is explained throughout the study.

### **1.1.3. Bourdieu and Symbolic Violence**

Bourdieu (1990: 127), defines symbolic violence as:

a gentle, invisible violence, unrecognized as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety, in a word, of all the virtues honoured by the ethic of honour, presents itself as the most economical mode of domination because it best corresponds to the economy of the system.

According to him, symbolic violence occurs when holders of symbolic capital, e.g. power, use such capital against agents who hold less power, seeking to alter their actions. In this case, it manifests itself in a very subtle way, often unrecognized, and this, he says, leads to misrecognition. Symbolic violence also occurs when holders of symbolic capital disapprove of

the actions of those who hold less capital especially when it leads to a change of disposition towards others and when they perceive others' symbolic capital as legitimate. He illustrates this using less privileged children and how they see the educational success of their elite peers as legitimate because the values of the working class children tend to become dominant within the school system. He explains how the school system and the process of schooling help in reproducing social inequalities from one generation to the other.

The concept of symbolic violence also referred to as modes of domination is important in explaining issues related to the situation of Muslim women who have been the target of several of the programs of the Sharia states. As has been discussed in this study, the programs initiated by the proponents of Sharia for women throughout the four focal states are geared towards improving on the general status of women. It is even treated as a form of obligation. However, the structure of these programs seems to be a gentle and unrecognized mode of domination. The centers tend to perpetuate the old system which is culturally predisposed to keep women from the public sphere; limiting their access to the more broadminded form of education found in Nigerian public schools.

#### **1.1.4 Bourdieu and the Notion of Capital**

Bourdieu (1986: 241-242) defines capital as:

...accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its “incorporated,” embodied form), which when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive basis by agents or groups of agents enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is *vis insita*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a *lex insita*, the principle underlying the imminent regularities of the social world.

He sees society as a universe of competition and capital is what makes the games of society. So, capital according to him is a process and not an end. Bourdieu uses the metaphor of the game of roulette to describe how the universe functions. Accordingly in a roulette one is given the opportunity to make money and instantly change ones social status- from poor to rich- when one acquires the economic capital. In the same way, he sees the universe as a competition or equality of opportunity where every moment depends on an initial moment, so that at every moment anyone can become anything, as every opportunity can be utilized and used to acquire more

opportunities.

Explaining further, Bourdieu says that capital functions in so many fields and can present itself in three fundamental guises namely; economic- convertible to money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; cultural- convertible, on certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and social capital- made up of social obligations (connections), which is also convertible in certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility ( Bourdieu 1986: 143). For the purpose of this study, cultural, social and symbolic capitals are essential explained below:

#### **1.1.4.1 Cultural Capital**

As mentioned above, cultural capital can be acquired unconsciously, it always remains marked by its earlier conditions of acquisition, it cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent and it declines and dies with the bearer (Bourdieu 1986:145). Cultural capital is also heavily disguised because it is linked to a hereditary transmission, in this case it is predisposes to function as symbolic capital depending on the social condition of its transmission and acquisition.

#### **1.1.4.2 Social Capital**

Bourdieu describes social capital as the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possessions of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or to membership in a group. This form of capital provides its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit. These types of relationships may exist either in practical for as in the form of material or symbolic exchanges which helped to maintain the; and they may be socially instituted or guaranteed (Bourdieu 1986: 249). According to him, the existence of these networks of connections is not a natural or social given but, instead it is a product of endless efforts at institution or institution rites which mark the essential moments necessary for producing useful and lasting relationships that secure material and symbolic profits.

### **1.1.4.3 Symbolic Capital**

This kind of capital is made up of social recognitions and it is the kind of capital which every kind of capital becomes. It is the state of being recognized and possessing the power to recognize. Best articulated in Bourdieu's word, "symbolic capital.... is not a particular kind of capital but what every kind of capital becomes when it is misrecognised as capital, that is a force, a power or capacity for ...exploitation, and therefore recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu 2000: 242).

Bourdieu notes that cultural, social and symbolic capitals come in three forms i.e. objectified, embodied and institutionalized forms and these take time to accumulate. He argues that capital in its objectified or embodied forms, have the "potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded forms, (it) contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible"(Bourdieu 1986: 242).

In explaining activities of religious organizations in northern Nigeria (see chapter five), Bourdieu's concept of capital is used to argue that contrary to the generally held perceptions that women's place is in the domestic sphere, FOMWAN's activities challenges that notion by showing how formidable Muslim women can take up women's issues. These women, though highly educated and highly influential in their own rights are devoted Muslims. However, what differentiates them from other women is the fact that they have acquired the cultural, social, economic and symbolic capital to influence changes in the society regarding women's issues.

## **1.2. Perspectives on education in Islam: The Qur'an and the Education of women**

The section reviews literature related to female education in general and Muslim women's education in particular. Using a historical approach, the section revisits some of the ideas of Islamic scholars on the concept of education in Islam. Particular focus is on the interpretation of Qur'anic verses on education in general and female education in particular. Female education in Islam has for long been topical among scholars of different disciplines. It has received even more attention from scholars of Islamic and religious studies. It is, therefore, relevant to the analysis carried out in this study to understand these interpretations since they focus directly on Muslim

women's education and how it is religiously viewed not only in northern Nigeria but also in other Muslim societies. Some of the interpretations advanced by the scholars now form the basis of some the policies and programs initiated by the Sharia states for women.

### **1.2.1 Early Conception of Education in Islam**

Education is an important part of Islamic tradition. It has played major roles in shaping the lives of Muslims and Muslim communities all over the world (Alavi 2008). The importance of education in Islam is demonstrated in the life of the Prophet Mohammed, who educated his close companions not only in matters of religion but in other civic matters since they affect the day to day lives of the Muslims of his day. The Qur'an and several *hadiths* (sayings of the Prophet) of the Prophet place special emphasis on education. For instance, several scholars argue that Qur'an 96:1-5 which says: *Read! In the name of thy lord who created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Read! And thy Lord is most bountiful. He who taught (the use of) the pen, taught man what he knew not*", makes education the first revelation given to Prophet Mohammed, and also indicates that learning has been part of Islam right from the beginning. The Qur'an also reveals that the educated cannot be compared with the uneducated when it asks: *"Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will remember.* (Qur'an 39:9).

The Qur'an further lays emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, and encourages everyone in the society to aspire for it when it states *"Allah will exalt in high degree those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge"* (Qur'an 58:11). The importance of education is clearly expressed in the verse above as it explains that those who have obtained knowledge – often through formal education – occupy a central place in Islam. According to the verse, the quest for knowledge is advocated by the Creator himself for all Muslims irrespective of gender. As Werthmann (2000: 253-254) further explains, they are enjoined to seek knowledge wherever it is found.

The history of Islam reveals an early construction of the importance of education in the life of the founder, Prophet Mohammed, and his followers. The Prophet told his followers in one of his

*hadiths* to seek knowledge even if it be as far as in China.<sup>4</sup> The followers were, therefore, expected to seek all forms of knowledge since the acquisition of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim. The *hadith* of the Prophet is clear that both male and female have to seek knowledge when it says: “seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every male and female Muslim.”<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, it is obligatory for every Muslim regardless of gender to seek and acquire education. In this understanding, knowledge is gender-blind; hence education is open to both sexes. By direct implication, there is no discrimination between the sexes in matters relating to the pursuit of any form of education by Muslims. This is because the same reward attached to the pursuit of education applies to both sexes. Seeking education is likened to walking in the path of Allah. It is in regard to education that gender equality in Islam is most graphically framed. Above all, equality between the sexes is most evident in terms of the obligation to acquire education. In this regard, women have also played active roles in the emergence and spread of Islam. In the early days of Islam, women were actively involved in expressing and defending their views about Islamic law.

According to Jawad (1998: 18), education in Islam started with the Prophet himself who was heavily involved in teaching his followers the principles of Islam. She notes:

When the prophet migrated to Medina, he immediately started the process of eradicating illiteracy. His Mosque also served as a center for Muslim learning. He was so interested in this matter that, soon after the victory of Badr, he instructed each of the Meccan captives, who were literate to teach ten Muslims how to read and write as condition for their release. He also set up circles of learned men to study and teach the Quran. Later, Mosques were set up in every locality and since then have remained as the essential location for educational activities among the Muslims.

What started in the mosque eventually developed into what she refers to as a “comprehensive education system fully integrated into the social and economic way of life” (Jawad 1998: 18). At

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<sup>4</sup> This *hadith* and a similar one- “*seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every male and female Muslim*,” have been attributed to the Prophet Mohammed. Werthmann (2000) asserts that the *hadith* has been very popular as claimed by scholars such as; Trevor 1975:245; Csapo 1981:314; Knipp 1987: 413; Yusuf 1991: 93, although she notes that some scholars such as Juynboll (1983: 68-69), claim that the *hadith* was forged in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century. The same *hadith* was quoted by more than 70 percent of the informants interviewed while conducting my study, especially when responding to the question on what Islam regards as education.

<sup>5</sup> For more on this *hadith* see Werthmann (2000: 265) and footnote 4.

this stage, both men and women participated in the learning process since both sexes were entitled to seek knowledge. Jawad (1998: 19) identifies three stages in the educational process that developed at this period. These include: first stage, where parents acted as teachers of language, culture and social customs; second stage, made up of Qur'anic schools with reading, writing and mastery of language, learning of subjects such as proverbs, poetry and arithmetic; third stage, involving higher studies in schools called the *Madrassa* where religious and transmitted sciences were taught as well as intellectual sciences. These classifications of learning later developed into formal systems of education throughout the Muslim world.

### **1.2.2 Women's Rights to Education**

On women's education, Jawad (1998: 20) argues that Islam encourages the education of women in the religious sciences and other branches of knowledge that relate to both the domestic and the social domain. She further argues that:

Islam strongly encourages the education of women both in religious and social domain. Their education and cultural training were regarded as an integral dimension of social development. There is no priority for men over women in relation to the right to education. Both are equally encouraged to acquire education, as already shown, 'from the cradle to the grave'.....So like her male counterpart, each woman is under a moral and religious obligation to seek knowledge, develop her intellect, broaden her outlook, cultivate her talents and then utilize her potential to the benefit of her soul and society (Jawad 1998: 20).

She gives examples of women who in early Islam excelled in different fields of study. For instance, the prophet's wife Aisha excelled in religious studies; Nafisa in literature; Al-Khansa in poetry and even praised by the prophet; and Zainab who excelled in medicine. Several other women gave humanitarian and medical services during the many battles fought in Islam. In the military, Nusaiba participated in the battle of *Uhud* and was also praised by the prophet (Jawad 1998: 20-21).

According to Jawad's interpretation, during the time of the prophet, women were highly respected for the active societal roles they played alongside men in social, economic and religious activities. They were also encouraged to express their views in matters concerning them and the entire society. The prophet is said to have praised the women of his days who were

enterprising and who supported their husbands in raising income for their households. Jawad (1998:24-25), however, notes that the decline in the status of Muslim women began after the death of Prophet Mohammed. According to her, the decline was the outcome of a number of cultural practices that gradually infiltrated Islam and deprived women of the right to fully participate alongside men in matters of the society. According to Jawad (1998: 24):

The ambience generated by these conditions served to undermine the position of Muslim women who became less and less part of social life in general. They were neglected and treated as sex objects, assumed heavy veiling and were confined to their small circle of womenfolk with no contact outside their homes; they were prevented from participating in the public life of the community and excluded from public worship in the mosque. But the worst deprivation of all was the denial of their right to receive education.

According to Jawad, throughout the Muslim world today, women have remained ignorant to outside affairs and several other rights accorded to them by Islam. Citing examples from Saudi Arabia, Jawad (1998:26-29) argues that the gap between male and female literacy has existed to this day and has remained common in most Islamic societies.

Doi (1996: 138) also shares the same view with Jawad (1998) when he argues that “the holy Prophet made women integral to his plan for Muslim education and learning”. Quoting several verses of the Qur’an and *hadiths* of the prophet to support his argument, Doi dedicates a whole chapter of his *Women and Sharia* (1996) to women and education. In it, he lists several women in the history of Islam who excelled in education. Starting with Aisha and Safiyyah, the wives of the Prophet, he makes reference to other women versed not only in Islamic education but also in other aspects of knowledge including poetry, history and literature. According to him:

This list of women of the early days of Islam shows that women were not kept illiterate and ignorant, but rather were fully encouraged to participate in the process of learning and scholarship. They also knew their rights and responsibilities very well. There were instances to show that some women even challenged great scholars of their times if they said something which was against the rights granted to women by the Qur’an and the Sunnah (Doi 1996:144).

The history of women’s education in Islam, Doi (1996) explains, dates back to the time of Prophet Mohammed, when women acquired knowledge alongside men. He further notes that the

education of women is very important in Islam, as reflected in the life and activities of Prophet Mohammed. Taking this into account, he concludes thus:

The holy prophet made women integral to his plan for Muslim education and learning when he declared: "Acquisition of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim male or female". Women were encouraged to study the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and some Arabic language in the time of the prophet...The prophet made it a point of duty for every father and mother to make sure that their daughters did not remain ignorant of the teaching of Islam because they would, after their marriage, have to play the important roles as house wives Doi (1996: 142).

On the equal rights and opportunity granted to women and women to acquire education, Doi agrees with Jawad that education is one of the most important rights given to women by Islam. They approach the issue of education by asking questions about the position of Islam in relation to employment and women's position in contemporary periods. Noting that knowledge and education are highly emphasized in Islam, they both agree that Islam encourages its followers to be educated first in their religion and then in other types of knowledge. This is because Islam holds the person who seeks knowledge in high esteem. For Jawad (1998), education or the acquisition of knowledge is a divine desire since it was revealed to Prophet Mohammed. Education, therefore, forms part of the divine revelation given to Mohammed and compiled into the Qur'an. The Qur'an became a communication of knowledge, and knowledge itself, she says, is an unending process of learning and an inheritance that is better than a hundred prayers.

In early Islam, Jawad observes, education was so important that it was considered a matter of religious duty and a manifestation of one's submission to the Creator. The educational system then was based on moral and spiritual qualities, with no separation between the sacred and the secular. This holistic nature of education was exemplified in the life of the prophet who set up circles of learned men to study and teach the Qur'an. As Doi (1996) explains, the educational methods were effective. He cites the example of Aisha, who could still remember many of the teachings of the prophet several years after his death. She continued to teach the followers of Mohammed. The Prophets injunctions and etiquettes many of these followers narrated afterwards were learned from her (Doi 1996: 141).

Another of the prophet's wives who is also a symbol of female education is Safiyyah. She was learned in *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) that people came from afar to learn from her. Several other

women became great scholars during the days of Mohammed and came to be respected by his companions. As confirmed by Doi (1996: 144) these women knew their rights and responsibilities very well.

Doi, however, queries the present educational system which he feels does not provide adequate facilities for women to receive adequate instructions. This, he claims, has led to a decline in the desire to acquire formal education by Muslims and particularly Muslim women. In relation to co-education of males and females, Doi accuses the modern system of education of presenting women the leverage of indulging in illicit or immoral behavior prohibited by the Qur'an, since they mix with men all the time in school (Doi 1996: 145). As a solution, he advocates for women-only schools from the primary to tertiary level. In these schools, he specifies, all teachers would have to be women. This point of view corresponds to some of the arguments discussed in chapter three as presented by the proponents of Sharia as justification for the existence of women centers. The Sharia states have applied this recommendation by creating women continuing education centers. Although teachers in these centers are largely females, however the gender composition is still males and females.

Similarly, Ladan (2001) observes that there are specific commands in the Qur'an and *hadiths* on the equal rights of women to acquire education. Citing two examples from the Qur'an, Ladan (2001: 61) explains that the first revelation given to the prophet was on education. In Ladan's view, there should not be a restriction on one sex since both males and females are enjoined by the Qur'an to seek any form of education. He, however, notes that discrimination against women's access to education persists in many areas as a result of customary traditions in which women are expected to fulfill their domestic responsibilities and at the same time pursue education, often resulting in poor academic performance (Ladan 2001: 79).

Going in the same direction as Ladan (2001), Khalil (2001) adds that education occupies a place of pride in Islamic teaching. Quoting Qur'an 58:11, she articulates the importance of women's education to the civilization of the community thus:

The promotion of women's access to education is a firm guarantee of their success in their important functions with a view to consolidating social progress and successfully preserving the continuity of civilization in accordance with religion(Khalil 2001: 71).

She argues that Sharia in which Islam bases its teaching recognizes the personality of women and grants them equal opportunities with men to be educated. This she reinforces by quoting a popular *hadith* which states that “the search for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim, male and female.” The right to education as well as other rights, she claims, has a vital function which cannot be replaced by other functions. When such functions are not properly utilized, women’s natural roles are devalued under the pretext of liberating women as is widespread in several Islamic societies (Khalil 2001: 71-72).

Badmos (2001:135) equally shares the same view as Ladan and Khalil above. In addition to supporting the other scholars that the Qur’an makes absolutely no difference between men and women in the acquisition of knowledge, he specifically refers to Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, the Jihadist and Islamic scholar who not only fought to remove syncretism from Islamic practices but also advocated for the education of women. Further supporting the education of women; he quotes Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio’s strong condemnation of the conservative attitude of Muslims towards female education. Citing women who have distinguished themselves in education, he insists strongly that women should not be confined to the domestic sphere but should be accorded the opportunity to acquire knowledge, as long as it does not affect their faith (Badmos 2001: 135-136).

Ammah’s (1997) position about the right of women to education is similar to Badmos’ (2001). Additionally, she makes reference to one of Prophet Mohammed’s *hadiths* which says that any father who brings up his daughter well, providing her good education and good training will not go to hell. The contrary seems to be the case in most societies as she explains: “it is quite clear that the existing practice in some Muslim countries of depriving women of their fundamental rights is not consistent with Islamic teaching, to which the prophet regarded women” (Ammah 1997:63). Noting the current socio-political status of women in most Islamic societies, Ammah (1997) argues that women have generally been discriminated against in various domains. They are not properly politically empowered probably because they lack the appropriate level of education. In short, their access to education promoted during the time of the Prophet seems missing in most of these societies.

Another major role which women played during the time of the prophet and cited by Ammah (2001) is their participation in battle, of course, during the period of the prophet. As she explains,

women did not only participate in serious discussions with the prophet but were also known to have gone to the battle field in order to help those who were injured. She commends some of the role models in Islam who were vibrant in the acquisition of education and participation in public functions; notably Aisha. Ammah concludes with the recommendation that women's education be taken seriously:

It is essential that she (woman) knows not only about *Deen* (religion), but secular knowledge as well. The future is in the hands of women. They have to educate themselves and fulfill their responsibilities. Their rights have been enshrined in the Qur'an; all they have got to do is claim it (Ammah 1997: 67).

Adeleye (1983) also observes that the importance placed on the education of women is made explicit in the Qur'an and *hadith* of the prophet. According to him, one of the *hadiths* reads; "he who goes in search of knowledge is in God's path till he returns." This *hadith* underscores the importance that Islam places on education. It further highlights how the acquisition of education is not limited to a particular gender.

In the same manner, Da Costa (2002), while describing the various rights granted to women in Islam, stresses on the equal rights granted by the Qur'an to all Muslims to acquire education.

Perhaps the most progressive decree of Islam with regards to women was the right to education. Removing the shackles of ignorance and placing women under the control of Divine Law and not of backward social norms and customs was a major step in the "liberation" of women. The fact that they were given access to knowledge meant that they also had access to their rights, and they could demand the protection of Divine law when these rights were transgressed. (Da Costa 2002: 23)

According to him, the right to education gives women the right or access to economic, social and political independence. Da Costa (2002: 23) further stresses the fact that these rights have "brought about major revolutions in the treatment of women and granted them what rightfully belonged to them of dignity, difference and economic independence."

For Alavi (2008), the goal of Islamic education is to be near to God. Islamic education, therefore, is an act of worship to Allah with the ultimate goal of drawing humans closer to their Creator and making them pure before him. Kadi (2006) perceives education as one of the cornerstones of Islamic civilization. Focusing on the rise and development of education in Islam, Kadi (2006)

observes that although Islam emerged in a largely illiterate society, the scriptures that lay its foundation is known as “The Book” and the study of it is compulsory for every Muslim. Kadi explains that since education in most Islamic societies developed with the rise and spread of Islam, the outcome has been the vibrant Islamic civilizations which have seen some religious scholars traveling long distances in search of knowledge. She puts it thus:

Compilation was viewed almost as a form of worship; and literature sang the praises of books. Because of that, expressions of things educationally abounded from earliest days of Islamic civilization, beginning thereby the first and longest stage of education in Islam, the largely independent pre-modern stage that extended from the first years of Islam in the seventeenth century until the nineteenth century (Kadi 2006: 312)

It can be observed from the statements above that in the early years of the development of Islam, education was accorded an important place. These gradually developed into a full formal Islamic system of education. Education, therefore, was inculcated into the minds of the followers of Islam right from the early days of the religion.

### **1.3 History of Women’s Education in Northern Nigeria**

Several scholars concur that Islam arrived northern Nigeria in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century (Paden 1973; Brown and Hiskett 1975). However, Fafunwa (1974: 52) rather holds that Islam was brought to Hausa land (most part of northern Nigeria) in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century by traders and scholars. He disputes the claim made by other authors that Islam was brought to Kano sometime between 1349 and 1585, after having been taken to Tunisia and later Cairo (Fafunwa 1974: 52). According to Fafunwa (1974), Kanem became the centre of Islamic learning by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. During the reign of Mai Idris Alooma (1570-1602) in Borno, Islam spread fast in the northern region. A number of *madrasas* (Islamic schools) were established around this period and steadily, places like Kano and Katsina became famous centers of Islamic learning (Bowen 1975: 7). By the 1700s Islam had spread to other parts of Hausa land although at this period it was still the religion of the elites who were mostly city dwellers. The majority of the people who lived in rural areas still practiced their traditional religion.

The nature of life and religious practices at this time gave rise to syncretistic practices. This slowed the spread of Islam resulting to the mixture of Islam with the indigenous religious

practices of the people. This mix produced a unique belief system which Brown and Hiskett (1975: 92) refer to as 'mixed Islam'. The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century is also important in understanding the expansion of Islam in northern Nigeria. According to Brown and Hiskett, at this time, Islam witnessed a revolutionary change from a 'mixed Islam' to a *wahabi* Islam. This innovative revival became an important influence on Islam both in northern Nigeria and the rest of West Africa. According to Wasterlund and Rosander (1997: 227), it developed into a strong militant and reformist Islamic movement that modernized Islam. It also purified Islam of certain some syncretistic (un-Islamic) which had infiltrated the northern region. The jihad of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also brought about many reforms in Islam as it was practiced in northern Nigeria at that time. For instance, it encouraged the education of women whose right to education had been curtailed by cultural and social factors. Usman Dan Fodio became popular for his outspoken views on women's position in society, mainly with regards to their educational status. Dan Fodio insisted on the need to allow women acquire education through his teaching programs. He also educated all his daughters. His youngest daughter, Nana Asma'u, became an active and prolific scholar who wrote in Fulfulde, Arabic and Hausa. She has been acclaimed by several scholars for contributing immensely to the spread of Islamic ideas throughout Hausa land (Brown and Hiskett 1995: 180). Although Dan Fodio never questioned women's right to education, he nevertheless insisted on providing education in accordance with strict Islamic tradition of the Qaddiriyya brotherhoods which he belonged. This seems to have adhered to in the current Sharia policies adopted in the four states investigated here.

After the 19<sup>th</sup> century revolution, Islamic learning in northern Nigeria was heightened since Usman Dan Fodio continued to argue that the education of women was obligatory (Boyd 1982: 19). This he successfully put into practice by writing on the subject, emphasizing that it was erroneous for the *mallams* (Hausa: teachers) to leave their women and children in ignorance while teaching only male pupils (Boyd 1982: 19). Fafunwa (1974) also concurs with Boyd on the fact that Dan Fodio paid close attention to issues relating to women's education. He explains that women's education among the Muslims in northern Nigeria only became a matter of pride during the time of Usman Dan Fodio and also only lasted a few years after his death (Fafunwa 1974: 56). If at all credits for the improvement of female education is due to any one, it is Usman Dan Fodio through his jihad. He moved the issue of female education in northern Nigeria from the doldrums of tradition to a position of pride and priority. However, one important thing to note at

this stage is that what was emphasized as teaching and learning ought to be done strictly according to Islamic tradition and practices. Emphasis was more on how women could learn and not on how they could become better participants in the social and economic spheres. They were limited to religious learning whose aim was to educate them on their duty and rights as Islamic women both at home and outside the home (Knipp 1987:70).

### **1.3.1 Qur'anic or Islamic Education**

Islam is one of the major religions with a system of education that is soundly established on sustained teaching that promotes its values. This system and particularly the insistence on the acquisition of knowledge are sanctioned by the Qur'an. Education in Islam is imparted through Qur'anic schools or Islamic schools (see also Bowen 1975:8). These schools often held outside the Mosques either in the living rooms of the *mallams* or under shades of trees or houses. The pupils assembled in semicircles with slates in hands and the *mallams* would teach them to recite the Qur'an and write in Arabic alphabets on the slates. Recitation of the Qur'an as practiced in northern Nigeria is usually a lifelong process which begins from childhood. Young girls were usually encouraged to attend these schools along with the boys. Besides Qur'anic recitation and Arabic writing, pupils were also taught moral lessons on obedience, respect for the husband especially for girls who often become wives at puberty, and good motherliness (Knipp 1987:138). The purpose of this type of education was to prepare the children for a purely moral and religious life. They were trained to be honest and practical Muslims. Every mother encouraged her daughter to attend these schools whereas older women were taught mostly in their homes by a *mallam*.

Two types of Qur'anic education gradually developed in northern Nigeria. First, Makarantan *Allo* (tablet schools), meant for beginners, usually between the ages of 3 and 9. Here, the pupils were expected to learn and memorize the entire Qur'an. Second, *Makarantan Ilimi* (Islamic schools), meant for more advanced pupils. The *Ilimi* schools taught all aspects of Islamic education, (Fafunwa 1974: 55). The target was for children to move on, as from the age of 12 years, to study the deeper curriculum which includes learning the meanings of the memorized Qur'an, *Hadith*, *Tafsir* (interpretation) and *Fiqh*. These schools thrived for decades in northern

Nigeria after the development of Islamic institutions in the region. They have continued to expand into their present forms with more advanced systems of learning.

Northern Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1900 with Sir Fredrick Lugard as its first high commissioner. The spread and expansion of Islam in northern Nigeria during this time took a new turn. The first administrative policy introduced by the British colonial authority was the indirect rule policy, presided over by Sir Fredrick Lugard. The indirect rule policy permitted the emirs to rule their emirates under strict supervision by the colonial government. This policy also restricted missionary activities in the north hence enhancing the spread of Islam. Trimingham (1956) remarks that fifty percent of the Hausas were not Muslims at the time the British occupied the emirate in 1900; but by 1962, eighty percent had become Muslims (Trimingham 1956:16). As explained by Tibederana (1983), between 1910 and 1946, British administrative policies in the north were unfavorable to Christian missionaries. They were not authorized to establish stations and schools in the Muslim emirates without prior approval of the resident British administrator. Up until the 1930s getting such an approval was almost impossible. As Tibenderana (1974) opines, the first western education oriented school was established in the Sokoto province in 1905 by Major Burdon. This was exclusively for the sons of the chiefs, some of whom had to trek several miles from other provinces to attend. After 1912, a few other schools were established both in Sokoto and other provinces as the years went by but these were very limited in their in-take of children and the type of education they taught.

This is also an indication that the colonial administration did not interfere with the Islamic educational system that was already in existence before colonialism started. Instead, northern Nigeria improved on the kind of Islamic education practiced there before the colonial era. The reasons for the progress of Qur'anic/Islamic education in this region lie in the policies adopted by the British colonial administration, which gave Islam the leverage and also the time to install and expand its religious activities, e.g. conversion of more people, and its Islamic education schools in northern Nigeria.

The outcome of this policy was the rapid proliferation of Islamic schools in the north. Meek (1925), notes that by 1925, there were Islamic schools in every Muslim town. He adds that British colonial officials were overwhelmed with the pace at which these formal Islamic educational systems developed especially between 1900 and 1925. Another outcome explored by

Clarke (1978) is the increase in the number of *mallams* and also graduates of Islamic schools who later became officers in the native administration under the British. By 1960, the estimated number of pupils attending these Qur'anic schools was 27,000. In 1965, there were 36,000 pupils registered in the *ilm* schools alone (Clarke 1978:134).

As far as the attendees of these schools are concerned, a number of them were girls. They were taught the same curriculum with the boys except for some few gender related subjects that trained them on how to behave and also to be obedient wives to their future spouses. So, even at this time, the focus on the education of women already existed. Since that focus was built on a tradition that made women more subservient, it is, therefore, not surprising that the new Sharia adopted a similar focus from 1999 onwards.

These schools flourished during this period because they were tuition free for everyone. Parents of children who attended Qur'anic or Islamic education were not expected to pay school fees.<sup>6</sup> Such education was part of every Muslim's religious life, since as many authors have explained; it was considered a means of being close to Allah. It was, therefore, the pride of most parents to have their children educated in these Qur'anic schools, knowing that they would eventually become better Muslims of the society, and would be assured eternal rewards in the afterlife.

Between 1930 and 1936, Qur'anic schools were established for girls in the Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto, Birnin Kebbi and Argungu emirates to accommodate approximately 600 girls (Tibenderana 1983: 329-331). The creation of these Qur'anic schools is viewed by some scholars, e.g. Csapo (1981: 311), as a shift in the direction of gender segregation in Islamic education. The need to keep women within a sphere where they could be trained according to cultural and traditional norms was realized through these new schools. The girls-only Sharia schools and centers created after 1999 also have similar motivations. With these developments, the intrusion of western education into the northern regions has had only very little impact on the establishment and continuity of Qur'anic education. In fact, the emirs had rejected any form of western education in their emirates for a very long time because of the fear that it would interfere with the Qur'anic educational system already in place and the customs taught in them. Also, as said earlier, western education was viewed as synonymous with Christianization. From a

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with a Director of the Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto state, 05.03.2007

political stance, the emirs feared a breakdown in the political status quo. If they allowed young people to be educated as it was the case in the south, they could eventually oppose or challenge the existing political, economic and social set up of the north which depended on religious authority rather than educational expertise. Colonial officers were careful not to repeat the experience in the south where western educated elites had become a sustained and increasingly irresistible opposition to colonial ideology and interests. They, therefore, preferred to encourage Islamic education which did not pose any immediate challenge to their authority.

### **1.3.2 Inception of Muslim Women's Education During the Colonial Period**

The history of western education in northern Nigeria has already been dealt with by several scholars (Graham 1966; Ogunsole 1974; Fafunwa 1974; Clarke 1978; Bray 1981; Ozigi and Ocho 1981; Trevor 1975; Oyediji 1983). However, the focus of this section is primarily on Muslim women and western education in northern Nigeria. Between 1930 and 1935, there was an expansion in western education in northern Nigeria (Tibenderana 1974:402-403) triggered by calls from parents for the creation of more schools that were closer to their children. This was to relieve some of these children who trekked several miles a day to get to the nearest western education school. The colonial government later felt the need to establish more schools in order to ease the hardship of these children. It is important to note that these western schools were mainly populated by boys because for a long time there were no provisions for similar schools for girls, nor were girls allowed to attend these schools alongside boys as it was the case with Islamic education. Many reasons are responsible for this restriction, among them, the fear of young girls losing their virginity if allowed to attend school beyond the age of 12. This age was considered to be the ideal age for a Muslim girl to be given out in marriage, but if she lost her virginity before marriage she would be a social outcast, a disgrace to her family, and will never find a husband in the Muslim society. Csapo (1981: 312) observes that parents were reluctant to send their girls to western schools because of the cultural allocation of gender roles which limited women to secondary roles in the society, thus their education was not given the same priority as that of boys.

Other factors that played against the education of girls in western schools included the marriage customs and the practice of seclusion (*purdah*) which kept women indoors or mostly at home.

Coupled with this was the fact that married women who were under seclusion relied on their daughters for economic purposes. The daughters, who were not yet liable or subjected to seclusion, had to hawk goods (often local snacks) on the streets on behalf of their mothers. These proceeds were added to the income to the family, especially where the fathers' income was not enough. In addition to these factors, parents also questioned the values of western education, as many of them considered it a destructive force to the traditional Hausa way of life which a Muslim girl is expected to follow (Fafunwa 1974).

Parents also believed that if their girls attend western education they could become un-submissive to their husbands when they eventually get married, thereby acting contrary to the traditions of the Hausa-Muslim society. They linked the lack of submission by wives to some of the uncontrolled and secular teachings of western schools. The teachings were subversive to the patriarchal values and ideologies of these communities. Additionally, western education carried the potential of making women completely independent of their husband and economically self-reliant. This would shatter the social balance which relied on female seclusion, i.e. not allowing girls to partake in public employment since they are not breadwinners of their homes.

The factors above, and many others, hindered the education of females in the north for a very long time. Thus, when restrictions on missionary activities were eventually lifted and western education was authorized in the northern emirates, the native administrative schools which were established attracted mainly boys (Clarke 1978; Tibenderana 1975).

However, by 1929 the colonial administrators began to contemplate on creating girls-only schools in northern Nigeria. E.R.J Hussey proposed two girls' centers be created in Kano and Katsina provinces with the clear-cut objectives identified by Tibenderana (1975: 3) below:

The objective of the schools was mainly to teach personal hygiene, childcare, welfare work and such domestic science subjects as might be found to be applicable to local conditions, together with reading, writing and elementary arithmetic. The language of instruction was to be Hausa. It was hoped that the study of the above mentioned subjects would make girls 'good' wives for the educated sons of the chiefs.

This proposal received the support of the emirs of Kano and Katsina who, however, requested that the males and females be separated. By August 1930 two girls' schools were opened in

Kano and Katsina with 15 and 40 pupils respectively. But just as it was when boys' schools were first established, these schools were mainly for the daughters of the ruling class. The early process of female education was also politically motivated as it was the case with the boys' schools where the boys were trained mainly to occupy administrative positions in the colonial government. However by 1933, the daughters of a few minor government officials were also attending these schools. The development of western female education was rather slow at this stage because parents who could afford it were not motivated to send their daughters to these schools since they preferred to have them kept in seclusion after marriage, while the husbands provided for them. As a result, they did not view western education as beneficial for the females. The perpetual domination of western schools by the ruling class also made the *talakawas* (commoners) apprehensive of it for a long time.

Female education, nevertheless, recorded some success because by 1934 more schools were opened in the Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi emirates. By this time, some of the emirs were willing to use the Native administration's revenue and part of their salaries to pay for salaries of European female teachers (Tibenderana 1975:5). A year later (1935), another female school was established in the Argungu emirate on the insistence of the emirs.

One strong challenge to female education at this time was the issue of co-education or "mixed schools" introduced by the colonial administration. The proposal for the establishment of mixed schools was first rejected by the emirs who saw it as unfitting to the cultural and religious conditions of the people. Nevertheless, gradual persuasion by the administrators that the girls would be taught in separate classes from the boys, while in the elementary schools, and would not be allowed in boys' school after the ages of 10 and 11 made the emirs to withdraw their earlier opposition. This paved way for the establishment of girls' elementary school in 1935 and mixed classes which were accepted by 1939. The policy, however, made the education of females unappealing, but, judging from the responses of the emirs, it would be right to say that female western education met with a number of obstacles. This was due mainly to the already established educational system and the various factors discussed above, stemming from cultural background.

Despite these obstacles, western education was still accepted, albeit to some comparable degree, by the ruling aristocratic class of the Muslim population of northern Nigeria. The major reason

behind this is that the colonial administration did not interfere with the indigenous Qur'anic schools. Tibenderana (1975: 418) explains that the emirs later accommodated western education not because they deemed it more positive than Qur'anic education, but rather as a separate institution which they believed could be essential for the material advancement of their people.

The establishment of a women's training center in Sokoto in 1937 was another boost in female education in northern Nigeria. The training center was established primarily to train Muslim women teachers to assist the European teachers (Tibenderana 1985). This center offered courses in Islamic studies, handicrafts and, cookery and laundry in addition to the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). Girls aged 13 years and above with good family background, which had completed the elementary II standard, were admitted into these schools. Upon graduation, they were expected to teach at the center for a minimum of two years. This whole process, however later met with serious obstacles as the girls soon got married and remained in seclusion after graduation, thereby defeating the very aim of the establishment of the center.

By 1950, there was, in addition to the women's training centers, a women's vernacular center in Sokoto established for training women in basic craft and communicative skills. However, there were many problems encountered at this period which were not unrelated to several of the issues raised earlier. In this way by the 1950s there was a renewed resistance to female education as women graduated at the training centers. The curricular were challenged by the people but when it remained unchanged, the zeal to continue to allow women to be trained at the centers as teachers gradually vanished. A confidential report by Mrs. Clark, the then headmistress of the training center indicates that the five years she spent at the center had used up ten years of her life and she had lost the enthusiasm of continuing without support from her native community (Knipp 1985: 192).

However, despite the resistance by the native community of girls continuing in school due to the required age for marriage, the quality of women's education improved. By the time Nigeria got her independence in 1960, a few of the women had graduated and obtained the Grade Two Teachers' Certificates (Grade II and III) and by 1964 the girls' school in Sokoto became a secondary school for girls (Knipp 1985: 192). Furthermore, between 1960 and 1970, many women had completed the teacher training, while others had gone to secondary schools. Since then, many Muslim women have had the opportunity to acquire some form of western education.

Several of them who graduated from secondary schools have entered universities and also graduated successfully. Today, some of them have become respected scholars in their various fields. Umar (2004) notes that by the mid-1970's, there was a proliferation of female Muslim scholars in northern Nigeria whose education stemmed from a convergence of several tracks and levels of Islamic and modern secular learning into a single educational system.

### **1.3.3 Integration of Qur'anic and Western Education**

As noted earlier, when the British colonized northern Nigeria they met a well-developed Qur'anic system of education which had been in existence since the coming of Islam. However, although the Islamic system of education was not destroyed with the expansion of western education, less emphasis was placed on it by the colonial government. Despite the little emphasis placed on Qur'anic education, Knipp (1985: 213) holds that, people in the north still wanted both forms of education. From the mid 1970s, northern Nigeria experienced a transformation in both Qur'anic and western education due mainly to the merger of the western and Islamic educational systems of education into one curricular. These were done mainly by

The National Policy on Education (UPE) established by the postcolonial Federal Government in 1976 also led to an increase in enrolment figures at public schools in northern Nigeria. Unfortunately, the decline in oil revenue experienced in the 1980s contributed to a decline in the western educational system and an increase in Islamic educational system. The proliferation of Islamic schools in northern Nigeria eventually led to the integration of both the Islamic and western curricula. It is this new trend that Umar (2004) observes has led to mass religious education resulting in unprecedented expansion of Islamic learning and literacy among women who traditionally had no access to education; and has produced a host of female scholars (Umar 2004: 103).

One peculiar aspect of female education in northern Nigeria is the recent emergence of what is referred to as the New Islamic schools or Islamiyya schools which combine both the Islamic and western system in a 70:30% ratio (Umar 2004). The curricula are a combination of subjects taught in the western schools and subjects taught in the Islamic/Qur'anic schools. Classes are organized according to western schools norms but the standardized code of dressing is borrowed from or leans towards Islamic cultures. This is the case of government schools in most northern

states.

This development continued in northern Nigeria until the return of democracy in 1999. It was expected that the democratically-elected government would improve on the socio-economic situation Nigeria in general and northern Nigeria in particular especially with regards to women's status. With the re-implementation of Sharia, however, a new narrative of northern Nigeria emerged with new policies which altered the expected state of affairs and brought in new changes which are explored in the following chapters.

This chapter has discussed the background, history and the theoretical grounding of this research. It further looks into the historical development of education in northern Nigeria, particularly Muslim women's education from the colonial period to date. The next chapter focuses on the politics surrounding the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria from 1999-2003.

## Chapter Two

### The Politics of Sharia Re-implementation, 1999-2003

#### 2.1 Introduction

In Nigeria, religion is politics by other means (Ukah forthcoming)<sup>7</sup>. At no other time has this statement been truer than during the Fourth Republic of Nigeria (1999-present). It is during this period that Nigeria witnessed an aggressive insertion and representation of religion in the public sphere, when twelve states in northern Nigeria decided to re-implement an expanded version of Sharia in their states. The expansion of Sharia penal code, in addition to existing Islamic civil law, was to cover all aspects of lives of the Muslims in the affected states. Prior to 1999, what existed in the northern region of the country were Sharia courts which only dealt with cases relating to civil matters (Ostien 1999: 68-81).

This chapter explores the politics surrounding the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria between 1999 and 2003. It was in 2003 that the last of the twelve states adopted an expanded version of Sharia, bringing an end to the process of Sharia re-implementation; as twelve northern states enacted laws to expand the scope of Sharia in their respective domains. These twelve states are consequently referred to as the Sharia states. This chapter specifically examines the agitations by the masses and the elites in Nigeria which culminated in the frenzy for the re-implementation of an expanded version of Sharia. It also presents the various arguments articulated for and against such an exercise by both Christians and Muslims within northern Nigeria and elsewhere in Nigeria. Furthermore, the chapter reviews emerging new shifts and emphases from the criminal aspect of Sharia to other issues which intruded on the private lives of individuals in the society; specifically, those geared towards the development of all spheres of the society to conform to Islamic standards. According to a director of the Sharia Research and Development Commissions in one of the Sharia states, the re-implementation of an

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<sup>7</sup> Ukah, Asonzeh, (forthcoming), "The Messiah and His Critics: Obasanjo, Religion and Politics in Nigeria 1999-2007", *LIWURAM: Journal of the Humanities*.

expanded Sharia code was to bring about smooth development in all spheres of the society.<sup>8</sup> Among other objectives, this chapter investigates such a claim and counter-claims from other stakeholders in the states.

## **2.2 Agitation for Re-implementation of Sharia: The Zamfara Initiative**

The annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections (judged to be the fairest elections at the time) by General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), protracted the already one decade military regime in Nigeria (Adeniran 2009: 104). This led to the assumption of the reins of power by General Sani Abacha (1993-1998). Abacha was widely suspected to be making plans to perpetuate himself in office as a civilian president, but died suddenly in June 1998, after spending five years in office (Marshall 2009: 166-167). This unexpected turn of events brought about the ascendancy of the then Chief of Defense Staff, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (June, 1998- May, 1999), as Head of state. On assumption of office, he promised a quick transition to civilian rule<sup>9</sup>. In the views of many observers, the rigged transition process saw the emergence of Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired army general, as the civilian president in a new political dispensation, which is generally regarded as the Fourth Republic.

During the campaign for presidential and gubernatorial elections, Nigeria witnessed what has been described as a competitive market place of religious ideas (Ukah 2008). It was during this period that Olusegun Obasanjo, the presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Ahmed Sani Yerima, a gubernatorial candidate for Zamfara state, deployed religion as a political instrument for achieving their desired aims of getting into elective positions. While Obasanjo presented himself as a born again Christian, claiming God ordained him while he was in prison for his alleged involvement in an aborted coup d'état attempt against the late Sani Abacha (Ukah Forthcoming), Ahmed Sani Yerima made promises on several occasions during his campaign to enhance the cause of Islam in the north, by re-introducing an expanded version of Sharia as a political tool of social and economic engineering.

In keeping with his promise, Ahmed Sani Yerima soon after assuming office as governor on

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with the Director, Sharia Research and Development Commission, Gusau, Zamfara state, 08.03.07

<sup>9</sup> Biography, <http://www.momentng.com/en/bio/17/abdulsalami-abubakar.html>, Accessed June 21, 2011

May 29, 1999, set out modalities to re-introduce Sharia (Weimann 2010: 19). He did this by appointing an 18-member committee to consider the legal framework of reintroducing an expanded version of Sharia by drawing up a penal code for the state based on Sharia (Ostien 2007). Particularly, the committee was responsible for: 1) examining and reviewing all existing laws with a view to conform with the traditions, culture, values and norms of the people; 2) examining and reviewing the structures and control of Area Courts in the State; 3) facilitating effective administration of justice in the State (Mahmud 2007: 171). By September, 1999 the committee came up with a bill which was presented to the state House of Assembly and soon after, passed into law with minimal debate (Mahmud 2007: 171). In January, 2000 the governor officially signed the bill into law and set about the modalities for its application. By this act, a new era of Sharia application was set in motion. This state of affairs led to the establishment of lower Sharia courts which embrace both civil and criminal matters (Ludwig 2008: 8).

This development got a popular grassroots support from the Muslim population and throughout the Muslim-populated states of northern Nigeria. Majority of northern Nigerian Muslims viewed his action as a restoration of the glory of the northern states lost as a result of colonial intervention (Gwamna 2004). This is reflected in the inaugural speeches of the dignitaries during the elaborate celebration that accompanied the event in the state capital, Gusau, which brought together prominent representatives of Islamic organizations. It was also clear that Ahmed Sani Yerima's action was supported by the responses from eleven other northern states that began to clamour for the re-implementation of Sharia (Ostien 2007: viii; Nmehielle 2004: 731).

### **2.3 In the Footsteps of Zamfara**

The popularity of Zamfara state's action in respect of Sharia had a quick, unprecedented bandwagon effect: Muslim masses in different northern states almost immediately embarked on an open clamour and agitation for a similar process in their states. Ahmed Sani Yerima's folk hero status taunted other governors in the north, who were actively harassed by their citizens to follow in the footsteps of the governor of Zamfara state, who was by now considered as a champion of the cause of Allah and his people. Yerima became a political superstar as well as a cult hero. Ugbolue and Kalejaiye (2000) capture the popular atmosphere in this way:

First, religious zealots and Muslim masses in the Northern states had started

singing the praises of Governor Ahmed Sani (Yerima Bakura), who began reaping huge political gains from the *Shari'a* issue. He became very popular overnight, being dubbed the "new *Sardauna*", *mujaddid*, *mujtahid* or *mahdi*, that is, the God-guided one, reformer or the person who removes evil from society. The fact that he was now being associated with Shehu Usman dan Fodio, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna* of Sokoto, and other reformers was enough to cause some of his other colleagues to emulate him. The portrait of Ahmed Sani Yerima is seen conspicuously displayed by Muslims in cars, buses, business premises and homes. He has become "the man of the people", a man who is ready to dare the consequences by upholding the *Shari'a*, the law of God.<sup>10</sup>

Ahmed Sani Yerima was viewed by a large population of the masses as a "political Messiah" who would restore the lost glory of the northern states and give the proper practice of Sharia to his people. A large section of the society also believed that Sharia would not only bring justice to the masses, but would also provide good governance which has eluded Nigeria for decades. They believed it would also sanitize the society as well as provide jobs for the unemployed. The support for the establishment of Sharia emerged largely from grassroots pressure rather than from the elites, although the elites served to represent the grassroots in voicing out such misrecognised yearnings by the seemingly non-literate/semi-literate population of the Sharia states (Paden 2005: 158).

In February, 2000, Kano state received several calls by some sections of the Muslim community spearheaded by influential personalities to re-implement Sharia (Sada 2007: 25-26). The agitation was for the state to sign into law the Islamic Administrative Reform which aims at establishing new Sharia courts for the state. These courts were expected to try all criminal cases under Islamic law where all parties are Muslims. However, the Kano state Sharia implementation was expected earlier than when it was eventually passed into law. Quite a number of Muslims in the state had expected that Kano state being the city with the largest population of Muslims would jump in re-implementing Sharia after Zamfara. However, this did not happen as Governor Rabiu Kwankaso was reluctant in implementing Sharia despite tremendous pressure from some section of the society (Sada 2007: 25). These concerns were conveyed through some influential

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<sup>10</sup>Ugbolue and Kalejaiye , The Godfathers. Tempo (Lagos) 04.04.2000  
<http://www.biafraland.com/godfathers%20of%20islamization%20of%20northern%20nigeria.htm> , Accessed 21.11.2010

citizens of the society who interpreted his action in delaying to implement Sharia as a reluctant attitude towards Sharia (Sada 2007: 4). Mohammodu Buhari, an ex-military president, spearheaded a delegation to the governor to present the general yearning of the people of Kano state asking for the application of Sharia in the state. In the same vein, there was a 5000-women march by the Women in Islam Organization to the government house in Kano, specifically to protest the delay in the implementation of Sharia in Kano state (Sada 2007: 26). By November 26, 2000, Kano state Sharia took effect after being passed to law by the Kano state house of assembly. Kano state Sharia under Rabi'u Kwankwaso was however criticized of falling short of the actual yearnings of the people as it did not apply several strict measures and programs as did other states. His successor in the 2003 elections campaign however, promised to introduce a better version of Sharia if voted into office, which he claimed was the yearning of the people. This promise which he further used as a tool to win the election was partly fulfilled after he assumed office by immediately introducing several Islamic programs in the state. Popular among these programs are the establishment of several institutions such as the Hisba commission, the directorate of public complaints and anti-corruption commission, all of which are founded on Islamic principles (Sada 2007: 27).

The re-implementation process was thereafter, followed by Niger state where the population is divided between Christians and Muslims. Here the new Sharia regulations were passed into law in January, 2000 under the administration of Governor Abdulkadir Kure. However, unlike the cases of Zamfara and Kano states, Niger passed into law five different laws to amend relevant provisions of the penal code law. Several other laws applicable in the state were also amended to conform to the ideals of Sharia and Niger state was declared a Sharia state (Yadudu 2000: 33).

After the re-implementation in Niger state, Kebbi state followed suit. In Kebbi state, the Sharia penal code was simply amended from the existing one and signed into law on December 5, 2000 and it came into operation on the same day. Jigawa state's Sharia penal code was signed into law on December 18, 2000 and came into operation on December 27, 2000; while Sokoto Sharia penal code was signed into law on January 25, 2001 and came into operation on January 31, 2001. Yobe state's Sharia penal code came into operation on April 25, 2001, after being signed into law on March 9, 2001. Although there seem to be no date of signing into law and coming

into operation of the Bauchi state Sharia penal code<sup>11</sup>, there is indication that it came into operation in May, 2001. Katsina state Sharia penal code, on the other hand, came into operation on June 20, 2001 although the actual date of signing into law was not given. Gombe state signed into law its own version of penal code on November 23, 2001 but the date it came into operation is not known. Kaduna Sharia penal code was signed into law on June 12, 2002 and it came into operation on the same date. Borno state was signed into law on the March 3, 2003 but no date of coming into operation. Thus, by the year 2003, twelve northern states had successfully signed Sharia into law. What followed afterwards was the setting up of committees and commissions in all the twelve northern Sharia states. These commissions have been responsible for the implementation and enforcements of the laws as applicable to the different states.

## **2.4 Arguments for and Against the Reimplementation of Sharia**

The re-implementation and expansion of Sharia which started in 1999 was, and still is, one of the most controversial and publicly debated topics in Nigeria. The issues raised by the initiative of Ahmed Sani Yerima, followed by eleven other governors of northern states, were multi-layered. They were legal, constitutional, social, political, religious as well as economic. In outlining the many points or reasons for the re-implementation of Sharia, Ahmed Sani Yerima in a speech buttresses this point thus:

One, Sharia is Islamic law which regulates the entire life of a Muslim from needs and wants to responsibilities, relationships, rights, offences and punishment. Two, Sharia is the legal system which provides justice to humanity that has stood the test of time. Three, Sharia contains laws and guidelines that could be used to effectively check the corrupt system of life which has so far defied all solutions. Four, the main aims of Sharia are to rid society of injustice, poverty, ignorance, crime and disease. Five, Sharia is for Muslims only but non-Muslims also have rights under the (sic) Sharia. Six, Sharia had been introduced by the Northern Regional Government since independence; hence, it was not an entirely new thing.<sup>12</sup>

These and many more reasons were presented by the pioneer in support of the re-introduction of Sharia which was equally accepted by eleven northern states. However, a wide spread, nation-

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<sup>11</sup> Details of reports on the process of Bauchi State sharia implementation can be found in Ostien (2007) Sharia Implementation in Northern Nigeria 1999- 2006 : A Source Book, Vol. II.

<sup>12</sup> Ahmed Sani Yerima 's speech to the Christian community of Zamfara state, 2006

wide debate surrounding the re-implementation of Sharia is hinged on the constitutionality of the actions of the governors. The Nigerian constitution provides for the freedom of religious expressions; however it does not guarantee a state to adopt any religion as a state religion. Therefore, by adopting Sharia the actions of the governors, some argue, is constitutionally illegal. Another point of the debates centers on the use of political and state instruments by political figures to advance the course of one religion at the expense of other existing religions as well as using religion to advance their selfish political interests (Ilesanmi 2001: 536). Illesanmi further notes that the institutionalization of Sharia in the northern part of the Nigeria has brought to the fore the perennial issues of determining the proper role of religion in the country's politics.

These debates have often existed between some sections of the adherents of Nigeria's major religious groups, as well as among diverse political and geographical divides (Gwamna 2004: 1). Since the re-implementation, some northern Nigerian Muslims have presented several arguments in support of the re-implementation of Sharia (Danfulani 2005). Although a larger number of the Muslim masses as well as religious leaders supported the re-implementation, there exist a few Muslims who have criticized the whole process of the re-implementation of Sharia which they argue should not exist in a multi-religious country such as Nigerian. Several Nigerian Christians have equally reacted to the re-implementation of Sharia in the country basing their arguments on several issues (Adegbite 2000:62).

The reactions started in 1998 after Ahmed Sani Yerima's pronouncement to re-implement Sharia for Muslims during his campaign. His remark sparked off series of debates about the constitutionality and unconstitutionality of the laws. These debates continued through the actual passing of the law in 1999 and continued until 2003 when the last of the states inaugurated its policies. The consequences of such reactions have often resulted in violent clashes between Christians and Muslims with each claiming some forms of rights.

## **2.5. The Muslim Call**

In this section, some of the reasons and arguments which many Muslims presented in justifying the increasing Sharia presence in some states of northern Nigeria will be discussed. While these reasons do not exhaust the barrage of arguments, they point to the pillars around which the main

issues of the controversy revolved. Among the numerous arguments are those centered on the general understanding of Islam as a way of life which must be guided according to the dictates of Sharia. Sharia is conceived as a guiding principle for Muslims and should be applied as a matter of religious right in which every Muslim is given the freedom to exercise such rights which are also guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution.<sup>13</sup> While it remains a religious right of every Muslim, Sharia is also viewed by northern Nigerian Muslims as superior to any law by virtue of its being a divine law. Also presented by Muslims are the arguments that Sharia would serve to rejuvenating the society morally by fighting against all forms of moral decadence as well as checking western influence on the society. Above all these is the argument that Sharia would sanitize the society and restore the lost glory of Islam.

### **2.5.1 Islam as a Way of Life**

One of the most important arguments for the re-implementation of Sharia in Nigeria is the argument which stems from the perception of Islam as a way of life by most northern Nigerian Muslims. Islam, according to those who hold such point of view, encompasses all aspects of life such that there is no divide between the sacred and the secular. Many interview interlocutors were explicit in expressing their conviction that “Sharia is Islam and Islam is Sharia”.<sup>14</sup> Espousing such a view is Ishaya Yakubu (pseudo name) who says that:

Islam is not only a religion, but a complete way of life. Islam means complete submission and surrender to the general decrees of Allah. So, you see, you cannot separate Sharia from Islam because submission to Allah’s decree is submission to the Sharia which is submission to Islam. So Islam is Sharia<sup>15</sup>

Generally, Muslims believe that Islam is a complete way of life of Muslims and since politics cannot be separated from the religion; not having the full force of Sharia, according to such advocates, is like amputating one leg of Islam. In this conception, Islam is believed to cover all aspects of the life of a Muslim whether social, political or economic.<sup>16</sup> Proponents of this view

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<sup>13</sup> This view is implied in section 38(1) of the Nigerian Constitution which gives rights to every individual to practice his/her religion as well as the right to propagate same.

<sup>14</sup> Out of twenty interviews conducted in 2007, ten have implied the statement “Sharia is Islam and Islam is Sharia”. This gives the impression that there is no clear-cut distinction between Islam as a religion and the laws guiding the religion.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ishaya Yakubu (pseudo name), Higher Education, Ministry of Education Gusau, 13.03.2007

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the Director, Sharia Research and Development Commission, Gusau, Zamfara state, 08.03.2007

assert that being a law revealed by Allah: “He (Allah) has provided humanity with a manual in the form of Sharia as a rule to govern the life of every Muslim”.<sup>17</sup> Northern Nigerian Muslims who support the Sharia programs of their political leaders, therefore, argue that the re-application of Sharia in Muslim populated states is aimed at providing a favorable atmosphere for northern Nigerian Muslims to practice their religion the way Allah intended it<sup>18</sup>. To deny them the application of Sharia in states where they are the majority will therefore be an infringement on their rights as Muslims and would also be a violation of the dictates of Allah, hence a distortion of Islam.

The arguments presented above, however, raise questions such as what form of Islam was practiced by northern Nigerian Muslims in the past when an abridged version of Sharia was in force? If Islam is a way of life, as understood by Muslims, then the practice of Sharia ought to have been inherent in the life of all Muslims so that every Muslim knows and practices his/her religious duties whether or not the rules guiding their lives are passed as a law in the state or not. In attempting an answer to the above questions one is tempted to state that the re-implementation of Sharia in 1999 by the twelve northern states creates the impression that the practice of Islam in northern Nigeria before this period was viewed as incomplete and thus a call for the application of a complete form of Islam which would as well raise more questions.

### **2.5.2 Religious/Constitutional Freedom or Rights**

Section 38(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees every citizen the freedom to practice his/her religion. The first section states:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Many Muslims encountered in the course of fieldwork referenced this provision of the Constitution as guaranteeing them a full exercise of their religious rights of which an application of the full extent of Sharia is a part. Therefore, Sharia authorities depended on the constitution to

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with the Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education, Sokoto, 05.03.2007

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Director, Sharia Research and Development Commission, Gusau, Zamfara State 08.03.2007

enact it. There are two reasons for this. First, they relied on section 4(7) of the Nigerian Constitution which states that “The House of Assembly of a state shall have power to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the state”. To bolster their views and support for Sharia expansion, northern Nigerian adherents of Sharia draw on these sections of the constitution to prove the constitutionality of re-implementing Sharia which, in all the cases, came about as a result of laws made by the respective state houses of assembly. Secondly, they depended on the constitutional provision as stated in section 36 (12) that no one should be punished for an offence which is not in a written law. What has remained silent in the argument for the constitutionality of Sharia as it applies to section 4(7) of the Constitution is the question of whether or not this section of the Constitution specified what sort of laws the state houses of assembly are expected or empowered by the Constitution to make.

The constitutionality of the re-implementation of Sharia has generated a great deal of debate from several Muslims as well as by non-Muslim scholars (Bello 2000; Nwabueze 2000; Ilesanmi 2001; Nmehielle 2004);. Non-Muslims in the Sharia states and elsewhere in the country contend that by re-implementing Sharia, the states have contravened section 10 of the 1999 Constitution, which prohibits a state from adopting any religion as a state religion. Some Muslims have, however, disputed that the same constitution permits everyone to practice his/her religion. So, since the same constitution provides for religious freedom, so that non-Muslim are not compelled to subscribe to Sharia, the re-introduction of Sharia has not in any way contravened the Nigerian constitution. They further argue that Sharia only applies to Muslims, except where non-Muslims wish to be tried under the same law. Danfulani (2005:47) also adds voice on Muslim's response to the constitutionality of the implementation of Sharia where he notes:

Most Muslims argue that because every citizen has the right to religious freedom, it is by implication constitutional to apply the full gamut of *Shari'a*, along with the practice of the Islamic religion, for without that, this religion remains incomplete.

The constitutional position on the right to religious freedom has given more strength to the issue of Sharia in Nigeria as Muslims maintain that what they have done is constitutional since the constitution not only gives them the right to religious freedom but has also backed the re-implementation of Sharia when it leaves it open for the government of any state to enact laws

geared towards the welfare of its citizens (Adegbite 2000: 65).

### **2.5.3 Sharia: A Superior Law**

The proponents of Sharia expansion argue that Sharia is a divine law, which by implication, is superior to the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (Danfulani 2005). This argument stems from the authority of the Qur'an as viewed by all Muslims. The Qur'an is believed to be the word of God, the last divine message of God. It is considered to be the final arbiter between good and evil, right and wrong. The Qur'an is one of the sources of Islamic law and spells out some legal aspects, as such, the authority of the Qur'an, according to Muslims, supersedes human authorities such as the constitution since God is above all.

Northern Nigerian Muslims argue that the re-implementation of Sharia in Nigeria was meant to be an expression of the superiority of the Sharia over the existing laws of the country which are formulated according to human philosophy and Greco-Christian, Euro-American tradition. These laws are believed to be ungodly and have failed in solving the country's moral decadence. This point of argument however, raises several significant issues such as: if the Sharia is superior to any law then it contradicts the constitutionality of the implementation of Sharia since the authorities depended on the provisions of the constitution to pass Sharia into law.

### **2.5.4 Moral Rejuvenation of Society**

Ahmed Sani's strong argument in 1998/9 was to use Islamic jurisprudence in the form of Sharia to transform and rejuvenate the societies of northern Nigeria. Danfulani notes that "the general belief that Sharia will usher in a period of peace and tranquility, and establish a criminal-free [*sic*] society is attractive to Northern Nigerian Muslims" (Danfulani 2005:47). This argument has continually been used by the proponents of Sharia to argue that northern Nigerian society is experiencing moral decadence as a result of the failure of western-Christian agenda and values. Muslim values, as exemplified in the practice of Sharia would, it was expected, purify the society; the Nigerian state was bedeviled by moral decadence, corruption and crimes as observed in every sphere of the economy. The re-implementation of Sharia therefore was expected to sanitize the society by purifying it of moral decadence as well as corrupt practices mostly observed in public offices and in the wider society (Ostien 2007: 3). Muslims also believe that

the current Nigerian legal system is colonially-imposed and out of tune with their faith and tradition, built on an age-long antecedent of several centuries older than Nigeria (Ciroma 2001). Sharia in northern Nigeria was expected to cleanse the society of all such ills. The impression that such arguments have created on the minds of the ordinary Muslims is that Sharia would bring an end to all forms of suffering as it would eliminate all forms of societal ills, thereby creating a blissful society where God's law is supreme. This promise perhaps explains why Sharia implementation received popular acclaim with ordinary northern Nigerian Muslims.

### **2.5.5 Recovery of Past Glory of Islam**

Another point of argument for the implementation of Sharia in Nigeria is the fact that Sharia will help to restore the glory of Islam lost when the northern emirates were subdued militarily by the European colonial invaders. The call for the re-implementation of Sharia was also likened to the Fulani Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio of the 19th century. At this time in the history of the development of Islam in the northern emirates, the jihad was believed to have purified Islam and led to the revival of Sharia as the governing law in all aspects of life throughout the Sokoto caliphate (Bello 2000: 6). Therefore the re-introduction of Sharia as expected was going to pave the way for a return to the pure form of Islamic practices expecting to result in the restoration of ideal Islamic society as well as the institution of a system of government strictly based on an Islamic rule of law.

Some northern Nigerian Muslims argue that the Sharia had been in practice before the arrival of the colonial masters. During this period, they claim, Sharia was the prevailing law in both civil and criminal matters. They further assert that there was sanity in the society since everyone knew the implication of the Sharia on his/her life. The coming of the British colonial administration in the late 19th century however distorted some important aspects of the Sharia when the colonial authorities abolished laws which included practices like torture; stoning and mutilations which were considered inhumane by the British colonial administration (Bello 2000: 6). Extreme aspects of Sharia were therefore abolished although the emirs had continued to adjudicate on other cases such as civil matters and minor crimes. A return to Sharia would therefore bring back all the harsh punishments abolished by the British with the aim of taking back Islam in Nigeria to the "good old days," although not much of it was in actual practice before the advent of colonialism (Bello 2000:).

### 2.5.6 Checkmating Christian/Western Influence

For many Muslims, anything western is equated with “Christian” and regarded as such (Gwamna 2003: 6). A long-standing argument in Muslim rhetoric, the argument that the Nigerian Constitution and the penal code were products of western and Christian values surfaced once more during the controversies about the re-implementation of the Sharia. Further arguments for this issue by Muslims relate to the supposed favoritism toward Christianity dating back to the history of colonial administration in Nigeria, especially when missionaries were allowed into the north. At this point, northern Nigerian Muslims also believe that the colonial administration gave northern Nigeria a sort of “Christian tag” (Gwamna 2003: 6). Citing examples with the declaration of Sunday as a work-free day and the use of the Red Cross in all public hospitals in Nigeria, Muslims argue that these give the impression that Nigeria is a Christian state. Westernization of several sectors of the society has always been criticized by northern Nigerian Muslims because many of them viewed western influence especially in form of westernized missionary schools as synonymous with Christianity.

The re-implementation of Sharia, some Muslims assert, would address and possibly reverse the problem of westernization/Christianization and provide the northern states with an Islamic atmosphere<sup>19</sup>. This is seen practicable in many of the Sharia states where most activities usually come to a halt on Fridays, while most public schools remain closed throughout the period of the Ramadan fast. Although the halting of activities on Sundays have been the usual practice in northern Nigeria even before the re-implementation of Sharia, the practice has dominated every sphere of the economy as most official activities often naturally come to a standstill before the *Jumaat* prayers. Billboards and write-ups in these states also suggest an Islamic atmosphere as they are covered with Islamic slogans and Arabic writings. The inscription of the Red Cross on public hospitals has also been replaced with a Red Crescent, indicating an Islamic ambience. The resistance by a large majority of northern Nigerian Muslims to speaking English, for example, is equally rooted in the perception of English with Christianity, a point that is further embedded in the increasingly blurred boundary between “Arabic” and “Islamic” for most of these adherents.

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Director, Sharia research and Development Commission, Gusau, Zamfara State, 08.03.2007

The supporters of the Sharia re-implementation program therefore perceive the whole exercise was directed towards the search for a viable alternative to western value system, including social or public morality, governance and personal organization. This development gives the impression that the re-implementation of Sharia was a reaction to western influence on the northern region of the country which has often been interpreted as Christian.

## **2.6 Opposition to Sharia**

Basically, opposition to the political project of expanding the scope of Sharia in northern Nigeria were two-pronged: the first came from minority Muslim elites, while the second, which was more resonant, came from a variety of Christian groups and elite.

### **2.6.1 Muslim Opposition to Sharia**

Islam in northern Nigeria, like elsewhere in the world, is not monolithic; the actions of politicians to re-implement Sharia received different reactions from different Muslim groups. One of such objections came from Ibrahim El Zakzaky, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Nigeria, In El Zakzaky's opinion, the introduction of Sharia was not done the right way because according to him, "the state superstructure must be Islamized before Sharia can be introduced and in this case the constitution creating state must be replaced with a an Islamic one based on religious counsel and consultation and then the state can be considered *halal*" (Sanneh 2003: 237). In the case of Zamfara and other Sharia states however, the re-implementation of Sharia did not follow this principle as it rode on the back of the same constitution which is considered as *haram* (forbidden) to implement a divine law. This point also relates to one of the reasons put forward by the Christian population that the implementation process is unacceptable since it was not pronounced by the *Ulama*, but by some political figures that have done so only for their own selfish political gain. El Zakzaky further expresses the fear that Sharia in northern Nigeria was not applied properly, he asserts that:

Islamic law is meant to be applied by an Islamic government in an Islamic environment. If you introduce Islamic laws under [sic] an un-Islamic environment, under a system of government which is not Islamic, then it is bound to be an instrument of oppression (quoted in Sanneh 2003: 237)

From the above statement, the requirement for the effective implementation of Sharia is such that it has to be applied by an Islamic government; he argues that “it is an Islamic state that produces an Islamic society”. If this is the case, then the Sharia states did not have the constitutional backing to implement Sharia in some parts of northern Nigeria since the country is considered a multi-religious state, guided by a secular constitution which should not allow for the application of such laws.

Defending his position on the issue of the Islamization of the state, Ahmed Sani Yerima defines his action as a move towards creating a “religious community” rather than a religious society or a religious state as understood by his opponents. According to him:

An Islamic community practices Islam all right, but its environment is not overwhelmingly Islamic. Here, non-Islamic institutions and practices are dominant. On the other hand, an Islamic State is wherein the environment is wholly Islamic and that all affairs including the conduct of government are regulated by Shari’ah exclusively. Zamfara State may be closer to an Islamic society, but it is still very far from attaining the status of an Islamic State, since it has not adopted Islam as State religion. The High Court and Magistrate Courts exist side by side with Shari’ah Courts: non-Muslims still avail themselves of these conventional Courts.<sup>20</sup>

From the explanation above, Yerima seem to counter the position of El Zakzaky in protesting that the re-implementation was inappropriately done since the states in question are not Islamic states and so lack the credibility to enforce such a law. Strong as his position may sound; it still has not been accepted by a cross-section of intellectuals who insist the state cannot implement Sharia. Abdulahi An Nai’m is one such scholar who maintains that “the state cannot implement Sharia”. Abdulahi reiterated his position in a public lecture delivered at the University of Jos, Nigeria in 2006 where he spoke in strong terms about the incapability of the state to implement Sharia<sup>21</sup>. This position is in agreement with El Zakzaky’s position that only an Islamic state can produce an Islamic society. Writing about the debates for the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, An Na’im states that:

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<sup>20</sup> Sani Yerima’s speech to the Christian community of Zamfara state op.cit.

<sup>21</sup> A public lecture delivered in September 2006 at the Faculty of Law auditorium, University of Jos, Nigeria.

Sharia does not have a future as a nominative system to be enacted and enforced as such by the state as a possible law and public policy...whatever is enacted or enforced is not Shari'ah as such and should not be described in those terms at all (An Na'im 2005: 327).

Focusing his arguments on the actual role of Sharia in the public life of the present and the future Islamic societies, An Na'im observes that the "present confusion, misunderstanding and suspicion surrounding Sharia are partly due to fundamental ambiguity of demands by the Muslims of northern Nigeria which tend to attract negative reactions from Christians and other citizens" (An Na'im 2005: 238). It is important to note that the Nigerian constitution does not completely nullify the re-implementation of Sharia in Nigeria. The problem arising from the Nigeria's version of Sharia however is the manner in which it was implemented. According to El Zakzaky and An Na'im, the implementation process in Nigeria does not agree with the process in which Sharia ought to have been implemented in the actual sense.

### **2.6.2 Non-Muslim Opposition to Sharia**

The views of Wole Soyinka stands out in articulating some of the general views of some Nigerian citizens who did not subscribe to the underlying ideas of the advocates of Sharia. According to Soyinka, the whole process of the re-implementation of Sharia was an abuse of the Islamic faith because the advocates are simply lying, misusing and abusing the Qur'an. In his words: "they are abusing knowledge and abusing piety and they are showing themselves to be nothing but real impious secularists who are merely manipulating religion for political ends."<sup>22</sup> Wole Soyinka condemns the advocacy for the re-implementation of Sharia by its proponents as a mere "pious pretence"; an act of hiding their political ambitions behind religion. He further argues that just like indigenous Yoruba people cannot insist on defending their traditional religion - *Orisa* in the name of indigenous rights, so also the advocates of Sharia should not insist on defending Sharia as religious rights of Muslims which must be imposed on the people. This view by Soyinka shows one among a wide range of views presented against the re-implementation of Sharia by both the Muslim and Christian population of Nigeria.

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<sup>22</sup>Soyinka's views are quoted by Lamin Sanneh (2003) from an interview with *The News*, Lagos, March, 2000.

## **2.7 Christian Reactions**

Although a few prominent Muslims oppose to the re-introduction of an expanded version of Sharia in the northern states, as should be expected, the most strident criticisms and opposition came from the Christian segment, particularly, these oppositions came from those within the Sharia states who feared they would inevitably bear the brunt of the new era of a progressive Islamization of northern society. No generally accepted statistical figures exist representing the religious composition of the country as religion was eliminated from the data of the last census exercise in Nigeria. However, it is generally believed that the country is equally composed of Muslims and Christians put at about 45% for each group and the remaining distributed unevenly among other religious traditions and groups such as African Tradition Religions (ATRs). The most heated reaction for the implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria came from Christian population. Although northern Nigeria has the largest percentage of Muslims in the whole country, Christians however constitute a significant minority population in all the Sharia states except in states like Kaduna, Bauchi and Niger which have large populations of Christians in almost equal proportion with the population of Muslims. This probably explains why the trenchant criticisms and reactions came from the Christians in Kaduna who perceived the implementation of Sharia mainly as a political rather than a religious venture. A number of the arguments against the reimplementation of Sharia by Christians are outlined below.

### **2.7.1 Second Class Citizens**

The most tormenting anxiety of the non-Muslim populations of the Sharia states stems from the Qur'an and the *Hadith's* teaching on how non-Muslims should be treated in a Sharia state: which suggests that non-Muslims do not have equal rights of citizenship in such states (Gwamna 2004: 3-8). Christians feared that in such a state they would only be tolerated but not treated equally. They also feared that their rights as Nigeria citizens in the face of the law and the Constitution of the country would be reduced to mere privileges, to be granted by the super-class of Muslims, who are in control of the resources and instruments of that state, deployed in line with what they consider to be Islamic ideology.

Christians have thus refused to accept the arguments presented by Muslims that Sharia will not

affect Christians. Christians fear that the imposition of Sharia on a state that is not mainly populated by Muslims will reduce the status of the Christians as well as other non-Muslims to that of second class citizens in their own country. This they argue from the point of view of the rights of *Dhimmi* (non-Muslims) in an Islamic state. In an Islamic state they argue, the *Dhimmi*'s are often reduced to the position of second-class citizens whose religion can only be tolerated by the Muslims. Several verses of the Qur'an point explicitly to how non-Muslims in a Muslim state ought to be treated. A number of these verses which Christians have often used to argue their points seem to connote an intolerable attitude towards non-Muslims. A few examples of some parts of these verses states:

Your Lord revealed to the angels: 'I am with you: give the believers firmness; I shall put terror into the hearts of the disbelievers— strike above their necks and strike all their fingertips.' That was because they opposed God and His Messenger, and if anyone opposes God and His Messenger, God punishes them severely— 'That is what you get! Taste that!'—and the torment of the Fire awaits the disbelievers (Qur'an 8:12-14).<sup>23</sup>

Verses such as these suggest an excruciating attitude towards those who do not believe in Islam and places the Muslims above them all. For these reasons, Christians were apprehensive of the fact that should they live under Sharia, there would be no escaping the harsh treatments such as stoning for adultery and amputation for stealing prescribed by Sharia against those who do not abide by the law. An Na'im (2010) observes that the traditional system of *dhimi* was developed by Muslim scholars as part of a world view that determined political allegiance on the basis of religious affiliation (An Na'im 2010: 320). Thus, those who belong to that status of the *dhimi* in accordance with Muslim and non-Muslim relations were expected to pay complete allegiance to the Islamic political structures which decides on their welfare. An Na'im gives a clear definition of the *dhimi* as follows:

The term *dhimma* referred to a compact between the state ruled by Muslims and a people of the book community whereby members of that community were granted security of their persons and property, freedom to practice their religion in private and communal autonomy to govern their internal affairs. In exchange, the community of People of the Book undertook to pay a poll tax (*jizya*) and observe the terms of their compact with the state. Those granted *dhimma* status were

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<sup>23</sup> The Qur'an: Oxford World Classics, translated by M.A.S Abdel Haleem, pp 111

encouraged to embrace Islam, but not allowed to propagate their faith. Common features of compacts of *dhimma* included restriction on participation in the public affairs of the state or holding public office that entailed exercising authority over Muslims (An Na'im 2010:323).

Views such as those observed by An'Na'im above gives a perfect description of kind of restrictions expected under a government guided by Sharia. It shows that non-Muslims who find themselves in such a condition are likely to be reduced to the level of second class citizens; a situation where Nigerian Christians feared would eventually occur with the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria.

Although a polemic point of view, Arbabzadah (2004) captures what the *Dhimmi's* were and which position they occupied in the society in the early days of Islam as follows:

Non-Muslims were generally referred to in Arabic as *Ahl Al-Dhimmah*, the "People of the Pact," and *Ahl Al-Kitab*, the "People of the Book." Strictly speaking, the terms should only refer to the monotheists mentioned in the Qur'an, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and a group called the Sabians, whose identity is unknown<sup>24</sup>.

The *Dhimmi's* are in this context expected to live as second class citizens and among other roles, they are expected to obey certain rules which guarantees there security. Articulating these rules, Arbabzadah (2004) states:

In addition to the *jizyah*, *dhimmi* had to obey a number of additional rules that were supposed to govern their public conduct. The rules were often suspended in practice, but in theory, they included regulations such as "showing a respectful attitude towards Muslims" or "when celebrating religious ceremonies, keeping the level of noise low." *Dhimmi* were also required to build houses lower than those of their Muslim neighbors, to avoid dressing like Muslims, and to ride on "inferior" animals like mules and donkeys rather than horses. In court, the word of a *dhimmi* witness counted less than a Muslim male, putting *dhimmi* on an equal footing with Muslim women.<sup>25</sup>

Views such as these reflect general views about the limited status of the non-Muslims in northern

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<sup>24</sup> Arbabzadah, Nushin, Multiculturalism in medieval Islam, [http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-multiculturalism/article\\_2263.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-multiculturalism/article_2263.jsp), Accessed 15.03.20 11

<sup>25</sup> Arbabzadah, Nushin, op. cit.

Nigeria. It is against the backdrop of the position of non-Muslims in such a society that that Christians in Nigeria have argued against the re-implementation of Sharia especially in states where Christians are a minority. Furthermore, since the Sharia proponents have not clearly spelt out during the re-implementation process what becomes of the rights of non-Muslims, Christians were worried about what becomes the status of non-Muslims as against the rights of Muslims in the Sharia states. According to the concept of an Islamic state, the responsibility for policy and administration rests primarily with those who believe in Islam. They are not entrusted with the responsibility of policy making and can only become equal participants when they embrace Islam. Christians feared that the re-implementation of Sharia gives the northern states an Islamic status and as such it is bound to discriminate between Muslims and non-Muslims of which they eventually might not be able have a say in the affairs of the states in which they are citizens (Gwamna 2004: 3-8).

Bolaji perfectly captures the issue of citizenship problem in Nigeria with the re-implementation of Sharia when he states:

Contrary to the rhetoric of the non-application of Sharia to the non-Muslims, they [Christians] have suffered a reduction in Nigerian citizenship. The fact that the sociological base of Sharia states is informed by Sharia has limited non-Muslims' expressions of Nigerian citizenship. They cannot do certain things that non-Muslims in non-Sharia states can do. Religious minority groups have suffered some restriction. Children of non-Muslims minorities "attending state run schools are ...compelled to wear the Islamic headscarf [hijab]". Also, in Azare, Bauchi state, 12 nurses ... [were] sacked for non-compliance with dress code based on Islamic law (Shari'a) (Bolaji 2009:10).

Bolaji uses the concept of "hierarchical citizenship" to describe the unequal treatment as well as access to resource and respect which exists in different forms between indigenes and settlers, Muslims and non-Muslims in different parts of Nigeria. He further explains this concept by stating that Nigeria's citizenship is complicated and an unusual form of asymmetrical federalism. In a usual symmetrical federalism he notes, there is a clear distinction between citizenship in the constituent state and citizenship in the association (Bolaji 2009: 9). However, he observes that this dual citizenship-characteristic of asymmetrical federalism has complications for Nigeria because of the recognition of ethnicity in Nigeria's 1979 and 1999 constitutions; the federal

character principle and the indigeneity clause; which further compounds Nigeria's citizenship problem ( Bolaji 2009: 9). To buttress the issue of indigeneity in Nigeria Bolaji articulates his position thus:

The replication of the indigeneity cause, at the state level, of Nigeria's citizenship has been problematic. The clause requires that a Nigeria citizen by birth is one whose either parents or grandparents "belong to or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria"... Indigeneity has delimited the geo-political space for the celebration and expression of Nigeria's citizenship. The fact that the exclusivist nature of this adopted definition is at variance with the cosmopolitan character of the constituent states has created hierarchical citizenship in Nigerian politics. Indigenous elites at the state level see settlers as having different rights though they are Nigerians (Bolaji 2009: 9-10).

The existence of non-Muslims in the Sharia states according to Bolaji's views, has the propensity of reducing their citizenship status, thereby placing them as second in importance to Muslims by virtue of their being non-Muslims. Because of such treatment, they are not able to enjoy certain rights and privileges which non-Muslims in non-Sharia states enjoy; in this case equality before the law is compromised because of religious affiliation. This has been the status quo even before the re-implementation of Sharia in the northern states but which has continued to aggravate since 1999. A consequence of such discrimination is a catalyst to majority of the ethno-religious crisis witnessed in northern Nigeria since the re-implementation of Sharia (Ostien 2009).

### **2.7.2. Unconstitutionality of Sharia**

Arguably, the most intense opposition to the Sharia programs of the northern Nigerian governors came from individuals who considered it a flagrant violation of the Constitution of the country. According to the views of this opposition group, section 10 of the Nigerian Constitution spelt out clearly that "the Government of the federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as State Religion". This, many scholars and some Christians argue, is a provision which clearly defines Nigeria as a secular state meaning the non-use of religion in running the affairs of the state (Nmehielle 2004; Onaiyekan 2001). By implementing Sharia however, it means several Islamic programs and institutions would receive full recognition and funding by the state. The creation and funding of Islamic schools by the northern governments are pointers to the fact that Islam is

being favored against Christianity in the states and would in turn make these northern states Islamic states. This argument has been highly contested by Nigerian Muslims who opposed the use of the word “secular” which they insist did not appear anywhere in the constitution. Legal scholars generally interpret section 10 of the Constitution as the “Disestablishment Clause” which effectively foregrounds the secularity of the country. To understand this view fully, the work of Ilesanmi (2004) captures the issue of secularity of the state. Ilesanmi (2004: 543) traces many of the crises Nigeria faces today to the apparent contradictions, inadequacies and ambiguities in the operative Constitution. Ilesanmi observes that since 1922 Nigeria has had a total of 9 constitutions; for him, the rapidity with which the country churns out constitution is symptomatic of inherent political and sociological maladies.

The main aim of Ilesanmi’s thesis is to explain the way in which the ruling class uses certain opportunity to “exploit religion and other forms of cultural identity for its selfish gain”. Raising questions about what fundamental rights religious beliefs and communities should be constitutionally entitled to, Ilesanmi notes that the non-establishment norm as found in section 10 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as well as the free exercise norm in section 38(1) of the same constitution, explains some of the religiously motivated constitutional problems Nigeria is having today. He also observes that the interpretation of the non-establishment norm by Muslims in northern Nigeria confers a secular status to the country; thereby reducing religion to the private domain. Many northern Nigerian Muslims contest this view; for them, it is unacceptable since the same constitution provides the legal framework for freedom of religious beliefs and practice. Thus, the point of referring to Nigeria as a secular state is unacceptable by northern Nigerian Muslims because it reduces their status as full citizens and also limits them from fully exercising their religious rights (Ilesanmi 2004: 543).

From the constitutional provisions however, Christians have argued that Nigeria is a multi-religious country and as such there must be a balance on matters of religion. When one religion is however favored at the expense of other religions where they all exist side by side, then this is constitutionally illegal and an infringement on the religious rights of the practitioners. Christians argue therefore that by adopting Sharia, the northern governors have contravened this section of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### **2.7.3. Political Sharia**

One of the pivotal points in regards to the opposition to the expansion of Sharia in northern Nigeria was the argument that it was a political instrument rather than a religiously-inspired program. The perception of Sharia as a political tool was clearly expressed by John Onaiyekan, the Catholic archbishop of Abuja, who stated that “the Sharia [program of northern state governors] is a perfect example of a political agenda parading itself as religion” (Onaiyekan 2001: 283). Perturbed by the dynamics of imposition of Sharia from above by Muslim political elite, Onaiyekan argues further that “Sharia has become a matter of great controversy because of its political dimension.” The Sharia program was used as a political instrument in several ways; first, in some states like Zamfara it was implemented by the political elite rather than religious elite while in other states there was pressure on the governors and the houses of assembly to enact and enforce Sharia. Secondly, it used a constitutional lapse in the section allowing state assemblies to make relevant laws for the state; thirdly, it was executed by state or political will and power and resources. This has given the Sharia a political name where religion is used by political powers for selfish ends. Nigerian Christians believe if Sharia was championed by the council of *Ulamas* (Religious leaders) and not by selfish politicians, it would be more acceptable by all. But this was not the case as the champions of Sharia re-implementation in Nigeria were political figures who probably were not devout Muslims. Thus Christians argue, for a divine law to be implemented in a haphazard manner as was the case in northern Nigeria is a pointer to the fact that it was more political than religious (Gwamna 2003: 6).

#### **2.7.3.1 Reaction to Christian Leadership**

Christians argue that the re-implementation of Sharia in 1999 appears to be a deliberate reaction to Christian leadership. Articulating such a point of view is Ayuk (2002) who observes that part of the causes of conflict between Christians and Muslims is the sudden emergence of a Christian head of state. He articulates his views at two different times thus:

Religion is a political factor in Nigeria. The Moslems have been in power for a very long time. It is only of recent that a Christian became a president and this is aggravating the whole situation. The Moslem leaders are now trying to implement the Sharia Law in the northern part of Nigeria, which means Christians in this part

of the country would be subjected to the Sharia law. This is causing a lot of problems in the country (Ayuk 2002:201).

He further buttresses his point thus:

Moslems are afraid they are losing out in the race of religiosity/spirituality and are doing everything they can to control the rate at which Moslems are defecting to Christianity. This has led to a stricter discipline on the Moslems who are not living according to the standards of Islam. Things have never been this way before: like the threat to stone a Moslem woman who had a child out of wedlock. But this is only a camouflage of political statement that Moslems are still in power and can do anything they want, even if the government does not approve of it. Part of that is the fact that the country now had a President who confesses, without fear of losing the Moslem vote, that he is a Christian (Ayuk 2005:118-119).

According to those espousing this perspective, the timing of the whole process of the re-implementation points to the fact that it was a reaction of the leadership of Olusegun Obasanjo who claims to be a born again Christian from the southern part of the country. Christians question why the proponents of Sharia did not attempt to re-implement Sharia when the atmosphere was more conducive, especially during the regimes of Muslim military heads of state; rather, the exponents of Sharia expansion waited until a Christian became the president of the country then the northern states began to agitate for the re-implementation of Sharia. Christians interpreted this action as an indirect protest against Christian leadership.

President Obasanjo's romance with certain Christian communities during his campaign for the presidency has been extensively discussed (Ukah 2008: 199-207). According to this study, Obasanjo was able to effectively use the rebranding of his image as a born again Christian by the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to win the sympathy of the Christian populace. This scheme he continually used throughout his second tenure in office and when he eventually wanted to run for the third time. A careful study of the actions of Obasanjo and Sani of Zamfara state shows that Nigerian political figures have used religion to achieve their selfish political interest. Religion therefore has become a very strong tool in the political drama of Nigeria (Adekunle 2009: 3-16).

#### **2.7.4 Islamization of Nigeria**

Apart from what Christians view as selfish political motives behind the re-implementation of Sharia, they also feared the implementation was designed to gradually Islamize Nigeria. This position is not new in Nigeria but dates back to the 1977/78 Sharia debates in the constituent assembly, when the northern states demanded for a Sharia court of appeal<sup>26</sup>. Proponents of “Sharia as an Islamization tool” pointed a similar strategy during the regime of Ibrahim Babangida, when Nigeria covertly joined the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1986. Christians argue that from its charter, the OIC which was founded in 1971 to promote Muslim solidarity and further economic, social, scientific and cultural cooperation among its 57 members was an organ of Islamic expansion engineered by Arab states. By joining the OIC, a club of Muslim states, Nigeria officially claims to be a Muslim state.<sup>27</sup>

With the current implementation of Sharia in twelve northern states, Christians argue that the motives behind Muslims’ argument for a divine law are a gradual process of Islamizing Nigeria as a whole. This grand design, Christians felt, led to the denial of citizenship rights to Christian minorities in the Muslim dominated states. Instances of these are seen where Christians were denied the right to own lands for the purpose of building of their places of worship as well as burial grounds for their dead members. Change of Christian names to Islamic names before admission in public schools as well as the takeover of mission schools by the government in the past.

#### **2.8 Consequences of Reactions**

The various arguments and reactions for and against the re-implementation of Sharia have had several consequences for the peaceful co-existence of the many different religious communities in Nigeria. Although both Christians and Muslims have argued for and against the re-implementation of Sharia in the country, these arguments have often times led to serious

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<sup>26</sup> For more on the 1977/78 sharia debates see Matthew Kukah (1993:115-136)

<sup>27</sup>The administrative headquarters of the OIC are based in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. The organization functions to give assistance to its members through its organs such as the Islamic Centre for Development and Trade as well as the Islamic Development Bank.

reactions which resulted in physical clashes between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The first experience of the collision between Christians and Muslims after the implementation was in Kaduna state in February 2000 (Gwamna 2003: 10). Before the clash however, Christians in Zamfara state under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), had presented their grievances after Sharia was passed into law and Zamfara declared a Sharia state( Akinwumi and Umaru 2009: 226-228; Gwamna 2003: 11-12). To make public its position on the matter, the Zamfara state branch of CAN declared a three-day prayer and fasting period. As part of the protest against the implementation, they also embarked upon a sit-at-home strike throughout the three days period. They felt that although an Islamic law, Sharia was not only going to affect the Muslims but will affect much more their lives in many negative ways. Although the protest in Zamfara was not violent, the governor of the state viewed the action by Christians as a harassment of his government (Oduyeye 2000: 3).

A pattern of adopting religious rituals in an attempt to resolve a political crisis soon emerged as Christians in other northern states followed the action of their counterparts in Zamfara state. In Niger state under the auspices of CAN, Christians observed three days of prayer and fasting as well as a sit-at-home protest. They also sent their objections of the re-introduction of Sharia in the state to the governor in writing (Gwamna 2003: 10).

In Kaduna state, however, the reaction was more volatile. Amidst a peaceful public demonstration by Christians against the introduction of Sharia, Muslims also staged a demonstration against Christian protest. This lasted for several days but on February 20, 2000, Christians all marched to the government house to openly protest the implementation of Sharia by presenting a letter to the deputy governor stating their position (Danfulani 2005:22). However, what started as a peaceful demonstration later turned into a clash between the Christians and a group of Muslims who had gathered to protest the demonstration by Christians. This eventually led to serious violence in different parts of the city of Kaduna; where over 1000 people lost their lives (Danfulani 2005: 13; Gwamna 2003: 1-2). This incidence was described by the then president of the country, Olusegun Obasanjo, as the worst incidents of bloodletting since the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) (Gwamna 2003: 10). This first case of violence precipitated other acts of “revenge violence” and public unrest in different parts of the country.

For example, the killing of southerners in Kaduna also led to another vengeful protest by Christians in Aba, Owerri, Oyo, Onitsha and Umuahia as the people saw the corpses of their dead relatives being brought back from Kaduna state (Gwamna 2003: 10 ).

There was also a similar reaction in Bauchi state, which led to a riot that claimed the lives of many Nigerians. This riot was triggered by the re-deployment of a Sharia court judge to Tafawa Balewa area of the state. This development was unacceptable to the Christians youths who staged a demonstration on June 14, 2001 to openly express their objection. The protest which started out peacefully was countered by a group of Muslim youths and a clash ensued between the two groups. This eventually led to serious tension and crisis leading to the death of numerous people and loss of several properties including places of worship. According to Gwamna (2004: 11); “Christians are opposed to the introduction of Sharia, the indigenous Christian minority population at Tafawa Balewa particularly opposed the posting of a Sharia court Judge in their area; their reaction is rooted in their historical antecedents which have consistently resisted Hausa-Fulani political hegemony, easily tied to Islam”. Since then there has been continuous agitations and tensions in several northern states, each relating directly or indirectly to the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria. Another consequence of the reaction to the re-implementation of Sharia in the north is the formation of and vocalization of indigenous Hausa Christian Association in Hausa land also called TAMANI which also led to the formation of TAMANI students’ campus fellowships in some of the Universities in the north.

## **2.9 Sharia: New Shifts, New Emphasis**

In its early days the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria was supposed to be a re-introduction of the aspect of Sharia abolished by the British colonial administration which were regarded as repugnant to natural justice, equity and good consciences. The repugnancy test affected all local laws of all Nigerian societies involving punishments like death, torture, flogging and amputation. However, the Sharia states went beyond the criminal aspect of Sharia to emphasize on several other societal issues unrelated to crime punishment while in most cases some of the earlier laws were amended. The debates and popularity attributed to the re-implementation of Sharia since 1999 has focused more on issues relating to extreme forms of Sharia punishment (amputation, stoning to death and public flogging) and other matters relating

to crime as well as those aimed at sanitizing society. As noted above, one of the arguments put forward by Muslims for the re-implementation of Sharia was that Sharia aims at sanitizing society of societal ills. This, perhaps, tells why most of the academic research carried out from the onset of the re-implementation of Sharia till now has focused more on issues dealing with crime and punishment as well as better administration of the society by bringing an end to certain practices which are unacceptable in Islam (Ezeilo 2001).

These practices include corruption, consumption of liquor, gambling and prostitution, unhealthy influence from media, unscrupulous market practices such as the use of false scales of measurement and insistence on *Dilali* (middle man) in business transactions who often owns a share from the transaction, as well as other matters relating to women and girls (Ostien 2007: 4-6). These developments brought about changes in all spheres of the society; apart from changes in the area of criminal justice, there were changes which intruded on the private lives of individuals. The aim of such changes as propagated by the proponents of Sharia was to Islamize all spheres of the Muslim life as well as the society at large.

In addition to the expansion of the law to include corporal punishments such as amputation of arms for theft and stoning for adultery, the governments introduced new social programs including programs aimed at providing what the governments considered to be Sharia-compliant quality education- compatible with Islamic ethics and ethos. They also diverted their attention to providing some social infrastructure such as roads and Sharia-compliant healthcare and public transportation system as they relate to the private lives of individuals. The government of the Sharia states also attempted to redirect their resources to important problems like the improvement of infrastructure as noted above. After the re-introduction of Sharia in Zamfara state for example, the governor made several efforts to deal with not only issues relating to crime and programs for the improvement of Sharia, but also on social services.

In a speech to the Christian community Ahmed Sani Yerima outlined some of what he believed were the achievements of his administration to include: “greater protection for women’s rights through the establishment of focal educational institution for women, establishment of health institution for women and children, separation of mass transit system and the empowerment of

women through the poverty eradication program.”<sup>28</sup>This new shift and emphasis which although seem to be geared towards the development of the society as well as lives of individuals in the society; was more emphasized in the educational sectors of the society, especially in states like Zamfara and Kano. Although Sani Ahmed Yerima’s acclaimed achievements give the notion that the intention for the re-implementation of Sharia was to provide a better living condition for the populace, a critical look at what he outlined above as achievements could be interpreted as an unwarranted use of public funds in segregating the society. Greater protection of women’s rights goes beyond segregating them to educational and health institution. Instead it ought to provide women the chance to free themselves from the already segregated sphere in which they had remained perpetually silent for several centuries. It should provide them the opportunity to situate themselves within the Sharia initiative and give voices to some of their concerns. This section discusses issues related to education such as dress code, public transportation and prohibitions on liquor consumption as well as restrictions on media practices

### **2.9.1 Emphasis on Dress Code**

One significant emphasis by the Sharia states is the issue of dress code for those living in the states. Nigerian Muslims believe that there is a particular way a Muslim ought to dress, that is, dressing in a manner that does not reveal body parts. This, they insist are Islamic ways of dressing, the emphasis of which seems to have affected only the female gender in the society. Although in the past northern Nigerian women have always dressed to cover the whole body from their heads to their legs, this applies mostly to married women whose bodies were expected to be seen only by their husbands. With the re-implementation of Sharia however, dress codes became a matter of priority, it was strictly emphasized not only for married women but also for unmarried young girls and young ladies. In all public schools in the Sharia states, for example, female pupils and students’ school uniforms were designed in a manner that covers their entire bodies even as the wearing of *hijab* (long veil) was made compulsory.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ahmed Sani Yerima ‘s speech to the Christian community of Zamfara state, 2006, undated.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Sa’adatu Shehu, Principal, Women Continuing Education Center Gusau, Zamfara state, 08.03.2007.

Justifying the enforcement of the wearing of the *hijab* by Muslim women in the north, the director of the Sharia Commission in one of the sharia states says:

If you see women now after the implementation of Sharia, the beauty you see on them is in regards to the *hijab* [...]. The wearing of the *hijab* is because it is a command from Allah in the many verses of the Qur'an, that women should not appear naked, so they wear the *hijab* to cover their bodies. And this has increased since the implementation of Sharia.<sup>30</sup>

The issue of the dress code in northern Nigeria is seriously emphasized as is the case in most Muslim societies all over the world (Ahmed 1992: 144- 168). In Europe, for instance, there is an on-going controversy concerning the use of the veil in public places. The debate on appropriate dress code for Muslim women is raging in many countries, for example, in France and the Netherlands where views are polarized between secularists and Islamists.<sup>31</sup> The use of the *hijab* is viewed by Muslims as proper Islamic mode of dressing for women. The Qur'anic text frequently cited to justify the wearing of the *hijab* by Muslim women states:

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; and that they should not display their beauty ornaments except what (must or ordinary) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their blossoms and not display their beauty save to their husbands... and that they should not stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O believers! Turn altogether towards Allah, that you may attain bliss (Qur'an 24:31).

Abdulrahman Doi (1996:23) also shares the same view as that of Qur'anic verse above. According to him the Sharia requires women to abstain from displaying their decorations except to a restricted circle of people.

### **2.9.2 Emphasis on Education**

The re-implementation of Sharia in the northern states seems to have shifted a great deal of

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with the Director General, Kano State Sharia Commission, Kano state, 17.03.2007.

<sup>31</sup> Hasan Mahdi, The great, burqa/niqab/hijab debate: To ban or not to ban? And what to ban? [www.newstatesman.com/blogs/mehdi-hasan/2010/01/burka-niqab-ban-french-france](http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/mehdi-hasan/2010/01/burka-niqab-ban-french-france), January 8, 2010, accessed 23.06.2011

emphasis to the provision of education. The proponents of Sharia claim they realize that one of the principles of Islam is the search for knowledge which must be sought after from the cradle to the grave.<sup>32</sup> They also seem to realize that for a successful implementation of Sharia that would be acceptable to the masses; the governments have to come up with programs that are directed towards education. One of such is the provision of opportunity for school age populace to have free access to education. Underscoring the importance of education in the new Sharia dispensation, a female informant maintains that education is necessary if a believer is to conform to the dictates of Sharia. She articulates her points thus:

Education is like a human right because without it how do you read the Qur'an? How do you know about Allah? How do you know what Islam is all about? How do you know what the Sharia you want to know about is all about? You have to read, so it starts with ...read in the name of Allah. Education is an integral part of Islam, without it you are no body because you don't know Allah, you don't know how to pray to him or how to serve him and you don't know how to serve yourself.<sup>33</sup>

With this in mind, the proponents set out a number of modalities in realizing their goals of providing education for the populace and particularly for females. First they embarked on media awareness program as well as personal calls by Sharia officials to village heads. The aim of such awareness programs was to persuade parents to send their children to school. They also provided educational materials and uniforms in some cases. A very interesting incentive was the introduction of schools feeding programs in some states. This program provides breakfast in all public schools. This is aimed at attracting kids who would otherwise disappear from school as a result of hunger. With the introduction of some of these programs some of the states have experienced high enrolment figures since the implementation of Sharia. An interlocutor notes that as a result of these incentives, there has been a doubling of the number of students attending both Islamic and western school in most of the Sharia states<sup>34</sup>. Although there are emphases on both systems of education, the greater emphasis was placed on the Islamic system of education. Apart from establishing new *Islamiyya*<sup>35</sup> schools, there is also a deliberate incorporation of

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<sup>32</sup>Interview with Director, Islamic Education Trust (Female), Minna, Niger state, 01.03.2007

<sup>33</sup>Interview with Fatima Ahmed (pseudo name), DECS New College Minna , Niger state, 02.03.2009

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Yahaya Abdul ( pseudo name) , Ministry of Education Zamfara, Gusau, Zamfara state 13.03.2007

<sup>35</sup> The term *Islamiyya* School is used in describing different types of private Islamic educational institutions. A

Islamic studies and jurisprudence into already existing public schools' curricula. Furthermore, a good number of the *Islamiyya* schools are now being funded by the government of the northern states. This emphasis on Islamic education is attributed to the widely held opinions by northern Nigerian Muslims that Islamic education transcends all other forms of education as it is the only education that guarantees fulfillment both in this life and in the hereafter. According to female lecturer and one time president, Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN):

Islamic education emphasizes both this world and the hereafter; it emphasizes that your perception of life is not only in this world but that there is a second world to come which is more rewarding. If you are good, you will meet good in the hereafter and if you are bad, you will meet bad in the hereafter....So Islamic education emphasizes that whatever you do, you have to be accountable for it.<sup>36</sup>

Likewise, there has been a great deal of transformation of educational institutions in the state to meet up with modern standards. These include the renovation of existing schools and the establishment of new ones; the provision of modern facilities in some of the schools especially in Zamfara and Kaduna; the establishment of separate educational boards in some case that would monitor the activities of new schools; collaboration with Non –governmental organization such a UNESCO and Girls education project GEP in several of the Sharia States and the provision of incentives by to students by the government.

In Kano state, there is some attention on the development of western education. This is because Kano state houses a large population of non-Muslims mostly southern Christians who had settled in Kano for close to a century. These developments are seen in the number of new schools established since the re-implementation of Sharia. For example, between 1999 and 2006, Kano established up to 104 new female schools all over the state.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, geared towards the development of western education in the state are certain programs like those promoted by the state namely *A Daidaita Sahu* (Societal Reorientation)

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number of them combine Islamic curricula with some subjects from the western style public school and they are found in most parts of northern Nigeria.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with a female lecturer, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto and past President, Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Sokoto, 06.03.2007.

<sup>37</sup> Data from the Department of Planning, research and statistics, Ministry of Education, Kano state, 15.03.2007

which also includes programs on schools called *A Daidaita Sahu a Makarantu* (Societal re-orientation in Schools) as well as *A Daidaita Sahu a dalilin talla* (societal re-orientation on street hawking). The aim of the program is to create awareness for parents on the need to send their children to school rather than send them on the streets to hawk. The program produces short stories in Hausa language narrating the importance of allowing their wards, especially young girls to go to school. Also, public awareness in form of drama on the television were incorporated into the already Islamized television network in Kano state. These programs particularly targets young girls who have been the most affected by the problem of street hawking<sup>38</sup>. Street hawking has often kept school-age children from attending schools as they are often found on the streets and the roadsides selling food items produced by their mothers. This perpetually limits their opportunity of acquiring education that is deemed important for their future prospect as well as living Sharia-compliant livelihood. In Bauchi and Kaduna states there are also awareness programs called the door to door awareness on the importance of education. Although these programs as important as they sound have only been effective in collaboration with activities of some non-governmental organizations<sup>39</sup>. The improvement of scholarship opportunities and the take-off of some awareness programs in all of these states is also a pointer to some educational development programs started by the Sharia states.

In Kano state, the establishment of a Sharia Commission which was founded primarily to cater for orderly conduct of the general public in accordance with the dictates of Islam brought into existence the Islamic Education Department<sup>40</sup>. The purpose of establishing such a department includes the promotion, establishment, control and supervision of all Islamic educational institutions in the state. Furthermore, the department is responsible for encouraging already existing Qur'anic and Islamiyya schools to be registered with the state government as well as giving these institutions both financial, material and moral assistance that are important for their smooth functioning. The Sharia Commission also took over the responsibility of producing the Islamic literature as well as syllabus for both Qur'anic and Islamiyya in the state. Furthermore, they became responsible for initiating activities that aims at promoting and enhancing the

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with the Director, *A daidaita sahu*, Kano state, 13.11.2008

<sup>39</sup> Interview with the national Director, Girls Education Project (GEP), Katsina state, op cit.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Director, Education department, Kano state Sharia Commission, Kano state, 12.11.2008

standard of Qur'anic and Islamiyya schools.<sup>41</sup> Details of these programs are discussed in chapter four and five.

### **2.9.3 Restrictions on Public Transportation**

As part of their social re-engineering programs, the Sharia states have, since 1999/2000, introduced a public transportation system that they deemed compatible with Islamic ethos. This system prohibits women riding on commercial motorcycles popularly called *Achaba* or *Going*. It also prohibits women from sharing other commercial vehicles with men. Thus, Ostien notes that public transport system in some of the Sharia states were segregated according to gender (Ostien 2007: 5). This they claim was meant to avoid any physical contact that women may have with men which could breed immorality. This is one of the changes that received a great deal of criticism from non-Muslims in the Sharia states who felt their rights to public services are infringed upon.

### **2.9.4 Ban on Prostitution**

Engaging in commercial sex activities is unacceptable in Islam. It is considered *zina* (unlawful sexual intercourse) and a sin before Allah, therefore punishable under Sharia. The existence of brothels is therefore viewed as one of the factors responsible for the immoral behaviors which have led to the moral decay in the Sharia states.<sup>42</sup> As part of fulfilling the promise that Sharia would help sanitize the society from all forms of immoral behaviors, the Sharia implementing states immediately placed a ban on commercial sex activities. Several campaigns were carried out against commercial sex activities while in some states the commercial sex workers were encouraged with financial incentives to stop their activities. Those who decided to stop the profession were rehabilitated with large sums of money by some of the state governments to help them begin a new life. One informant observes that generally, the number of commercial sex workers has reduced as compared to the period before the implementation of Sharia. He notes that in Kano state for example, over one hundred commercial sex workers have been rehabilitated after giving up their profession and were given large sums of money to begin other

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Director, Education Department, Kano State Sharia Commission, Kano state, 12.11.2008

<sup>42</sup> Interview with the Director General, Sharia Commission, Kano state 17.03.2007

forms of business.<sup>43</sup> In Zamfara state, a total of 2,800 brothels were closed down since the re-implementation. The proponents of Sharia argue that the existence of brothels and beer parlors breeds alcoholism and immorality, so were tagged condemnable vices (Yerima 2006). This they attributed to the campaign and awareness programs introduced by the states.

### **2.9.5 Prohibition on Liquor**

Alcohol consumption is prohibited in Islam. It is considered *haram* (forbidden) for Muslims. The Qur'an explicitly states that: "O ye who believe! Intoxicants and Gambling, (Dedication of) stones, And (divination by) arrows, Are an Abomination – Of Satan's handiwork; Eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper" (Qur'an 5:90).<sup>44</sup> Several *hadiths* of the Prophet also prohibit Muslims from the consumption of alcohol. Being a divine command, one of the several things prohibited by the Sharia states was alcohol. The Sharia states came up with laws proscribing not only the consumption of alcohol but also the sale and transportation of it which is equally considered *haram*. Regardless of who sells and who drinks, the decision led to the closure of several beer parlors in the state. For instance in Zamfara states a total of 3,800 beer parlors were closed down. Subsequently, any Muslim found selling or drinking alcohol was charged to Sharia courts. Gwamna (2004) argues against such a drastic move, according to him, by insisting on these prohibitions, the proponents of Sharia had no regard for the rights of non-Muslims in the states who are not prohibited by any law from the sale or consumption alcohol (Gwamna 2004: 5: 14-15 ).

### **2.9.6 Prohibition on un-Islamic Media Houses**

Muslim authorities in the Sharia states also view certain programs on television like modeling, fashion/beauty contests and some western soap operas as un-Islamic as they connote evil and immorality. Therefore there was an embargo placed on several television programs in the states. Also forbidden and closed down were several public cinema houses and shops which sell video cassettes, VCD and DVDs. The argument behind the closure of such was that the existence such public institutions have had corrupting influences on the youths in the society as well as creating breeding places for all manner of crimes (Ostien 2007:4).

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<sup>43</sup>Interview with the Director General, Sharia Commission, Kano state 17.03.2007

<sup>44</sup> From: [www.norasensation.wordpress.com/2008/10/16/why-is-the-consumption-of-alcohol-prohibited-in-islam](http://www.norasensation.wordpress.com/2008/10/16/why-is-the-consumption-of-alcohol-prohibited-in-islam).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Bridging Gender Disparity: Women's Education in Zamfara and Kano States**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria in 1999 was, as claimed by the proponents of Sharia, designed to transform every facet of the society according to Islamic ethos. This perhaps precipitated the rash of changes in several other Sharia states. These changes have had wide implications on the social set up of Sharia states and also on the private and public lives of individuals, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Specifically, some of the changes targeted the private and public behavior of women in northern Nigeria. As in all societies undergoing profound social transformation, the very weak and relatively disempowered members such as women and children are often adversely affected by such societal changes. Prominent among these changes are those related to the education of women.

As observed in the previous chapter, there is a long checkered history of women's education in northern Nigeria. This history, as is the case with many other post-colonial Muslims societies in Africa, is dogged with several controversies. The major controversy revolves around the type of education best suited for Muslim women: i.e. colonially-introduced Western education vs. Islamic education. Colonialism brought about many changes in Nigeria. One of them was the introduction of a western style educational system. While this system of education was widely accepted in southern Nigeria, it was treated with a lot of skepticism in the northern parts of the country. There, it was considered by northern Nigerian Muslims as incompatible with the cultural setting, hence, unsuitable for Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular. As an alternative, the traditional Islamic system of education was generally recommended for Muslim women. This was accounted for by the fact that women, more than men, were the custodians of the religious knowledge meant to be imparted on their children.<sup>45</sup> As custodians of religious

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<sup>45</sup> These views also emanated from several of the interviews conducted in the focal states.

knowledge, women were expected to acquire the religious knowledge needed to not only qualify them but also properly equip them in their future role as the first teachers of their children.

This chapter examines some of the important programs introduced in two Sharia states: Kano and Zamfara. It discusses several of the policies and programs pioneered by the Zamfara and Kano state Governments on education. Focus here is on those policies that were directed at re-orienting society in a bid to curb certain social ills such as corruption, prostitution, mixing of males and females and hence improving on the livelihood of Muslims. Soon after inaugurating their respective Sharia programs, these two states initiated specific policies on education with special focus on the education women. In Zamfara State, for instance, the program “The Journey to Our Greatness” was introduced with the aim of improving on the education of women and girls. This program entailed an overhauling of female education in Zamfara state by ensuring that all institutions responsible for female education are brought under one umbrella for effective implementation of all programs initiated for women during this period. Another program introduced by the state still with focus on women is “Bridging the Gender Gap: Focal Primary Schools in Zamfara State”. Its aim was to provide model schools where girls could be closely monitored and trained according to Muslim ethics before they entered tertiary education.

In Kano state, a similar program called “Societal Reorientation on Street Hawking” (*A daidaita sahu-adalilin tala* in Hausa) was introduced, with the particular aim of putting an end to street hawking prevalent among young girls in all parts of northern Nigeria. Street hawking is one of the factors responsible for females being kept away from school as their mothers rely on them for petty businesses in homemade snacks. A more widespread program introduced in both Zamfara and Kano states, which also exists in other parts of the Sharia states, was the establishment of Women Continuing Education Centers (WCECs) whose principal objective was to provide educational opportunities for women. The centers targeted women who had dropped out of school to get married; so it provided them the chance to continue their education in their capacity as married women – and also as mothers and first teachers of children.

For the purpose of this study, three women centers in Kano and Zamfara are given particular attention, namely, Women Continuing Education Center Gusau Zamfara State and City women center Kano State. In a nutshell, the chapter investigates the creation of female Islamic schools exclusively for girls and women and how these schools have attracted a large population of

married women. All of the programs mentioned in this section have direct impacts on women and female education in Zamfara and Kano states.

### **3.2 Nigerian National Policy on Education**

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulates that all Nigerian citizens be educated. Chapter II, section 18 (1) of the constitution clearly states that the “Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.” It also states in 18 (3) that the “Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide (a) free, compulsory and universal primary education; (b) free secondary education; (c) free university education; and (d) free adult literacy program.”<sup>46</sup> While section 18 (2-3) stipulates the government’s stance towards the provision of education, the first part of Chapter II section 17 of the same Constitution focuses on the citizens’ rights and freedoms. Section 17 (1), for instance, upholds that:

1) the State social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equity and justice. 2) In furtherance of the social order- a) every citizen shall have equal rights, obligation and opportunities before the law. The State social order is founded on ideals of Freedom, Equality and Justice<sup>47</sup>.

Although the Nigerian Constitution makes no provisions for the Constitutional rights of children to education, the National Policy on Education (NPE) which is equally a legal document covering all Nigerian citizens provides such rights. It could, however, be claimed that this right is also borne in Section 18 (3), especially the provision “free, compulsory and universal primary education”.

The NPE stipulates that the philosophy and objective of the country’s educational system is set to benefit all citizens (NPE 2004: 4)<sup>48</sup>. In terms of relevance, the Constitution and the NPE are intended to cater for specific needs of both the individual and the society. However, they do this

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<sup>46</sup> 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria- Chapter II ( Fundamental Objective and Directives, Principles of State Policy, <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>, accessed 15.03.2010

<sup>47</sup> 1999 Constitution op.cit.

<sup>48</sup> Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education-4<sup>th</sup> edition (2004) NERDC Press, Yaba, Lagos Nigeria.

by sustaining the nation's developmental priorities, aspirations and goals. Here are a few ways through which the NPE achieves national development:

- Section 1, 4(a) conceives of education as an instrument for national development and integration as well as a means of fostering the worth of an individual.
- Section 1, 4(d) states that, “every Nigerian child shall have the right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability”.
- Section 5 (c) stipulates that Nigeria's Philosophy of education is based on “the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal educational system” (NPE 2004: 7).
- For the NPE, the major role of the national educational policy is to serve as an important tool in fostering developmental plans. Since education is viewed as the most important instrument of change, “any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of the any society has to be preceded by educational revolution”.
- The NPE further states that “lifelong education shall be the basis of the nation's educational policy”, and in order to achieve this, “efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs”.
- As section 1 (7) clearly affirms, the national educational goals derived from Nigeria's philosophy of education are: “a) the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity: b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society: c) The training of mind in the understanding of the world around: d) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society( NPE 2004: 6-7).

Similarly to other neighboring African countries, educational policy in Nigeria prioritizes national unity and development over individual educational achievements. Before delving into the educational programs tailored to women's education in Zamfara and Kano states, it is important to situate these two states geographically, culturally, and religiously within Nigeria.

### 3.3 Zamfara State

Historically, Zamfara is one of the old Hausa cities of northern Nigeria. Established as Zamfara Kingdom around the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it flourished as a city state well beyond the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It became part of the Sokoto Caliphate after the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In modern Nigeria, it was part of Sokoto state until 1996 when Zamfara, along with five other regions, became an independent federal state of Nigeria. The other five new states are Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Gombe and Nasarawa. The decision to create these new states was taken by the late military head of state General Sani Abacha. The capital of Zamfara State is Gusau. The state consists of 14 local governments, and has as major towns Kaura-namoda, Anka, Talata-marafa and Zugu.

Geographically, Zamfara state is located in the north-western part of Nigeria. It has a land mass of 39,762 square kilometers and shares border with neighbouring states such as Sokoto state to the north, Katsina state to the east, Kaduna and Niger states to the south and Kebbi state to the west.<sup>49</sup> The people of Zamfara state are popularly referred to as the *Zamfarawa*. The majority of them are of the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups. Like many other states of Nigeria, Zamfara has a sizable population of people from other ethnic groups. According to the 2006 census, Zamfara state has a total population of 3,259,846.<sup>50</sup> Zamfara state relies mainly on agrarian activities with about 82% of its population living in rural areas. Until the recent discovery of solid minerals such as alluvial gold, granite, limestone and kaolin in the state which has diversified sources of living, it was estimated that approximately 250,000 families in Zamfara state depended mainly on farming; producing both food and cash crops. This agrarian nature of the state is reflected in the state's slogan: "Farming is our pride".<sup>51</sup>

Politically, since its creation in 1996, Zamfara state has been ruled predominantly by the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP). The state has had only one military administrator who ruled from 1996 to 1999. The state has since 1999 democratically elected three governors. One of them

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<sup>49</sup> See Zamfara State of Nigeria: Information and Guide, [http://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/States\\_Nigeria/Zamfara\\_State.html](http://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Zamfara_State.html), accessed 25.10 2010.

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.nigeriamasterweb.com/Nigeria06CensusFigs.html>

<sup>51</sup> Zamfara State Integrated Development Program (ZASIDEP), working document.

Ahmed Sani Yerima, promised in his gubernatorial campaign in 1998 under the ANPP ticket promised to re-implement Sharia if elected. When he was elected, he followed on his promise and in 1999 (see chapter two).

### **3.3.1 Education**

Educational activities in Zamfara state are coordinated and directed mainly by the State Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technical Education. At the local government level, each local government council coordinates educational activities. Other departments within the Ministry of Education also work on education, for instance, Primary Education Board which handles issues related to primary education; Teachers Services Board which is responsible for all activities related to the enrolment, promotion and welfare of teachers; Female Education Board which takes care of the education of women and the girl child; Scholarship Board responsible for all issues relating to scholarships; Agency for Mass Literacy; Agency for Nomadic Education; Library Board; and Arabic and Islamic Education Board. Like other states, Zamfara has several public primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Among the tertiary, we could mention the Abdu Gusau Polytechnic in Tashan Mafara established in 1992, the College of Education Maru established in 2000, and the Zamfara State Collage of Arts and Science Gusau created in 2000.

Zamfara state has several challenges in the area of education. According to a document prepared by the technical coordinating committee of the Zamfara state integrated development program in 2000, some of these challenges include, insufficient funding, inadequate qualified teachers in primary and secondary schools, congestion in primary and secondary schools, inadequate facilities such as science laboratories and workshops, poor performance of pupils and students in final examinations, and great gender disparity between males and females in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

As a result of the challenges outlined above and in line with the goal and philosophy discussed above, Zamfara state has since the new Sharia dispensation initiated several programs aimed at tackling issues affecting education in the state. In 2000, the Zamfara state Education Transformation Committee was set up as part of the Zamfara State Integrated Development Program (ZASIDEP). Its aim was to overhaul the education sector and to initiate innovative

programs that would enable the state compete with other states of the country. In accordance with the provisions of the National Policy on Education, the state began what it termed a reform of education. However, there were apparently no major changes in policy as noted by one of the respondents for this study who remarks that:

All the states in Nigeria where Sharia has been established consider education as the birthright of every citizen. We encourage all citizens both male and female to pursue education vigorously. Their policies are in consonance with the existing policies of the federal government on education. However, the emphasis is on character building, for example in Zamfara state the policy does not negate the provisions of the federal government.<sup>52</sup>

The goal and objective of the NPE which Zamfara State claims it adopted stipulates that:

- a) Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by educational revolution;
- b) lifelong education shall be the basis of the national educational policy;
- c) education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded in response to the societal needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice;
- d) educational activities shall be centered on the learner for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment;
- e) Universal Basic Education in a variety of forms depending on the needs and responsibilities, shall be provided for all citizens;
- f) efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs;
- g) educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by their being based in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual;
- h) modern educational techniques shall be increasingly used and improved upon at all levels of the education system;

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Mallam Yahaya Abdul (pseudo name), Director, Ministry of Education, Gusau, Zamfara state, 13.03.2007

- i) the education system shall be structured to develop the practice of self-learning. Government shall in this regard continue to encourage the establishment of Young Readers Club in schools;
- j) at any stage of the educational process after junior secondary education, an individual shall be able to choose between continuing full-time studies, combining work with studies, or embarking on full-time employment without excluding the prospect of resuming studies later on (NPE 2004: 9)

Even though Zamfara State simply took over the objectives laid down by the NPE, it still presented it as policy of its own though also stating that they do not depart from the objectives of the NPE outlined above.

### **3.3.2 Policy on Women's Education**

Muslim women's education in northern Nigeria has had a long, albeit turbulent history due mainly to cultural and religious practices. As noted in chapter one, some of these cultural and religious practices were an impediment to women's access to education. This situation was heightened by the introduction of western education during colonialism.

From a religious point of view, Western education was viewed with great suspicion since it was somehow identified with Christianity. This was because it was mostly propagated during this period and even earlier by Christian missionaries (Clarke 1978). Consequently, Western education failed to meet the enthusiastic approval of majority of Muslims in northern Nigerian (Csapo 1981:312-313). So, especially women, seen as the backbone of children's breeding, were not exposed to it for a long time (see Knipp 1987). Islamic form of education and knowledge, which was already entrenched and valorized in the region even before colonialism, continued to be promoted above any other form of knowledge. Also, women were encouraged to acquire and value religious knowledge as the best form of knowledge.

Besides the religious obstacles, there were also cultural practices that negatively affected the education of both men and women – hence the low literacy rates in northern Nigeria. Among these factors are the prevalence of early marriages; traditional practice of *kulle* (Hausa term for seclusion) (see Calaway 1987); cultural gender division of labor that restricts women to the

domestic sphere<sup>53</sup>; and also interestingly, as by a Deputy Director at the Ministry of Education in Sokoto State, the fear that educated women could become too assertive or unmarriageable if allowed to remain in school for too long<sup>54</sup>. This would disrupt the traditional gender balance and could potentially lead to a breakdown in social norms. These factors and other will be discussed in detail in the later part of this work. A major outcome of this state of affairs is great literacy gap between women and men in all the Sharia states. For instance, according to a survey conducted in 2006 by the National Bureau for Statistics, the literacy rate among women in some of the northern states was as low as 15%.<sup>55</sup>

The above negative influences notwithstanding, the state has adopted policies to improve on the education of women. These policies are based in the Sharia and have only been implemented since Sharia was re-implemented in the State in 2000. Several educational programs have been initiated for the education of women, i.e. both married women and young girls. In the following sections, I focus on one of them tagged, “The Journey to Our Greatness.”

### **3.4. “The Journey to Our Greatness”: Zamfara State and Women’s Education**

The civilian government of Zamfara state which came into office in 1999 initiated a new policy on education. The policy specifically targeted female education by introducing a number of measures. Before this period, Zamfara state was among the few northern states with the lowest literacy rates especially for women. The 1995 National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) statistics show that in Zamfara there were three times more children attending traditional Qur’anic schools and Islamiyyah schools than formal primary schools. In order to improve on the education of women, the state government carried out several reforms and launched many educational programs for women. The following sections explain some of these programs; explores how they function and also how they were received by the population.

#### **3.4.1. Female Education Board (FEB)**

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<sup>53</sup> See: Werthmann (undated), The Examples of Nana Asma’u, <http://w.nmfuk.org/asmau/TheExampleofNanaAsmau.pdf>. Accessed 13.05.2010

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Deputy Director, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto state

<sup>55</sup> Ketefe, Kayode “Forty-seven percent of Nigerians are illiterates-survey”, The Punch (Lagos), Tuesday, June 20, 2006, <http://www.punching.com/man/article04>, accessed 20.06.2006

Recognizing the inadequacy of the religious form of education as well as the disparity already existing between male and female access to education in the state; the Zamfara State government established a number of new programs piloted by the Female Education Board (FEB) created in 2000. The board was established as an autonomous institution independent of the Ministry of Education with the sole responsibility of designing and implementing programs aimed at fostering female education in the state. Particularly, it focused on the creation of focal schools for girls, the establishment of Women Continuing Education Centers and the establishment of public primary and secondary schools for girls. Some of the programs initiated by the Zamfara state are discussed in the next section.

The director of administration of FEB articulates the inspiration behind the establishment of the board in the following words:

The idea emerged in 1999 from the governor, Ahmed Sani Yerima on [sic] how to elevate the status of female education in the state [...]. In the northern part of the country, we are less advantaged in education especially female education, so the government envisaged the way to elevate women's education. So they came up with some guidelines...before the establishment of the board mainly to elevate the status of the girl-child institutions.<sup>56</sup>

According to documents produced Zamfara state FEB, the aims and objectives of the FEB are:

- i) To elevate the status of the girl-child in the society through proper acquisition of adequate education and skills;
- ii) To influence, encourage and design educational policies relevant to female education so as to ensure access and continuity of participation in the education system;
- iii) To encourage greater enrollment of females in both western and Islamic schools;
- iv) To undertake monitoring of activities in all female institutions of learning to ensure greater success in internal and external examinations for admission into tertiary institutions of learning;
- v) To sensitize the populace with the view of correcting the misconception about female education and creating greater awareness through the media on the social and economic importance of such education in the community and national development;

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Hussein Sale, (Pseudo name), Director of Administration, Female Education Board, Gusau, Zamfara state, 09.03.2007

vi) To recruit, appoint, promote and discipline teaching and non-teaching staff.<sup>57</sup>

With these aims and objectives in mind, FEB was established to chart a new course for female education in the state. One of the arguments presented by the state in support of the establishment of FEB was that previous administrations had neglected or failed to prioritize female education. The consequence, they claimed, has been the disparity in literacy rates between men and women. The new focus on female education, state officials argue, is accentuated by the special place of women in the implementation of Sharia regime in the state.

The schools established by FEB are modeled on western education with an added emphasis on Islamic virtues in line with the dictates of the Sharia especially in the area of dressing and total separation from males. Also these schools have more Islamic subjects into their school curriculum. FEB is also responsible for developing curricular in accordance with the existing ones made by the ministry of Education. However, the new FEB curricular are slightly modified to suit the objectives of the board. The FEB has also taken over all girls' schools (from the primary to the secondary level) from the Ministry of Education. They are now run by the FEB under its ideals, which include the separation of the sexes in all public primary schools. So, today, all girls' public schools are separated from boys' schools and now function as separate institutions under FEB.

The establishment of FEB met with some criticisms and opposition from the general public and especially from some officials of the ministry of education, although these criticisms were not widespread.<sup>58</sup> Chaired at the time by the wife of the governor in the person of Karima Ahmed Sani, the director of the female education board observes that a number of people in the ministry of education saw it a waste of funds, while others considered it a strategy for pillaging the rather scarce resources of the state government. Some of the criticisms were based on the traditional understanding of the role of women in the society. For the traditionalists, spending money on the education of girls is unproductive because their place is in the home of the husbands. This is because girls are expected by tradition to get married once they reach puberty and to take on the role of mother and housekeeper. In his role as the breadwinner, the husband is expected to attend

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<sup>57</sup> Zamfara State Female Education Board's pamphlet "The Journey to our Greatness: Female Education in Zamfara state 1999-2006

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Mohammed Nuru Suleiman, Director, Administration, Female Education Board Gusau Zamfara state, 09.03.2007

school and get a job. With this age-long traditional belief, the work of the FEB was not only viewed as waste of resources but also as a threat to the social order.

A further point of criticism leveled by the traditionalists was that the activities of the board were tantamount to over exposing the girl-child by encouraging her to acquire western education. This type of education, given the secular habits identified with it and its earlier attachment to Christianity is largely conceived by northern Nigerian Muslims as ungodly. Until this day some still view western education as synonymous with Christianity and are therefore worried that, if it is allowed to encroach into their societies, it would erode the strong Islamic religious beliefs they abide to.

From a purely economic point of view, western education for girls is considered too expensive, especially given that such education usually stops when the girl gets married. The question we ask here is: why is the program not accepted by all the population? The first possible answer is that the Sharia government of Zamfara state did not take into accounts the underlying cultural beliefs and presuppositions of the people on the education of girls and the content of such an education before launching its programs. If the points of criticism discussed above were integrated into the program, there would have been more chances for them to be accepted. For instance, if it was made clear that educating the girl is not intended to disrupt the social order but rather to give her more options even while staying at home, many people would have agreed. Second, instead of carving a place for cultural practices in these programs, the government and proponents of these programs have rather focused on remodeling educational and other institutions to suit their Sharia agendas. Their approach has been predominantly top-bottom.

The above criticisms notwithstanding, the FEB also registered some successes as seen in the table below. The FEB started the first fully fledged secondary school for married women. Assisted by unprecedented publicity for this school by the state government, the FEB also generated public awareness programs for husbands, educating them about the need for them to allow their wives to benefit from such an educational initiative<sup>59</sup>. Most of the students in this secondary school indicated that they became aware of the institution through the mass media especially radio and television advertisements. Importantly, others indicated they had been

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Students at the Women Continuing Education Center Gusau, Zamfara state reveals that a number of them were introduced to the centers by their husbands through a special awareness programs.

informed by husbands, friends and relations who had seen or heard one of the government's advertisements. Husbands, particularly, were enthusiastic about their spouses coming into the new school; it was an illustration of their versatility, i.e. letting their wives access not just knowledge but also a broad range of modern modes of thought and living.

Table 3: List of girl's enrolment in some Government Senior Secondary Schools 2000-2006

Name of school	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
GGASS	2,170	2,570	3,160	3,711	4,630	5,120
GGUSS	1,686	2,050	3,050	3,670	4,540	5,235
GGCT	389	570	625	698	1,490	1,090
GGCSS	451	610	728	816	1,150	1,420
GGDSS	1,451	920	1,115	2,460	3,260	3,625
SCE	220	320	457	570	1,110	1,446
GGSS	-	950	1320	2,560	3,120	3,920
<b>Total</b>	<b>6379</b>	<b>7990</b>	<b>11,355</b>	<b>14,386</b>	<b>19300</b>	<b>22,946</b>

Source: Department of Schools Management, Zamfara State Female Education Board Gusau, 09.03.2007

For government officials, this was a mark of great success. Their programs had triggered a shift from the old order in which women were marginalized and restricted to domestic responsibilities to a new order engineered by the quest for and acquisition of formal education. Overall, though criticized at the beginning, there appears to be a favorable acceptance of such institutions for married women, especially because it shields them from contact with younger, unmarried girls. This gives the women a more recognized and special status commensurate to their natural position as mothers, wives and child educators.

### 3.4.2. Focal Primary Schools

Focal Primary Schools (FPS) are among the exclusively female schools established by the Zamfara state government in 2000. The FPS exists alongside public primary schools which are also gender separated. The main objectives of these special schools are, 1) to improve on the education of the girl-child right from the lowest level, and 2) to increase enrolment figures of girls receiving western education in a bid to bridge the gender gap between boys and girls. The overall intention of the state in creating these schools is to monitor the transition of girls from the

FPS through the JSS to the time they enroll into tertiary institutions where they can take decisions on their own especially on issues concerning marriage.

Established through FEB, Focal Primary Schools exist in all 14 local governments of the state as well as in Gusau, the capital of the state, i.e. there are 15 of this brand of schools in Zamfara state. The program admits girls from the age of six years, the official age of admission into primary school in Nigeria. The schools have six grades or levels and access to the next level is through examinations. After the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the pupils are admitted into the Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) established by the state or the existing public junior girl's schools elsewhere in the country.

An important characteristic of the FPS is that they operate the western system of education, following the guideline and curriculum of the federal government in conjunction with the Universal Basic Education (UBE). A close observation of these schools reveals that Islam is given unprecedented attention as the code of conduct. The pupils are expected to strictly follow Islamic principles. The gender separation in these schools confirms the belief held by some Muslim scholars that co-education is unacceptable in several Islamic societies (see Doi 1996: 144-145). While coeducation is objectionable among northern Nigerian Muslims, this is not the case with southern Nigerian Muslims.

At the time of creation, each FPS had 60 pupils. The number of pupils was expected to reach 360 in the six year period. The figure provided by the authority of the Female Education Board in Zamfara state is 900 pupils each year for the entire state for six years. This indicates that every year there are up to 5,400 pupils in FPS all over the state<sup>60</sup>. Apart from primary schools, the FEB has also successfully created seven junior and seven senior secondary schools for girls. In 2006 alone, it established five junior secondary schools in five local governments and one senior secondary school in 2006<sup>61</sup>. These schools were all founded in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, funded by the Ministry of Education.

The numbers above suggest a clear change in attitude towards these schools compared to the criticisms against the FEB. On the possible reasons of this sudden change of attitude towards female education by the Zamfara state government during the Sharia period, Mohammed Aliyu

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<sup>60</sup> Statistics from Female Education Board Gusau, Zamfara state, 09.03.2007

<sup>61</sup> Information from Department of Statistics, Female Education Board, Gusau Zamfara state, 08.03.2007

Anka notes that education is very important in Islam. According to him, “seeking knowledge in Islam means doing the will of Allah and contributing to the nation and to self development.” Consequently, in contributing to national development, both men and women are considered very important as no country progresses when its female population is left behind. Both males and females are stakeholders in any given society. Describing the role of women in the society and the need to have them educated, Mohammed Aliyu Anka notes that:

A woman plays the role of a mother, a wife and other functional societal roles. At home, she plays an enormous role in shaping the future life pattern of the children. She is responsible for the upbringing, training and education of the child...women play great roles in the inculcation and promotion of education in the society since children are the leaders of tomorrow....Their abilities, strengths and force would be ineffective unless they are educated.<sup>62</sup>

To gather support for its female education programs, the state government often claims that Zamfara is underdeveloped partly because the women, who constitute more than one-half of the population, are not adequately and effectively contributing to the social development<sup>63</sup> of the state which the officials of the state attribute to the lack of adequate education of women which hinders them from actively participating in nation-building. The Zamfara state government is, therefore, striving to set the pace for the development of female education in the whole of northern Nigeria. Being the first state to implement the Sharia it has become a model for other states to emulate in all aspects of development. The FSP schools are therefore expected to be models for the other Sharia states if they too want to bridge the educational gender gap between male and female Muslims.

Another important reason advanced by an interlocutor for the disparity between male and female education is the unfavorable atmosphere within which western education is propagated. For him, western education does not follow any of the cultural and religious norms suitable for them. He articulates his views thus:

The only thing the Muslims abhor about western education is the system; the un-Islamic atmosphere is our great concern. But if we can provide an atmosphere that is Islamically oriented then we can't abhor any kind of knowledge and we can't

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<sup>62</sup> Remarks by Mohammed Aliyu Anka, Executive Chairman, Universal Basic Education Board, Zamfara state, in: *Kallabi*, a maiden Magazine of Girls' Focal Primary School, Gusau, Zamfara state, vol.1 no. 1, July 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Remarks by Mohammed Aliyu Anka, op.cit.

restrict our women from acquiring same...So we don't prevent our women from going to the university or any institution. We too are after their education, but let it be in an atmosphere where it is Islamically oriented. No intermingling between males and females, the women must wear the *hijab*. If these ethics are complied with then you will see a remarkable change.<sup>64</sup>

Rejection of the teaching environment of western education is not only because of restrictions on wearing the *hijab* and co-education as articulated in the above quotation but also because of the secular and non-religious atmosphere within which these schools operate. For most northern Nigerian Muslims, education is necessary only for a developing a religious character and purpose, which cannot be achieved in a secular context. For northern Nigeria Muslims, to be “secular” is not simply to be without religion; it is to be actively anti-religion.

### **3.4.3. Women Continuing Education Center (WCEC)**

The Women Continuing Education Center Gusau, Zamfara state, was established in 1998 shortly before the re-implementation of Sharia<sup>65</sup>. Founded during the military regime of General Sani Abacha, the aim of the school was to cater for female school dropouts especially married women who had abandoned their education because of early marriage. The center was intended to provide education to such women who were interested in continuing their education in their status as wives and from their marriage homes.

At inception, the school was not enthusiastically received by the women targeted. For instance, only 50 women were admitted in its first year in 1998. This number is however doubled in the years after, and by 2007, it had reached 487. These were women attending both the junior and senior levels of the WCEC. The principal of the center attributes the significant increase in the number of participants to the implementation of Sharia, which he claims, created more awareness about the need for women to be educated.

WCEC Gusau is based on the formal system of education (western education) and functions like any normal government school except for the fact that it is reserved exclusively for married women who can no longer attend regular schools. Women enrolled in these centers are admitted

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Mallam Abdul Yahaya (pseudo name), Shari'ah Research and Development Commission Gusau, Zamfara state, 08.03.2007

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Sa'adatu Shehu op. cit.

based on the level dropped out of school before marriage. For instance, when a girl had dropped out of school in class 2, WCEC admits her into class 3, depending of course on her willingness to continue from that class. Upon graduation and successfully passing the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the University entrance examination or its equivalent for other tertiary institutions, these women can then proceed to the university or any other tertiary institution of their choice. As it is customary, they will have to decide this with their spouses. With this training, the women can then gain employment in the civil service or other organizations and build a career.

WCEC Gasau maintains they have no special emphasis on Islam but operate a formal education system. However, courses such as Islamic Studies, *tajweed*<sup>66</sup>, with a strong reliance on the Qur'an are taught. The school also insists on the wearing of the *hijab* which the schools' authority asserts is a Muslim way of dressing and since the school is for married women; the students have to be fully veiled (see Plate 1 below). Reacting to the insistence on the *hijab*, the principal explains:

...a Muslim woman is not supposed to go out of their houses without covering her body...this is the Muslim way of dressing and it does not matter if you are in primary or secondary school you have to cover your body...If you go round all the schools I mean female schools in Zamfara you will not see any women in school without the *hijab*, except for private schools but all government schools have to comply.<sup>67</sup>

In northern Nigeria, the *hijab* is an important part of the Muslim woman's dressing. It is what distinguishes her from non-Muslim women. Her public recognition as a decent woman lies in her wearing the *hijab*. The *hijab* is an important symbol of social and public piety for these women and their men who see it as distinguishing their women from the non-Muslim, impious outside world and its pervasive influences. The introduction of the *hijab* as a compulsory part of female dressing in northern Nigeria came with the introduction of Sharia. Before the Sharia era of 1999, the *hijab* was only recommended for women<sup>68</sup>. Thus one characteristic feature of the women

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<sup>66</sup> Arabic word for a set of rules guiding how the Qur'an should be read.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Sa'adatu Shehu(Pseudo name), Principal, Women Continuing Education Center, Gusau, Zamfara state, 08.03. 2007

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Sa'adatu Shehu op.cit.

centers is their appearance in a uniform *hijab* distinguishing them from other women outside the fold.

Picture 1: A cross section of women during classes at the Women Continuing Education Center Gusau, Zamfara State.



Source: Chikas Danfulani

### **3.5 Government Incentives for school participants**

In order to attract married women to the schools run by FEB, the government introduced many incentives. Some of these were necessary to assist the women in their matrimonial duties while others were simply to make them feel honored attending the schools.

An important incentive by the government is the supply of meals to the students during school hours. This is made possible through a special program on feeding introduced in all government schools in Zamfara state during this period. Stressing on this incentive by the government, the principal of women center for continuing education Gusau notes:

The women are given breakfast in school and this is provided by the government. One of the things which hinders women from attending school is that they have to stay back to cook for their families, so the government decided to provide them

with breakfast so that they will not have to stay and make breakfast before coming to school. Also you know that some of the women are breastfeeding so they get hungry easily and it is usually difficult to concentrate when one is hungry, so this is meant to encourage them to continue [in school].<sup>69</sup>

Generally, breakfast consists of light cereals such as *koko* with beans cake or tea and bread. It is served after the first few lessons usually between 9:30am and 10.00am. The students are thereafter expected to follow their lessons normally. Lunch is however not provided because the classes end between 1:30pm and 2:00pm, and the women are usually expected to leave straight for home except in cases where they have obtained permission to visit other places such as the market.

Picture 2: Day Care center at Kano City Women Center, Kano



Source: Chikas Danfulani

Similar incentives also include the provision of a nursery or day care for toddlers whose mothers attend school. Before this period, “wife-mother-students” attended classes with their children. This was a big inconvenience for them and also fellow students since the children needed to be attended to during lessons. With the creation of a nurseries run by trained baby caregivers, the

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Sa’adatu Shehu (pseudo name), 08.03.2007

women are now able to attend lessons without distraction. They only go to breastfeed their kids during the breakfast break.

Another important incentive is that the women are given four months maternity leave from school if they become pregnant<sup>70</sup>. Once the maternity leave is over, they resume school with their babies and continue from where they stopped. Though maternity leave is paid for in the case of employed women, for the “wife-mother-students” in FEB WCEC it is not. Although four months is the standard period, a woman can effectively stay away from school from three to six months, and if she is in very critical situation, she can stay even longer. Even though these breaks somehow affect the flow of her education, they nevertheless give her the leverage to deal successfully with her matrimonial duties without completely losing her right to return to school.

### **3.6 Women’s Voices on Education Programs**

To be able to assess the relevance of these schools, the voices of the women who attend these schools are important. These women have divergent reasons for attending the WCEC schools. These reasons can be grouped into the following headings: convenience, compliance with religious demands and excellence. The majority of the women decided to enroll in these schools because, as they claim, the schools provide facilities that help them cope with both matrimonial and educational challenges, e.g. the provision of child care services which is absent in the regular public schools<sup>71</sup>. The fact that the schools are exclusively for married women swayed their choice. Being in the company of other married women gives them the confidence to want to continue and to achieve more goals together, since they have similar challenges especially at home. Having to cope with younger unmarried girls who would make fun of them would have been out of the question for them<sup>72</sup>. They also feel their level of maturity and circumstances are different from those of the unmarried girls and being mothers they will find it difficult to fit into single girls’ school. They also feel highly respected by their teacher(s) and peer, an honor they would certainly not have enjoyed in other schools.

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Sa’adatu Shehu op.cit.

<sup>71</sup> Out of the 28 women interviewed in the centers, only two students did not drop out of school as a result of marriage.

<sup>72</sup> Informal chat with some women at WCEC Kano state

In the WCEC, there is no distraction since all of them are married and are focused on making good grades. One informant states; “this school passes the final examination better so I decided to come and finish my SSCE here”.<sup>73</sup> This informant is unmarried (the only exception in this class), and is in her final year. For the moment, she explains, she has no plans of getting married before she completes university. According to her, the women center is a center of excellence because it produces students with good grades. This implies that deliberate efforts are made to ensure that these women graduate from WCEC schools with good grades. I could not independently verify this because the fieldwork was completed before they sat for the WAEC examination.

For many of the women-students, the motivation to resume school derives from unrealized adolescent ambitions – dreams they were forced to give up to get married. For some, the initial glamour of marriage often weaned or was completely lost soon after the birth of children in the family. For others, marriage was not really a bed of roses, since some of them got divorced or disenchanted by certain traditional practices like polygamy. Enrolling in the new schools is a way of rekindling the ambers of their lost dreams of educational achievement.

From the above responses, we can deduce that these women are attracted to the WCEC schools because of the focus on their status as wives or married or divorced women. Here, they share similar challenges and experiences unique to marriage life which unmarried students in conventional schools lack<sup>74</sup>. This singular attraction of this category of schools does not only give the women the chance to complete their education but also somehow exonerate their parents for whom it was the duty to marry them off once they reached puberty. This is evident in the responses of the women attending the centers.

The challenges for these women are enormous. They have to cope with education and home care at the same time, and sometimes with child care too. Having spent so many years at home away from school, returning to the habit of learning has been demanding. As they said, they have since lost touch with the reality of being students: “Sometimes it is difficult to concentrate or even understand what the teacher teaches”, says a lady, mother of three, at the Gasau WCEC School.

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Nafisa Bello, 19years , Senior Secondary 3, WCEC Gusau, Zamfara state, 18.03.2008

<sup>74</sup> Some of the women at WCECs share some of their initial attraction to these schools to include the fact that the schools are women only schools which they are more at home with considering their present status

### 3.7 Kano State

Kano, the city after which the state is named, is one of the oldest in Nigeria. Its recorded history dates back to the 6th century AD with the settlement of the Maguzawa people. It was upgraded to a state in 1967, separating it from what was formerly called the northern region. Kano state is located to the north-west of Nigeria. It shares borders with Katsina state to the north-west, Jigawa state to the north-east, Bauchi state to the south-east and Kaduna state to the south-west.

Kano state is made up of 44 local government areas – making it the state with the highest number of local government areas in northern Nigeria. Additionally, it has 40 state constituencies with 40 members; 24 federal constituencies with 24 members and three senatorial districts represented by three senators. Since its creation in 1967, the state has been ruled by 10 military administrators and seven civilian governors depending on the type of federal government in place at each given time.

According to the 2006 census, the population of the state is 9.38 million with an almost equal male to female ratio of 51 and 49 percent respectively. Two ethnic groups, the Hausa and Fulani, form the majority of the population. There are, however, sizeable pockets of people from other ethnic groups such as the Igbo and the Yoruba settled mainly in the *Sabon Gari* area.

During the colonial era, Kano state was known for exporting groundnuts as raw materials. This transformed into one of the most vibrant commercial cities, known not only for its groundnut pyramids but also for its large scale production of cotton, which attracted several textile industries to northern Nigeria. However, with the discovery of oil in Nigeria in the late 1950s, and the oil boom in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nigeria's attention shifted from agriculture to oil production, leading to a gradual collapse of the agricultural potential of the state. However, Kano state still remains one of the top commercial cities in Nigeria, bringing together traders and investors from different parts of the country.

Traditionally, Kano became an emirate as far back as 1805 during the Fulani Jihad of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio. As a result of this, it gradually evolved into the largest and most popular Hausa emirate under the Sokoto Caliphate. It was ruled by several emirs before the colonial occupation of Kano. In 1903, Kano was captured and colonized by the British. Currently, the

emirate of Kano is headed by Alhaji Ado Bayero who has held the position since 1963, being the 13th Fulani emir since the Jihad and the longest serving emir on the throne. Ado Bayero is the son of late Abdullahi Bayero dan Muhammad Abbas who ruled from 1926-1953.

### 3.7.1 Education

According to the Kano state Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (K-SEEDS), the literacy rate in Kano state is 35%. The average enrolment rates in the different levels of education are: 90% for primary education; 80% for secondary education; and 60% for tertiary education. Although these figures appear too high for any northern state, the fact still remains that female enrolment rates are still low, i.e. 40% for the primary, 35% for secondary, and 20% for tertiary.<sup>75</sup> This shows a significant gap between male and female enrolment – a gap similar to the one identified in Zamfara state above. Educational activities in Kano state are managed by the state ministry of education which serves as the umbrella agency for several other government educational agencies namely: Agency for Mass Education, Kano State Primary Education Board, Science and Technical Schools Board, Kano State Teachers’ Service Board, Kano State Library Board, and Kano State Scholarships Board. As Table 3.3 indicates, Kano state has several educational institutions at all levels of education:

Table 4: Educational institutions in Kano state

Type of institution	Number of schools
Primary schools	3,400
Junior secondary schools	388
Senior secondary schools	392
Technical and vocational schools	7
Tertiary institutions (e.g. universities, colleges)	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,193</b>

Source: Kano State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy

The six tertiary institutions in the state are, Kano State University of Technology, Kano State Polytechnic, Kano State College of Education, College of Arts, Science and Remedial Studies, Aminu Kano School of Islamic Legal Studies, and Audu Bako College of Agriculture. They are

<sup>75</sup> Kano State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy K-SEED, Policy Framework 2004, pp8

located in different local government areas of the state. The existence of many educational institutions (see Table 2) shows that Kano has the potential meeting the educational needs of the people. However, the majority of the children in the state, especially girls, are enrolled in Qur'anic and Islamiyya schools, accentuating the gender gap in education highlighted above.

Other challenges facing education include the lack of adequate infrastructure, inadequate numbers of teachers, poor working conditions, huge gap in the teacher-student ratio, lack of classrooms and residential hostels, and serious contestation in the few ones that exists. These problems constitute a serious hindrance to effective learning and teaching.<sup>76</sup>

Since 1999 when the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program was inaugurated in Nigeria, Kano state has reoriented several educational programs without, however, implementing any new policies on education in the state. According to the K-SEEDS document, the state has since 1999 been working on mainstreaming all Qur'anic and Islamiyyah schools into the formal system through an integrated process introduced by the state Primary Education Board. Also, in collaboration with the local Sharia Commission in Kano state, the state has worked towards the inclusion of Islamic education in the formal system and vice versa. An important part of the state's policy is on the development of already existing Islamiyyah schools and the creation of new ones. Articulating this, the Director General of the Sharia Commission in Kano state, observes that: "The policy of the Sharia states relates to the general policy of the federal government. For Kano state there are no special policies with regards to education. We only try to see that in our schools Islamic teaching is inculcated".<sup>77</sup> This view suggests that, besides the existing National Policy on Education, Kano state did not formulate a new policy on education during the process of the re-implementation of Sharia to cater for the special needs of the state. It is important at this point to distinguish between policy and programs for a clear understanding of some of the issues to be discussed here.

A policy is a course of action, principle, strategy or procedure adopted or pursued by an individual, group or state for the sake of expediency, prudence or to realize specific objectives or goals. A program, on the other hand, is a plan of action to accomplish a specific end. While programs help to actualize policies, policies help formulate programs. However, what have been

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<sup>76</sup>Kano State Economic Empowerment and Development strategy K-SEEDS 2000, page 44

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Director, Sharia Commission, Kano state, 12.11.2007

presented as policies by Kano state especially in relation to the development of education are simply programs. These programs, as observed above, all aim at securing a place for Islam in all domains of the state. New rules were introduced to re-enforce the compulsory inclusion of Islamic education in all public schools. Evidently, special organs of the state now place emphasis on Islamic knowledge, i.e. the inclusion of courses on Islam and the Qur'an in existing curriculum in most public schools; the establishment of new Islamiyya schools; and renovation of existing ones. Similar to Zamfara state, Kano state has also started a number of programs directed at improving on the access of women to education in the state. The programs initiated by Kano state are discussed in detail below:

### 3.7.2 Kano State and Female Education Programs

Kano state programs, as opposed to Zamfara state programs discussed above, focused exceedingly on raising awareness to sensitize the society on the need for women to be educated. These awareness programs are said to have made very positive impact on the education of women. This can be seen in the rise in the number of girls attending schools in Kano State between 2003 and 2004 in tables 5 and 6 below.

Table 5: Kano state ministry of education: two year female enrolment figures 2004-2005

Zone	2004	2005
Municipal	25,663	25,315
Bichi	1,519	2,306
Wudil	7,029	5,012
Tudun-wada	2,511	4,880
Danbata	3,828	3,999
Nassarawa	11,312	not available (na)
Minjibir	4,331	4,839
Gwarzo	Na	5,655
Rano	Na	5,115
Gaya	Na	5,180
Available total	56,193	62,301

Source: Department of Planning, research and statistics, Ministry of Education Kano State, 15.03.2007

The state governments also established up to 104 new secondary schools for girls between 1999 and 2006 (Table 6). However, none of this is attributed to the deliberate policies put in place by

proponents of the re-implementation of Sharia. This section deals with some of the programs introduced by Kano state since 1999, namely; *A daddaita sahu* (societal re-orientation) - an awareness program aimed at re-orienting the state about the importance of female education and the dangers of street hawking by young girls; What the Societal Reorientation Program of the state seems to emphasize is the strengthening of existing Islamiyyah schools and establishment of new ones. In addition, it emphasized the reawakening of women continuing education centers and the strengthening of Islamiyya evening schools for women. Besides the specific emphasis on societal reorientation, some statistical data from the ministry of education in Kano state is also used in explaining some of the improvement on female education in Kano state.

Table 6 Kano state: New female Government Secondary Schools created, 1999-2006

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No of New schools	1	2	2	0	5	11	40	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>43</b>

Source: Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Ministry of Education Kano state 15.03.2007

### 3.7.2.1 Societal Re-orientation Program ( A daidaita sahu)

In 2004, Kano State started a program named (in Hausa) *a daidaita sahu* (Societal Re-orientation). The main objectives of this program are to reorient the public and to instill certain values in the citizens of the state. Its scope covers all aspects of the society in both rural and urban areas. Apparently, the inspiration behind “*a daidaita sahu*” was the realization that, given the return of Sharia, Kano state was operating in a challenging environment. In the inaugural address for this program, the Kano state governor explains:

We must all realize that our state operates in a challenging environment. I do not mean challenging only in terms of inadequate funding, broken infrastructure, long neglected school system, dwindling trade and closed factories. But trying times in the sense that together we chose to implement the Sharia and Sharia by its nature is integrative, it is undivided and unbroken. It means restoring confidence in government, it means emphasizing the importance of community, protecting the dignity of the common man and so on. This is the reason why as a first step we need to re-orient the people.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ibrahim Shekarau (2004), Inaugural Address and plan for Action by Kano State Governor on: Societal Re-orientation.

The idea held by proponents of Sharia that Sharia was the only way to morally rejuvenate the society and bring about total restoration from the decay which generally characterized the Nigerian system, is clearly expressed in the governor's speech. So, Sharia was seen as a timely intervention in this chaos and implementing a program such as Societal Reorientation was expected to bring about positive attitudinal changes in the people of the state, hence enhancing societal harmony, developing human resources and at the same minimizing social decay.

*A daidaita sahu* has several target groups which include educational institutions, civil servants, the business community, youth and women<sup>79</sup>. The target groups of interest in the present discussion are the educational institutions, youth and women. Targeting educational institutions with the program was intended to inculcate specific Islamic values in the pupils and students. In accordance with this objective, certain special programs were instituted for the schools, among them, the deliberate and special training of heads of primary, secondary, Islamiyyah and Qur'anic schools for the provision of quality of education. Three striking points of the program that are directly related to the ideology of the Sharia proponents are: 1) encouraging Islamic learning after regular school hours; 2) compulsory attendance of congregational prayers for all Muslim students in public schools and; 3) Working with students associations and Islamic organizations such as the Student Union (SU) and the Muslim Student Society (MSS).<sup>80</sup>

Issues of women and the girl-child are top priority in the Reorientation Program. According to the designers and executors of the program, women constitute a very important segment of the society since they are in the majority<sup>81</sup>. Among the virtues expected to be seen in women are, the fear of God, good motherhood, respect for elders and authority, truthfulness, and humility. Programs such as *a daidaita sahu* are designed to help women acquire these virtues. The program also include initiatives that promote self employment among women, that train leaders of women's organizations, that fund societal reorientation programs of women's NGOs, media programs that uphold the dignity of, and respect for, women and the sensitization of women on how to discipline children. One important way of implementing these programs, the pioneers

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<sup>79</sup> Shekarau (2004 : 18-19)

<sup>80</sup> Shakarau ( 2004: 15)

<sup>81</sup> Shekarau( 2004: 18)

believe, is supporting and facilitating the establishment of women Islamiyyah schools and the reestablishment of continuing education centers.<sup>82</sup>

In an interview with the director of *a daidaita sahu*, he explains that the state created two programs to improve on female education. They are *Zauren shawara* (Women's Forum for Discussion) and *Fansar yan talla* (Ban on Street Hawking)<sup>83</sup>. The former is meant to create general awareness on education and education-related opportunities for women while the latter is aimed at keeping young girls who go hawking to earn money off the streets and to reinstate them in schools. The Ban on Street Hawking program partly tackles the problem of child labor common in the state, and which has been exacerbated by increasing economic meltdown in the country since 2009. Since parents are poor, they send their children to hawk or to do other petty jobs in order to bring home some money (Akpan and Oluwabamide 2010: 191)<sup>84</sup>. For a long time now, street hawking in northern Nigeria has been one of the activities that have kept young girls from going to school. Because of the traditional practice of seclusion, most married women can hardly leave their houses to engage in small scale businesses that could provide them money and hence empower them. As a result, these women often times rely on their daughters who are free from the gender segregation to run errands for them. Some of these errands include hawking for them. Although in some cases, young boys are used for street hawking, in most cases girls are the target as they are also indirectly molded by their mothers to become economically independent. Furthermore, these young girls generally work hard to make much money from hawking since part of the profit is normally reserved for buying her traditional wedding set known in Hausa as *kayan gara* (usually wedding belongings such as beds, settees and kitchen utensils bought by the girl's family to accompany her to the new home). Often the benefit of having enough money to purchase the *kayan gara* perpetually sends these girls to the streets especially in cases where they are allowed to own their business. Consequently, street hawking is a complicated practice because it is woven into the future social plans of the girls who engage in it.

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with the Director, Islamic Education Department, Kano State Sharia Commission, 16.03.2007

<sup>83</sup> Interview with the Director, *A Daidaita Sahu*, Kano State , 17.03.2007

<sup>84</sup> This trend which is not peculiar to northern Nigeria alone has become a menace in the entire Nigerian society. Several NGO's are involved in fighting against it.

Realizing how negatively street hawking and other social activities affected the lives of young girls, the Sharia states have started condemning these acts and calling for girls to be sent to school or to be taken off the hawking business. A number of the states have also recently placed a ban on street hawking.

The Kano state government in particular started a project to curb this practice by setting up a committee in 2000 to look into the phenomenon and come up with strategic plans for eradicating it. The committee's plan of actions was to find out why such practices are mostly prevalent among young girls. The committee's report states that the primary cause for street hawking is lack of female empowerment among Muslims in the state. Most women living in seclusion rely on their young girls who can move freely to hawk for them by selling items such as traditional snacks and local drinks (Werthmann 2005). The committee recommended that the government find alternative means of empowering women and also waive or pay school fees of girls taken off hawking. According to the director of the program, the program was well received by a large section of the society although it has not completely eradicated the issues of street hawking as a number of them still hawk on the street. Also, the acquisition of other skills, such as sewing, knitting and baking by girls especially in WCECs was emphasized during this period.

### **3.7.2.2 Women Continuing Education Center**

A number of Women Continuing Education Centers in Kano, the state capital, have received much recognition from the government in terms of resource allocation and also from the women in terms of their excellent patronage. Although these all-female students' schools for married women were established before the re-implementation of Sharia, there is huge increase in the number of students in the centers since Sharia was re-introduced in the state. Two of these schools were used as case studies in this research, i.e. *Goran Dutse* Women Center and Kano City Women Center. Both schools are located in the state's capital, i.e. Kano. They both teach formal (western) education but emphasize on Islamic subjects and Islamic dressing. One striking thing about the Kano women's centers which make them different from the Zamfara state WCEC is their skills acquisition program which has been incorporated into the syllabus (see Picture 3). This program teaches the women new skills such as sewing, knitting, embroidery, and baking. The program is available for all. A woman could decide to enroll only for the basic skills

acquisition program if she finds the regular educational program too difficult or she may enroll for both and lesson periods are organized in a way that caters for the needs of those women who combine regular subjects and skills acquisition. The school has both male and female teachers. Asked if the women feel comfortable to have male teachers around, the principal noted, it is almost impossible to have only female teachers in the school, however a number of the students in these schools aspire to become teachers themselves.

Picture 3: Women acquiring skills at the City Women Center Kano State



Source: Chikas Danfulani

The WCEC centers are tuition-free. As in the case of Zamfara, the Kano centers also have daycare centers for the children of the mothers who attend these schools. There are, however, some shortcomings, which makes the Kano WCEC less effective compared to the *Goran Dutse* Women Center also in Kano and the Zamfara WECEC. These include:

- 1) The women have to buy their uniforms, books and school stationeries themselves; the state does not provide them.
- 2) Breakfast is not provided.
- 3) The facilities are inadequate, especially classrooms.

- 4) Though the Women Centers in Kano state are highly attended, the women end up being cramped into small classrooms.
- 5) Most of the available classrooms contain up to one hundred women receiving lessons together.
- 6) The classrooms are not independent rooms but rather small rooms in a huge partitioned hall. Some of the partition is done with wood and so does not generally stop noise from spreading across the rooms.
- 7) Due to shortages in chairs and benches, some of the women often sit on mats on the floor during lessons (see picture 4).

Picture 4: A cross section of women in class at the Goran Dutse Women Center Kano State



Source: Chikas Danfulani

The *Goran Dutse* Women Center, on the other hand, is comparatively more organized since they have enough classrooms. However, just like the city women's centers it is also usually overcrowded and women sometimes sit on mats on the floor or stand along the walls to follow the lessons. But like Kano City Women Center, they also have classes designed for skill acquisition. These skills are, for women, a quick way of getting empowered since these skills enable them to start small-scale businesses.

In spite of the above shortcomings, the women attending these centers do not seem bothered about the inadequacy of facilities nor the quality of education. They are interested in attending the courses, seizing the opportunity to acquire new skills, and benefitting from the incentives provided by the government. For a number of them, the opportunity to study again is more valuable than any incentive the government could provide. The majority of them who dropped out of school in order to get married shared the same opinion about the importance of education. Asked what influenced them to return to school, one of them, Usaina Hassan, in the Kano City Women Center said: “education is very important in our lives and one can fit in anywhere when educated...there is a lot of difference now because I am enlightened and we [her husband and her] understand ourselves better because my husband is educated.”<sup>85</sup> Similarly, for Amina Yahaya Muazu who attends the *Goran Dutse* Women Center Kano, “education is good but we had to obey our parents by getting married. Now I want to continue because I have been encouraged by my husband who at first discouraged me...I had to continue giving him the awareness and later he allowed me.”<sup>86</sup>

The husbands of some of the women attending these schools are educated. For these, it was easier for them to convince their husbands to allow them return to school than it was for women whose husbands are not educated. This notwithstanding, there were also a number of cases husbands with university degrees did not allow their wives to continue with education. One of the major reasons for this, as hinted at above, is that some men believe educated women are not submissive to their husbands. Shedding more light on this, Alhji Sani Usman, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto said:

Educated women seem to know their rights. You can tame an illiterate girl but it is difficult to tame an educated girl, don't you think so? When you ... pick an illiterate girl, she does not know anything, you can ask her to do anything and she will say “Yes sir”. Anything you ask her to do she does not question you. But an educated mind is an enquiring mind, sometimes she will ask you “is this what Islam says?” When you are going out of point an educated woman will question you “you ask me to do this, is that what Islam says we should do? Only education will make someone think like that and begin to ask questions.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with Usaina Hassan, Kano City Women Center, Kano State, 14.11.2007

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Amina Yahaya Muazu, Goran Dutse Women Center Kano, 15.11.2007

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Alhji Hussein Mohammed, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto

For those men who hold the positions exposed by Alhji Sani Usman above, educated women tend to speak “too much grammar” and are generally untamable by their men. This explains why educated women are perceived with suspicion by men. Because of their education, some of them end up not getting married – as said above the culture expects all women to be married, and often at puberty. For some of the women interviewed, it took them 18 years after marriage to be able to go back to school.

### **3.7.2.3 “Educating the World”- Justifying the Existence of WCECs**

One of the educational institutions that was inherited from the previous administration and remodeled by the Zamfara state government as part of its unique vision inspired by its Sharia policies is the Women Continuing Education Centers (WCECs). The WCECs are special educational facilities established for married women who dropped out of school for early marriage. As indicated earlier, early marriage is perennial in northern Nigeria, and is motivated by the belief among northern Nigerian Muslims that young girls must be married off early in life in order to shield them from teenage crises, misadventures and immorality. According to an interlocutor, proponents of early marriage in Islam back their position by referring to Prophet Mohammed who married his wife Aisha before she turned 10, becoming a model for Muslims to emulate<sup>88</sup>. Some base their arguments on certain Islamic injunctions which compel them to marry off their girls early. Husseini, in Gusau, Zamfara state, holds this position and explains thus:

You know the problem is that we feel insecure to send our girls to school without guidance, without any guidance the girl may be influenced by the male counterparts most especially the youths. That’s the fear and you know the religious injunction that says whatever a girl does badly, it affects the parents directly and whatever sin she commits if she is not married then the sin is directly on the parents even if she is an adult. But if she is married any sin she commits is on her head. So that makes parents insecure to let them learn on their own.<sup>89</sup>

Such ethical considerations support the practice of early marriage for girls between the ages of 12 and 15. When teenage girls get married, they are shielded from public view and this rules out

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State, 05.03.2007

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Hakeem Abubakar, Ministry of Education Bauchi 17.03.2009

<sup>89</sup> Interview, Husseini, Gusau, Zamfara State, 09.03.2007

the possibility of them continuing with education. The WCECs are, therefore, designed to produce an amicable environment that satisfies ethical requirements of being a married woman, and also to provide educational facilities for young married women prematurely extricated from public schools. Articulating the inspiration behind establishing the WCEC centers, Mallam Husseini Sale, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, had this to say:

... the state government decided to solve the need to see that girls attend schools. You know that in the northern states, when a girl reaches thirteen or fourteen years she is married off. So, government decided to make provisions for girls who started their education but stopped on the way because they were married and could not continue. We thought that if they want to continue how will they do that? From there the government established the schools for continuing education mainly for married women and young girls most especially those who started school but were removed by their parents. So that if their spouses decided to allow them they can just continue.<sup>90</sup>

Even though a number of such centers existed before the re-implementation of Sharia<sup>91</sup>, as explained by Sa'adatu Shehu, Principal, WCEC Gusau, they were mostly for skill acquisition. With the re-implementation of Sharia, their curriculum was expanded to include formal education albeit with Islamic courses as well. These centers also teach regular subjects like biology, physics and chemistry on top of the basic skills such as knitting, sewing and baking, which were initially tailored to the women's roles as home managers or home keepers. As revealed by women at the centers, husbands of women at the Zamfara state WCEC schools easily let their wives attend the schools mainly because they are given special incentives by the state government. For instance, education at the Zamfara WCEC center is tuition free, the government provides a day care center for children and also breakfast. At WCEC Gusau, Zamfara, the women are entitled to a maternity leave of 3 months, are provided free meals, books and uniforms. According to the administrative and academic principals of the school, the incentives provided by the state government have in many ways increased women's enrolment at the centers because it provides for flexibility in learning which are often absent in public schools which makes them unsuitable for some married women. Although these incentives make learning more flexible and attractive, they however slow down their academic progress because

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<sup>90</sup> Mallam Husseini Sale, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto State, 05.03.2007

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Sa'adatu Shehu, Principal, Women Continuing Education Center Gusa, Zamfara State

the women end up repeating classes. In addition, they impact on the effective academic performance of these women since they have the right to stop attending classes at will. However, as stated above, the flexibility gives them the unique chance of combining marital and educational responsibilities and achieving success in both of them.

Regardless of the long standing tradition in northern Nigeria that educating women is a waste,<sup>92</sup> the proponents of Sharia in Zamfara and Kano states claim to have realized that educating women means “educating the world.”<sup>93</sup> This is especially true if we consider that, as said by many respondents, in their role as mothers and caretakers of children, women are indeed “first teachers,” hence educating them is a way of making knowledge available to the children they bring up. Supporting the education of women Hajiya Sadiya Umar Bello, makes the following arguments:

...his (Prophet Mohammed) emphasis was to educate the women because if you educate the women it's like educating the whole society and the whole world. Because in the long run the women are going to look after the children and they are going to train them and once you have a mother that is ignorant, it will be obvious that the child will also be ignorant. So his emphasis was very much on women and he educated all of them.<sup>94</sup>

Most northern Nigerian Muslim men often interpret Prophet Mohammed's stance above to mean Islamic education alone which for them is the basic education that is necessary for all Muslims and which every Muslim requires for continued existence in this world and for life hereafter. They claim that although Islam permits one to seek knowledge elsewhere out of Islam, however, such permission is only for the men who are expected to be bread winners of the home and who need such additional secular education to support their survival and that of their families in this world. More so, since women's needs are provided for by their husbands they only need Islamic education in order to inculcate Islamic values and ethics into their children.

Another school of thought, however, holds the view that both systems of education are good for both males and females. The Islamic injunction to seek knowledge was given without any

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Hussein Sale, op.cit.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Director, Arabic and Islamiyyah Board Gusau, Zamfara state and Hajiya Sadiya Umar Bello, Lecturer, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Hajiya Sadiya Umar Bello, Lecturer, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, Sokoto State, 06.03.2007

preference to gender. Instead, it is accepted among many Islamic scholars that only through knowledge can humankind attain the height for which they are created (Lababatu 2007). All useful knowledge they argue is cherished by Islam and acquiring it is a duty for everyone, both male and female. To shed more light on such views, Hajiya Sadiya Umar Bello in Sokoto, explains thus:

The first revelation that came to prophet Mohammed is on education, he was commanded to read and God knows the importance of education that is why the first revelation was on education, education lays the foundation for everything in life...the prophet also says education is obligatory on for male and female, there is no discrimination. When it comes to education, there is no discrimination between sexes and you can go as far as any length to achieve education. The prophet also says you can go as far China to seek knowledge...This means that he means both the religious and secular knowledge.<sup>95</sup>

Statements like this shed light on the importance that Islam places on education, and especially female education. This refutes the long standing traditional belief that women's education is secondary to that of men. It is in the light of such Qur'anic injunctions that some Sharia states embarked on special programs for women focusing on special education centers where married women, who missed the first opportunity due to marriage, could get educated.

### **3.8 Islamiyyah Schools**

Qur'anic schools are similar to Islamiyyah schools mainly in content and methods of dissemination. Qur'anic education known in Hausa as *makarantan allo* (slate schools) has developed into what is Islamic education in northern Nigeria today Danfulani (2007:111). Such schools are usually organized outside the mosque, in the homes of the *mallamai* (teachers) or under a tree; pupils usually between ages 2 and 12 were engaged in the recitation of the Qur'an as they scribble down Arabic alphabets and verses of the Qur'an on their slates. This system exists all over northern Nigeria and is usually the first education received by children before they acquire any form of education. The purpose is mainly to prepare the students morally and to train them in future religious obligations. Islamiyyah schools on the other hand developed from Qur'anic schools into what is known in Hausa as *makarantan ilmi* (higher schools). They were

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<sup>95</sup> Hajiya Sadiya Umar Bello, Usman Dan Fodio University Sokoto, Sokoto State, 06.03.2007

meant for more advanced pupils and they embrace all aspects of Islamic studies such as *Tafsir*<sup>96</sup>, *hadith*<sup>97</sup>, *Fiqh*<sup>98</sup>, as well as a highly developed curriculum which includes learning of the meanings of the memorized Qur'an (Fafunwa 1974: 55). Recently, several Islamic schools have incorporated both western and Islamic studies into their curriculum providing a balance which has attracted large number Muslim women (Umar 2004:100). Such schools are popularly called Islamiyyah schools and have been highly patronized by women (Umar 2004:98)<sup>99</sup>. Pupils who graduate from Qur'anic and Islamiyyah schools are generally equipped with skills directed towards the understanding of Arabic language and Islamic knowledge and less of the skills needed to operate and function in a modern economy. Besides religious knowledge and competence, a number of pupils graduate from Qur'anic and Islamiyyah schools without certain skills or competences adequate for competition in the contemporary society.<sup>100</sup>

Regardless of the existing gender disparity in northern Nigeria, the majority of the programs on women and girl-child education were before this period handled by private and religious organizations as well as some NGO's, The Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) (Adeboye 2010) and Muslim Sisters Associations (MSA) who have been concerned with the continuous decline in girl-child education, as well as the general educational status of women in Zamfara state. The Izala movement is also one of the important Islamic movements that have been involved with the issues of women and girl-child education in Nigeria and particularly northern Nigeria (Umar 2004:109). These will be discussed extensively in the following chapter, but suffice it to say that all these organizations asserted their influences following the decline of the Nigeria's educational system in the late 1980's and early 1990's. As it is the case with most developing nations, one of the main reasons for the emergence and proliferation of such non-governmental institutions in Nigeria has often been linked with the collapse of several social institutions.

Kalu (2003:398) observes that several NGOs (including religious ones) sprang up in the early 1990's as a result of issues such as legitimacy crises, state failure, massive corruption and the

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<sup>96</sup> Arabic term for Exegesis, literally meaning interpretation

<sup>97</sup> Arabic term for statements or deeds of the Prophet Mohammed

<sup>98</sup> Arabic term for Islamic Jurisprudence

<sup>99</sup> Also interview with Deputy Director, Sokoto State Ministry of Education, Sokoto

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Kahdija Jibrin (pseudo name), Director, Islamic Education trust, Minna Niger State, 02.03.2007

abuse of human rights. These led many foreign countries to bypass the corrupt state and to rebuild the already battered civil society, to fund empowerment projects and to protect human rights. The majority of them, he notes, were fully matured just in time when the issues of human rights related to the Sharia started from 1999 onwards (Kalu 2003: 398). However, long before the proliferation of NGOs in Nigeria, a number of organizations such as FOMWAN, established in 1985 has been in the forefront of not only campaigning for quality schools and programs for the girl-child but, has also provided and funded some of these schools. Thus both private and religious organizations such as these evolved with different aims and objectives to respond to social issues affecting the wider society and particularly women (Adeboye 2010: 242-243).

### **3.9 Islamiyyah Schools for Women**

Islamic education has received a great deal of popularity in northern Nigeria. Aside of the fact that it is the oldest existing system of education in northern Nigeria before the coming of western education, it is also perceived to be the most important form of education for Muslims. It is viewed as the education that “guarantees one’s existence in this world and in the hereafter” (Halima Malo op.cit).<sup>101</sup> Apart from the importance Islam places on education which has been interpreted and reinterpreted by many scholars such as Doi (1996) and Talbani (1996), the importance of Islamic education is viewed as an act of worship to Allah. It is also believed that without this education, no Muslim would be able worship Allah in the right way. Therefore, it is means of being near to God because it brings one closer to his/her creator (Alavi 2008).

It is in line with the general belief by northern Nigerian Muslims that Islamic education is more important than any other form of education that the Sharia states seem to have placed emphasis on it. Since the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, for instance, the inclusion of Islamic education into the curriculum of several public schools in the Sharia states has been a top priority. For example, in Zamfara and Kano states, Boards of Islamic Education were created exclusively to deal with the religious aspect of education. Part of their agenda was to develop a curriculum which accommodates both formal (western) and Islamic education. Furthermore, they have proposed the inclusion of Islamic subjects into the curricula of regular public schools. These Boards also encourage Islamic learning outside of school hours.<sup>102</sup> The proponents

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<sup>101</sup> Interview with Halima Malo op.cit

<sup>102</sup> Inaugural address and action plan on societal reorientation by the Kano state governor Mallam Ibrahim, 2004

believed religious education based on the Sharia morally educates the populace and creates sanity in the state.

Conversely, the proponents of Sharia implementation have targeted women with their programs on the acquisition of Islamic education. This as noted earlier is due mainly to the fact that women are believed to be teachers to their children and the acquisition of Islamic education is expected to make considerable difference in the manner in which its inculcation to their children would be easier. According to the director Sharia commission Kano state: “there is an increase in the Islamiyyah schools which are dominated by women.”<sup>103</sup> The Sharia commission has since its implementation focused on the establishment and improvement of Islamiyyah schools and has played an instrumental role on awareness for women to get enrolled in such school. Fully funded by the government, these Islamiyyah schools hold classes both in the morning and evening. These schools are socio-culturally significant. They have attracted many women who view them not only as alternatives to formal education but also more importantly as preparatory grounds which augment their chances of getting good suitors. This is because the schools, unlike the WCEC, are open to unmarried young women. Suitors would normally prefer religious, pious and traditionally-trained women instead of the tough-talking formal educated ones. Articulating this point, Alhji Sani Usman, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, explains from his log of experience in the domain:

When I talk of education I am saying we have women who want to have traditional education [Islamic education]; everyone wants to have a women who knows Arabic, who knows the Qur’an who knows the laws because most of the time they are the first teachers of the child before the children go to school but if it is western education, when a lady is mentioned with higher education everybody is apprehensive.<sup>104</sup>

Because of the emphasis placed on Islamic education, many uneducated northern Nigerian women have equally accepted Islamic education as best form of education, for them, it is through it that their husbands are comfortable with them. Although they have interest in western education which they believe could help them interact with the world, they still find Islamic education playing a dominant role in their lives. As one of the informants notes:

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with Mallam Yahaya Tonko( pseudo name) Director, Sharia Commission Kano State, 16.03.2007

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Alhji Sani Usman, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto State, 05.03. 2007

I prefer Islamic education because I will enjoy it here on earth and in eternity. Islamic education makes you know a lot about the history of Islam, I am only doing this (western education) because I want to go further with my Islamic education and I need this one to get it.<sup>105</sup>

Semi-educated women especially those who attend the WCECs tend to appreciate Islamic education more favorably than western education while highly educated women perceive both types of education as complementing one other. Although Islamic education guarantees one's life in the hereafter, secular education helps secure one's existence in this world and sharpens one's understanding of his/her religion. Focusing on this complementarily, Khadija Jibrin, Islamic Education Trust, Minna Niger state, adds that:

The problem with those who have only Islamic education is that they cannot relate what they know to anything in the world around them. We have lots of the teachers in the course of time in our schools that went through the Islamic studies courses in colleges of Islamic studies and universities. But the sad thing is that they can hardly relate their knowledge to modern knowledge.... So to me it is important that anybody going through Islamic studies most also have broad general knowledge.<sup>106</sup>

So, Islamic education, candidly put above, enhances one's commitment to his/her creator. But, at the same time, possessing only Islamic education apparently limits one's aspiration to compete in the scientific world. Therefore, although Islamic education is obligatory for every Muslim, it is not sufficient if women are to be favorably positioned and equipped to compete for social, economic and political resources with other members of the society.

This chapter has reviewed the approaches used by Zamfara and Kano states to revamp female education under Sharia. It has demonstrated that while some men still think women should not be taken out of the home and exposed to formal education, the policy of creating special educational institutions exclusively for married women worked out well and was favorably received even in conservative male circles. The education of women is, therefore, taking place without necessarily disrupting the division of gender roles and spheres of activities as initially feared by some men. The next chapter moves the debate further by discussing educational programs in Kaduna and Bauchi state.

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<sup>105</sup> Husseina Hassan, Kano City Women Center, Kano, 14.11.2007

<sup>106</sup> Khadija Jibrin, Islamic Education Trust, Minna Niger State, 01.03.2007

## Chapter Four

### Sharia and Women's Education in Bauchi and Kaduna States

#### 4.1 Introduction

The re-implementation of Sharia in Bauchi and Kaduna states was not positively received as it was in other Sharia states of northern Nigeria. This is possibly because the earliest violent reactions against the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria occurred in Kaduna (February 2000) and Bauchi states (June 2001).<sup>107</sup> These two states have a long history of ethno-religious violence between Christians and Muslims resulting in loss of lives and properties.<sup>108</sup> The long history of violence in these states could be attributed to the composition of the population of the states, which includes Christians and Muslims who are often competing for control of religious space, and also the ethnic diversity, which has ethnic groups vying for a better representation of their groups. The 2006 national census did not include the issue of religion in its questionnaires. This has made it difficult to ascertain the current percentage of Christians and Muslims both in the northern states and the rest of the country. However, according to Paden (1999:1), Bauchi state is predominantly Muslim but with a large population of Christians and indigenous religious believers, while Kaduna state is mixed almost equally between Christians and Muslims.

Taking into account the population of Christians and Muslims in Kaduna and Bauchi states above from Paden (1991), the re-implementation of Sharia had different impacts in these two states compared to the others where the Muslim population overwhelmingly outnumbers the Christian population. Thus, the impact of Sharia is felt mainly on restricted settlements where Muslims are predominant. This notwithstanding, there is also a direct impact on the lives of non-

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<sup>107</sup> See Husaini Abdu (undated), *Ethnic and Religious Crises in northern Nigeria; Issues in Informer Repression*. <http://hussainiabdu.info/mydocs/Ethno-religious%20Crisis%20in%20Northern%20Nigeria.pdf>, accessed 12.08.2011.

<sup>108</sup> The history of religious violence in the northern states of Nigeria has already been documented by several scholars; one of such is Kukah (1993) *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*; (1996) *Religious Militancy and Self-assertion*; Falola (2003), *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Majority of the literature on violence show that Kaduna and Bauchi states have had prolonged history of ethno-religious crisis due to their religious and ethnic composition.

Muslims, albeit to differing and generally less significant degrees, for instance restrictions on public transportation and closing down of cinemas directly affected non-Muslims. The ethnic and religious multiplicity of Kaduna state and the acceptability of Sharia are underscored by Mallam Sani Mohammed, lecturer, Kaduna state University, Kaduna, who believes that the Sharia introduced in Kaduna state is partial in the following excerpt:

Sharia in Kaduna state is different from the way it is in Zamfara or Kano states. Why? It is because Sharia in Kaduna state is not full [Sharia] like in other states; it is partial because it's like we have people that are in Sharia part of the state and those who are in non-Sharia part of the states, even in the state capital you realize that people are divided socially.<sup>109</sup>

From the above perspective, the kind of Sharia practiced in Kaduna and Bauchi state could be said to be an abridged Sharia moderated by the religious demographics of these two states, which make them starkly different from Zamfara and Kano states discussed in chapter 3. It is understandable that in a Sharia state with 90% Muslims, the impact of Islamic Law will certainly be higher than in a state with less than 50% Muslims. For instance, in Bauchi state, when the Sharia Court in Tafawa Balewa was created in 2001, a Sharia Court Judge was posted to work in it. But because Tafawa Balewa is a predominantly Christian part of the state, the creation of the court and the posting of a Muslim to control it, led to clashes between Christians and Muslims.<sup>110</sup> Christians in Tafawa Balewa had also vehemently resisted other changes initiated by the Bauchi state government after the re-introduction of Sharia in the non-Muslim parts of both Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro Local Government Areas (LGAs). For Gwamna (2003: 12), Christians in Bauchi and Kaduna State have deep rooted history of consistent resistance to Hausa-Fulani political hegemony. In these states, Islamic political control dates back to over five decades. Under this hegemony, non-Muslims have suffered subjugation and marginalization under the power of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim political elite who control the structures of power, politics and the economy.

Within the context of a new era of the expanded Sharia in Kaduna and Bauchi states, this chapter examines the various policies adopted by the Sharia governments on education in general, and on

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with Mallam Sani Mohammed, lecturer, Kaduna state University, Kaduna, 14.08.2008.

<sup>110</sup> Punch Editorial: "Religious Riots in Bauchi"

<http://www.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art20080102793175>, 02.01.2008., Accessed 13.08.2011.

women's education in particular. Focus, as in chapter 3, is on the establishment of Women Continuing Education Centers (WCECs) and the impact of Sharia on other educational programs created for Muslim women. In addition, the chapter discusses the intervention of certain Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in the education sector.

## **4.2 Bauchi State**

Bauchi state is located in the north-eastern geo-political zone of Nigeria. The state was established in 1976. Before the reorganization of states in 1996, Bauchi state also included Gombe which was declared a separate state in 1996 along with the five other states as listed in chapter three. Bauchi state shares borders with Kano and Jigawa states to the north, Taraba and Plateau states to the south, Yobe and Gombe states to the east, and Kaduna state to the west. According to the 2006 census, Bauchi state has a population of about 4.6 million people. It is heterogeneous consisting of many ethnic groups including the Hausa-Fulani, Jarawa, Tangale and the Sayawa.<sup>111</sup> Although there is no available demographic figures on the population of Christians and Muslims, Bauchi state is predominantly Muslim with a sizable percentage of Christians who occupy the predominantly non-Muslim Local Government Areas ( Paden 2002:1-2).

According to the National Bureau for Statistics (2010), the youth literacy rate in Bauchi state (defined as the ability to read and write) stands at 39.5% (i.e. literacy in English) and 69.8% (literacy in other languages). Adult literacy rate is 26.6% (literacy in English) and 65.7% (literacy in other languages).<sup>112</sup>

Administratively, Bauchi state consists of 20 local government areas which are further subdivided into districts. It comprises of several ministries administered by commissioners. The state is one of Nigeria's main tourist attractions and it is the home to one of Nigeria's main national parks; the Yankari Game Reserve.

Traditionally, the state has five Emirate Councils namely, Bauchi, Katagum, Misau, Jama'are Ningi and Dass. The Emir of Bauchi is the Chairman of the State Traditional Council. Politically,

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<sup>111</sup> Source: <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/links/bauchiadv.asp?blurb=200>, 12.10.2011

<sup>112</sup> Source: National Bureau for Statistics. National Literacy survey 2010, <http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/>, 20.01.2012

Bauchi state has since 1976 had 10 military administrators and four democratically elected governors. The state is currently governed by Mallam Isa Yuguda of the People's Democratic Party who was elected as governor in April 2007 and re-elected in 2011. The state occupies three seats in the senate and 12 representatives in the National House of Assembly. In June 2001, Bauchi state became a Sharia state along with 11 other states that re-implemented Sharia. This led to the establishment of the Bauchi state Sharia Commission which handles issues relating to the new programs on Sharia.

### **4.3 Education**

Like in most other states in Nigeria, Bauchi state has a Ministry of Education which is one of the most important ministries. It comprises of many sub-ministries or departments like Teachers Service Commission, Adult and Non-formal Education, Education Resource Centre, Special Schools Management Board, and the State Universal Basic Education. Its main mission is to promote and deliver quality education to its citizens, and also to develop the students' full capacities (i.e. training students to cope with, and adapt to, the employment market and career exigencies). In a nutshell, the Ministry of Education is responsible for all educational matters in the state.<sup>113</sup>

According to the BASEEDS document compiled by the Bauchi state government in 2004, in the 2003 academic year, Bauchi State had a total of 1,276,464 pupils in primary schools and 96,768 students in secondary schools across the state. Out of these, there were 481,553 (37.7%) females in the primary schools and 27,252 (28%) in the secondary schools. The number of teachers in primary and secondary schools in the state in 2003 stood at 14,274 and 1,981 respectively.<sup>114</sup>

#### **4.3.1 Bauchi State Policy on Education**

The education policy of Bauchi state operates within three major educational frameworks: the National Policy on Education (NPE), Nigeria's commitment to global initiatives on Education for All (EFA), and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>115</sup> So, the state does not have a state-specific policy on education. However, education in the state follows the

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<sup>113</sup> Source: Bauchi State Ministry of Education: Eleven Background Studies, compiled, September 2008, pp20-21

<sup>114</sup> Source: Bauchi State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (BASEEDS)

<sup>115</sup> Source: Bauchi State Ministry of Education, Major Highlights on the Education Sector, 2008, pp 12-13

provisions of the National Policy on Education (2004) and other national sub-sectors. It is based on the following policies which also apply to other states of the federal republic. These policies are listed in the Bauchi Ministry of Education's *Major Highlights of the Education Sector* (2008: 14).

- 1) National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development
- 2) National Policy on Educational Management and Information Systems
- 3) National Policy on Public-Private Partnerships
- 4) National Gender Policy on Education
- 5) National Policy on School Health
- 6) National Policy on HIV/AIDS
- 7) National Policy on Family Health and Life Education.<sup>116</sup>

In order to realize the policies above, the *Major Highlights of the Education Sector* (2008: 15) further states that the current educational policy of Bauchi state focuses on improving the learning environment in schools and emphasizing on and accelerating the education of girls and women.<sup>117</sup>

Since the return of democracy and the subsequent re-implementation of Sharia in Bauchi state, education has been given a place of prominence.<sup>118</sup> Several programs were initiated aimed at improving on the level of education in the state. The first major programs were in the media, i.e. on television and radio. The first media program was a phone-in question and answer program on Bauchi state television whose aim was to create consciousness in the minds of the citizenry about the importance of education in general and female education in particular. Other media appearances included informative jingles on radio, and the distribution of information posters. Besides the media, the ministries of youth and sports also engaged communities in small talks on the benefits of education.

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<sup>116</sup> Major highlights of the education sector op.cit.

<sup>117</sup> Major highlights of the education sector op.cit.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Hajiya Fatiya Bappa, Coordinator, Girl-Child Education/HIV/AIDS, Bauchi State Ministry of Education, Bauchi

The state government also collaborated with some NGOs which served as facilitators for the expansion of general education and also female education. The NGOs did this in forums such as workshops, press conferences, and awareness campaigns. For instance, in an interview, Hajiya Fatiya Bappa, Coordinator of Girl-Child Education/HIV/AIDS, Bauchi state, explained that the government of Bauchi state in collaboration with the education department of the Federation of Muslim Women's Organization of Nigeria (FOMWAN) held several workshops in the state on the theme of education in a bid to increase awareness on education and its possible benefits.<sup>119</sup>

FOMWAN, established in 1986, is dynamic in many ways. Firstly, it is one of several women's organizations in Nigeria committed to challenging patriarchal systems and the subordination of Muslim women. Secondly, it is committed to increasing women's literacy levels and access to education in Nigeria. FOMWAN, as Laremont (2011: 228) says, is effectively playing a key role in the emancipation of Muslim women in Nigeria. FOMWAN has its presence in all the states visited for this research and was repeatedly mentioned positive terms by the informants, especially its role in initiating education and other programs in the states. For more details on FOMWAN's role as a women's agency that has engineered change in women's lives in the various states where it is actively represented, see chapter five.

While data from the ministry of education suggests that the programs in Bauchi state were unrelated to Sharia, a critical perspective of the activities of the Sharia Commission in Bauchi state suggests that the Sharia Commission had a policy on education in Bauchi state. With its inception in 2001, the Sharia Commission created a *Da'wah* department responsible for initiating the activities to be carried out by the Commission. The *Da'wah* department is made up of Islamic scholars and prominent members of the Sharia Commission. It has many functions, among which is the responsibility of organizing awareness campaigns in local government areas of the state. In these campaigns, Bala Ahmed, Public Relations Officer, Bauchi state Sharia Commission, said in an interview in early 2009, parents are persuaded to send their children to school.<sup>120</sup> This grassroots mobilization has partly accounted for the increase in enrollment figures in primary and secondary schools in Bauchi state. Created to implement Sharia programs in the state, the activities of the Sharia Commission in Bauchi state also includes education and

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<sup>119</sup> Interview op.cit

these educational programs are autonomous from those of the state ministry of education. However, because the Sharia Commission's main focus is on Islamic education, the *Da'wah* department plays the specific role of supervising the activities of Qur'anic and Islamiyyah schools in the state. The department is, therefore, obliged to report to the ministry of education. According to the public relations officer of the Commission, Bala Ahmed;

The Sharia Commission is dealing with the Islamic aspect of education although we also give emphasis to other aspects because when you talk of health, it is there in Islam, when you talk of technology, it is there in Islam. So it makes no difference to obtain only the Islamic aspect of knowledge because all other aspects are already there in Islam. Islamic education is necessary if you want to live according to the dictates of the Quran...as far as a Muslim is concern and the tradition of the holy prophet because God said you have to know me before you practice my religion. ... "Know me first as your creator". How do you know your creator? By reading the books of Allah, by going through the tradition of the holy prophet... if you know that, everything will be easy for you.<sup>121</sup>

From the foregoing, the Sharia Commission's focus of action has been on revamping Islamic education rather than formal, western education. For northern Nigerian Muslims, as confirmed earlier on by Mallam Abdul Yahaya (pseudo name), Director, Sharia Research and Development Commission Gusau, Zamfara State, Islamic education is privileged and valorized over modern, western-type of education. Although other forms of knowledge are recognized, some scholars argue that the importance of Islamic education cannot be over emphasized because it is eternal as it guarantees a Muslims' existence in this world and the world after (Alavi 2008: 20). Therefore, the major task of the Sharia Commissions in Bauchi and Kaduna states has been to work out strategies for the implementation of policies, among them, the development of Islamic education as one of the cornerstones of Islamic society, politics and identity.

Besides the educational program of the Sharia Commission in Bauchi state, the state government through its ministry of education also initiated other educational programs aimed at improving on the level women's education. One of them is the Special Schools Program discussed below.

#### **4.3.2 Special Schools Program Bauchi**

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<sup>121</sup>Interview with Bala Ahmed Public Relations Officer, Sharia Commission Bauchi State

In 2001, Bauchi State government established a Special Schools Management Board (SSMB) under the Ministry of Education. The main objectives of establishing the SSMB are: to enhance the establishment of new schools; to increase government's involvement in schools management, selection of students with high academic prospects and preparing them for the West African Examination Council (WAEC).<sup>122</sup>

The board aimed to achieve these objectives through the advancement of excellence in knowledge and character building. According to a report submitted to the Governor of Bauchi State prior to the establishment of the board, the schools which fall under the category of special schools are schools with a history of poor performance in the final WAEC examination. According to the initiators of the program, establishing a board such as the SSMB that caters for pupils' deficiencies was a means of gradually reversing the negative trend.<sup>123</sup> So, in an effort to realize its goals, the SSMB established three secondary and primary schools from the period 2001 to 2006, and one junior secondary school in 2006. However, some of the schools established by the SSMB have no permanent facilities. For instance, the Junior Secondary School established in 2006 is located in and still uses the facility of the existing Jibril Aminu Primary School in Bauchi state. The management, however, argues that the purpose of establishing such schools is to enhance the smooth transition of pupils from the newly created primary schools into junior secondary schools; an initiative intended to provide a good learning and teaching environment which could eventually make these schools become a model for the entire state.<sup>124</sup>

The SSMB program in Bauchi state was inspired by the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program introduced by President Olusegun Obasonjo in 1999. The UBE program has the following objectives:

- 1) Developing in the entire citizenry a strong conscientiousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.

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<sup>122</sup> WAEC is a prerequisite certificate for entrance into the university and other tertiary institutions.

<sup>123</sup> A brief on the Special Schools Management Board submitted to the Governor of Bauchi State, by the Bauchi State Ministry of Education, Special Schools Management Board  
<http://www.bauchistategov.org/ministryofeducationmanagementboard.html>, accessed, 05.10.2010

<sup>124</sup> A brief on the Special Schools Management Board submitted to the Governor of Bauchi State, by the Bauchi State Ministry of Education, Special Schools Management Board

- 2) Providing free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
- 3) Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system.
- 4) Catering for young persons, their schooling as well as other out-of-school children or adolescents through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision of UBE.
- 5) Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for the lifelong living.<sup>125</sup>

The UBE program is similar in many ways to the Universal Primary education (UPE) program introduced in the 1970s which failed woefully due to poor planning and implementation. Among its many objectives, the UBE program was expected to bridge the gender and regional educational gaps existing in the country and to provide Nigerians with access to free and quality education. However, the UBE seems to differ from the UPE program in terms of its scope. The UBE is broader in coverage, and apart from providing free education at primary education level, it “stresses the inclusion of girls and women and a number of underserved groups: the poor, street and working children, rural and remote populations, nomads, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, minorities, refugees, and the disabled.”<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, it stresses the inclusion of school library projects in the program.

The UBE program with branches in every state inspired the initiation of several education projects all over Nigeria. For instance, many of the activities of NGOs in northern Nigeria are in collaboration with the UBE program, one of which is the SSMB project in Bauchi State.

Bauchi state government also provides several incentives to all students of the SSMB schools. The incentives included: uniforms, transport allowance, payment of tuition fees especially for students already in secondary schools, and a special feeding scheme aimed at attracting more students from low economic backgrounds to the SSMB schools. The government anticipated that

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<sup>125</sup> For more on UBE program, see: Adepoju and Fabiyi (undated), *Universal Basic Education in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects*, <http://uaps2007.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=70830>, accessed, 13.08.2011.

<sup>126</sup> See Unagha( 2008), *Implementing Universal Basic Education (UBE) through the Strategic Provision of School Library Services*, <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/amanze.htm>, accessed 13.08.2011

with the provision of these incentives, along with the availability of necessary facilities and structures, the schools would record up to 300% success before the end of the 1999-2003 administration.<sup>127</sup> Convincing as this program may look, it is however highly ambitious and unachievable within this time span, given the trends in which most programs in Nigeria are executed.

The Bauchi state background surveys on educational activities in the state and some of the statistics compiled by the Girls Education Project show a steady improvement in the performance of students of the special schools board from 2005 to 2007, although the document does not show what the performance of the students prior to this period was. The results of the NECO examinations written by students from these schools between 2005 and 2007 are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: NECO examination results in seven secondary schools (2005-2007).

Year	Total enrollment	5 Credits (incl. English & Maths)		4 Credits		3 Credits		2 Credits		1 Credit		Without Credits	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2005	1117	388	34.7	43	3.8	48	4.3	77	6.9	98	8.8	433	38.8
2006	1353	543	40.1	178	13.2	114	8.4	173	12.8	148	10.9	196	14.5
2007	1847	932	50.5	176	9.5	103	5.6	105	5.7	119	6.4	409	22.1

Source: Special Schools Management Board, Bauchi state.

As can be seen in Table 7, the percentage of students with five credits (including English and mathematics) increases progressively in the three years: 34.7% in 2005, 40.1% in 2006, and 50.5% in 2007. This could be taken as a sign of success, especially given that the percentage of pass without credits falls significantly from 38.8% in 2005 to 14.5% in 2006.

Teachers in the schools were also provided incentives such as better accommodation or rents subsidy, salary increases, transportation allowances, and regular promotions. The committee

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<sup>127</sup> Achieving 300% success in educational attainment within the Nigerian context is simply over ambitious, and can only be explained as political propaganda that does not really reflect the reality of the established structures.

identified the poor conditions of services in the past years as the major cause of brain drain from Bauchi State. With the provision of these incentives, the schools have recorded a huge increase in the number of teachers in the state. Table 8 recapitulates the number and qualification of teachers in special schools in 2008.

Table 8: Qualification of teachers in special schools by in 2008

Qualification	Total	Males	Females	Percentage
Master's degree	3	2	1	10.7
First degree with teaching qualification	7	6	1	25
Graduate without teaching qualification	1	1	-	3.5
(Higher National Diploma D)	2	2	-	7.1
Ordinary National Diploma	5	2	3	17.8
Literacy certificate	6	6	-	21.4
First School Leaving Certificate	4	4	-	14.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Special Schools Management Board, 2008

Although the table above is used by SSMB to show an improvement in student performance following the employment of new teachers, a critical look at the table shows that less than 40% of the teachers have been to the university. The bulk of the teachers hold only an Ordinary National Diploma (17.8% of 28), a Literacy Certificate (21.4%), and a First School Leaving Certificate (14.2%). This raises the question whether indeed the quality of education in SSMB improved especially given the qualification and number of staff that manage the school. It is also not clear how SSMB effectively improves on the quality of education in low-performing schools, since this is one of its main objectives. Also, a close examination of the table also shows that the 300% success expected was not achieved as the percentages of students who pass these subjects are still below 100%.

#### 4.4 Policy on Female Education

During the re-implementation process, Bauchi state had no specific policies on women's education. What the state set out to accomplish in the area of female education was the

formulation of programs, generally referred to as policies. Interestingly, none of these so-called policies was followed through to achieve the set goals, although frameworks and roadmaps were specifically designed to achieve specific goals or sets of goals.<sup>128</sup> According to Hajiya Fatiha Bappa, most of the attention given to female education from this period came from the wife of the governor of the state, who focused on the empowerment of women and the girl-child through education.<sup>129</sup> This she did in collaboration with UNICEF which had started a project on the promotion of women and girl-child education in six LGAs. With Governor Muazu's intervention through the pet-project of his wife, UNICEF's projects were extended to cover the 20 LGAs in Bauchi State. In each of the LGA, a girl-child coordinating project was started. The objective, Hajiya Fatiha Bappa, Ministry of Education, Bauchi State explains, was to campaign for and facilitate the enactment of a law in the Bauchi state House of Assembly that would make education compulsory for girls.<sup>130</sup>

The Bauchi State Ministry of Women Affairs also started a program for the empowerment of women in all the 6 senatorial districts<sup>131</sup> of the state. Through it, 6 women centers have been established since 2000, mainly for the teaching of skills such as sewing, knitting and adult education. This is in addition to the existing skills acquisition centers in the state.<sup>132</sup> Also in 2006, the Bauchi state government, through the Ministry of Education and the governor's wife's influence, initiated a program for married women in the form of education centers; an initiative which the successive first lady Amina Yuguda championed. According to Hajiya Fatiya Bappa, the target was married women who had dropped out of school.<sup>133</sup> During a visit to the center, I was told that women were admitted from the Junior Secondary School 1 to Senior Secondary School 2 depending on the level they were in when they dropped out of school. As in Zamfara and Kano, the program is dedicated to giving women the opportunity to continue with their education. Although the Ministry of Education claims it initiated and runs the program, Hakeem Abubakar Hamid of the Department of Statistics, Bauchi State Ministry of Education says in an

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<sup>128</sup> Interview with Bala Ahmed, Public Relations Officer, Bauchi State Sharia Commission, Bauchi, 14.03.2009

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Hajiya Fatiha Bappa, Ministry of Education, Bauchi State 12.03.2009

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Hajiya Fatiha Bappa, op.cit.

<sup>131</sup> Nigeria's state governments are divided into several senatorial districts; these are sub-units of the federal government. They represent the different local government in the state that combines to produce the senators to the Senate of the National Assembly.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Hajiya Fatiha Bappa, Ministry of Education, Bauchi State 12.02.09

<sup>133</sup> Information from the Ministry of Education Bauchi State, and interview with Hajiya Fatiya Bappa, op.cit.

interview that the establishment of the women centers was most likely the initiative of the UNICEF and not a direct project of the Bauchi state government.<sup>134</sup> For the most part, what the Bauchi State government did was to create awareness through the media and through its direct meet-the-people visits to rural areas. The government, as said earlier, had no specific policies on female education. Considering the impact of Sharia on women's education in Bauchi State, Hajiya Fatiha further notes that:

There is no clear distinction between pre-Sharia and now. Islam was already imbibed in the lives of most Muslims... so with the re-implementation you don't notice any difference... Sharia in Bauchi state is flexible, it hardly affected non-Muslims, and neither did it affect the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. It did not affect women's education negatively. More women want to be educated in Islam with the reimplementation of Sharia which is making them realize their rights... Islamic education has played positive roles on most Muslim women's lives. Both educations are important but while one is compulsory the other is optional. [However] personal conviction as Muslims makes most women opt for Islamic education above any form of education.<sup>135</sup>

The excerpt above contradicts earlier observations that the re-implementation of Sharia has had a huge impact on both Islamic education and western education in Bauchi State. As expressed by Hajiya Fatiha above, the re-implementation of Sharia in Bauchi state did not have a direct impact on women's access to western education. As he further notes, the re-implementation of Sharia in Bauchi state has rather made women to know their right to Islamic education since it is presented as obligatory for every Muslim and guarantees them eternal bliss in the hereafter (Talbani 1996:69).

As is the case in most Sharia states, there was a call for the Islamization of every aspect of society including education. Islamic education has, therefore, received great attention since the re-implementation of Sharia. The issue of Islamization of education has been extensively discussed by several authors in relation to the general concept of the Islamization of knowledge which can be viewed as an attempt at making Islam a relevant source of power and social control (Talbani 1996:66). Talbani (1996) particularly observes that the general objective of education according to the Islamic education theory is the actualization and perfection of all aspects of

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with Hakeem Abubakar Hamid, Department of Statistics, Bauchi State Ministry of Education 13.02.09

<sup>135</sup> Personal interview with Fatiya Bappa, op. cit.12.02.09

(spiritual) life, and since education or the acquisition of knowledge is commended by Prophet Mohammed, it is inseparable from the spiritual life of Muslims. He further argues that Muslims believe that as long as the Qur'an remains central to the educational curriculum, there will be guarantee that the Muslim *Ummah* will keep its integrity and authentic character (Talbani 1996:75).

On western education, the government also played a direct positive role in creating awareness among parents and husbands on the education of their daughters and wives respectively. The awareness methods used, as said earlier, included: television and radio programs, advertisements and personal visits to the people at local levels. The government found the need to inform people on the importance of western education for women because it had realized ignorance by most Muslim parents and husbands was a major stumbling block to efforts on the education of women.

Apart from awareness campaigns, the Bauchi state government also made western education free for all women and at all levels. The emphasis on Islamic education by the Sharia Commission of the state led to an increase in Islamic schools in which the curriculum Islamic schools was integrated into that of the formal (western) schools. Interest in education increased significantly among the Muslim community. Of all the efforts made by the government to promote education, one has been identified by the authorities of the Ministry of Education in Bauchi state as a direct outcome of Sharia: this is the creation of policies on female education, e.g. the Girls' Education Project described in the next section:

#### **4.4.1 Bauchi State: Girls' Education Project (GEP)**

In 2004, the federal government of Nigeria signed an agreement with the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom and UNICEF, to begin a joint project on the education of girls, called 'Girls' Education Project' (GEP). According to this agreement, and as further corroborated by Halima Jibril, Co-coordinator of the Girls Education Project in Katsina State, DFID funds the project while UNICEF is responsible for implementation it in collaboration with the Federal Government.<sup>136</sup> GEP was established in six states of northern

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril, Co-coordinator, Girls Education Project (GEP), Katsina State, 12.03.2007. See also UNICEF at a glance: Nigeria, [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria\\_39351.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria_39351.html) and United Nations Girls Education Initiative, <http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/nigeria.html>, accessed 09.08.2011

Nigeria namely: Niger, Sokoto, Katsina, Borno, Jigawa and Bauchi States. From Nasir's (2007: 78) study, these states fall in the category of states with low female literacy rates in Nigeria. According to the coordinator of the GEP project, Halima Jibril, "the main objective of the project is to bridge the gender gap in education between boys and girls in those states, and by extension, in the communities where the project is being implemented."<sup>137</sup> This objective is in line with United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 whose aim is "to achieve universal primary education with the target to ensure that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling"; and MDG 3 which is "to promote gender equality and empower women with the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and at all levels by 2015."<sup>138</sup>

In each state where GEP operates, there are 120 schools where UNICEF implements the GEP project. In all, the GEP project covers 720 schools in the six Sharia states including Bauchi. GEP is structured hierarchically from the national level, through the state and down to the LGAs.<sup>139</sup> At the national level, there is a steering committee headed by the Minister for Education. The committee is composed of commissioners from the six states, the Ministry of Women Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and representatives of some NGOs. At the State level, there is also a steering committee made up of each state's Ministry of Education, Primary Education Board, Agency for Mass Education, Ministry of Health, NGOs, Parents Teachers Associations, traditional rulers and religious leaders. There is also a Local Government steering committee, chaired by the education secretary of each LGA and with representatives from the same government agencies sitting in the state government committee. Finally, there is also the community level which consists of the school-based management committees composed mainly of community leaders and women and men from different professions. Their responsibility, Halima Jibril says, is to contribute to the development of the schools.<sup>140</sup>

According to the national coordinator of GEP, the involvement of different stakeholders in the GEP projects has attracted more students to the schools and has also ensured a consistent

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<sup>137</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril, 12.03.2007, op.cit.

<sup>138</sup> United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI): Millennium Development Goals, [http://www.ungei.org/whatisungei/index\\_2581.html](http://www.ungei.org/whatisungei/index_2581.html) accessed 09.08.2011

<sup>139</sup> See UNICEF: Nigeria, [http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/media\\_2254.html](http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/media_2254.html) , accessed 09.08.2011

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril, National coordinator of GEP, Katsina state, 12.03. 2007

attendance by girls and women in the states where GEP schools exist. Within one year of the establishment of GEP in the six focal states, enrolment figures increased by 10 to 15%, while gender disparity in the schools was reduced to from 36.6% in 2003 to 21.3% in 2005.<sup>141</sup> To properly understand the impact of the GEP project on female education in these states, the coordinator attributes the success to sensitization, mobilization and the role of traditional leaders:

Attendance has greatly increased in GEP schools and that is important because in the past, girls' attendance was poor because they are the ones who fetch water; so, they are not in schools. They are the hawkers; so, they are not in schools when they should be. They are the ones who go to take care of the sick in hospital. Many factors affect girls' attendance but now things have stabilized because of sensitization and mobilization, and particularly the role which traditional rulers have played in GEP. They have been the vanguards of girls' education in their communities.<sup>142</sup>

All stakeholders in the GEP project are responsible for sensitizing and mobilizing their communities on the project. The steering committees at the different levels have been instrumental in the success of GEP given that they took their own destinies into their hands right from the beginning of the project by mobilizing and sensitizing the communities as well as involving them in development plans for these schools. In some cases, Halima Jibril further states, the whole local community is involved in building classrooms and other infrastructure for the schools.

Besides the girls' primary schools created under the GEP project, most communities have also recruited child caregivers and have established nurseries in some of the schools to cater for their toddlers. Additionally, some communities organized literacy classes three times a week where women received formal education and also learned some basic domestic skills like sewing, knitting, and bakery. Other steps were taken at community level to achieve better results in female education. Halima Jibril tells us of the example of some communities in the Bakori local

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<sup>141</sup> Cambridge Education: Girls Education plus <http://www.camb-ed.com/International/Internationalpresence/ByCountry/NigeriaProjects/NigeriaGirlseducationplus.aspx>, accessed 09.08.2011

<sup>142</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril, op. cit. Katsina State, 12.03.07

government area of Katsina, where hawking by girls was prohibited during school hours to entice the girls to stay in school. This has given a boost to the progress of GEP.<sup>143</sup>

Although GEP focuses on six states, its main emphasis is on the rural areas which are more often marginalized in terms of policies on education, resulting in the wide gap that exists in the levels of education between urban and rural women in all the Sharia states. Articulating this fact Nasir (2007: 78) explains that a “fairly high percentage of Nigeria’s population live in ‘rural’ as opposed to ‘urban’ areas, as these terms are defined by the demographers.” She observes that the 1991 census put the rural population of Nigeria at 64%. The bulk of this rural population is in the north, where more women than men are found in the rural areas. Despite the population gap between the rural and urban areas, the Nigerian government tends to focus on the urban areas when providing educational and other opportunities for its citizens.

The coordinator of GEP emphasized that for some of the communities GEP is involved with, no girl, before the start of GEP, had successfully transited from primary to secondary school. This is because the primary schools in these communities are skeletons of what they ought to be due to the government’s lack of serious involvement in sensitization. According to Halima Jibril, most of these schools have not graduated a single girl to the secondary school level in 30 years, i.e. since the creation of government primary schools by the Universal Primary Education policy of the mid 1970s.<sup>144</sup> This state of affairs changed with the introduction of GEP, which has in the last years produced girls who have successfully entered college or secondary schools. The national coordinator of GEP further remarks that one of GEP’s basic roles in the communities is to assist in ensuring that girls who enroll in GEP schools have a successfully transition to secondary school level. For this to happen, it was necessary to involve the entire community whose full participation has helped to gradually change the situation of things in the rural areas.

Although the GEP project specifically targets rural Muslim areas of northern Nigeria, there is, however, no special emphasis on Islam in all of the schools. Since the GEP focused on the gender gap only in western education, its main objective has been to reduce or close it. In these rural areas, co-education was rejected, so when GEP started, there was no attempt to separate the pupils according by gender. Girls and boys continue to attend classes together in all the primary

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<sup>143</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril 12.03.2007 op.cit.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril 12.03.2007 op.cit.

schools, contrary to the current practice in most urban centers where the genders are kept apart. However, when pupils graduate from primary schools they are compelled to attend separate schools because they are already approaching puberty, and the authorities fear they might engage in sexual immorality.

Furthermore, with GEP's intervention, the government became more practical in issues of girl-child education in Bauchi state. The government involved the Local Government Councils by making them provide more classrooms for the pupils. The Councils participate both physically and financially in the construction of the school buildings, and are also involved in the recruitment of teachers who are paid by the government. Additionally, the Councils provide, in whole or part, other special incentives such as uniforms, first aid, and also often donate money which is used in funding some of the projects carried out by the schools.<sup>145</sup>

The coordinator of GEP also states that GEP officials have been seriously involved with the communities. Community leaders are usually approached directly and the objectives of the project are presented to them. From the initial stage of those contacts, most of the communities were suspicious of GEP's intervention. For them, GEP probably had a hidden agenda. However, with continuous persuasion from GEP, community leaders eventually accepted to allow GEP into their communities. The coordinator explains that:

There has been a deep-rooted fear about Western education because of the history of how education came into Nigeria. It is closely associated with Christian evangelism, and so many parents up till now do not want to be associated with Western education until you explain to them and let them see that there is nothing harmful about Western education, and we often refer to the Islamic injunction that said men and women should seek knowledge even if it will take you to China.... But, initially they had that aversion and were very suspicious until we started quoting for them verses from the Qur'anic texts.<sup>146</sup>

It is observable from the explanation above that GEP did not rush into commencing the project but took sufficient time to educate the community through their leaders on the need to tolerate western knowledge which was hitherto was a *haram* (forbidden) in some parts of northern Nigerian. Different methods and stages were adopted by Bauchi state to effectively sensitize the

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<sup>145</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril, 12.03.2007, op.cit., also personal observation

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Halima Jibril, 12.03.2007, op.cit.

populace about the activities of GEP. These are outlined in a GEP base line survey carried out in 120 schools in 2004 and include:

- 1) Advocacy, sensitization and mobilization to policy makers, traditional and religious leaders, women's groups and community members in the six GEP LGAs in 2005; creating awareness on the Girls Education Project.
- 2) State, LGAs and community-level GEP steering committees formed in 2005; providing a structure of GEP management.
- 3) School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) established in 60 schools in October, 2005. This started communities' involvement in the management of their schools.
- 4) Radio phone-in program (Radio Link) broadcast every Saturday from 9:15 to 10:15 am from 2005 to 2006.
- 5) National Television Authority (NTA) live discussions on GEP conducted every Saturday from 9:00 to 10:00am, from 2005 to 2006. It created more awareness on the GEP project.
- 6) Community mobilization on enrolment into GEP schools in 60 communities in November, 2005. It resulted in an increase in enrolment from 15,843 (40.5%) for girls in 2004/05 to 26,381 (44.5%) in 2006/07.
- 7) Meetings with the Girls' Education Committees at state, LGA and community levels for the promotion of the project. These meetings continue to date.
- 8) Drama performances on the disadvantages of illiteracy and the benefits of GEP were staged in all the GEP focus LGAs from 2005 to 2006.
- 9) Documentary concepts, jingles, posters and bill boards on GEP were prepared and distributed in 2006 and 2007. This resulted in wider acceptance of the project in the state.
- 10) Formation of school clubs started in 2005 in all the GEP LGAs.
- 11) Training and retraining sessions on gender mainstreaming and general hygiene for GEP consultants and teachers of GEP focus schools were organized in 2006.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Bauchi state Progress Report on Girls' Education Project (GEP) Phase I & II, 2005-2008. Source: Ministry of Education, Bauchi State.

From the details above, it can be claimed that the method adopted by GEP was carefully carried out; yielding positive results, especially in relation to the two year enrolment statistics of females presented in tables 9 and 10.

The statistics in table 9 shows male and female enrolment in 2006 and 2007 in some of the educational institutions in Bauchi state. Although the number of females in 2006 and 2007 is considerably high in some schools, there is also a decline in the number of females enrolled, for instance, in public primary schools in this same period. Also there seems to be a decline in the number of students who move from primary school to Junior Secondary School and also from Junior Secondary School to Senior Secondary School. For instance, in 2006, up to 511,737 female students were enrolled in public primary schools while only 22,161 were enrolled in JSS and 13, 899 in SSS. Although these figures increase in 2007 with 30,055 in JSS and 16,492 in SSS, primary schools enrolment rather falls to 352,330 in 2007. This clearly supports the remark made by the coordinator of GEP that female students' transition from primary to secondary schools in Bauchi has been a major problem.

Table 9: Bauchi State's Enrolments in Primary and Secondary Education.

Year	2006			2007		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
ECCD	14,973	12,717	27,688	25,299	19,732	45,031
Public Primary Schools	782,916	511,737	1,294,653	505,236	352,330	857,566
Private Primary Schools	-	-	-	48,366	19,423	67,789
Islamiyya Primary	67,509	38,708	106,217	98,674	77,860	176,534
Primary Special Needs	398	115	513	436	194	630
Nomadic Primary Schools	13,456	3,098	16,554	17,571	4,963	22,524
Women Centers	-	-	862	-	-	1,121
Literacy Centers	1,209	380	1,589	1,986	540	
JSS	42,184	22,161	64,345	54,475	30,055	84,530
JSS Special Needs	346	106	452	450	212	662
SSS	26,507	13,899	40,406	35,547	16,492	-

Source: Ministry of Education Bauchi State

One of the positive impacts of GEP on communities in Bauchi state is the establishment of Mother's Clubs which later gave birth to the establishment of Women Continuing Education Centers within the auspices of GEP.<sup>148</sup> A total number of 120 mothers clubs were established with support from UNICEF in March 2007. A number of such clubs located in Kaloma, Baba and Kirfi/Cheledi communities have organized themselves to acquire soft skills in the production of pomade, processing of groundnuts (the most popular economic commodity in northern Nigeria) and rice processing. These were ways in which women have been able to organize themselves for economic empowerments which often help them to support their children's academic pursuit. With the support of UNICEF, the women at the mothers club have been able to acquire pieces of land for the construction of women centers in the following communities: Guyaba, Baba and Bara in Kirfi LGA; Fjguji, Isawa, Giade, Dagauda, Dambam North and Jalam in Dambam LGA; Garin Abare in Darazo LGA; Wandi and Badel in Dass LGA and Sakwa and Tashena in Zaki LGA. The efforts of the mothers club has set the pace for both the establishment of some women centers as well as increased interest in girl's education by women's groups.<sup>149</sup> For instance, the enrolment figure in the table below shows an increase in female enrolment between 2004 and 2006 in 6 LGAs. Also the activities of other women's group such as the FOMWAN are pointers to the increased involvement of women's groups in female education in northern Nigeria.

Table 10: Total yearly enrolment according to gender in Zaki, Dass, Kirfi Darazo Dambam, Guyaba LGAs.

Year	Total enrolment	Males	Females
2004-2005	38,996	21,752	17,244
2005-2006	48,442	26,687	21,755
2006-2007	59,290	31,417	27,873
Total	146728	79856	66872

Source: Bauchi State progress report on Girls Education Project

The more recent statistics on enrolment in GEP schools in Bauchi state in table 10 indicates a

<sup>148</sup> Bauchi state progress report on girls education project (GEP), Phase I and II, 2005-2008. Data from Bauchi state Ministry of Education Bauchi.

<sup>149</sup> Bauchi State progress report on Girls Education Project, op.cit.

qualitative improvement in GEP schools across the state, which could be worth emulating by other Sharia states such as Zamfara and Kano. In Zamfara, for instance, some programs on female education were haphazardly designed and ineffectively implemented. An example of this is the separation of the sexes and the wearing of *hijab* by girls which were hurriedly enforced on primary school girls. Although the policy makers claim that the system has led to an increase in enrolment figures in states like Zamfara, it is still unclear whether such programs were able to inculcate in the minds of members of these communities the need to tolerate other forms of knowledge and the cultures that bear them. Furthermore, the intervention of organizations such as the UNICEF and DFID has greatly helped improve education in Bauchi.

The governors' wife of Bauchi and other focus states have also been highly influential in ensuring that the projects receive the needed support from the state governments. These women usually serve as facilitators for NGOs, but more often use their powers as first lady to mobilize resources and public support for female education projects. Governors' wives, though not elected officials of states, have since the 1990s been invested with symbolic power (Bourdieu 1992: 101) which frequently translates into economic power. They function as gate-keepers to their husbands and a dense network of economically powerful state actors. These women and their hired collaborators often want to be seen to be useful and productive actors in the society. They position themselves as prominent power players who use their activities in the education sector as platforms for a wider engagement in society. As mentioned above, their activities, which are invested with symbolic capital, can be explained within the framework of Bourdieu's symbolic power. Symbolic capital according to Bourdieu includes prestige, honor and attention and confers different forms of power which the individual or group wields over the field and over the regularities and rules which define the ordinary functioning of a field (Bourdieu 1992: 101). Symbolic capital also legitimizes the actions of people, by approving those with more capital while often disapproving of those who hold less capital, especially when it leads to a change of disposition.

#### **4.4.2 Women Continuing Education Center**

According to Umezulke and Afemikhe (2007), the phenomenon of Women Centers has a long history in northern Nigeria.<sup>150</sup> These centers have been established by several northern states within the scope of the country's Adult Education Program and the national policy on education. Like in many other northern states, the existence of Women Centers and their activities in Bauchi cannot be over emphasized. However, with the re-introduction of Sharia, the notion of Women Centers has seen a new conception which is the creation of Women Continuing Education Centers. This raises questions such as, what are these centers and what do they offer? Initially, and as already explained in chapter 3, the majority of Women Centers only taught crafts and skills acquisition (Umezulke and Afemikhe 2007: 5) to women. The skills usually taught were knitting, sewing and baking and the aim was to empower the women. Of course, the authorization of their husbands was sought for.

With the re-implementation of Sharia, however, many of these centers were converted into special centers, i.e. WCECs, where women are taught western education alongside other skills, and also Islamic subjects in line with the Islamization Project of the Sharia governments. The main characteristics of these centers is that the students enrolled are exclusively married women who had dropped out of school in order to get married and who could not continue due to constraints mostly related to the practice of seclusion. Marital status, therefore, is a requirement for admission into these new women centers. As in Zamfara and Kano studied in chapter 3, the WCECs in Bauchi are sponsored by the government and are thus free for the women. The centers have mainly female teachers with only a few male teachers.

In Bauchi state, six women centers exist mainly as adult centers for both skills acquisition and formal education. Some of them were left without proper funding and monitoring by previous administrations. However, since 1999 when Sharia was re-implemented they have been taken over by the Sharia governments. The main objective of the government's action is to create an 'ideal' educational institution where women learn freely and conveniently. These efforts led to the establishment and expansion of WCECs in Bauchi state, where women attend classes: one of

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<sup>150</sup> See Umezulke and Afemikhe (2007), *Alternative Assessment and Women Education in Nigeria*, A paper presented at the 33rd Annual Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment held at Baku, Azerbaijan September 16. 21. 2007, [http://www.iaea.info/documents/paper\\_1162b40a8.pdf](http://www.iaea.info/documents/paper_1162b40a8.pdf) accessed 24.06.2011

these centers in Bauchi state namely, Women Secondary School as some of them are called is discussed below:

#### **4.4.3 Bauchi State Women Secondary School**

One of the efforts of the first lady of Bauchi state in the domain of women's education was the creation of a women's secondary school within an existing Government Girl's College Bauchi in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The aim of this school is similar to that of the WCECs, i.e. offering wives and mothers who dropped out of school for marital and recreational reasons the opportunity to continue education at the secondary school level. Hajija Fatiya Bappa, the Coordinator, Girl-Child Education/HIV/AIDS, Bauchi State Ministry of Education, articulates below how the Women Centers in Bauchi were established and how they function. According to her:

Six women centers exist in three senatorial districts of Bauchi under the auspices of the Ministry for Women Affairs of the state. The centers are responsible for educating women in vocational training; in sewing, knitting, cooking, and the likes.... Recently the Ministry of Education in Bauchi state initiated what is called the 'Married Women Program' which is a normal school. This is for groups of married women, who by virtue of marriage or other reasons could not complete their education. They enroll in Junior Secondary School 1 to Junior Secondary School 3. This has given them the opportunity and chance to come back for their education.... All these efforts were in realization of the importance of women's education.... The school was in existence in [within the premises of] Government Girls' College Bauchi... for women only.... However, the school was separated from the normal girls' school. Government felt that since these women are married, it is better to separate them from the small girls so that they will have their place separate from the girls.... At the moment, they operate as separate schools for [married] women only.<sup>151</sup>

The description above reveals the importance that the state government places on the Women Continuing Education Centers. Although the Center has been in existence for quite some time as part of Federal Government College (FGC) Bauchi, it has since 2007 been separated from FGC in a bid to offer married women a unique atmosphere where they can acquire formal education

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<sup>151</sup> Interview with Hajija Bappa, Ministry of Education Bauchi State, op.cit.

among their peers. For this reason, the Women Center at FGC was upgraded into a regular secondary school for learning of conventional subjects as in other formal government schools.

In an interview with Hauwa Useini, the principal of Women Secondary School Bauchi, she reveals that in the period 2007/2008, 50 women were admitted into the school and have since begun having lectures.<sup>152</sup> She notes that the school operates the formal system and offers the same subjects offered in other public schools. What differentiates the school from the formal schools, however, is the fact that it is exclusively for married women. The principal, like most other state official, confirms this exclusionary system is convenient and effective for married women who wish to continue with their studies. Additionally, the Women Secondary School also allows the women to dress responsibly as married women according to the local culture and religious ethics. The pressure of dressing like young girls in other schools is absent.

In spite of these peculiarities, the Women Secondary School was still in the early stage of formation when we visited it in early 2009 for interviews with the students. Only a few women were available and most of them were still at the level of registration. The teachers in these schools are both males and females.<sup>153</sup> Asked how the women cope with having male teachers, the principal of the women center feels that the state tertiary educational institutions produces very few female teachers with the basic minimum teacher training requirement and so it is very difficult to avoid being taught by male teachers.

Programs run by the school include vocational skills and basic literacy, and are aimed at empowering women as well as preparing them for admission in tertiary institutions. To what extent such a separate system of education allows women continue their education after graduating from these centers is one of the questions raised and discussed in chapter six. However, from my observation of the learning process at the centers, it seems effective learning is handicapped by the lack of basic facilities such adequate classrooms, basic educational equipments and adequate teachers which other schools have.

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Mairo Bawa, (pseudo name), Principal, WCEC Bauchi state, 12.02.2009

<sup>153</sup> A visit and observation of the school and interaction with a few of the students was conducted by the researcher on the 12. 02.2009. Formal interviews with the students about their experiences in the school were not possible because the students were still in the early stage of registration and lectures had not yet begun. However, they talked about their desire to continue with their studies after spending many years out of school due to early marriage.

## 4.5 The Impact of Sharia

The respondents interviewed in Bauchi state unanimously agreed that the Sharia drafting committees did not make any direct changes to the Ministry of Education's educational policies that were already in place and run by the National Policy on Education when Sharia was re-implemented in 1999. Nevertheless, they also explained that a few of the programs initiated by the Sharia Commission on Islamic education were carried out in collaboration with the Bauchi state government.

However, for the Public Relations Officer of the Bauchi State Sharia Commission, the Sharia government in Bauchi state has had a considerable impact on women's education. Also, since one of the main objectives of the re-implementation of Sharia has been to increase Islamic learning in the state, the Sharia Commission of Bauchi took several steps to improve on Islamic education in the state. Here, the Commission created an Education Department to deal strictly Islamic education and to provide awareness particularly on women educational issues.<sup>154</sup> The main aim was to ensure that the general public was enlightened on issues relating to education in general and the benefit of allowing children especially female children to be educated. A particular point to note here is that the management of the Sharia Commission in Bauchi state asserts that they have realized that the state lacked female nurses in the state general hospitals. To fill this gap, it pleaded with parents to send their girls to nursing schools, so they could occupy such positions in the near future.<sup>155</sup> It is significant to note that earlier in the history of female education in several northern states, subjects such as personal hygiene; home management, child welfare, and cookery in schools were among the most accepted subjects for women. At this period, it was expected that elite girls study to become good wives for educated sons of emirs (Tibenderana 1985: 95-96). However, with the current emphasis is not mainly on producing women wives but women who would impact on their society by occupying certain positions in hospitals, especially where the medical field is saturated with men.

Today, contrary to the past, women can now specialize in various other subjects both in the sciences and the humanities, even though, some of the Sharia Commissions specify special

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with the Public Relations Officer, Bauchi State Sharia Commission Bauchi, op.cit

<sup>155</sup> Interview with the Public Relations Officer, Bauchi State Sharia Commission Bauchi, op.cit

subjects for women such as nursing, teaching, and vocational skills. These latter subjects are considered suitable for women whose major responsibilities, according to the predominantly Islamic cultures in the north, are in the domestic sphere.

Many of the women in WCEC, for example, say they are contented with being part of the government program on total separation of (married) women from men and young girls even when these programs show no prospect of completely liberating them from perpetual separation. In light of the apparent complicity of women in their segregated lifestyle and secluded education, we could make allusion to Bourdieu's premise that misrecognition often arises where subordination to systems are reinforced by values accepted as valid (Bourdieu 2000: 242-243). The women's misrecognition of the situation makes them believe the new centers created by the Sharia governments are a radical transformation of political and economic power relations. By accepting the values that keep them segregated, secluded and excluded from much of public life, they directly and indirectly perpetuate the structures of subordination and disempowerment.

Apart from the general subjects, the Sharia commission in Bauchi state also stresses on Islam and Islamic subjects. Mallam Bala, the public relations officer of the Bauchi state Sharia Commission, believes that Islam encompasses all forms of knowledge, and once women seek Islamic education, in doing so, they also acquire other forms of knowledge. In a similar vein, Talbani (1996:69) observes that according to the general discourse of knowledge in most Islamic societies, the main objective of education is the attainment of bliss through religious knowledge. In line with such arguments, the Bauchi state government has provided women who had only Islamic education the opportunity to further their studies in the field of nursing. Mallam Balla argues that because many of them already possess Islamic education, the opportunity that came with the re-implementation of Sharia was an eye-opener for many to go back to school.

One of the most important impacts of Sharia on education in Bauchi state is the creation of private Qur'anic and Islamiyyah schools. A Bauchi state document titled *Background Studies of Education in Bauchi* produced by the Ministry of Education in 2008 shows that Bauchi is one of the leading states in Nigeria in terms of the number of both Islamiyyah and Qur'anic schools. It also shows that so far there are 4,403 Qur'anic schools and 2,340 Islamiyyah schools in the 20 LGAs of the state. The document is divided into two strands namely: Formal and Non-Formal. The Formal Sector comprises of schools that deal with the 3Rs, i.e. reading, writing and

arithmetic or core subjects such as Mathematics, English, Social Studies Hygiene and Sanitation, while the Non-Formal comprises of purely Arabic and traditional Qur'anic schools.<sup>156</sup> In most cases, they are all non-formal in their methods of teaching. They emphasize on what they refer to as the 'each-one teach one' method and Qur'anic memorization. All of these apply to both Arabic and traditional Qur'anic learning which takes place outside the classrooms (usually in the home of a *mallam*).<sup>157</sup> The main objectives of Islamiyyah Schools and the government of Bauchi state's involvement with these schools since the re-implementation of Sharia are based on the following:

- 1) The yearnings and aspirations of the communities and the interests of individuals to help in propagating Islam.
- 2) Imparting knowledge of Islam to children and youths ;
- 3) Orienting citizens on moral education.
- 4) Assisting disciplined and respectful members of the community.
- 5) Reducing the illiteracy rate of the state and the nation at large.<sup>158</sup>

Although John Paden (2002: 1) holds that Bauchi state is predominantly Muslim, there is a large population of non-Muslims in the state. This diverse demographic character of Bauchi state affected the way Sharia was implemented. It also influenced a number of the educational programs implemented by the Sharia Commission. Due to the religious diversity of the state, the towns with more Muslims are often considered as being more sensitive to issues of male-female separation. The public relations officer of the Sharia Commission breaks the state, on the basis of religion, into what he calls the gender sensitive and non-gender sensitive parts. This division takes into account the differences in power relations according to gender. He notes that LGAs with high Muslim populations and where the Islamization Project of the government is most effective are considered by the government as gender sensitive local governments. In such areas, the establishment of Islamiyya schools is highly acceptable, especially for the females. For instance in Zaki LGA, also considered a gender sensitive area, the establishment of Islamiyya schools attracted more girls than boys, i.e. 10,040 girls as opposed to 3,200 males. This indicates

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<sup>156</sup> Bauchi State Ministry of Education, background studies on education in Bauchi state

<sup>157</sup> Bauchi State Ministry of Education, background studies on education in Bauchi state, op.cit.

<sup>158</sup> Bauchi State Ministry of education, background studies on education in Bauchi state op.cit.

that religious schools are normally preferred by parents for girls than for boys. One of the main arguments for insisting that women and girls receive Islamic education is that women are considered by northern Nigerian Muslims as well as in some Islamic communities as custodians of knowledge (Kassam 1996: 113). By virtue of their being mothers they are expected to serve as first teachers to their children before they ever leave home in search of some other forms of knowledge. Although this view is not hegemonic among all Muslims, most Muslims in northern Nigeria apparently subscribe to it and have kept their women from attending western schools, as already discussed extensively in chapter 3.

The subject of the *hijab* as an appropriate mode of dressing for women has been topical too. Nasir (2007:90) argues that women's mode of dressing was not a problem in northern Nigeria until the mid 1970s and the 1980s when the expansion of university education in north brought females from different cultural backgrounds with diverse modern modes of dressing which led to negative reactions by conservative Muslim males. She further observes that such reactions became a part of the political Islamic expansion in northern Nigeria at this period. The rise in political Islam brought into existence the Izala Movement led by Sheikh Ismaila Idris ( 1936-2000) and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria led by Ibrahim Yaqoub Zaqaqi; both having different opinions about Muslim women's dressing (Nasir 207: 91). These trends continued until the re-implementation of Sharia in Northern Nigeria when some states made it part of their policy to enforce the wearing of *hijab* by Muslim females in public places including public schools.

For instance, in February 2004, Zamfara State government introduced a new dress code for female participants in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); and in 2005 the government also introduced a new dress code for the states' cultural troupe. The *hisbah* board was afterwards charged with the responsibility of arresting and prosecuting women who dressed indecently. Similarly, in March 2003, Kano State directed all tertiary institutions to enforce appropriate dress codes for female students or face the wrath of the *hisbah* (Nasir 2007:107). Responding to questions on the impact of Sharia on women's lives in general, the Public Relations Officer of the Sharia Commission in Bauchi notes that:

As far a Bauchi state is concerned a lot of transformation has taken place in the lives of women. First and foremost, the way they dress; in the past before the

reintroduction, you can hardly recognize who is who but with the reintroduction it makes some difference. The moment you see a Muslim woman you really recognize she is a Muslim because of the way they dress. Going to our schools now you must have observed most of our female students have *hijab* to cover their whole body. In the past it was not so...but with the introduction of Sharia we made a write up to the Ministry of Education and they now understand our position.... Our wives, before they leave the house they now dress decently. In fact, Sharia has impacted positively in their lives.<sup>159</sup>

The issue of dress code has been prioritized in Bauchi state since the reintroduction of Sharia. A special program called “*Gyara Kayanka*” (Hausa: Adjust your dress) was set up in Bauchi mainly to correct wrong dressing by women and girls in schools as well as nurses in health institutions. The program is controlled by the *hisbah* department of the Sharia Commission inform who enlighten people about the proper Islamic dress code authorized by the Islamization project. The *hisbah* was authorized to flog women who dressed against the dressing code. In some cases, public servants are said to have been dismissed from work for not dressing properly. As narrated by Bolaji (2009: 10) 12 female nurses in Azare, Bauchi state were dismissed from their jobs for not wearing the Sharia approved uniform for female nurses in state. Bolaji observes that although the Sharia sanctions were meant to apply only to Muslims, in most cases they also affect non-Muslims. Such transformation somehow authenticates Sharia and gives an upper hand to religiously-based discriminations against non-Muslim groups particularly Christians.

Another area in which the re-implementation process in Bauchi impacted on the lives of women is in the area of public transportation.<sup>160</sup> In Bauchi state, Mohammed Bala, Public Relations Officer of the Sharia Commission further explains, the *Gyara Kayanka* Committee was responsible for ensuring that women do not use the same public transport with men, since they claim, unacceptable according to their interpretation of Sharia. The *hisbah* was constantly deployed on streets and highways to reinforce these restrictions and to punish the offenders who broke the law. Since it was implemented in the early 2000s, several woman have been arrested while many of them have had to trek long distances in a bid to avoid sitting in the same buses with men. These restrictions have had adverse effects on the lives of women and have limited their free movement and participation in the public domain.

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with Mohammed Bala, Public Relations Officer, Sharia Commission, Bauchi, Bauchi State, 14.02.2009

<sup>160</sup> Interview Mohammed Bala, 14.03.2009, op.cit.

## 4.6 Kaduna State

Kaduna state is located in North-western geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It share borders with Zamfara, Katsina, Niger, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, and Plateau states. It lies to the south of Abuja, capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The city was founded by the British as far back as 1913, and was called Kaduna In 1917; Kaduna became the capital of the northern region. It continued to be capital even after British colonialism ended in 1960. In 1976, it was renamed Kaduna province by General Murtala Mohammed and elevated to the level of a state along with six other regions. It comprised two provinces: Zaria and Katsina. In 1987, the Katsina province became Katsina state while the Zaria province became what is today Kaduna State. The state is known as Nigeria's cultural melting point due to its diverse ethnic composition which includes, among others, Hausa, Fulani, Kadara, Kagoro, Bajju, Jaba, Kataf Gbagi and Kurama, Igbo, and Yoruba. According to the 2006 census, the population of Kaduna state is 6 million. Of this, 3.1 million (51.6%) are males and 2.9 million (48.4%) females.

Economically, Kaduna state is one of the major commercial cities in Nigeria, second only to Kano state.<sup>161</sup> It has many industries and factories, e.g. textile factories, beer breweries, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) refinery. The Kaduna International Airport and the major rail terminal linking states like Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt make Kaduna State both a local and international melting pot of trade and culture. It has one of the biggest international trade fair complexes in the country which attracts both national and international investors every year.<sup>162</sup>

Politically, Kaduna state is made up of 23 LGAs and 32 emirate councils. The state has had several military and civilian governors and administrators. Since 2011, it is governed by Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Yakowa stepped into the seat of governor in 2011 when the elected governor, Namandi Sambo was appointed vice president of the country. In the 2009-2012 legislative periods, Kaduna state is represented in the National House of Assembly by 15 Members Parliaments and three senators representing the different constituencies of the state.

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<sup>161</sup> Kaduna State Economic Empowerment and Development strategy- KADSEEDS pp5

<sup>162</sup> KADSEEDS op.cit.

## **4.7 Education**

Kaduna state is often referred to in Nigeria as the center of learning because it is host to many government educational institutions, among them, the Nigerian Defense Academy, Federal Training Center, and National Board for Technical Education, National Primary Education Commission, and the famous Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Like in the other states investigated here, in Kaduna state education is managed by the Kaduna state Ministry of Education which is made up of departments and agencies. According to the KADSEEDS document produced in 2004, Kaduna state had 2,842 public primary schools and 286 secondary schools. For the state, these schools are insufficient considering the population of the state and the huge demand for education by the local communities triggered by the introduction of the Universal Basic Education in 1999 which offers free primary education for all Nigerians.

Since 1999 with the introduction of the UBE scheme, there has been a significant increase in enrolment in primary schools in the state. Informed by the universally accepted fact that education is the storehouse of wealth, Kaduna state government made a huge investment in the education ministry of the state by budgeting up to 4.9 billion Naira in 2003 and 3.9 billion Naira in 2004 to tackle the problem of inadequate financing of the education sector which is noted as the major factor in the poor implementation of several programs in the state.<sup>163</sup> KADSEEDS' main task is to initiate programs that ease problems facing the education sector. These problems include low quality of education, resulting to poor examination results by students or pupils, inadequate teaching and administrative staff, and lack of basic educational facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and libraries.

## **4.8 Educational Policies**

Apart from the National Policy on Education introduced nation-wide, Kaduna state has not created any new educational policies since the re-implementation of Sharia in 1999. However, like the other states already discussed, Kaduna state has undergone a lot of transformation in the domain of education since 1999. This is evident in the number of new schools established between 1999 and 2006 (see table 11).

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<sup>163</sup> KADSEEDS op.cit.pp79

Apart from the establishment of new schools, other initiatives were undertaken by the state government, for example, the provision of incentives for students especially girls. For instance, in some of the new schools, the state government provided subsidies for schools fees and feeding. Other incentives in form of scholarships are given to students who perform well. Kaduna state also enforces what it calls the non-withdrawal policy, which upholds that young girls must remain in school until graduation.<sup>164</sup> In an interview with the Director of Science, Ministry of Science and Technology, Kaduna state in 2008, he insisted the policy is intended to discourage early, culturally and religiously authorized marriages that force the girls to interrupt their studies.

From table 11, a total of 138 new junior secondary schools were established in Kaduna between 1999 and 2006. It demonstrates a quantitative increase in educational facilities during the peak of Sharia re-implementation. However, the official position of state functionaries is that the increase is unrelated to the re-implementation of Sharia but to the autonomy that comes with democratic governments. It may be argued that it is this autonomy that authenticated the expansion of Sharia. From this perspective, there is, therefore, a strong link between the implementation of Sharia and the expansion of the educational sub-sector.

Table 11: New schools created in Kaduna State between 1999 and 2006

Year	Number of new schools	Level
1999	1	Junior secondary ( JSS)
2000	2	JSS
2001	35	JSS
2002	28	JSS
2003	22	JSS
2004	0	JSS
2005	30	JSS
2006	58	JSS
Total	138	

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Kaduna state.

In line with the Federal Constitution and the National Policy on Education, state governments institute their own programs within primary and secondary schools without restriction. Contrary

<sup>164</sup> Interview with the Director, Science, Ministry of Science and Technology, Kaduna state 15.08.2008

to Kano and Zamfara states which stress that the implementation of certain programs was an offshoot of the re-implementation of Sharia, Kaduna rather insists that the impact of the return to democracy was mainly responsible for the educational transformations in the State. Articulating this point, Mohammed Sani in Kaduna, notes that:

Parents continually send their children to school just like they did before the re-implementation of Sharia.... The government did not make any impact in terms of making people to be Sharia-aware because of the volatility of the state.... So, the government did not encourage saying 'these things (the new schools) came because of Sharia', 'we are creating this because Sharia has come to the state, etc'. Because we don't want to create a situation whereby the other people that are non-Sharia practitioners will think we are propagating something different ..., therefore, the government of Kaduna did not specify policies to say this is for Sharia and non-Sharia.<sup>165</sup>

According to Mohammed Sani, the state does not differentiate between Sharia and non-Sharia policies because of the mixed religious and ethnic composition of the state. However, he is unequivocal when he says none of the educational programs mentioned above can be directly related to the re-implementation of Sharia in Kaduna state as it was the case in Kano and Zamfara states. Further explaining why these programs are unrelated to Sharia, Mohammed Sani adds that:

Before 1999, people were lax because of the system we had in place which was not democratic. So, the democratic system has brought a lot of changes in it in terms of allowing people to have a say...it was the democratic system that gave us the opportunity to ask government for certain things.... The coming of democracy has given some improvement in teachers' welfare, incentives by government for schools which has attracted more people to schools than during the military regime.... Sharia is not felt strongly in Kaduna to the point where it can bring such changes in policies.

In a nutshell, it is the democratic dispensation inaugurated in May 1999 when military rule ended that gave impetus to the expansion of Sharia, and in the perspective of Mohammed Sani above, the incentives introduced by the democratic government in the state are an important motor in driving up the enrolment in primary and secondary schools as well as the number of new schools created. Statistics from the ministry of education in Kaduna State show a steady increase in the

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<sup>165</sup> Mohammed Sani, Kaduna, 14.08.2008

number of new schools founded between 1999 and 2006 as well as a steady increase in enrolment figures.

#### **4.9 Changes in Women's Education**

In Kaduna state, the impact of Sharia has not brought drastic changes in policies regarding women's education. To a large extent, what the Kaduna State government has done since the re-implementation of Sharia has been limited to creating awareness about the importance of Western education and the need for women to be educated. This, Sani Says, has been through workshops organized by the Sharia Commission of Kaduna.<sup>166</sup> However, as Mohammed Sani also explains, women's interest in education, especially religious education, increased after the re-introduction of Sharia:

Most women realized that with the coming of Sharia they need to be educated in terms of the religion. So, most females now are trying as much as possible to go to the Islamic schools.... The governor's wife thought of reforming these schools, then decided to raise the standard of such schools so that it will not look as if they are in that archaic system of education. So with that, those women who go to such schools had their syllabus changed by incorporating the Western knowledge into the Islamic system... So, women realized they can go to such schools not only for Islamic knowledge but for a little bit of Western knowledge as well... Most of the Islamic schools now are female oriented; most of the Islamiyyah schools are populated with women...why because of the coming of democracy and because it is what the Sharia orientation came with.

The new system of Islamic schools which incorporate Western knowledge, Sani insists above gives Islamic education a modern flare which attracts more women to it. Sani argues that this style of education has lifted the standard of most Islamiyyah schools in Kaduna state. Umar (2004:104) equally observes that the incorporation of both Islamic learning and Western/modern education in the curricula of most schools in northern Nigeria today has facilitated Muslim women's access to both types of education since they constitute a large percentage of those attending such mixed schools. The increase in the number of women attending these schools could be attributed to the Islamization process which introduced separate secondary schools for females and males, improved on such schools in infrastructure and social and financial

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<sup>166</sup> Interview with Mohammed Sani 14.08.2008

incentives, and also created two women-schools in Kaduna state. Among these changes, the separation of the sexes is a major factor in the increase in the enrolment of women in Islamiyya schools in the state.

One of Kaduna government's assistance in the education of women in Kaduna State has been through the partial payment of school fees for all women attending Islamiyya schools. An important role played by the government in implementing rules and regulations which fall in line with the Islamization project has been the enforcement of the wearing of *hijab* by all Muslim females in public schools in some parts of Kaduna State. The wearing of the *hijab* was made obligatory for all Muslim women and girls in most of the Sharia states in northern Nigeria.

#### **4.10 Kaduna State Women Centers**

Several women centers exist in Kaduna State. According to Mohammed Sani interviewed in 2008, two of those centers are in Ungwan Sarki and Barnawa settlements of Kaduna metropolis. Both are major townships and are important for the establishment of such centers. Explaining how these centers were turned into attractive institutions of learning for women, Mohammed Sani makes the following comments:

What they did is, within this Islamic system, they introduced English and Arithmetic. So, with English and Arithmetic now, it has created an avenue whereby females that are at home and were not thinking there would be a day that they would read English and Arithmetic, now realize...they can. So, I remember the government stepped in and prepared what we call Junior WAEC [West African Examination Council], JSCE [Junior Secondary Certificate Examination]. So, this JSCE has been extended to those Islamic schools because it is prepared by the Exam Resource Center of the state. Because most of the Islamic education schools are female oriented, most of the schools you see Islamiyya, married women go in are usually female.

From what Sani says here, it is clear that most Islamic schools in northern Nigeria are female oriented. This has its starting place from the history of resistance to Western education in northern Nigeria as explained in earlier chapters. It is pertinent to state here that culture played a vital role in the earlier resistance to women's education in the past. Although it is generally believed that Islam permits the education of both sexes, some cultural practices in the northern states which have been in place since the pre-colonial period have perpetually hampered

women's access to education as noted by many earlier scholars, e.g. Knipp (1987), Clarke (1978), Csapo (1981), and Umar (2001, 2004).

Recent efforts made by the government of Kaduna state to provide equal opportunities for women and men have still met with some resistance as women are compelled to attend the type of schools that provide the acceptable Islamic atmosphere which most Western schools do not provide. These schools combine formal education (Western) curriculums with Islamic education curriculums of the Islamiyya and Qur'anic schools. This form of education started in the late 1970s. It was at this time in the history of education then *madrassa* schools for women were established for the first time.<sup>167</sup> According to Umar (2004), following the collapse of Nigeria's educational system in the 1980s new trends of *madrassa* schools emerged in northern Nigeria. As a result, throughout the 1980s and 1990s "regular sets of female students were routinely admitted into the several dozen *madrassas* that were established by the state governments, religious associations and wealthy individual patrons" (Umar 2004: 102).

As will also be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the Izala Movement has also played a significant role in the development of what some scholars refer to as new form of Islamic schools (Umar 2001: 153-154). The Izala Movement has particularly championed the cause of women's access to education. Having been influenced by what Sheikh Uman Dan Fodio stood for, the Izala believe it is a lesser sin to allow women receive education along with men than to leave them in total ignorance. Hence they have succeeded in schools which have attracts thousands of women across northern Nigeria. The origin of such education and its impact on Muslim women is discussed in Chapter five.

In conclusion, many of the women centers that existed in the pre-Sharia times were not very useful because they provided mainly domestic skills training with little emphasis on large scale empowerment of women. In spite of the fact that they only provided women with menial skills, empowerment opportunities of women in northern Nigeria are still very few, and those offered hardly qualify women to compete socio-politically and economically in the contemporary world.

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<sup>167</sup> For more on the development of *madrassas* in Nigeria see Mohammed S. Umar, Mass Islamic education and Emergence of Female 'ulama' in Northern Nigeria: Backgrounds, Trends and Consequences. Reese S. Scott, The Transmission of learning in Islamic Africa, 2004 pp 99-119.

This chapter has discussed the various programs introduced in Bauchi and Kaduna states since the re-implementation of Sharia. The chapter has shown that in Bauchi and Kaduna states, the impact of Sharia on education in general and female education in particular is not as big as in Kano and Zamfara states. Several programs that are directly related to western education and especially female education were unrelated to the implementation of Sharia. However, the Sharia Commissions of these states had programs on Islamic education and, in some cases; they collaborated with the state governments in implementing some of the programs. From the foregoing, it is evident that the emphasis on Sharianization/Islamization of the society as proclaimed by proponents of Sharia received less popularity in Kaduna and Bauchi States due mainly to the fact that Kaduna and Bauchi state governments were very sensitive to ensuring stability of their state, especially since both states share similar histories of ethno-religious instabilities.

## Chapter Five

### Impact of Religious Organizations on Women's Education and Some Contemporary Muslim Views on Women's Education in Northern Nigeria

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the roles of certain religious organizations in unraveling the crisis of women's education in northern Nigeria. Particularly, it focuses on Islamic organizations such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Organization in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the *Jama't Izalat al Bid'a Wa Iqamat as Sunnah* also known as the Izala movement who have remained the most influential religious organizations propagating women's education not only in northern Nigeria but in the entire country. FOMWAN and Izala have been selected as important to this study because they are mainly the few Islamic religious organizations with specific policies on education with particular emphasis on the education of women. Islamic bodies such as the Izala movement and the FOMWAN have been instrumental in the establishment of primary, secondary and schools of higher learning in Nigeria.

The Izala, existing in most of the Sharia states, has been very active in the establishment of schools and hospitals, thereby providing both medical and educational services to the populace. Similarly, Christian missionary activities in Nigeria are characterized by the establishment of schools and hospitals. During the colonial period they provided social services as a means towards proselytizing the people. Recently, churches in Nigeria have championed the establishment of church based schools scattered all over Nigeria. Some examples of these churches are Evangelical Church of Nigeria (ECWA), The Redeemed Christian Church of Nigeria (RCCG), and the Winners Chapel who have not only established Primary and Secondary Schools but have also established universities namely Bingham, Redeemers and Covenant Universities respectively.

The chapter further discusses some expert views on education. Particularly it focuses on predominantly male view on Muslim women's education as well as women's views on education

in northern Nigeria. These gendered perspectives on women's education to a large extent represents the widespread debate on the question of the rights of women to all forms of education as defined by Islam. The active role of Islamic organizations as well as the diverse views on women's education has grave implications on the way women respond to issues relating to their development and empowerment particularly in the area of education.

## **5.2 Roles of Islamic Organizations**

Religious organizations have played vital roles in the formation of religious based institutions. They have been the main driving force in the establishment of religious institutions and agencies that participate in the processes of change in most modern societies. In many societies, religious organizations have been the driving force in the establishment of educational and healthcare institutions. This is particularly so in southern Nigeria where different Christian groups pioneered education and healthcare infrastructural and capacity building (Omenka 1989). Also as (Rose 2000: 340-241) rightly observes, besides ministering to their congregation, religious organizations provided social services to the communities around them; frequently supporting schools, community centers and offer services such as child care, afterschool programs, and food pantries in some cases and are instrumental in the development and maintenance of other community organizations.

As it is the case with many developing countries, Nigeria's religious organizations have equally participated actively in the establishment of schools and hospitals which in some cases have complimented government's efforts in the provision of basic social amenities for its citizenry. While such organizations differ from secular ones known as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) because of their subtle emphasis on religious conversions, they, however, share common features in terms of their activities which go beyond religious proselytization to augmenting governmental efforts in initiating change in the society. For the last two decades, northern Nigeria has witnessed a rapid increase in the activities of religious organizations. This is explicable with the rapid proliferation of Christian and Muslim organizations in Nigeria. This trend has led to rapid explosion in Nigeria's religious landscape as each group competes with the other in the clamor for both recognitions and membership (Ukah 2008:4).

A strategy used by majority of these religious groups is the establishment of educational and health institutions that cater not only for the members of such organizations but for the entire community. This strategy has its roots in the colonial history of northern Nigeria where missionary presence was only allowed by the colonial officers in some parts of northern Nigeria to operate educational and health care institutions. Non-Governmental Organizations on the other hand pay attention to the urgent needs of the society and in most cases start as initiatives of a few individuals primarily as a means of continuing where the state fails. As is the case with most developing nations one of the main reasons for the emergence and proliferation of non-governmental institutions in Nigeria is the collapse of several social institutions Kalu (2003: 398-399).

### **5.2.1 Women's Organizations**

Women have played central roles in the rise and development of the society. Despite their being a part of deep patriarchal cultures where their roles are mostly within the private domain thereby limiting their active participation in the broader society; women have been able to carve out "friendly spaces"<sup>168</sup> and form organizational instruments which have helped in expanding such liberty and creating women solidarity/female agency (Jeenah 2004: 2). Although spaces as fashioned out by women have often focused mainly on the development and empowerment of women; they have in the long run also contributed positively to the development of their respective communities.

The active participation of women in the development of their various communities challenges the generally held notions in most traditional societies that women are housekeepers and their influences limited to the domestic domain. Despite this widely held conviction, there is indication that within the sphere of each religion and culture women have tried to overcome such obstacles by contributing to societal debates as well as fulfilling a variety of social functions. Through the formation of organizations, women have been able to influence the society with respect to issues related to their socio-political and economic needs. Jeenah (2004:3) explains

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<sup>168</sup>The word "space" is used metaphorically in this chapter to refer to the sphere of influence/domain within which women express themselves and articulate issues relating to their well being. A friendly space in this case means a suitable space.

that every country in sub-Saharan African has some form of women's organizations,<sup>169</sup> particularly Muslim women's organizations falling either in the social or feminist category.

In Nigeria, several of such organizations exist. A recent study documents up to 64 main organizations existing across the 36 states of Nigeria.<sup>170</sup> This list although very comprehensive, left out some important women's organizations that have been subsumed under certain umbrella organizations such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Organizations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) which accommodates over 500 women wings of the various Islamic Sufi brotherhoods and organizations in Nigeria. These include the Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, Jamatu Nasir Islam (JNI) and a host of other related organizations. The document nevertheless reveals that women organizations have continuously shown increasing physical presence not only in Nigeria but also in sub-Saharan Africa. Jeenah (2004: 1) observes that in many African countries, women have continually played important roles as guardians of tradition within their respective cultures, as a result of their in-depth knowledge about their customs, rituals and practices which they orally hand down from one generation to the other. Women organizations are also important in influencing the situation of women especially in relation to issues of the constitutional rights of women as well as their rights within Islam. FOMWAN is one of such groups which are contributing to changing the situation of women in the fight against cultural impediments to women's education and guarding the tradition of Islam as they focus on *Da'wah*.

Within broader religious organizations in Nigeria such as the few mentioned above, there are women segments. Nigerian women actively strive to produce women sections at any given time. Some examples of women's spaces are seen in various Sufi *tariqas*<sup>171</sup> (Arabic: tariqa / turuq) of Islam in most Muslim societies in Africa. They have been able to convert several communal rituals into what Jeenah (2004: 1) refers to as "women-only rituals." Such movements also exist in Christianity as Women Fellowships and Women Unions under similar names. They have equally developed as women's associations or organizations from institutions and civil society such as Nigerian Association of University Women. Furthermore, they have evolved as civil

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<sup>169</sup> Women's organizations in this chapter refers to organizations formed and administered by women particular with the aim of playing social role or taking forward agendas of gender justice. Several of such organizations or unions exist within religious circle in every society.

<sup>170</sup> Women's Organizations in Nigeria, <http://www.distel.ca/womlist/countries/nigeria.html>, accessed 25.06.2010

<sup>171</sup> *tariqa* is a Sufi brotherhood, a way of Islamic religiosity- mystical Islam

rights group with different agenda in the society such as BOABOB<sup>172</sup> for Women's Human Rights and Women in Nigeria (WIN), which aims at promoting human rights issues concerning women. They have also progressed as organizations set up to look into women's health issues such as the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN). Forums such as these provide women the opportunity to either discuss issues relating to their interests or to assert their positions in society as well as to contribute to national debates on gender issues.

### **5.2.2 FOMWAN: Women Organizing for Women**

The Federation of Muslim Women's Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) was founded in 1985. Before its starting off, a number of educated Muslim women in Nigeria had since 1980 began to search for better ways to improve the knowledge and practice of Islam amongst Muslim women in Nigeria.<sup>173</sup> These women hypothesized that for women to excel in their religion they need to be educated. Such education should however not be limited to religious education which is already widely accepted by Muslims. But they envisaged a balance between religious education and western education which they hoped would provide women with the needed cultural capital to participate in the Nigerian public sphere. Capital according to Bourdieu (1986: 241) is what makes the game of a given field in the society and society is a universe of competition with different agents competing for one form of recognition or the other. Often used in the economic field, Bourdieu explains that capital can exist in objectified or embodied forms and in this case it takes time to accumulate. He notes that "it is ...impossible to account for the structure of and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in one form recognized as economic theory" Bourdieu (1986: 242). He further explains thus:

...capital can present itself in three fundamental guises namely, economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is

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<sup>172</sup> BAOBAB for women's human rights is a non-governmental human rights organization concerned with women's legal rights under the 3 systems of customary, statutory and religious laws in Nigeria Established in 1996. The name BAOBAB has its root from the African tree which is both a source of food, fuel, and medicine; symbolizing strength and the ability to withstand every harsh condition (See: <http://www.imow.org/wpp/stories/viewStory?storyid=128>). The organization branches in 14 states of Nigeria. Its main mission is to promote women's human rights through the improvement of knowledge, exercise and development of rights under religious, customary and statutory laws. More on BAOBAB and its activities can be found on their website: <http://www.baobabwomen.org/history.htm>

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Dr Aisha Lemu, FOMWAN's first National President, Minna, Niger state, 01.03.07

convertible, on certain conditions, into *economic capital* and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and *social capital* made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of title of nobility ( Bourdieu (1986: 243).

Because cultural capital obtained through schooling is convertible into other forms of capital, the acquisition of such education generally transforms the social and self worth of a person such that he or she would be recognized by society as capable of fulfilling certain social and economic responsibilities. Not to have such education is to be a liability to both oneself and society in specific respects. In this sense, the opposite of capital—whether cultural or symbolic or economic or social—is liability. FOMWAN therefore insists that women acquire both western and Islamic education. They argue that the provision of both western and religious education to women in the Sharia states is expected to offer women with the institutionalized form of cultural capital in form of qualifications which women are able to convert to economic capital in form of wage-earning employments.

However, because most women in northern Nigeria lack such opportunities, they are often marginalized and their potentials under-actualized and under-utilized. Thus, their rights as Muslim women and also as citizens of Nigeria have been infringed upon, consequently limiting their opportunity to contribute their best to the social reproduction of skills which are needed to run society effectively. When women cannot be employed in specialized and technical sectors because they do not possess the requisite knowledge and qualification, they cannot be hired to replace ageing and retiring workers in the public sector; they cannot also be empowered to engage in private sector economic activities, a situation that leaves the entire society impoverished.

The idea of FOMWAN started with a group of educated and influential Muslim women. These women who are in the peak of their career in various fields, having achieved the highest educational qualification within a male dominated setting, had on individual basis began small programs aimed at empowering Muslim women in different parts of Nigeria. Such programs include literacy for women; health awareness lectures and a number of them had formed smaller associations to accommodate the various needs of women. By the mid 1980's, these women saw

the need to bring together the smaller groups under one umbrella to provide one voice for Muslim women, thus FOMWAN was founded in 1985.

FOMWAN is a national non-governmental women's religious organization. It is aimed at advancing and protecting women's interest, welfare and aspirations in line with Islamic principles.<sup>174</sup> It is established in all 36 states of Nigeria and spreads across 600 local governments. FOMWAN has a dual mission namely religious and non-religious. Religiously, FOMWAN's is to propagate Islam; firstly, by bringing together all Muslim women's organization under one umbrella; secondly, the organization does this by providing Muslim women with religious education and ensuring they live according to the dictates of Islam as well as making positive impact on both religious and secular national matters. The non-religious aims of FOMWAN emphasize on the provision of social services to its members as well as a contribution to national development through women empowerment programs in the areas of health, education and economics. Generally, the aims and objectives of FOMWAN are captured in one of its online publications titled, *FOMWAN at a glance* as follows:

- 1) To create awareness among Muslim Women of the true teachings of Islam in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and to encourage women to live in accordance with those teachings.
- 2) To improve the moral, educational, intellectual and economic development of women through capacity building, seminars, and empowerment programs.
- 3) To take special care of early school leavers (drop-outs and out of school children).
- 4) To rehabilitate street children, abandoned children, orphans and refugee children.
- 5) To provide girl-child education and adult-literacy for women in English, local language and Arabic through establishment of schools: Nursery/Primary, Secondary, Women's Islamiyya and Vocational Centers.
- 6) To develop youths through educative programs, including youth Camps.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> <http://www.fomwan.org.index.php> accessed 25.06.2010.

<sup>175</sup> Source: <http://www.fomwan.org/publication.php>, accessed 29.01.2012

FOMWAN also envisions a world where women are properly educated in both western and religious knowledge, and equipped to work with men towards an equitable and peaceful society. FOMWAN's multi-dimensional approach to social issues is articulated in this statement:

Our mission statement is to propagate the religion of Islam in Nigeria through *da'wah*, establishment of educational institutions and other outreach activities. And also to improve the socio-economic status of the populace especially women, youth and children, through training, provision of qualitative education, health and humanitarian services, micro enterprise schemes and advocacy.<sup>176</sup>

The excerpt above shows that FOMWAN's roles are multifaceted, besides propagating Islam through *Da'wah*, they are also involved in providing services to their communities through the establishment of educational institutions, healthcare and economic empowerment not only to women. Also they are able to bridge some generational gap by extending their services to youths and children. With these two faceted roles which are discussed further in this section, FOMWAN has been able to balance between traditionally held practices and modernity.

Although its aims are multifaceted, of particular importance to this study is FOMWAN's emphasis on education in general and women's education in particular. The low level of education among Muslim women in Nigeria and particularly northern Nigeria is what FOMWAN sought to tackle from its inception 27 years ago. Bilkisu Yusuf, one of the founding members of FOMWAN explains that "it is a paradox that although education is compulsory in Islam, the education of women was not made a priority in many Muslim communities like northern Nigeria where girls are either sent to hawk on the streets or withdrawn from schools and married off early."<sup>177</sup> This state of affairs has hampered women's access to education, thereby creating a gender disparity in education. Therefore, FOMWAN seeks to advocate the retention of girls in schools as well as the provision of continuing education for women. Aisha Lemu, the first National President of FOMWAN and the director of Islamic education trust Minna, Niger state remarks that since its inception, there has been greater acceptance of women scholars and

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<sup>176</sup>FOMWAN Mission Statement, <http://www.fomwan.org.index.php> accessed 25.06.2010.

<sup>177</sup>Yusuf Bilkisu, Nigeria: Federation of Muslim Women's Association- Making Education a priority, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006240281.html>, accessed 25.06.2010.

women doing things in their own rights through its role in promoting education, health and women's rights under Sharia, which also includes the right to education.<sup>178</sup>

### 5.2.3 FOMWAN's Organizational Structure

FOMWAN has a National Executive Council (NEC) with headquarters located in Abuja. The national headquarters determines the way power is delegated to the various states. It also has state headquarters in 36 states of Nigeria. The state headquarters are responsible for handling the affairs of FOMWAN at the state level. Besides the state level FOMWAN also has a local government body found in several local governments of the states. At this level FOMWAN's activities are able to reach to women at the grassroots. FOMWAN's NEC consists of national officers led by the *Amira* (President).<sup>179</sup> Other members are the *Naibatul Amira* (Deputy President), national secretary general, assistant national general secretary, national financial secretary, treasurer, public relations officer/organizing secretary, *Da'wah* Officer, Assistant *Da'wah* Officer, Legal Adviser, National Auditor, Ex-officio members, chairpersons of standing national committees and FOMWAN State Chapter *Amiras*.<sup>180</sup>

Apart from the national, state and local government level, FOMWAN has Zonal Coordinators and Deputy Zonal coordinators for the North East, North West, North Central, South West, South-South and South East. FOMWAN further consists of a number of departments; these departments also referred to as committees are responsible for a number of FOMWANs projects, they are as follows:

- 1) Education and Capacity Building.
- 2) Publications,
- 3) *Da'wah* and Advocacy
- 4) Projects and External Relations
- 5) Finance and Resource Mobilization
- 6) Community Development and Humanitarian Services
- 7) Membership Mobilization and Coordination
- 8) Health
- 9) Headquarters Project

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<sup>178</sup>Interview with Dr Aisha Lemu, First national president of FOMWAN, Minna, Niger State, 01.03.06

<sup>179</sup> The title of *Amira* is used to refer to the president of FOMWAN. It is the female of *Amir* (Arabic: leader, commander) used as a political title.

<sup>180</sup> <http://www.fomwan.org/fomwan.php?id=5>, accessed 25.06.2010

## 10) Electoral matters

FOMWAN's National officials are elected through nominations, usually during their annual national meeting. Officials at the state and local government levels are also elected after every four years during their annual state or local government meetings. FOMWAN is one of the few organizations in Nigeria that has succeeded in uniting both the north and south in terms of equal representation in leadership. A position such as the *Amira* is usually zoned between the north and south and changes after every four years. Therefore when an *Amira* emerges from the north, the deputy president must be from the south and vice versa. This gives the opportunity for fair representation and also accommodates ethnic differences that might hamper the smooth running of FOMWAN. FOMWAN considers it un-Islamic when leaders insist on holding unto power after their leadership tenures elapse; consequently, they endeavor to set an example for the wider Nigerian society to emulate in terms of alternating headship.<sup>181</sup> Trust plays a very significant role in the choice of leadership positions in FOMWAN. At any given time, FOMWAN leaders are nominated based on years of experience as well as the level of confidence bestowed on a potential candidate. These strategies have helped FOMWAN avoid a great deal of power tussles which exist in similar organizations as well as organizations led by men. Also in line with contemporary changes, FOMWAN prefers to give opportunity to the younger generation who seem to know what works best.<sup>182</sup>

### **5.2.4 FOMWAN's Educational Reform: A Revival of Nana Asma'u**

Nana Asma'u, was the daughter of Usman dan Fodio, the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihadist. Usman dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto caliphate was both a political and religious leader who fought for the reform of Islam in northern Nigeria as well as the establishment of the Fulani empire grounded in Islamic law (Sulaiman 2009:205). One of the most outstanding achievements of Usman dan Fodio was the advancement of the status of women who were at that period under subjugation due to deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes in northern Nigeria. Sulaiman (2009:

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<sup>181</sup> Interview with Dr. Aisha Lemu, first national president of FOMWAN, Minna, Niger state, 01.03.06. Lemu believes that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) - Nigeria's ruling party appears to have copied its rotation of leadership formula between the North and South of Nigeria from FOMWAN's system of alternating leadership between North and South.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Aisha Lemu, op.cit.

281) points out that several Muslim women became great beneficiaries of the transformation that took place throughout the period of the Jihad. Particularly, Usman dan Fodio encouraged women's education as well as their full participation in the scheme of affairs of his day with the most prominent of this women being the Shehu's daughter Nana Asma'u.

Nana Asma'u lived in the period 1793-1894. She was the most educated of his daughters and has remained a role model for majority of Nigerian Muslim women<sup>183</sup> (Boyd and Meck 1997). She was believed to have learnt the Qur'an at the age of 9; she was trained in Islamic jurisprudence and in medicine. After schooling and marriage, she picked up the challenge of educating the children in her household and gradually expanded her generosity to children outside the home and eventually to women. Her teaching later extended to women in 99 other villages who came annually to receive from her wealth of knowledge which was very practical in nature.<sup>184</sup> Nana Asma'u established a movement of educated women who travelled from place to place teaching other women. As a result of such influence, today working women in northern Nigeria justify their activities outside the home by referring to the teachings of Usman Dan Fodio and the teachings of Nana Asma'u (Werthmann 2005:3). They also try to modify their roles and the many options available to them within the context of their religion and culture.

FOMWAN views its organization as a revival of Nana Asma'u's system of teaching. Just as Nana Asma'u organized and taught women in the past, FOMWAN has provided similar opportunities for women to educate themselves. FOMWAN therefore organizes annual events from the national level to the grassroots where women are taught during the month of Ramadan. This brings together women from different parts of the states as well as women who have little or no access to education and who at times can hardly perform their daily prayers. Therefore, at such forums, apart from being taught how to read and write, they are also taught how to pray as well as how to cope with family responsibilities.

FOMWAN's guiding principle is Qur'an 13:11 which states: "Verily Allah will not change the condition of people until they change it themselves (with their own soul)."<sup>185</sup> FOMWAN

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<sup>183</sup> Werthmann (undated), The Examples of Nana Asma'u, <http://w.nmfuk.org/asmau/TheExampleofNanaAsmau.pdf>. Accessed 13.05.2010

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Sadiya Umar Bello, Sokoto, 06.03.07

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Sadiya Umar Bello, Sokoto, 06.03.07

members believe Allah will hold them responsible should they fail to transform the conditions of women in the society. Over the years therefore, they have been involved in various activities aimed at empowering women. FOMWAN shares similar view with Kassam (1996) who observes that the general perception among Muslims is that women are traditionally known as custodians of knowledge and culture (Kassam 1996: 113). As custodians of knowledge, women are therefore expected to be initial teachers for their children before they ever go out in search of knowledge,<sup>186</sup> often defined as the “socialization role of women.” However, without education, FOMWAN members argue, women cannot be good teachers to their children. Accordingly, they emphasize the need to acquire both religious and secular knowledge.

FOMWAN’s educational department has grown into a national board on education which is instrumental in the establishment of nursery, primary, secondary school as well as women centers which offer adult literacy programs for women. According to the chairperson of the education board, FOMWAN has over 171 Qur’anic and Islamiyya schools, 120 adult literacy centers, 5 secondary schools, 55 nursery and primary schools, 13 daycare centers, 6 non-vocational centers and one orphanage in 30 states of Nigeria.<sup>187</sup> The adult literacy center is dedicated to women whose education was interrupted as a result of early marriage. FOMWAN also holds an annual educational lecture series in the various states where FOMWAN is represented, while other activities include evening classes, vacation classes, workshop and quiz competitions, youth camps and counseling.

The Kaduna state coordinator of FOMWAN notes that FOMWAN in Kaduna state is involved in a number of activities targeted at women<sup>188</sup> referred to as skills activation centers; these centers are similar to the Women Continuing Education Centers discussed in chapter four. However, the one established by the Kaduna state chapter of FOMWAN focuses more on skills development. They also have special programs for working class women which are called flexible education

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<sup>186</sup> Interview with Sadiya Umar Bello, Sokoto, 06.03.07

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Latifa Okonnu, chairperson, FOMWAN Education Board, Lagos, 09.05.07

<sup>188</sup> A discussion with Zulaihatu Jaafar and Bilhatu Idris Adamu of the Kaduna Office of the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations in Nigeria, 10.07.2010, <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-zulaihatu-jaafar-and-bilhatu-idris-adamu-of-the-kaduna-office-of-the-federation-of-muslim-women-s-associations-in-nigeria>, accessed 29.01.2012

programs. These are mainly night classes held one hour every night and two hours in the day at the weekend. Also, during the Ramadan period, Kaduna state organizes scholarly lectures for women which are held in the mosque between 9.00am to 12.00 noon every day. They are also involved in a sort of door to door *da'wah* mainly at the rural areas, enlightening women about their faith and the need to get educated.

FOMWAN magazine-*The Muslim women* reveals that FOMWAN has a functioning education board which handles issues of education. The board is made up of a chairperson and other officials in charge of organizing and formulating educational policies. Within its non-religious aims, education is considered the core activity of FOMWAN. Therefore, forums are held annually where reviews of FOMWAN's educational activities are conducted. During the fourth meeting of the national education board held on June 3, 2006, FOMWAN came up with several plans of action which included mass literacy programs in each state, establishment of Qur'anic schools and competition amongst them, establishment of libraries and reading rooms in mosques areas, awareness campaigns in collaboration with traditional rulers and the *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) and a host of other activities and projects.<sup>189</sup>

Adeboye (2009) sheds more light on the activities of FOMWAN where she remarks that FOMWAN has not only established schools all over Nigeria but also collaborates with other bodies in order to realize these goals. She describes such initiative this way: "... to fulfill its educational aspirations, it partners with the federal government of Nigeria on the Universal Basic Education, Nomadic Education programs, the Joint Consultative Committee on Education and the Quranic Education Programme. It works also with other NGOs such as the Civil Society Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA)" (Adeboye 2009:244).

Besides educational programs, FOMWAN actively participates in politics as it strives to provide a platform where Muslim women who have been excluded from formal office within the government structures find a platform of power for political expression. This is more so at a time when several other women organizations successfully utilize the religious platform to claim their basic rights as well as to launch themselves into mainstream politics (Adeboye 2009: 240-241).

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<sup>189</sup> *The Muslim Woman*, Magazine of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria, No 9, 2006, Islam and Human Rights

In the light of this development FOMWAN actively participates in providing civic education to Muslim women and also participating in the general debate about whether or not Muslim women can aspire for political offices; becoming the most influential women's organizations in Nigeria which has not only united the north and south in terms of providing a common ground for women to express their concerns, but has also influenced certain government policies in Nigeria especially those related to education in general and particularly women's education?

### **5.3 Izala Movement and the Reform of Women's Education**

The Izala movement was founded in Jos, the capital of Plateau State, in 1978 by Sheikh Ismaila Idris (1936-2000). Idris' reasons for establishing such a movement were threefold: a revival of the *Sunna*, abolishing of all *bid'a* (or un-Islamic innovations) and the achievement of Muslim unity. The Izala movement grew from a very little beginning to become the most powerful reform movement in Nigeria and in West Africa. It has also experienced several attacks and counter attacks from the Sufi brotherhoods (Loimeier 1997: 223). The formation of the Izala movement also brought about a new phase in the development of Islam in Nigeria, which was characterized by the greater participation of women in politics and greater efforts in the expansion of Islamic education (Loimeier 1997: 207).

From its inception, the Izala movement experienced a number of crises as a result of attack from the Sufi brotherhoods. This led to changes and compromises within the Izala movement.<sup>190</sup> The most significant of such changes that relates to this research are those within the sphere of women's situation and especially women's education. According to Loimeier (1997), shortly after the *Maitasine* riot in 1981, the Yan Izala shifted their sphere of influence from preaching to the promotion of and expansion of Islamic education of which women were given an unprecedented attention. Thus he notes that "in respect to women's education, the activities of the 'Yan Izala had pioneering effects" (Loimeier 1997: 207).

Accordingly, the Izala gained a great deal of popularity through its propagation of women's education. By November 1986, when the Izala was celebrating its rapid expansion in Jos, Kaduna and other parts of northern Nigeria where Izala is influential, references were made to

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<sup>190</sup>For more on the conflict between the Izala and other sufi brotherhoods, see Loimeier (1997: 252-291).

several of its achievement. One of the outstanding achievements of the Izala then was on teaching in modern schools which was occasioned by the establishment of adult, primary and married women schools scattered all over Nigeria ( Loimeier 1997 : 225). Citing examples of the successes of the Izala movement in the sphere of education and especially women's education in the town of Kaura Namoda in Zamfara state, Argungu and Sokoto,Loimeier notes that by 1987 the Izala movement had established several Islamiyya primary schools, Islamiyya secondary schools and a number of other adult schools mostly patronized by women (Loimeier 1997:237).

Izala schools are found in several of the Sharia states of Nigeria. Sani Umar (2001) observes that most of the schools are modeled after the Northern Provinces Law School established during the colonial period and fashioned after the western schools system. Although Izala's main aim is to eradicate innovative practices in Islam, it seem to depart from these objectives in their practices especially in relation to the schools because they incorporate the western system "with clearly defined syllabi, graded classes, school uniforms, and fixed periods to graduate after satisfactory performance in written examination. These features are notably absent in the Islamic traditional educational system. The formal student-teacher relationship contrasts sharply with the more personal master-disciple relationship that prevails in Islamic traditional education" (Umar 2001: 134). This innovation in the area of education by the Izala is viewed by several scholars as not only representing Islamic modernism but as a development that represents a contemporary example of modernizing education which has helped to neutralize the long standing resistance to western education in northern Nigeria (Umar 2001:125). One of Izala's highlights is the education of women irrespective of the general belief by mainstream Muslim *ulama* that educating women is unimportant. The Izala enrolls both male and female students and they have separate schools for married women attended mostly in the evenings. For Izala, the main aim of educating is to ensure that every woman has some basic education and most importantly in the religion which she would someday provide for her offspring. Sani Umar articulates some of the major arguments by the Izala in insisting on the education of women in the following way:

Izala insists on educating Muslim women over the strenuous opposition of some traditional 'ulama' who argue that mixing the sexes in school contravenes Islamic teaching. For Izala, mixing the sexes is a lesser evil than leaving Muslim women ignorant of Islam — thus re-echoing the argument once advanced by Sheykh Usman dan Fodio. The implications and consequences of women's increased

access to Islamic learning are not yet clear. One can surmise that women educated at Izala schools are likely to espouse Izala doctrines and become active members, thus adding a gender aspect in Izala's Islamic modernism (Umar 2001: 136)

From the excerpt above, it is clear that the Izala is more liberal when it comes providing women with access to education. As would be seen in the next section, one of the major hindrances to female education in northern Nigeria is coeducation which gives an unfavorable atmosphere for parents to allow their female girls to mix up with boys in school. Izala on the other hand argues that women are better off in mixed schools than left uneducated which is one of their basic rights in Islam. Although some of the sharia states insist on separation of sexes, a number of them have collaborated with the Izala in actualizing some of the programs. For instance, in Zamfara state, the program on integration of western and Islamic education by the Zamfara state Arabic and Islamic board were an emulation of Izala's educational programs.<sup>191</sup> An interview with the director of the board reveals that in line with the common belief by Muslims that Islamic education is more important than any form of education and in collaboration with quite a number of Izala schools the Sharia states have placed a great deal of emphasis on Islamic education.

This partly explains why in some of the Sharia states today, Qur'anic and Islamic schools have been given topmost priority. For instance, since the re-introduction of Sharia, Zamfara, Kano and Bauchi States have established Boards of Islamic Education whose main responsibility is to ensure the effective management of Islamic and Islamiyya schools in the states.<sup>192</sup> While in Zamfara State it is a separate board, in Kano and Bauchi states, they are a segment of the Sharia Commission. They are also responsible for monitoring and ensuring the enforcements of Islamic education in all public schools as well as the establishment of new ones.<sup>193</sup> This is because as a religious education based on the Sharia; the proponents of Sharia believe that its inculcation on the populace would go a long way in creating sanity in the state.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Memorandum for the integration of western education into Quranic/Islamiyyah schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria, Department of statistics, Ministry, Arabic and Islamiyyah Education Board, Zamfara state, Gusau, 08.03.2007

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Directors and PRO Sharia Commissions of Zamfara, Kano and Bauchi states respectively.

<sup>193</sup> Memorandum for the integration of western education into Quranic/Islamiyyah schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria, Department of statistics Arabic and Islamiyyah Education Board, Zamfara state, Gusau, 08.03.2007.

<sup>194</sup> Memorandum for the integration of western education into Quranic/Islamiyyah schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria, Department of statistics, Arabic and Islamiyyah Education Board, Zamfara state, Gusau, 08.03.2007.

Women have been the target group for the acquisition of this type of Islamic education since the re-implementation of Sharia. According to the director Sharia commission Zamfara state, “there is an increase in the Islamiyya schools which are dominated by women.”<sup>195</sup> The Sharia Commission has since its inception focused on the establishment and improvement of Islamiyya schools and has played instrumental role on awareness for women to get enrolled in such schools. Since the re-implementation of Sharia, the state has recorded a 60% increase in Qur’anic and Islamiyya schools. For instance, statistics from the board reveals a total of 95,528 pupils in Islamiyyah primary schools alone.<sup>196</sup> Most of the Islamiyyah schools in Zamfara state are dominated by women; they offer both morning and evening classes. The Islamiyya schools are funded by the government and are preferred by most Muslim women since they guarantee them marriage suitors as attested by the following informant:

When I talk of education I am saying we have women who want to have traditional education [Islamic education]; everyone wants to have a women who knows Arabic, who knows the Qur’an who knows the laws because most of the time they are the first teachers of the child before the children go to school but if it is western education, when a lady is mentioned with higher education, everybody is apprehensive,<sup>197</sup>

Because of the emphasis placed on Islamic education and its preference over any form of education, most northern Nigerian women were not fully exposed to western education consider Islamic education to be superior. For instance 90% of women interviewed at WCEC’s in both Kano and Zamfara states reveal that Islamic education is more important than western education because of its eternal reward as well as their spouses’ preference of it; these views were expressed following the question about their preferences for Islamic or western education.<sup>198</sup> Although they share their interest in western education which they feel helps them to interact with the world, they still find Islamic education playing dominant role in their lives. In the area of women’s education therefore the Izala movement has been pioneers of what the Sharia states seem to be emulating today. Their innovative insight into the issues of women’s education has

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<sup>195</sup> Interview with the director, Sharia Research and Development Commission, Zamfara state, 07.03.2007.

<sup>196</sup> Memorandum for the integration of western education into Quranic/Islamiyyah schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria, Department of statistics, Arabic and Islamiyyah Education Board, Zamfara state, Gusau, 08.03.2007.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with the Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education, Sokoto, 05.03.2007.

<sup>198</sup> Interview excerpt with women students at the WCEC Gusau Zamfara state, Goran Dutse and Kano city women center, Kano.

provided a wider scope for women to acquire western education by integrating western ideas of education into traditional Islamic education. However, the question still remains as to how far the integration of western education into Islamic educational curriculum helped in bridging the gap in education of Muslim women in northern Nigeria since they still remain the most educationally disadvantaged in terms of western education.

#### **5.4 Contemporary Islamic Views on Women's Education in Northern Nigeria**

This section reflects diverse opinions that emanating from data collected in four states of northern Nigeria. The starting point of these dialogues was a discussion of the current statistics from the Ministry of Education that indicate the educational disparity between the southern and northern geopolitical regions of Nigeria. The statistics as revealed in a survey conducted by The National Bureau of Statistics conducted early in 2006 which shows that adult female literacy rate in north-western Nigeria is 15.4% as against 31.0% for adult male literacy rate (Ketefe 2006).<sup>199</sup> This is by far the lowest figure for both the adult literacy rate and female literacy rate for the whole country. Among interlocutors were scholars of Islamic Studies, some of whom fired back in response thus: "What do you mean our women are educationally disadvantaged? What is your yardstick for measuring that?" Other responses were "You can only talk about disadvantaged in relation to western education, otherwise our women are educated." These responses reveal both a resistance to widely held opinions in Nigeria and even outside the country regarding perceived educational imbalances as well as the diversities and complexities involved in the conceptualizations of education in a society that puts a high premium on education as a strategy for the contest of important state and civil resources such as development, employment, and so on. Implicit in the query raised above are more fundamental issues about the meaning of education, its general purpose(s) and cultural determinants. In order to explore some of these issues, this section investigates the various views of some experts in Islamic education on what they think of and understand by education in Islam. To these experts comprising male and female, the following questions were raised: What do Muslims regard as education? How do Muslims interpret the Islamic teaching on education? Do they agree with the general impression

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<sup>199</sup> Ketefe Kayode, Ketefe, Kayode, <http://www.punchng.com/main/article04>, accessed 06.06.2006.

that women in northern Nigeria are educationally disadvantaged? Responses to these questions were analyzed below:

#### **5.4.1 Education as a Vital Element in Islam**

The importance and place of education in Islam is made explicit in the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the Prophet. The grounding of the role of education in these sacred texts further indicates how the issue of education was constructed early in the history of Islam. Understood as acquiring and imparting of knowledge in a systematic and methodic fashion through teaching and learning, education is a central theme in Islam. The Qur'an teaches that Allah is the source of all knowledge. It makes it clear that Islam upholds education. The first revelation that came to the Prophet was "read"; "Read: In the name of thy Lord who created man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous. Who teacheth by the pen. (Who) teacheth man that which he knew not."<sup>200</sup> Therefore reading and seeking for knowledge is very important to every Muslim. The Qur'an also reveals as part of the importance placed on education that the educated cannot be compared with the uneducated in all ramifications when it pointedly asks: "... are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed."<sup>201</sup> As it is the case in every society, education creates qualitative difference: the educated and uneducated belong to different social and economic class altogether. Thus when the Qur'an lays emphasis on education it seeks that everyone in the community or society should be educated to be on – or almost on – the same level. Otherwise the educated will be granted a "high place before Allah" because they understand and do whatever Allah enjoins them to do. The Qur'an further states in Sura 58 verse 11 "...Allah will exalt those who believe among you and those who have knowledge to high, ranks..."<sup>202</sup> This shows clearly that the educated and faithful have a higher status both in the society and before Allah. To be faithful requires knowledge and understanding which Allah grants

To emphasize the importance that the Prophet places on education, a *hadith* of the Prophet says; "He who goes out in search of knowledge is in God's path till he returns"<sup>203</sup>. This statement

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<sup>200</sup> Qur'an 96:1-5, Quran Explorer, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/>, accessed 28.08.2011.

<sup>201</sup> Qur'an 39:9, Quran Explorer, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/>, accessed 28.08.2011.

<sup>202</sup> Qur'an 58: 11, Quran Explorer, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/>, accessed 28.08.2011.

<sup>203</sup> Tirmidhi Darimi, Simple guide on Islamic exorcism, <http://islamicexorcism.wordpress.com>, accessed

underscores that Allah upholds education and places great respect and value on the person who seeks to be educated. Consequently any Muslim who seeks to be educated shall be rewarded just like he who goes on a jihad would be rewarded. The search for education is likened to doing God's will or being on the right path. To the Muslim, the search for knowledge and education is in line with God's commands. Emphasizing further, another *hadith* says "If any one pursues a path in search of knowledge, God will thereby make easy for him/her a path in paradise."<sup>204</sup> Here the reward a Muslim is promised for seeking education is equated with the same reward a believer gets in serving Allah. Thus to seek education is service to Allah which shall not go unrewarded: it is like opening the way for an inheritance in paradise.

In yet another popular *hadith* of the prophet which 90% of our informants invoked to argue the importance of education, Prophet said; "Seek ye knowledge even if it be as far as China."<sup>205</sup> China in this context refers to the remotest parts of the world which was not Islamic. By this injunction Muslims are encouraged to seek education wherever it could be found and no matter the difficulties such enterprise entails. An added importance of this text indicates that "knowledge" refers not only to religious education but also to secular education which may not be found in the immediate environment of the Muslims. Hence the use of the phrase "as far as China" to emphasize the importance that Islam places on both religious and secular education. At the time the *hadith* was uttered, any "knowledge" existing in China would not have been "Islamic" knowledge but Chinese or secular knowledge, wisdom or philosophy. To Muslims therefore, all knowledge is one and springs from Allah, the lord of the universe; distance should neither limit, nor deter the Muslims' quest for knowledge. Consequently, education is an integral part of Islam, a pre-requisite to a proper relationship with Allah, for without it a Muslim is nobody; without education s/he would not know Allah, would not know how to pray to Him, would not know how to serve Him or how to serve his/her self and serve others adequately.<sup>206</sup>

#### **5.4.2 Education Obligatory on all Muslims**

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28.08.2011.

<sup>204</sup>Ahmed Gahzi, [http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/hadeeth/hadith\\_500.html#KNOWLEDGE](http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/hadeeth/hadith_500.html#KNOWLEDGE), accessed

28.08.2011.

<sup>205</sup> Bihawul Anwar, vol.1, p. 57, <http://www.hujjat-workshop.org/index.cfm?content=85>, accessed 28.08.2011.

<sup>206</sup> Interview with Amina Keri, Minna, Niger State, 2.3.2007.

Another *hadith* indicates that education is compulsory for all Muslims. This *hadith* is clear that both male and female should seek education when it says; “the search for knowledge is an obligations laid on every Muslim.”<sup>207</sup> It is an obligation upon every Muslim regardless of gender to seek and acquire education. In this understanding knowledge is gender-blind; hence education is open to all irrespective of sex. By direct implication, therefore, there should be no discrimination between the sexes in matters relating to the pursuit of any form of education by Muslims. This is because the same rewards attached to the pursuit of education apply to both sexes seeking education, which is likened to walking in the path of Allah. It is in regard to education that gender equality in Islam is most graphically framed. Above all, equality between the sexes is most evident in terms of the obligation or the imperatives of education.

To further bolster this fact, the Prophet Mohammed did not only teach that both men and women should be educated but exemplified it by teaching both men and women of his day. This was reflected in the lives of his followers and also of his wife, Aisha, who was said to be well-educated in religious matters that the followers of the Prophet were asked to seek half of their knowledge with the rosy-cheeked Aisha.<sup>208</sup>

Based on the rights bestowed on women by the Qur’an, women are expected to seek education wherever it takes them (Werthman 2000:265). The Qur’an does not specify which education a women should pursue and which she should refrain from, but stresses they must seek education just like their male counterparts would. Doi (1996: 144) notes several women in the history of Islam who excelled in education. Starting from the wives of the Prophet, Aisha and Safiyah, several other women were said to have been versed not only in Islamic education but also in other aspects of knowledge including poetry, history and literature.

Doi is in agreement with the fact that both Islamic knowledge and other branches of knowledge are obligatory upon every Muslim both male and female. Women, much like their male counterparts, have the right to seek for any form of education as long as such education does not distort the moral values inculcated in them by religious education. Jawad also notes that education is strongly encouraged in Islam for both men and women. Giving examples of how women in the early days of Islam excelled in the field of education, she notes: “Early Islamic

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<sup>207</sup> Ibn Majah Baihaqi, [http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/hadeeth/hadith\\_500.html#KNOWLEDGE](http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/hadeeth/hadith_500.html#KNOWLEDGE), accessed 28.08.2011

<sup>208</sup> Interview with Dr Mrs. Aisha Lemu, Minna-Niger state, 02.3.2007.

history is replete with examples of women who showed a remarkable ability to compete with men and excelled on many occasions” (Jawad 1998: 25). She goes on to list the various fields of knowledge which women have ventured into and excelled as religious studies, literature, medicine and military services.

Thus, Muslims all agree that education is compulsory for every Muslim and Islamic scholars have interpreted that to mean that both men and women have the right to be educated, that is, to acquire any form of knowledge. While there is general agreement on the imperatives based on Qur’anic teaching and the hadith, upon every Muslim to acquire education both religious and secular, the cultural applications and implementation of these sacred injunctions vary from one place to another, as is the case in northern Nigeria, which is the focus of the next section.

### **5.5 Existing State of Affairs**

In many contemporary Islamic cultures, the basic Islamic teaching that education is obligatory for all Muslims seems to be fading away as women are relegated to the background as far as education is concerned. To compare the contemporary Islamic societies with what scholars argue was the practice in the early days of Islam where women were allowed to participate alongside men in acquiring knowledge; one wonders where most Islamic societies missed the point of enforcing equal educational opportunity for both men and women. Evidently, northern Nigeria is a context where gender equity is a matter of historical hubris rather than reality. Expressing her opinion on the reason for the decline in the educational status of women and their status in relation to other rights accorded them by the Qur’an; Jawad (1998:25) notes that:

Firstly, certain pre-Islamic customs reappeared, especially during the Abbasid period; secondly, various social attitudes infiltrated Islamic culture from conquered peoples, and were assimilated as norms and then identified with Islam. Hence the status of Muslim women started to deteriorate. This was accelerated by catastrophic historical events such as the Mongol and the Turkish invasions and the ensuing decline of the Islamic civilization. The ambience generated by these conditions served to undermine the position of Muslim women who became less and less part of social life in general.

The deterioration in the educational status of women in general and the overall status of women has relegated women to the background and their roles now are mostly those which culture and

society define or prescribe. These roles are shaped by customs and traditions giving the women a “second class” position in the society. Thus women are seen as mothers and their status in the society becomes that of mothers, wives and homemakers (or household managers). In the light of the above situation, women’s education was, and still is, seen as secondary since their basic duty is to raise children and become good wives to their husbands. Biological reproduction has taken precedence over social production and reproduction of knowledge for women. In addition to this culturally defined responsibility, women who excelled in education were, and still are, seen as threats to their husbands. Again, according to Jawad:

Female education was viewed as a threat to the traditional customs and the way of life of these societies. Indeed educated women were feared and mistrusted as they could communicate potentially destructive or innovative ideas. Educated women were considered to be obtrusive. They did not appeal to men who expected them to serve them obediently (Jawad 1998: 25).

The assumption that educated women are to be distrusted as potentially bold, unmanageable, and not capable of making good wives and mothers, resurfaced in interviews conducted among male informants in northern Nigeria<sup>209</sup>. While all informants agreed that education is obligatory for every Muslim, the men, however, disagreed that western education is compulsory on the women. According to them women have certain roles such as managing the home, looking after the children and being good wives to their husbands. By “good wives” these male interviewees mean obedient, submissive, unquestioning and cooperative with the husbands’ agenda and decisions. Thus, the basic education the women should have is the religious education which is compulsory for every Muslim and the woman in particular because she has to play the role of first teacher to her children. The woman being the first teacher means giving the children the basic Islamic education before they leave the home to attend school. As a result of this conceptualization, thus men in northern Nigeria encourage or prefer women with Islamic education than any other form of education as wives and companions.

The idea that western education corrupts women by inculcating in them the spirit of rebelliousness, intractability and obstinacy is deeply entrenched in the northern Nigerian Muslim male psyche. Women with university education or degrees are believed and perceived to be very

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<sup>209</sup> Interviews with the Director, Sharia Research and Development Commission Gusau Zamfara state, 08.03.2007 and the Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto state 05.03.2007

disrespectful and impetuous toward their husbands and kinsmen.<sup>210</sup> University education, for example, is believed to predispose the women to speak “too much grammar”: they would challenge their husbands on basic issues of life and living. Apart from being disrespectful insubordinate to their husbands, women with higher degrees seem to know their rights as women and as Muslims. Such knowledge, it is assumed by men in northern Nigeria, will make the women more assertive and more self-confident in the home which will not augur well for the sort of male dominance which prevails in Hausa culture. Expounding on this is Hussein Mohammed a Director in the Ministry Education in Sokoto state who expressed some of the reasons why men are afraid of educated women. He observes that men believe that educated women are too assertive. Explaining further he comments thus:

Once men marry them [women] they are [expected to be] their property, so they [men] fear a women with education... if you [woman] have a degree and I want to marry you [woman] and they tell me you [woman] have a masters degree, I will say *wao!* No. Men are yet to come to terms with such reality because women are moving very fast educationally....Many people when they hear Dr. X, a lady, hardly will anyone approach her and say “I want to marry you”. He [a man] will think that when he says “stop this” she will be speaking long grammar. This mentality is part of the community; it is there among our people. They fear a woman with too much education.<sup>211</sup>

This is a succinct framing of the reasons why educated women are perceived with suspicion. Illiteracy is culturally functional in this context Explicit from the above view is the male construction of educated women as too assertive and unmanageable. The educated woman resists, questions and challenges subjugation and slavish domination and it is this tendency that men resent most, it seems. The fear of the possibility of female defiance has gradually been factored into social and political policy making in respect of the education of women in northern Nigeria. While some of our informants acknowledge that women should be educated and must attain any level of education, some, however, feel that women should seek to be educated in courses that are related to their primary responsibilities which are strongly configured to be domestic and household management.

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<sup>210</sup> Interview with the Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto state 05.03.2007.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Alhaji Hussein Mohammed, Director, Inspectorate Services, Ministry of Education Sokoto, Sokoto state 05.03.2007

In this vein, women should be teachers, nurses, caterers and such professions that depict similar roles in the home. These are essentially “service role” with less power, authority, visibility and remuneration than other professionals such as lawyers, medical practitioners, engineers and so on. They are also viewed as “weak” so there is a certain educational level a woman is not expected to attain due to the weakness associated with her physiology. For example, a woman cannot be a judge in a Sharia court because her primary role which is the home cannot permit her to play both roles and succeed.<sup>212</sup>

## **5.6 Education is Education**

The overwhelming argument of Muslim men as indicated in data from the focus states in northern Nigeria is that “education is education” whether it is Islamic (religious) education or any form of education. Most informants argue that while it is obligatory for a Muslim to have religious education, it is only optional for an individual to acquire western education. Nevertheless, it is compulsory for a Muslim *umma* to acquire any other education apart from the Islamic education. Accordingly, in a Muslim *umma* there should be lawyers, teachers, doctors, engineers and the similar disciplines.<sup>213</sup> It is a collective responsibility to acquire this category of knowledge but an individual must have religious education in order to fulfill the obligations of worshipping Allah adequately. Religious education is the foundation of the Islamic *umma* and incumbent upon every Muslim to acquire this foundational knowledge: but western knowledge or education is optional and complementary, sufficient but not necessary for an individual Muslim.<sup>214</sup>

In the light of the above, Muslim women in northern Nigeria are viewed as educated despite the overall statistics that presents them as educationally disadvantaged in comparison to women in other regions of the country. Islamic education, they argue, is a necessary foundation of all forms of education and knowledge acquisition, and since these women have acquired this sort of education, they are to be regarded as educated. Accordingly, these women do not need western education in addition to what they already have in order to creditably perform their basic duties to the society and to the Muslim *umma*. Using Nana Asma’u, the daughter of Sheikh Usman Dan

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<sup>212</sup> Interview with the Director, Sharia Research and Development Commission, Gusau Zamfara state 05.03.2007.

<sup>213</sup> Interview with Mohammad Sani, Zamfara state, 08.03.2007.

<sup>214</sup> Interview with Director, Sharia Research and Education Commission Gusau, Zamfara state, 07.03.2007.

Fodio, as a role model, Muslims in northern Nigeria believe that a woman can attain the highest level of religious education without any secular education and still be recognized as educated. Nana Asma'u was said to be well educated in the norms and values of Islam such that she became a renowned scholar without western education and today her achievement is still recognized worldwide. Therefore women in northern Nigeria cannot be said to be disadvantaged educationally because more than 80% of them have some form of Islamic education. Aside from such argument lacking in merit because of the difference in time between when Nana Asma'u lived and contemporary situation, proponents still insist that what was good for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Hausa woman should be good for the women of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Given the above scenario that presents Muslim women in the north as educated, the facts still remain incontrovertible that the educational status of women in the north is the lowest as compared to women in other regions of the country. Islamic education is education indeed, however, it is important to consider the functions and requirements of contemporary society because such brand of education falls short of meeting the needs of women in the society in which they live in. Islamic education is self-limiting because it cannot meet the requirements of an informational or jet age when knowledge in technology and science almost doubles every ten years or so. The acquisition of knowledge in informational technology is an enviable human capital that drives the motor of social and economic development as is evident in the fast developing countries of Asia such as Singapore, India, Thailand and China. While many women aspire to develop themselves and participate in a broadly conceived public sphere comprising political, social, economic, religious and popular cultural enterprises and experiences, they are however hindered by the male voices that present them as “educated” even when they cannot access a wider horizon of expression and experience. They cannot take up positions in the management of society, in government and in the production and reproduction of social knowledge. Such rationalization thereby blocks their chances and possibilities of exploring better opportunities through western education.

## **5.7 Women's Voices on Education**

All the women involved in this study admitted that Islamic education has played a dominant role in their lives and has given them respected status as Muslim women. They, however, were of the

view that western education has added more to their status as Muslim women and women in the society. To them, western education has made them better Muslims, grounded and enlightened enough to face challenges as women both at home and outside the home<sup>215</sup>. Women strongly recognize their potentials to contribute to the welfare of society through accessing western education. This position is in direct opposition to the views of men who insist that Islamic education should be sufficient to women in carrying their domestic and wifely duties. This indicates that the women share different views from men in terms of defining what education really means. To the men, a woman who has religious education has got it all and western education is secondary in her life while the women see it differently. They know the value of western education and would ordinarily desire to acquire this in addition to Islamic education. It is western knowledge that would enable her to reposition her life and experience in a wider context of human development and advancement. It is this that would give her the enabling tool to access a rapidly changing social, economic, cultural, religious and political sphere where her skills and potentials would be put to use for the service of the Muslim *umma*.

## **5.8 Contemporary Factors Hindering the Education of Muslim Women**

Quoting Byoma, Marg Csapo captures some of the earlier factors that have hindered women's education in northern Nigeria. According to her, women in northern Nigeria are considered as secondary citizens and as such their education does not receive the same priority as that of the boy child (Csapo 1981: 311). Fewer girls than boys are found in conventional schools. Outlining further these factors, Csapo enumerates the following: traditional antagonism against western-type education, marriage customs and seclusion of women, fear of moral laxity in the schools, paucity of post-primary institutions and lukewarm attitudes of political leaders. The condition of education in northern Nigeria in the late 1970's and early 1980's when Csapo conducted her research has not changed much in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the same factors militating against the education of women still hold sway. A recent analysis of the various factors that are still hindering the education of women in the north reveals that while these factors are not far from those enumerated by Csapo, there are however several factors that continue to perpetuate

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<sup>215</sup> These views were shared by Aisha Lemu, Amina Ahmed and Sadiyah Umar Bello. All three women were top ranking officials in the civil service now educationists and lecturer respectively.

women's educational status compared to men's, These include: unfavorable atmosphere, poverty, polygamy, government policy and fear of moral laxity.<sup>216</sup>

### 5.8.1 Dress Code

A very important norm in most Islamic societies is the strong emphasis on the acceptable standard of women's dressing. This issue has generated several debates on whether what has been generally viewed as the proper mode of dressing as enforced in most Islamic societies is actually Islamic or cultural (Nasir 2007: 90-107). Although this research does not engage in such contemporary debates but it tries to discuss dress code in relation to its impact on female education in northern Nigeria. In Islam, woman is expected to dress in accordance to the prescription of the Sharia which states:

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; and that they should not display their beauty ornaments except what (must or ordinary) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty save to their husbands ...and that they should not stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O believers! Turn altogether towards Allah, that you may attain bliss.<sup>217</sup>

Certain interpretations of the Sharia oblige women to dress in a way that does not expose their bodily appearance or ornament. Instead they must be modest in their appearance. The issue of dress code is taken seriously in most Islamic societies. However, a great number of northern Nigerian Muslims believe that the atmosphere western education presents itself has been inimical to the total moral wellbeing of women. With religious education, it is different because women must dress according to the norms of Islamic dress code. However, in conventional schools women are not given the opportunity to dress the way Islam prescribes for them. When what is perceived as normative in Islam comes in conflict with practices of western educational institutions, the latter is quickly sacrificed rather than compromise religious norms. Female dressing habit has been a strong flash point in the argument against western education in the north of Nigeria and this has had its impact in keeping women from western-type of educational institutions.

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<sup>216</sup> These factors were widespread in the responses of informant on the question of why women still lag behind men in terms of equal educational opportunities.

<sup>217</sup> Qur'an 24:31.

### **5.8.2 Co-education**

Another point of disagreement and resentment to western education is coeducation: the practice of educating both sexes together in the same school. While Islamic education allows women to study alone without mingling with men, western education on the other hand encourages coeducation. To many Muslims, this is not encouraging because it is perceived as the seedbed of cultivating immoral thoughts and actions, practices inimical to the proper observance of Islamic moral codes and conducts. Coeducation is viewed among northern Nigerian Muslims, particularly males, as one of the strongest systems that encourage immoral behavior among female students (Doi 1996: 144).

It is against this backdrop that Zamfara and decided to separate the sexes by having separate schools for boys and girls right from the primary level with the hope that Muslim parents will be encouraged to allow their girls acquire education.<sup>218</sup> The enforcement of the use of the *hijab*, on all female pupils and student from primary to tertiary institutions is also an indication that the atmosphere has been very unfavorable to Muslims in the north before now. Thus the perceived unfavorable atmosphere presented by western education by which some Muslims see as “un-Islamic” makes western education unappealing to most Muslims in the north.

### **5.8.3 Fear of Moral Laxity**

Fear of moral laxity has always been one of the strongest reasons that have hindered the education of women in northern Nigeria. Western education encourages coeducation and the fear of many Muslims in the past has been that if girls were allowed to co-educate with boys they would become morally loose. Coeducation, it is believed, is the enabling condition for breeding sexual immorality among the pupils and students and sometimes among teachers and students. Doi (1996: 144-145) also shares this view and pointedly argues against the system when he states:

Whatever trumpets the proponents of coeducation may blow in praise of the system, the sad fact still remains that a majority of girl students in the secondary schools in Europe and America spend more time in picking up illicit sexual techniques from their class mates than in collecting useful knowledge from their

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<sup>218</sup> Interview with the principal, Women Continuing Education Center, Gusau, Zamfara state, 08.03.2007

teachers...therefore we should dispense with the system of coeducation and should open primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities exclusively for women where the teachers as well as the students are women. The uniform for all female students should satisfy the requirements laid down by the Shari'ah for proper dress (Doi 1996:144-145).

The Islamic injunctions on women, they believe, are stricter than what is expected of men<sup>219</sup>. That a woman is not expected to mingle with the opposite sex is strongly advocated. She is expected to always “lower her gaze”, and most of all appear before men in the appropriate dress that conforms to the Sharia norms or injunction. However, women who attend western schools are generally absolved from conforming to these injunctions. According to an interlocutor, some Muslim men would rather have their wives educated according to the prescriptions of Islam than allow them to attend western schools.<sup>220</sup> One of the primary reasons for this is the fear of these women becoming morally loose. Western schools, it is generally feared among Muslims, produce secular human beings which inexorably lead to secularization of personal conduct and life as well as worldview. Muslims are at odds with such possibility as the Muslim *umma* is based on the God's injunctions as made explicit in the Qur'an and expanded in the *hadith* or scholarly interpretations (see Talbani 1996: 75-79).

#### **5.8.4 Early Marriage**

The issue of early marriage has been looked into extensively in earlier studies on women in northern Nigeria (Csapo 1981; Knipp 1987; Callaway 1984; 1987). However recent studies in the field of education in Northern Nigeria also confirm that early marriage is one of the several factors that still impede women's education in all of the Sharia states in northern Nigeria. Although a cultural practice, it has been viewed and accepted by northern Nigerian Muslims as a religious obligation. The Qur'anic injunction that places the sin of unmarried women upon the head of her parents has forced many parents into marrying off their girls at a very early age.<sup>221</sup> In addition to such Islamic injunctions, many northern Nigerian Muslims try hard to emulate the prophet Mohammed who married his wife Aisha at a very early age; parallel to this conception is

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<sup>219</sup> Interview with Mohammed Suraju, *op.cit.*

<sup>220</sup> Interview with Hussein Mohammed, *op.cit.*

<sup>221</sup> Interview with Mohammed Isa( pseudo name ) Principal, Women Center for Continuing Education, Gusau Zamfara state 07.03.2007.

the belief that young girls who are not married off early in life acquire a lot of immoral behaviors if they remain unmarried beyond the age of puberty and worse still when these girls are allowed to acquire western education where the atmosphere is unfavorable. As a result, young Muslim girls in northern Nigeria have for a long time married from age twelve. Once married, they often remain in seclusion and begin the process of child-bearing/rearing which repeatedly prevents them from pursuing further education. For girls, marriage, which ideally coincides with puberty, marks the transition to adult status. If a girl is married off as early as age twelve, she enters *Kulle* (Hausa: seclusion) and loses the freedom of childhood, hence, most girls are married by age fifteen, and for many the transition is a difficult one. These and many more practices have hampered the education of women for many years, as women were not allowed outside the confines of their homes to acquire the most important tool that guarantees their easy participation in the wider society.

### 5.8.5 Poverty

Another factor that has denied women access to education is the current economic situation of most northern Nigerian families. Because of the marriage customs among northern Nigerian Muslims, which allows for men to marry up to four wives, it is often difficult to sustain such homes. In countless situations, the breadwinner of the home who is always the man is unable to provide for the basic necessity of the home due to the large number of children as a result of polygyny. In such cases Islamic education is preferred because it is not expensive. As an informant notes:

... Islamic education is imparted cheaply. If I have four wives and have twenty-five children and I send them to be taught by *Mallams*, it may not cost me much. But if I send them to western schools they will say bring text books, bring uniforms, etc. Islamic education takes cognizance of our traditional way of life...<sup>222</sup>

There are instances of polygynists having more than 25 children, so the figure cited by the informant above is not wide of the mark or strictly hypothetical. In such situation the most affected in the family are the female children. The girl child is seen by most parents as

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<sup>222</sup> Husseini Mohammed, *op.cit.*

expendable and should quickly be married away in order to prevent the shame of pre-marital pregnancy and, more importantly, create space for the development of the male children. Boys are seen as assets and the pain of investing on them is not felt by parents. The situation is different for a girl who may eventually marry off and remain in seclusion for the rest of her life. The practice of keeping females in seclusion precludes investing in them educationally because they would not be required to utilize such investment in working in the public sphere. The practice of early marriage which ensures that girls are married off between the ages 12 and 15 precludes these girls from remaining long enough in schools to acquire adequate education which would be useful in social governance or public organizations.

### **5.8.6 Government Policies on Education**

Another issue at variance with northern Nigerian Muslim communities is the official educational policy of the State. Government policies on education have been very unacceptable by many Muslims in the north. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) of the 1970's was meant to bridge the gap between males and females and the most recent Universal Basic Education (UBE) introduced by the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo has improvement of girls' education as one of its aims. However, the UPE recorded very little success (Clarke 1978: 133). These schools constructed under the UPE program have received very poor funding by the federal and state governments. They lacked adequate classrooms to accommodate the students and the facilities in these schools were not enough to meet up with the needs of the students. Lack of adequate funding and misappropriation of funds subverted official government policy on education (Clarke 1978:134).

According to the government's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document, "The goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, and value reorientation can be effectively pursued, attained, and sustained only through an efficient, relevant and functional education system."<sup>223</sup> The UBE program of the Obasonjo regime, like its ill-fated predecessor, falls short of proper implementation. The mechanism and infrastructure needed to achieve the identified noble objectives have not been adequately

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<sup>223</sup> *Meeting Everyone's Needs: National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy* (Abuja: Nigerian National Planning Commission, 2004), pp. 35

addressed. The result has been poorly-staffed and poorly equipped schools, poorly motivated teachers and a general lack of academic infrastructure resulting in poor performance by students in many of these schools.<sup>224</sup> This has made parents apprehensive of allowing their girls to attend any form of education apart from the religious education. Parents argue that since the schools are not producing good results with quality products, why waste money and time on them. To many, this is an attractive, if not inescapable conclusion.

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<sup>224</sup> Interview with the Director, Islamic Trust Fund, Minna, Niger State, 02.03.2007

## Chapter Six

### Summary and Conclusion

#### 6.1 Theorizing Women's Education in Northern Nigeria

In her book, *Nigerian Women Speak* (2007), Fumilayo Para-Mallam gives a gendered analysis of government policy towards women in Nigeria. Although Para-Mallam's work is an in depth examination of the National Policy on Women (NPW), it, however, also deals with some of the latent problems facing policy implementation in Nigeria, especially the country's incessant efforts to reverse gender disparity. She observes that personalization and politicization of institutional resources are the main bottlenecks militating against the implementation of such policies in Nigeria (Para-Mallam 2007:289). This premise presented by Para-Mallam holds true not only for the federal level where most policies are formulated by the central government of Nigeria, but also for the state and the local government levels of the government.

The issues often used to account for the deterioration of education in Nigeria are not very different from those identified in Para-Mallam's study. While the decline in oil revenue in the 1980s is said to have been responsible for Nigeria's inability to continually fund the UPE program of the late 1970s, corruption and mismanagement of public resources have been largely responsible for the gradual collapse of education in Nigeria since the 1990s (Clarke 1978; Reichmuth 1989; Umar 2004; Smith 2007). The shrinking of government financial resources—particularly the subvention dedicated to education—led to the emergence of private educational institutions in the country. Furthermore, it led to a proliferation of private religious educational institutions in Nigeria. Umar (2004) asserts that, with the shrinking of the formal state resources and the downsizing of the public sector, religious educational institutions set the pace for the provision of alternative types of schools.

This trend, that is the emergence and existence of religious educational institutions, has continued in northern Nigeria side by side with government owned educational institutions. The provision of alternative educational facilities by the religious institutions has expanded the field

of education allowing many more people to access it. However, the availability of religiously owned institutions has threatened women's access to public schools in northern Nigeria as parents prefer to send their daughters to religious schools, since, for them; the social atmosphere in public schools is generally not religiously favorable. The re-introduction of Sharia, therefore, heightened the demand for a more strict compliance with Islamic ethos in public schools in the Sharia states. Also, it led to the establishment and popularization of Islamic schools for women.

This last chapter revisits Bourdieu's theoretical concepts as a tool in explaining the politics surrounding Muslim women's education in northern Nigeria since the re-implementation of Sharia as discussed in the previous chapters. Bourdieu's concepts of the *Field* and *Symbolic violence* are used side-by-side to elucidate different aspects of the challenging educational and religious field in the four Sharia states since 1999.

## **6.2 Religion and Education in Northern Nigeria in the Light of Bourdieu's Field Theory**

The field, as observed by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 97), is "an arena within which struggles and maneuvers take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them". Bourdieu and Wacquant define the field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are "objectively defined in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions by their present or potential situation..."(Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97). Jenkins (2003) equally observes that Bourdieu refers to the field as "a social disposition occupied by individuals or institutions- the nature of which defines the situation of the occupant" (Jenkins 2003). In a lucid description of what obtains in the field, Bourdieu uses the metaphor of a game to describe the field and the activities that go on in it which according to him follow specific logic.

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), in any given field, there are stakes, which serve as products of the competition between the players and investment in the game which stems from their oneness of belief in the field. Also in the game Bourdieu describes the importance of trump cards which represent the various types of capitals that come to bear in the field, which could either be valid or not as they all hinge on the existence of a game (field) in which the

competency can be employed (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:98).

One of the major challenges of this thesis has been the fuzziness of the borders between the fields. Bourdieu also states that the two cannot be easily detached from one another. The focal point of this chapter, as far as the concept of the field is concerned, is the educational field, located within a religious field, that is, Sharia, which is itself a part of the field of law and state politics. The approach to education in northern Nigeria is often based on religion, therefore, leading to the fusion of the religious and educational fields. Another important practice that is revisited here is the practice of female seclusion, also known as *Purdah* or *Kulle* in Hausa. This is a cultural practice in many Islamic societies; ingrained within the broader religious field. Because of this, it is difficult to separate the religious and the cultural borders since they are interlinked in many ways, among them, law-religion-education-culture. This inter-linkage justifies the importance of evaluating the educational programs of the Sharia states within the framework of the religious field in northern Nigeria.

Deriving from the analyses presented in chapters three and four, the educational field in northern Nigeria has always been a contested sphere. This contest often pits secular-western education against Islamic education especially with regards to the education of women. Situated within the religious field of the Sharia states, the field of education consists of agents and players such as the state government and its respective policy makers and policy/implementers, religious leaders, individuals (pupils, women, girls, boys, adults, etc.), teaching and non-teaching staff. The link between the educational, the religious, and the political fields in the northern Nigeria can best be explained within the framework of the central argument that religion and the state are considered inseparable by some Muslims. Although Bourdieu extensively discusses the political and religious field, he, however, does not give a clear-cut concept of the educational field.

There are several religious and secular institutions within the educational field in northern Nigeria. These include schools, Sharia Commissions, ministries of education and Islamic institutions such as the Izala Movement, the *Jama'at Nasr al-Islam* (JNI), and the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria. All these bodies serve as agents or players in the field and are, at the same time, active contestants within the religious and secular educational field. As agents and institutions in the field, they are in constant struggle over specific stakes and

resources available in the educational field. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:102) describe what goes on within such a field in the following words:

In a field, agents and institutions constantly struggle according to the regularities and the rules constitutive of the space of play (and, in a given conjuncture, over those rules themselves), with various degrees of strength and therefore diverse possibilities of success, to appropriate the specific products at stake in the game. Those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage but they must always contend with the resistance, the claims, and the contention, 'political' or otherwise, of the dominated.

The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for implementing the federal government's policy on education in all parts of the country. The state governments are equal critical stakeholders with the central government in the implementation of some of the rules guiding the educational policies which should fall in line with the cultural context in which such policy is applied (NPE 2004: 9). As said earlier, northern Nigeria is located within a very deeply religious setting. The existence of Islamic education which had survived the intrusion of western education during colonialism has created a distinctive system where the majority of the players in the field share the same religious affiliation, i.e. they are Muslims. However, also within the Muslim community there are different sub-fields with adherents like the Sufis and Izala, which possess certain resources that enable them to be distinct and to mobilize competitive advantage. At the same time, they share similar types of cultural capital in the form of Islamic education with other actors in the broader field.

Even though the major focus of this study is on the impact of the re-implementation of Sharia on Muslim women's education, one cannot successfully discuss western education in northern Nigeria without also looking at Islamic education. This is because the two systems of education often go hand in hand especially where the curricula of public schools and privately owned Islamic schools are fused into a hybrid curriculum offering both secular and religious courses. The term 'hybrid' refers to a mixed system of education emphasized by the Sharia Commissions of the focal states. Although the term as used in this study defers from its usage in popular culture as seen in linguistics and post-colonial discourses, it however, helps in explaining the mixed system of Islamic and Western education propagated by the Sharia proponents. However, the questions one asks here are, for whose advantage is this hybrid system? Does it benefit the

(married) women who are enrolled in these special schools or the predominantly male cultural and religious set up which uses it to continuously keep the women away from the broader social field?

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (2000), the values of the powerful in society are usually disseminated through the institutions of education such as schools. These educational structures – primary, secondary tertiary or women-only schools– play a central role in the reproduction of social and cultural inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron 2000: 71-72). They further note that generally, the values of the powerful are enforced on the children of the working class through the educational system, thereby perpetuating dominant values but also maintaining the status quo. So, the school curriculum becomes a platform for propagating social strata and inequality. This in turn produces symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1984), which, as explained earlier, represents a situation in which holders of symbolic capital use such power against an agent who holds less, seeking to alter their actions; while children of the less privileged see the educational success of their advantaged peers as legitimate social values to aspire for. As symbolic violence often forms the basis of gender inequality, the concept has been fruitfully used in this study to account for the situation of Muslim women within the educational field in northern Nigeria. Since they are deprived of western education but provided with a form of Islamic education that encourages their being disadvantaged they are cut-off from major resources that provide both political and economic capital. What seems even more surprising is that, the hybrid education system perpetuated by the Sharia governments emphasizes Islamic knowledge rather than practical knowledge that opens doors of employment and social upward mobility for the women. Also, providing women skills such as knitting and baking only further limits them to the home domain.

According to Bourdieu, social formations are structured around a multifaceted collection of social fields where different forms of authority socialize. In this case, their autonomy varies from one to the other (Bourdieu 1993). For instance, within the educational field, the field of primary education varies from the secondary education field which also varies from the tertiary education field. Nigeria uses the 6-3-3-4 system of education which consists of 6 years of primary school; 3 years of junior secondary school; 3 years of senior secondary schools; 4 years of university education. Apart from university level where consistency exists, the 6-3-3-4 education system has been plagued by innumerable problems since its inception in the late 1980s. One of the major

problems is that it does not work well with other tertiary institutions which are not degree oriented such as polytechnics, teacher training colleges, and colleges of agriculture whose curricula do not lead to academic degrees but rather to professional certificates and diplomas in various fields such as education, agriculture, business, technical skills and many other specialized professions.

This state of affairs has fashioned a structured system within the field of education which concurs with Bourdieu's argument as observed by (Naidoo 2004) that the field is structured into hierarchies with different agents or institutions playing both dominant and subordinate positions depending on the quantity of the resources (capital) possessed by occupants of the field. Naidoo (2004:459) conceptualizes higher education as "social machine that selects students according to an implicit social classification and reproduces the students according to an implicit academic classification and reduces the same students according to an explicit academic classification which in reality is similar to the implicit social classification".

Bourdieu's main argument about the educational field is the premise that the educational system serves as the starting point for the acquisition of certain cultural capitals. These capitals are acquired through the process of socialization. However, he warns that this process repeatedly contributes to the construction and consolidation of social inequality, and hence mirroring the social space with its dominant and dominated agents and institutions, its instrument for reproduction of inequality, and its struggles for inclusion and exclusions of certain agents (Bourdieu 1996:271). This argument captures the statuses of some of the educational programs for women instituted by the Sharia states, discussed in chapters three and four. The conception behind the Women Continuing Education Centers discussed in this study as centers that provide women with the requisite education to compete in the public sphere, for instance, is very elusive since the WCECs have apparently instead consolidated the social network of chauvinism that existed before. The centers somehow perpetuate the existing status quo of women being relegated to the background in terms of access to economic capital and political institutions. This notwithstanding, the centers are a giant stride towards correcting the earlier practice of preventing women from acquiring western education due to the underlying issues discussed earlier. The actions of Sharia proponents have been guided by the deeply rooted notions of

female submissiveness and moral uprightness– notions that have served as important drives in the implementation of these programs.

Given that northern Nigerian women do not usually get equal educational opportunities as their male counterparts, they are often not completely prepared for public responsibilities. Consequently, reviving a system as those in the WCECs, as the Sharia Commissions have done in the states studied, clearly perpetuates a ‘mis-education’ of women, especially as these women are somehow mildly obliged to accept these educational facilities as perfect. This fits with Bourdieu’s concept of *misrecognition*, which arises when subordination to (e.g. an educational system) is reinforced by values that the women themselves accept as valid. In such a situation, the subordinated become complicit with such values. This produces a situation of symbolic violence which he further describes as:

gentle, invisible violence, unrecognized as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety, in a word, of all the virtues honoured by the ethic of honour, presents itself as the most economical mode of domination because it best corresponds to the economy of the systems ( Bourdieu 1990: 127).

The above position by Bourdieu (1990) elucidates the conceptualizations and preferences reminiscent of the education of Muslim women in northern Nigeria. These women prefer centers where women are prevented from attending other schools and are kept away from the public sphere; since these selected centers are presented by the proponents of Sharia as the legitimate and ideal institutions that provide not only earthly success but also eternal bliss. Furthermore, the women are complicit actors who tolerate the existence and continued functioning of these schools which they consider ‘the best possible schools’ for married women. In this sense, the schools are ‘the best possible schools’ for married women not because they actualize women’s potentials and challenge them to participate fully and actively in the economic and social reproduction of wealth and wellbeing but also because they accommodate the status-quo and all the elements that facilitate the absence of equal treatment for women in society. These accommodated elements include early marriage, wife seclusion, and economic disempowerment. By accepting the new education centers as the best possible schools for them; cooperating with them and participating in their activities and programs, the women effectively become tolerant to their own subordination to such system. Hence, they tend to misrecognise the legitimacy of other

forms of knowledge propagated in other types of schools. As explained by Bourdieu, misrecognition also occurs when holders of symbolic capital disapprove of the actions of those who hold less capital; especially when such a move leads to a change in disposition; or when it leads them to perceive the others' (holders of symbolic capital) symbolic violence as legitimate. The women discussed in this investigation find themselves in the above situation. They acknowledge the legitimacy of the different programs offered for them within the context of the Sharia regime since these are projected as sustaining their culture, religion and especially their status as wives and mothers. Even if the role of the Sharia proponents could be described as manipulative, i.e. wielding capital into a form of subtle symbolic violence, the women's perception of that role would be more positive. A few possible reasons would be:

- 1) The educational system offers them the chance to pursue their almost lost education in a convenient, respectful environment, i.e. with other wives and mothers.
- 2) The WCECs shield them from the immorality and unreligious environment of the regular (mixed-gender) public schools.
- 3) They are not in contact with younger girls who could constantly taunt and snub them.
- 4) Their husbands are comfortable that they are not exposed to other men.
- 5) Though only in some states, their children are offered nursery care during classes, of course, besides the other incentives described in chapter three.

These factors make the women's participation in the maintenance of the existing status quo or the perpetuation of symbolic violence easy and unconscious. For instance, the broader implication of creating women-only educational centers discussed in the previous chapters as in Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna and Bauchi states is that the centers and their programs simply reproduce the social domination of women by men since they design and implement these educational programs, and also consolidate the position of power held by the men. Because the women who attend these schools or centers often do not always have the liberty to choose to go to other types of schools, they are, therefore, literally compelled to accept the only choice that is available to them.

The Islamic injunction which is traditionally interpreted as placing men 'a degree above' women has often been used as a religious basis for social and gender stratification within and across

cultures. A frequent outcome is that it erases the cultural basis of social and gender relations replacing it with a religiously-dictated practice. Bourdieu refers to such scenarios as modes of domination. He argues that those who are dominated in this type of scenario end up accepting the values and positions of the dominant authority and interpreting them as right and legitimate. The consequence, taking into account northern Nigeria, is that besides exacerbating a religious authority, it has also created a male-centered system, whose values are sanctioned and authorized by a male-interpreted religion and culture. This religion and culture define the status of women as subordinate to men, and limits their roles in society to the domestic sphere. Callaway (1984: 436) and Epstein (2007: 28) view men's role in the creation of such a system as crucial. For Epstein, women's subordination or submission has remained the basis of maintaining the social coercion and stratification systems of ruling and governing groups mainly made up of males. Through this, the men perpetually control the behavior of females in the public sphere in many parts of the world. In describing female subordination in a global context, Epstein (2007: 31) reiterates that "the denigration and segregation of women is a major mechanism in reinforcing male bonds, protecting the institutions that favor them and providing the basic work required for societies to function." Such persistent segregation does not only exist in the work place, as Epstein (2007) notes, but also in the educational system where certain types of education are labeled as women-friendly as it is the case with the WCECs and the focal schools as introduced by the Sharia states.

Again, Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) find formal education a platform for reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the other. They explain that there is generally a tension between the conservative approach to schooling (i.e. the preservation of knowledge such as in Qur'anic and some Islamic schools) and the dynamic, innovative approach (i.e. the generation of new knowledge, e.g. as in western schools) in situations where the dominant group's cultures are embodied in the schools. The statuses of the so-called formal education in the women centers straddle the divide between formal and vocational training. The centers, therefore, generate ambiguities that are difficult to deal with, for instance, the candidates in these centers find it difficult to transit from secondary education to tertiary education. The centers, therefore, share features of both formal and informal education but fail to clearly create opportunities for the women in especially the post-secondary formal education structure. In

conclusion, taking into account the different features and structure of these women centers, one can say that they are structures of domination of women. Although they try to provide them formal education, they still perpetually limit these women from aspiring for opportunities as they limit women's access to jobs and careers in the public sphere.

### **6.3 Summary of Major Findings**

The re-introduction of Sharia by twelve states in northern Nigeria brought about the transformations which drastically changed the state of affairs in several of the 12 Sharia states. These changes had wide implications not only these states but also in the whole of northern Nigeria. The re-implementation affected the socio-economic situation of many Muslims especially women. This study set out to identify the major changes that have taken place in the domain of the education of Muslim women since the re-implementation of Sharia. The changes made to the laws of the Sharia states were aimed at eliminating social vices and sanitizing the society to conform to Islamic values and ethos. Besides the legal system, other changes were made to the existing policies in education, religion, etc. For example, in the four states studied in this work, i.e. Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna and Bauchi states, many female educational programs were introduced that have led to significant transformations of both educational system (i.e. a merge of Western and Islamic curricula) and the target group of students for the system, i.e. women-only schools and special educational centers for married women who had dropped out of school to get married (see chapters three and four). On the whole, the changes have been aimed at fostering the education of Muslim women who before this period were shown by censuses to be the most educationally disadvantaged group.

Researching the transformations recorded since the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, this study relied on three main research questions:

- 1) What is the teaching of Islam on education in general and female education in particular?
- 2) How have the different versions of the re-implemented Sharia influenced Muslim women's education in northern Nigeria since 1999?
- 3) How do Muslim women interact with, and respond to, the new structures of Sharia especially in relation to their education?

These questions have helped in providing answers to the problem of female education in northern Nigeria. They have also helped in understanding a number of the programs introduced by the proponents of Sharia in the states studied. The research demonstrates that several programs on female education were introduced since the re-implementation of Sharia. These programs were expected to uplift the educational status of women. However, the nature of a number of these programs which emphasize women only institutions tends to limit women's access to other educational facilities. This poses a danger for the future of women who would eventually compete for resources with a wider public.

The work also illustrates how the interpretations of the Qur'anic verses that give equal rights to education for both males and females are often done in favor of the dominant gender, that is, the males. This further shows the power play surrounding the re-implementation of Sharia in Nigeria and the agitations by both the masses and the elites which culminated into the frenzy for the re-implementation. It also lays bare the motivations of the different arguments advanced for and against Sharia by Muslims and Christians respectively. The study highlights emerging shifts in the Sharia approach from the criminal code to other issues, for example, Muslim women's education, which the proponents of Sharia argue were geared towards the development of all spheres of society to conform to Islamic standards.

From investigation carried out in this work, we found out that social actors (i.e. officials of Sharia Commissions, some teachers of the Qur'an, conservative parents, etc.) and proponents of Islam interpret the Qur'an and Prophet Mohammed's injunctions and teachings in ways that favor the policies designed on Sharia. For example, in order to encourage women to attend the special schools created for them, these proponents project portions of the Qur'an where it emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge by all Muslims irrespective of gender. Being a religiously pious community, whatever is said in the name of God is very positively assessed and accepted. So, the Qur'anic injunctions on the rights and privileges of women are believed to have granted women equal access to all forms of education under Sharia. However, due to cultural practices and the fact that the law is interpreted by the men, Qur'anic verses and injunctions are often read from a male standpoint that keeps them dominant both within the religious and the cultural nomenclature. Women have, therefore, been made to comply with such interpretations, which though constitute symbolic violence for them and their rights to choose what is good for

them, are viewed by these same women as authentic and ideal.

A perfect example of the above trend in the interpretation of the Qur'an is where proponents of Sharia argue that women are custodians of knowledge (see chapter three). Knowledge in this sense is limited as women are encouraged to appreciate Islamic education more than western education. This tends to limit their participation in the wider social and economic sphere. The issue of the interpretation of religious scriptures to suit the dominant gender has remained a perpetual practice in the Sharia states. This is evident in a number of the programs of the Sharia governments.

For example, Kaduna state government used the first lady of the state to promote the program which re-enforced the spread of women's Islamiyya schools (see chapter four). Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital explains the immense role that first ladies play not only at the Federal government level in Nigeria but also at the state level of government. These women often bestowed with the symbolic capital possess the power to influence changes in their domains. As such several, programs in the states especially those dealing with gender issues are handled by the wives of the governors who by virtue of their positions as first ladies are used to promote such program. According to Bourdieu, symbolic capital is made up of social recognition it is also an end product of every form of capital, i.e. cultural, social and economic (Bourdieu 2000:242). Thus, although some first ladies do not have the cultural capital i.e. academic qualification to coordinate programs of the state, they are however given such responsibilities by virtue of the office they occupy.

This study shows that these programs targeted only women. But the question is why women are the target? Why do these programs privilege only women? As stated in some of the arguments put forward by the proponents of Sharia, women suddenly became the target of Sharia programs for three reasons: 1) their status as Muslim women and custodians of Islamic knowledge; 2) their roles as mothers, and first teachers to their children; 3) their marginalized educational status which has made them to lag behind the men over the years. These arguments sound convincing only in as much as practices of the proponents of Sharia show deliberate efforts in formulating and implementing programs directed at bridging the educational gap between males and females

in the Sharia states. However, a critical examination of the programs clearly demonstrates that their activities undermine these arguments, i.e. practical policies rather show the faultiness and fallacies of these arguments. Consequently, these arguments only make sense within the paradigm in which men control the principal structures and resources of society.

The study further shows that the establishment of Women's Education Boards, Focal Schools, and Women Continuing Education Centers in the four Sharia states investigated here, was a deliberate attempt at laying particular emphasis on women-only institutions. This is confirmed by the interviewees who are proponents of Sharia. Deliberately targeting women from a cultural and religious standpoint, shows that Sharia certainly affects the lives of women in the Sharia states. However, the insistence on total separation of women from men is a pointer to the fact that women are yet to be liberated from the cultural practice of seclusion which exists in the north and which confines women to a particular space and limits their interaction with the opposite sex. Since the programs are controlled by men, and the women are separated and educated under specific conditions, the outcome is that they remain perpetually subjugated. As a result, they can only participate in a few domains of social life that do not pose any threat to the male chauvinistic society and its infrastructures. They are left to compete only among themselves, and also only in a competition that is limited to a particular gender. So, apparently, the gender gap in the area of education is still wide in several of the Sharia states since the re-implementation of Sharia. Moreover, women have also not been able to integrate the public political sphere populated by men. A proof for this, as gleaned from reports from Sharia Commissions in the states and interviews with highly educated Muslim women, only very few women served in the various Sharia committees during the whole process of the re-implementation<sup>225</sup>. So decisions on problems facing women and how they could be resolved under the Sharia dispensation have been exceedingly taken by men— a recreation of the old dispensation.

#### **6.4 Concluding Remarks and Suggestions for Further Research**

When Sharia was re-introduced in 1999, the main focus of the programs of the states was on criminal law. They also focused on social conduct, for instance, removing certain aspects of

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<sup>225</sup> Interview with Dr. Aish B. Lemu, Minna, Niger state. 02.03.2007.

social life which according to Sharia are immoral e.g. the existence of beer parlors (bars), from the protection of the law. However, at some point, emphasis shifted from criminal law to other issues such as education. As observed in the previous chapters, several societal trends and the public policy focus of the Sharia state governments seem to explain this sudden shift to education.

Firstly there was unpopular support for the criminal law due to its impact on women, and especially the poor, uneducated, and rural women. The conviction of some poor women by some Sharia courts for adultery and the sentencing of these women to death by stoning provoked general public outrage among human rights activists in some parts of northern Nigeria. These sentences also attracted national and international condemnation, some elaborately described by Kalu (2004) and Ostien (2007). The often rash judgments by some of the lower Sharia courts led to a backlash where even some die-hard Sharia enthusiasts started questioning the integrity of the personnel handling these cases. With these negative appraisals, the Sharia states started looking for new domains in which the Sharia project could regain the popularity it had before these events. The introduction of educational programs within the same period therefore, became a possible rescue-domain for the advocates of the re-implementation of Sharia. The strategy was to initiate programs which would be accepted by the populace. Zamfara state's educational programs became a model for most of the other Sharia states. The initiation of educational programs and particularly religious educational programs was a welcome idea to the populace who were for long deprived of education due to factors such as poverty and early marriages, in the case of the females.

Secondly, the general argument among northern Nigerian Muslims that education is fundamental to all Muslims launched a religious search for education as a way of being close to God. Education was encouraged by Prophet Mohammed during his time. He used to bring the people together to teach them about religion. Thus, it is generally accepted that education is a fundamental part of Islam and any *umma* that aspires for greatness must educate its populace. The proponents of Sharia, therefore, claimed they were simply going back to the ideal teaching of the Qur'an by making Qur'anic education an integral part of their reform program. By proposing an answer to the question about what type of education was emphasized in the Sharia programs and why, this research shows that although the Zamfara and Kano Sharia projects have

placed great emphasis on education generally and particularly female education, the greater emphasis has been on Islamic education, expected to be a tool that would help in the transformation processes of the Sharia states. In situations where western education is emphasized, it is done with insistence on strict compliance with the dictates of the Sharia, that is, the atmosphere of learning must conform to Islamic principles, which entails the total separation of the sexes, the creation of women-only schools and centers of learning, the enforcement of 'Islamic' dress codes for women which in this case means the wearing of *Hijab*, and the incorporation of Islamic education in secular schools curricula.

Thirdly, by far the most sophisticated argument for the shift from criminal law to other issues as propounded by the Sharia proponents is that which touches on the process of Islamization of the society. During the initial stages of the re-introduction of Sharia, the main aim was to expand the law and to restore Islamic cultural values which were believed to have been eroded by a western-styled Nigerian constitution which, for the Sharia proponents, was too secular rather than being multi-religious. For them, the constitution did not cater for the religious needs of the Muslim populace. Consequently, creating a system that is strictly religious along with an educational system based on Islamic principles was a top priority for the Sharia states. This, they believed, would go a long way in cleansing the society and gradually restoring the 'lost glory' of Islam. Cook (1999) explains that those calling for the Islamization of education consider it one of the keys to the revitalization of Islam. In northern Nigeria, western education is viewed by the proponents of Sharia as having fallen short of educating the whole person because it does not represent the basic religious values propagated in Islam. Therefore, the Sharia states' objective in the creation of new educational policies was to resurrect Islamic principles.

From the study, it is clear that several of the programs introduced for women are more intense in Zamfara and Kano states than they are in Kaduna and Bauchi states. As the study shows programs in Kano and Zamfara state are a direct impact of Sharia while those in Kaduna and Bauchi are unrelated to Sharia, but rather to the democratic wind of change that came with the return of democracy after the fall of the military regime. For example, the re-establishment of women centers, the insistence on the separation of the sexes, and compliance with proper Islamic ethos were stricter in Zamfara and Kano than in Bauchi and Kaduna states. As discussed earlier in the study, Kano and Zamfara states are similar because they are overwhelmingly Muslim,

although with a sizable population of non-Muslims; Kaduna state is mixed and Bauchi's Christian-Muslim population can almost be referred to as mixed due to a large population of indigenous non-Muslims existing in the state. This is evident in the kind of Sharia implemented and practiced in the state. The study also shows that Bauchi and Kaduna state's version of Sharia can best be described as abridged as it has a strong divide between Sharia and non-Sharia parts. This means that some parts of Kaduna and Bauchi do not subscribe to Sharia. In these parts of the states, little emphasis is placed on certain prohibitions and the process of Islamization (see chapter two).

The similarities and differences between the educational programs of Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi and Kaduna states have wide implications for female education in northern Nigeria. It suggests that some of the northern states are yet to fully come to a complete recognition of the problems facing female education. This issue needs very urgent intervention that goes beyond the creation of women-only centers or on Islamization processes. Focusing on Islamization alone in its re-engineering program, rather than on educational opportunities for women in the broader public domain, has continued to be highly structured to conform to the Islamic ethos and the cultural roles allocated to women, i.e. as home keepers and child bearers.

Furthermore, the perpetuation of WCECs instead of direct policy-driven programs to correct the problem of school dropout due to early marriage gives room for the continuation of the practice of early marriage. The WCECs do not solve the problem but rather contain its aftermaths and outcomes. The cycle will continue, with more and more girls leaving school to get married and then returning to the WCECs to continue learning from where they stopped several years back – how effective this is, is still questionable and could be a suitable area for further longitudinal research. With this, the gender and regional gap in education would continue to widen. This will indeed have negative implication for the processes of change as envisioned in the National Education and Empowerment Development Strategy and the Millennium Development Goals.

This research has contributed to a variety of growing literature on the re-implementation of Sharia in northern Nigeria, which has largely focused on various aspects of women's life (see the introduction). This study through its focus mainly on the impact of Sharia on the educational status of Muslim women in northern Nigeria unlocks a field of knowledge on the educational status of women under a Sharia dispensation, which has hitherto not been researched. It

therefore, contributes a fresh dimension and insight to the wide range of research on women's education in northern Nigeria.

One of the main questions the research sought to answer was the changes initiated by the re-implementation of Sharia on educational policies, particularly women's education in the four states: Kaduna, Zamfara, Kano and Bauchi. Through the statistics provided and the evidence from the data, the research has shown that, between 1999 and 2007, emphasis on female education in the four focal states improved, which led to large female enrolment figures in schools and the introduction of innovative programs. However, the improvement in female education in these states is not absolutely credited to the re-introduction of Sharia but also to the timely intervention of several non-governmental organizations. Their activities somehow coincided with the re-implementation of Sharia. It would be interesting to follow up and assess to what extent the programs studied have been sustained, and the impact(s) they have on women, particularly as the state administrations have changed over time.

Another sub-question the study focused on was the enrolment of females in schools within the study area. It would be interesting to carry out a research that would study post-2007 to establish completion rates across the study areas. It will also be useful to do a follow-up research on all the schools, i.e. from secondary schools to the university, in order to trace the transition of women from the WCECs and Focal Primary Schools to the JSS, SSS and university. This would help to establish if these girls and women have gone on to graduate and progress to higher education or whether the model schools and centers established during this period have produced qualified candidates for tertiary institutions. This will help answer some of the questions raised as problems related to the existence of these types of educational institutions.

Finally, the study has shown that the educational programs of the Sharia Commissions are strictly Islamic as they are directed at combining Islamic education with western education. This means that Islam and formal education are merged. This is not terrible, as it is also the type of education already advocated for northern Nigeria by Islamic organizations such as the Izala (see chapter five). This hybrid type of education, promoted by the theory of the Islamization of knowledge, if taken as a model and fully implemented may influence education in the Sharia states and may be good for gender education because it gives Muslim women more exposure. So, it would be interesting to follow up on the educational programs started by the Sharia

Commissions of the four states (and also the other eight Sharia states) to find out to what extent they have facilitated the Islamization process. Longitudinal and empirical studies are, therefore, needed to further corroborate the findings and conclusions arrived at in this work.

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