Forging the Chains:

The Status of Northern Adolescents

Lead Consultant's Discussion Paper

Abdalla Uba Adamu
Department of Education
Bayero University, Kano

For the

P A R T O N E

Introduction

Before tackling the issue of the *status* and subsequently *needs* of adolescents in the **Northern cluster,** I think it would be appropriate to begin with some fairly technical conceptual frameworks so that we have a clearer idea of what we are referring to when we discuss *adolescent.*

Adolescence is the transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. *Adolescence is* thus a convenient label for the period in the life span between ages 12 and 20 and is roughly equivalent to the term "teens."

In many societies adolescence is narrowly equated with puberty and the cycle of physical changes culminating in reproductive maturity. Western societies understand adolescence in terms of a broader sense of development — that is, it encompasses psychological, social, and moral terrain as well as the strictly physical aspects of maturation. This understanding is not necessarily unique to western societies, and is fairly universal. However, different rates of social development, including different cultural mindsets might have created differing rates at which children go through these stages in different societies.

Adolescence is the period during which the individual experiences an upsurge of sexual feelings following the latency period of childhood. During this time the individual learns to control and direct his sex urges.

Another issue that usually arises in adolescence is that of emotional (if not physical) separation from parents as a necessary step in the establishment of personal values. This new responsibility for self-determination and self sufficiency forces an array of adjustments upon many adolescents. Furthermore, teenagers often have no defined role of their own in society but are caught in the ambiguous overlap between the reasonably clearly defined roles of childhood and adulthood. In a sense these issues define adolescence and the response to them partly determines the nature of an individual's adult years.

Some specialists consider adolescence to be an intense and often stressful period of development that is characterized by a variety of special types of behavior. Others find that the difficulties of adolescence have been exaggerated and that for many adolescents the process of maturation is usually peaceful and untroubled. Either way, the adolescent period is a delicate balance in the life of the individual, and therefore deserves careful attention to enable children successfully navigate their way through it traps and pitfalls.

Physiological aspects
The physical and physiological changes of adolescence do not proceed uniformly; however, a general sequence for these changes applies to most people.

It is useful to speak of phases of bodily changes in adolescence in order to draw important distinctions among various degrees and types of change. Bodily changes affect height, weight, fat and muscle distribution, glandular secretions, and sexual characteristics.

When some of these changes have begun, but most are yet to occur, the person is said to be in *the prepubescent* phase. When most of those bodily changes that will eventually take place have been initiated, the person is in the *pubescent* phase. Finally, when most of those bodily changes have already occurred, the person is in *the postpubescent* phase; this period ends when all bodily changes associated with adolescence are completed.

The bodily changes of adolescence relate to both primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Primary sexual characteristics are present at birth and comprise the external and internal genitalia. Secondary sexual characteristics are those that emerge during the prepubescent through post pubescent phases

Although the ordering of these bodily changes is fairly uniform among individuals, there is considerable variation in the rate of change. Some adolescents mature more rapidly and others more slowly than most of their peers. Of course, there are also youths who pass through the periods of bodily change at the average rate.

Variations in the rate of bodily change in adolescence often affect psychological and social development. Early-maturing adolescent boys tire typically better adjusted than late maturers and have more favorable interactions with peers and adults. These advantages of early maturation and disadvantages of late maturation tend to continue through the middle adult years for males.

For females, however, early maturation is associated with more psychosocial disadvantages than is late maturation. Maturing at an average rate seems to be most advantageous for females. However, the relations between female maturation rates and personality and social functioning in later life have not been determined.

Bodily changes among adolescents can also differ according to socio-cultural and historical influences. The age of menarche, for example, varies among countries and even among different cultures within one country. Moreover, there has been a historical trend downward in the average age of menarche, translating into a decrease of several months per decade from about 1840 to the

present. This phenomenon is generally ascribed to the improved health and nutrition of children and adolescents.

Nutritional Requirements in adolescence

Nutritional needs during adolescents vary according to activity levels, with some athletes requiring an extremely high-calorie diet. Other adolescents, however, who are relatively sedentary consume calories in excess of their energy needs and become obese. Peer pressure and the desire for social acceptance can profoundly affect the quality of nutrition of the adolescent as food intake may shift from the home to fast-food establishments.

Pregnancy during adolescence can present special hazards if the pregnancy occurs before the adolescent has finished growing and if she has established poor eating habits. Pregnancy increases the already high requirements for calcium, iron, and vitamins in these teenagers.

In Western societies, eating disorders such as *anorexia nervosa* and bulimia arise predominantly in young women as a result of biological, psychological, and social factors. An excessive concern with body image and a fear of becoming fat are hallmarks of these conditions. The patient with anorexia nervosa has a distorted body image and an inordinate fear of gaining weight; consequently she reduces her nutritional intake below the amount needed to maintain a normal minimal weight. Severe electrolyte disturbances and death can result. Bulimia is a behavioral disorder marked by binge eating followed by acts of purging (e.g., self-induced vomiting, ingestion of laxatives or diuretics, or vigorous exercising) to avoid weight gain.

Personality
The dramatic changes that characterize puberty present the adolescent with serious psychosocial challenges. A person who has lived for 12 years has developed a certain sense of self as well as of self-capacity. In adolescence, however, this knowledge of self is challenged. The rather sudden bodily changes in this period are accompanied by equally dramatic changes in thoughts and feelings. Thus, not all the assumptions adolescents held about the self in earlier stages may still be relevant to the new individuals they find themselves to be. Because a coherent sense of self is necessary for functioning productively in society, adolescents ask a crucial psychosocial question Who am I?

At precisely the time that adolescents feel unsure about who they are, society begins to ask them related questions. For instance, adolescents are expected to make the first steps toward career objectives. Society asks adolescents, then, what roles they will play as adults — that is, what socially prescribed set of behaviors they will choose to adopt.

Thus, a key aspect of this adolescent dilemma is that of finding a role, which is generally taken to be the outward expression of identity. The emotional upheaval provoked by this mandate is called the *identity crisis.* In order to resolve this crisis and achieve a sense of identity, it is necessary to synthesize psychological development and societal directives. The adolescent must find an orientation to life that not only fulfills the attributes of the self but at the same time is consistent with what society expects; that is, a role cannot be self-destructive (e.g., sustained fasting) or socially disapproved (e.g., criminal behavior). In the search for an identity, the adolescent must discover what he

believes in and what his attitudes and ideals are, for commitment to a role entails, to a greater or lesser degree, commitment to a set of values.

If the adolescent fails to resolve the identity crisis by the time of entry into adulthood, he will feel a sense of role confusion or identity diffusion. Some young adults waver between roles in a kind of prolonged *moratorium,* or period of avoiding commitment. Others seem to avoid the crisis altogether and settle easily on an available, socially approved identity. Still others resolve their crises by adopting an available but socially disapproved role or ideology. This latter option is called negative identity formation and is often associated with delinquent behavior. Resolution of the adolescent identity crisis has a profound influence on development during later adulthood.

All societies traditionally prescribe stereotyped roles to each sex. These roles have adaptive significance; that is, they allow society to maintain and perpetuate itself. From this reasoning, it follows that differences in sex-role behavior, at least initially, arose from the different tasks males and females performed for survival —especially those tasks centered on reproduction. Differing biologies exert differing pressures on psychosocial development; however, these pressures do not occur independently of the demands of cultural and historical milieus. The biological basis of one's psychosocial functioning is believed to relate to adaptive orientations for survival. Many differences exist between males and females, but the nature of individual differences between the sexes is dependent on interactions among biological psychological, socio-cultural, and historical influences.

Cognition
The dramatic physical and physiological changes characteristic of adolescence have an equally dramatic impact on cognitive and social functioning. Adolescents think about their "new" bodies and their "new" selves in qualitatively new ways. In contrast with sensorimotor and more limited spatiotemporal modes of thinking—which according to Piaget characterize infancy and childhood— beginning at about puberty, the *formal-operational* mode of thought emerges, characterized by reasoning and abstraction. In this formal-operational stage, adolescents begin to discriminate between their thoughts about reality and reality itself and come to recognize that their assumptions have an element of arbitrariness and may not actually represent the true nature of experience. Thus, adolescent thinking becomes somewhat experimental in the scientific sense, employing hypotheses to test new ideas against outward reality.

In forming hypotheses about the world, adolescent cognition can be seen to grow along with formal, scientific, logical thinking.

Formal-operational thought does not seem to be a stage characterizing all adolescents. Studies of older adolescents and adults in Western cultures show that not all individuals attain formal operations. In turn, in some non-Western groups there is a failure ever to attain formal operations. Some researchers have attributed these differences to the differences between rural and urban societies and the different kinds of schooling offered by each. There is, however, little evidence for socioeconomic or educational differences being associated with the achievement of formal-operational thought.

Formal-operational thinking also has limitations, predicated in part on the fact that adolescents often think about their own thinking. Just as the infant is

preoccupied with his physical self in a world of new stimuli, so the adolescent may be preoccupied with his own thinking in a world of new ideas.

Such preoccupation often leads to a kind of *egocentrism,* which can manifest itself in two ways: First, the individual may presume that his own concerns, values, and preoccupations are equally important to everyone else; second, the urgency of this new thinking may paradoxically give rise to an overestimation of one's uniqueness, often resulting in feelings of alienation or of being misunderstood. Although the formal-operational stage is the last stage of cognitive development in Piaget's theory, the egocentrism of this stage diminishes over the course of the person's life, largely as a consequence of interactions with peers and elders and — most importantly — with the assumption of adult roles and responsibilities.

The social context
The adolescent's social context is broader and more complex than that of the infant and the child. The most notable social phenomenon of adolescence ix the emergence of the marked importance of peer groups. The adolescent comes to rely heavily on the peer group for support, security, and guidance during a time when such things are urgently needed and since perhaps only others experiencing the same transition can be relied upon to understand what that experience is.

Contrary to cultural stereotype, however, the family is quite influential for adolescents. Indeed, no social institution has as great an influence throughout development as does the family. Most studies indicate that most adolescent have relatively few serious disagreements with parents. In fact, in choosiness their-peers, adolescents typically gravitate toward those who exhibit attitudes and values consistent with those maintained by the parents and ultimately adopted by the adolescents themselves. For instance, while peers influence adolescents in regard to such issues as educational aspirations and performance, in most cases there is convergence between family and peer influences. While it is the case that adolescents and parents have somewhat different attitudes about issues of contemporary social concern (e.g., politics, drug use, and sexuality), most of these differences reflect contrasts in attitude intensity rather than attitude direction. That is to say, rather than adolescents' and parents' standing on opposite sides of a particular issue, most generational differences simply involve different levels of support for the same position. In sum, there is not much evidence supporting the cultural stereotype of adolescence as a period of storm and stress. Most adolescents continue their close and supportive relationships with their parents, and their relationships with peers tend to support parental ideals rather than run against them.

PART TWO

Education and the Social Response in the Cluster

Having looked at the adolescent as a physical and emotional entity, let us now focus our attention on addressing some of the needs of the adolescent through formalized educational strategies, and the extent to which these have been successful.

Of all the states in the Northern Cluster, Kano State has had the most visible exposure to western education, starting with a colonial elementary schools in 1909 and 1910 for the "sons of chiefs" and "mallams class"

> "first at Nassarawa on land given by the Emir and later in Kano City...(which) flourished and fulfilled their purpose in a marked degree, even though they had at first to deal with pupils aged 6 to 40. For these schools came at first a dribble, which developed into a steady flow of trained teachers, literates of the ruling class and skilled artisans. That the flow never became a flood is due to the first world war. Wars arid economic recession have dogged the development of education in Northern Nigeria and no less than three serious crises have occurred.' (Williams 1960 p.10)

More than seventy years after those pioneer schools were established in Kano in 1910, the dribble remained almost the same.

Thus modern education (i.e. education with roots in Nigeria's colonial past) has never been fully accepted in Kano because of the historical antecedents which linked the development of education with Christian missionary activities in Nigeria. This was brought about by the Islamic nature of Kano State (Kano State 1976, 1983). As a Kano State government Committee (me *Galadanchi Committee)* set up to analyze the problems of education generally in Kano observed,

There is still, in our society, the lingering suspicion of Western education as an agent of Christianity. As a result of this suspicion, it is difficult to convince a great number of our people of the desirability of sending boys to school, let alone girls. The proliferation of Islamiyya Schools (mixed schools with strong Islamic influence) shows conclusively that when Western education is mixed with Arabic and Islamic religious teaching, it is readily acceptable. (Kano State 1976:35)

The gravity of the situation *as it affects girls* the most sacrificial group of learners—is reflected in Table I which shows the number of girls in Kano State post-primary schools in 1960s.

Table I: Kano State Post-Primary Students, 1962-1970

Year	Total	Girls	% Girls
1962	1,998	480	24
1963	2,465	622	25
1964	2,746	452	16
1965	3,310	788	23
1966	3,512	863	24
1967	3,404	771	22
1968	3,999	864	21
1969	4,707	804	17
1970	6,159	939	
Mean	**3,588**	**731**	**20**

Source: Kano State, 1970

Table I suggests a small number of girls in relation to the number of boys who attend post primary schools. For instance, the highest percentage of girls in schools was in 1963 when girls constituted 25% of the post-primary school population in Kano. And even then, girls are not found in all post secondary institutions, such as Craft and Technical Colleges.

The significance of the educational under-representation of girls in Kano in Table I is more so when the total population of girls of post-primary age in Kano, is taken into consideration. According to the 1963 census figures (the most reliable in Nigeria), the 10-14 female population (the bulk of the post primary population) in Kano was 268,933—out of which, for instance in 1962 only 480 were in post-primary schools.

The problem of low enrollment of girls in western type of schools in Kano State was not confined to the 1960s. It persisted well into the early 1980s making the problem almost permanent to the social structure of Kano State. This is indicated by Table II which shows the transition rate of girls from last year of Primary school to the first year of Post Primary school the following year.

Table II: Female Transition Rate From Primary To Post Primary Institutions In Kano State, 19 76-1983

Year	Primary 7	Year	Number	%
1976	5,128	1977	1261	24
1977	5,103	1978	1030	20
1978	4,806	1979	1124	23
1979	5,589	1980	2402	42
1980	9,466	1981	2351	24
1981	56,258	1982	2387	4
1982	30,641	1983	3S86	12

Source: Kano State, 1983

Thus even after the advantages of education in both national and personal advancement have become obvious the rate at which girls continue their education after primary schooling in Kano remains quite small, as Table II shows.

And in all analysis of the situation the consequences of Tables I and II are often seen by observers as well as the Kano State government to be caused by parents who do not wish to see their daughters continue with education beyond a certain level (mainly primary school). For instance, in a survey of various works on girls' education in Northern Nigeria, Csapo (1981) discoverer most of the findings place significant emphasis on the religious, social and economic factors hindering the education of girls in Northern Nigeria. Csapo blames the Northern Nigerian politicians for this situation by arguing,

> Northern politicians might consider the education of every Nigerian citizen desirable, but they are confronted with the reality of prevalent religious and social practices. In a democratic system the majority rules, and until the majority is convinced of the value of and the need for changing social practices, a politician seeking election has to be aware and respectful of the feelings of the voters. The government might make schooling compulsory for both sexes...However, this decision will probably have to be postponed until sufficient classrooms are built, teachers are trained and methods of enforcing the law can be found.' (Csapo 1981:315)

Similarly, in a further analysis of the impediments to women education in Kano, the *Galadanchi Committee* observed,

> It is regrettable that even though there has been a continuous awareness of women's education over the years' our educational leaders have only succeeded in paying 'lip service' to it. So far no positive action had been taken to show society the importance of women's education. The education authorities should first of all convince themselves on this important issue before convincing others. If the system of women and girls education is to be carried out on successful lines, the wives and daughters of the educated class must first be educated. (Kano State 1976:36)

And yet the Galadanchi Committee did not pay adequate attention to the efforts the Kano State government should make to encourage girls education in Kant>, and the evidence shows clearly the government does not seem to do much in alleviating the situation. This is partly reflected in Table III which shows the number of post-primary girls institutions in Kano from 1947 to 1984.

Table III: **Girls Post Primary Institutions in Kano State**, *1947-1984*

Institution	Year
1. Women Teachers' College	1947
2. Government Girls College, Dala (GGC)	1961
3. Won1en Teachers' College, Gezawa	1973
4. Government Girls' Secondary School, Kura	1975
5. Government Girls' Secondary School, Kwa	1977
6. Women Arabic Teachers' College, Gwauron Dutse	1977
7. Government Girls' School Secondary, Shekara	1979
8. Women Teachers' College, Mallam Madori *	1979
9. Government Girls' Secondary School, Kabo	1979
10. Government Girls' Arabic Secondary School, T/Wada	1980
11. Government Girls' Secondary School, Jogana	1980
12. Girls Science Secondary School, Taura *	1981
13. Government Girls' Arabic Secondary School, Dambatta	1982
14. Government Girls' Arabic Secondary School, Babura *	1983
15. Government Girls' Arabic Secondary School, Birniwa	1984
16. Government Girls' Secondary School, Kachako	1984

*Source: Kano State, 1985; Schools marked * are now in Jigawa State.*

There were thus 7 conventional secondary schools, 4 teacher training colleges and 5 Arabic oriented secondary schools in the old Kano

And although from 1984 to 1986 three more schools were added with a total population of 12,594, it is still interesting that although the colonial government in Northern Nigeria set the unusual precedent of providing a formal system of secular western education which had Kano State as its starting point (Graham 1966), no attempts were made to ensure *proportionate provision* of educational facilities for both boys and girls in Kano State even after Nigerian independence in 1960.

The significance of Table III is further emphasized when the total number of post-primary schools in Kano is taken into consideration. For instance in 1983 there was a total of 181 secondary schools in Kano - out of which 12 were for girls. Similarly there were 27 Teacher Training Colleges out of which 4 girls'. And although there were 22 Technical Colleges, none was for girls (Kano State 1983). These figures are projected in the table below

Institution Type	Total	Girls	% Girls
Secondary Schools	181	12	21.72
Teacher Training Colleges	27	4	1.08
Technical Colleges	22	0	()
Totals	**230**	**16**	

Table III indicates a gap of 14 years between the establishment of the first post primary school for girls in Kano and the next one. And although the gap between setting up new girls schools has decreased over the years, nevertheless the number of the schools is inconsistent with the demand.

Pushed Out, or Edged Out?
Yet in an ironic twist of history, the 1980s witnessed a massive surge in demand for girls' education in Kano. This is for instance indicated in a report in the *New Nigerian* newspaper of 17th October 1986 (p.12) which stated,

Kano State has recorded a dramatic rise in the number of females seeking admission into post primary institutions. Few years ago the State government complained of poor response of females to western education. Over 17,000 sat for the common entrance examinations this year (1986) out of which 7,156 were recommended for admission into post primary institutions. The Commissioner for Education, Alhaji Ibrahim Isma'il, said it was only 4,000 of those recommended for admission were actually admitted. He described the sudden rise in the number of girls seeking for admission as very pathetic and appealed to Federal Government to come to the aid of the State Government in this regard.'

Often studies in the past have blamed parents for not allowing their daughters to attend western type of schools (e.g. Kano State 1976), yet the government, most likely aware of the overall ratio of male to female births in the State does not seem to make adequate provisions to cater for the greater demand for education by girls in the 1980s by providing more schools for girls in proportion to the demand. In this situation, without enough schools to go to, one wonders what happened to the 13,000 girls who would not be admitted to schools in 1986, as the newspaper report indicated.

Thus the State government has no means of coping with a surge in demand for education; *an ironic situation, when in every report parental resistance to education was cited as the major cause of the problem.* This is indicated, for instance, by government officials in a report where the Governor of Kano State

> "blamed the shortage of indigenous manpower in the state on parents who refused to allow their children to go to school." *(Sunday Triumph* 23 September 1984)

And because government is committed to programs of social transformation requiring educated manpower, the State government often had to resort to drastic measures to enforce parents to send their children to schools. In one instance, it was reported,

> twenty six parents have been taken to courts in Kano State because they refused to send their children to school. The state government had only recently warned parents to either send their children to school or face 'unpleasant consequences'. The trail judge warned and discharged them on the understanding that they would send their children to school immediately. The parents were warned that if they continue to refuse to send their children to school, they would be sent to jail. Some traditional rulers have also been involved in the campaign to persuade unwilling parents to send their children to school. *(New Nigerian* Wednesday 4th July 1984 p.16)

It is interesting to note the persistence of this problem of getting parents to send their children to schools, long after it has become obviously clear there was no longer any formal association between modern education and Christianity; and despite concessions such as the early introduction of Islamic Religious Knowledge in the school curriculum.

Worst hit by parental reluctance, which was heavily capitalized by the Government bureaucracy, were girls who were shut out in the general provisions

for education. In the planning stages of western type of education in Kano, it was not deemed necessary, or politically expedient, to establish a school for girls. It was only later, in 1930, that a palace school for girls, *Gidan Makama Primary School* was established. As this was meant for children of the Emir and his courtiers, clearly the vast majority of girls of the "commoners" were excluded. This school later became the *Provisional Girls School* (Gidan Makama), in 1947, before converting to *Women Teacher's College* (WTC), in 1962.

It was clear, even from this politically correct attempt at providing education for the palace girls, that they were expected to become teachers — there were no facilities to enable them to learn other careers. It is thus from this beginning that the educational indoctrination of girl's education in Kano, and by extension, the Northern Cluster, started: with the view that the only career suitable for girls is teaching. In the meantime, no one has bothered to ask the girls themselves.

Tokenism and Girl-Child Education

However, Kano was not without tokenism with regards to girls' education. For instance, in 1987 the Kano State Government appointed four Committees to determine the final shape of a new Social Policy for Kano. The Committees were on The Destitutes, The Almajirai, Women Affairs, and Social Mobilization.

Each of these Committees was given specific terms of references to enable it to make recommendations that will lead to a brave new hope for citizens of Kano State. In the Women Affairs Committee, term of reference No. 6 was to

> identify the vital areas where female labor/work is specifically required for the well being of the society (e.g. Nursing, Medicine, Teaching, Social Work etc) and to encourage women to pursue such careers.

It is significant that Engineering, Civil Service, Science, Media, etc were not considered important enough. A Government White Paper which contained the governments' reactions to the Committees' findings and recommendations was released in May 1988.

In responding to this Term of Reference, the Committee on Women Affairs noted that:

> The Shariah recognizes the fact that women have a role in societal development through contributing to the upkeep of their homes, and public work such as Nursing and Midwifery provided that conducive atmosphere prevails in accordance with the Shariah. But today you find a situation in which male doctors and other medical professional attend to women in hospitals and vice versa. Women can do such work to help develop the Nation if given the necessary education. (Kano State 1988 p.10)

Based on this main observation, the Committee on Women Affairs made a series of recommendations, the main one being,

The government should emphasize the importance of female education. All encouragement ought to be given to female education. Also, female education should be free. (Kano State 1988 p.11)

But since modern education has been identified as necessary for modern nation-building, it became imperative for the Kano State government to find ways of making it more acceptable. The fundamental strategy adopted by the Kano State government to achieve this was to make education as free as possible for Kano State indigenes. This case was presented by the Governor of Kano who in interview in 1984 argued against fees or levies in education in Kano:

> if we say we are going to impose a levy on education or school fees we must remember that in some areas we still have to chase people to go to school and even if they go you have no guarantee they will stay because once the rain season comes their parents will just withdraw them automatically. We are now battling to make them understand how important it is for them to acquire education. If you impose a levy you are jeopardizing your chances of getting children to go to school. " *(New Nigerian* Wednesday 25th April 1984 p.3)

This strategy, far more attractive than threats of incarcerating errant parents, became the basis for wider provisions in general education through a system of generous scholarship provisions for Kano State students, especially those wishing to study science and technological disciplines in institutes of higher learning.

Thus education among the populace in Kano has graduated from the stage of sullen acceptance to a nadir of indifference. It is no longer seen by a shell-shocked populace as any agency for individual transformation. This is essentially because over the years—indeed since the first schools in Kano in 1909/1910 — education has not felt its presence felt to the very large population of people in the State.

Since the creation of the state in 1968, countless committees had been set up under various shades of policy control and governance to find what is quaintly called "lasting solutions" to the problem of education in the State. All the committees produced neatly typed reports that made neatly .stated recommendations whose results are still as neatly ineffective as before the committees started. Clearly, then, there is still a problem of making children of school-aged population *literate* in Kano. Arguments abound that by the virtue of attending *Islamiyya* schools, the vast majority of these population clusters *are* literate. Nevertheless that does not equip them with intellectual instruments necessary for integration in a contemporary society.

Switched Off!
Thus the education of girls in Kano, and by extension the Northern Cluster, had always been a thorny and unresolved issue. Typically girls' education in the rural areas of the state follows a specific pattern — which ends with the girls' often being denied by *the system,* the chance to further their education beyond the primary school. This, of course, is mainly due to faulty government policy; there are insufficient secondary schools for girls which thus denies a large portion of girls who may wish to proceed the chance to do so — especially those from the rural areas.

Yet these girls are too young to be married off. Village communities are not immune to social progress. The barrage of doom-laden messages about WE and other horrifying diseases associated with early marriages have started manifesting themselves in the increasingly large number of pubescent girls roaming around

urbanized rural areas. They constitute a danger to society in that they could fall in bad habits. They cannot continue with their education either because of earlier-level failure or simply because there is no further school to go to, or because there are funds to enable them to proceed.

A fundamental erroneous assumption for reluctance of girls education in the North that it is a rural phenomena. Surprisingly, this is not the case. Many people in inner city environments also provide a 'stiff' opposition to the education of girls. Whilst in the rural areas the problem is that of possible lack of schools to go beyond the primary schools for the girls, in the urban settings it is the perceived lack of relevance of the entire educational framework. Poverty alleviation in the inner-city is not seen as possible through regular or conventional education. Indeed a vast majority of the girls in the neighborhood shun the school to enable them to hawk various, mainly consumable/food items for their parents (groundnuts, eggs, Lola, regular prepared food etc).

In a similar way, the images of small children (mainly boys) hanging around the various motor parks and main streets of our *villages* haunts any educational planner. Often these children are given out the in the care of a "mallam" ostensibly for Islamic learning; but ending up as cheap, abused child Labour. Any interventionist strategy for this age group which requires credibility must take into consideration not only their vocational needs, but also its integration with their Islamic education, and thus address their needs as adolescents. This should enable them acquire technical skills which makes them self-sufficient and therefore takes them off the streets and restore their dignity as human beings - instead of providing cheap, abused labor.

This is where specific interventionist strategies are needed to cope with the situation. It is clear that these strategies could not be based on government initiatives, since as we have seen, Government does not seem to have the will to address the problem, despite well placed tokenism. This is where NGOs, operating outside political philosophies and aimed at impactful capacity building, could make a more effective penetration in areas where government structures are either not possible or not feasible.

Any interventionist strategy must combines two basic philosophies in one package:

1. **First** is the need to keep non-schooling adolescent children off the streets. There place should be in what I call **Life Shelters**— places where they go to learn skills and eventually earn self-respect.

2. **Second** *is* the need to provide them with *a **functional*** education which equips them for a more independent living outside the school environment.

Focus Outcomes
The girl-child interventionist strategy must be a program with a potential society-ranging benefits.

- *The first direct beneficiaries are the parents of the girls who are now relieved that their wards have a focused activity everyday.*
- The second main beneficiaries are the *girls themselves who are now trained to acquire functional skills in crafts and trade* to enable them eke out a

meaningful form of living within their parents/husbands homes. Indeed their ability to sustain themselves through such activities encourages other parents/pupils to come to the Centre to be enrolled.

For the Indigent Almajirai

- Attempt to draw attention of Qur'anic and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with regards to needs for useful living in society especially in vocational skills.
- b) To provide such children with sufficient proficiency in craft skills. c) To provide the same pupils with a creative avenue to commercialize the fruits of their labor through the school.

Thus overall emphasis of community-based strategies in Kano focus attention on the issue of *Poverty Alleviation* as an agency of social transformation through staggered interventionist strategies.

References
Csapo, M. (1981) 'Religious, Social and Economic Factors hindering the education of girls in Northern Nigeria' *Comparative Education* 17 (3) pp 311-319.
Graham, S F (1966) *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1919 - with special reference to the Fork of Hanns Vischer.* (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press).
Kano State (1970) *Kano State Statistical Year Book 1970.* (Kano, Military Governor's Office, Economic Planning Division).
Kano State (1974) *Kano State Statistical Year Book 1974.* (Kano, Ministry of Economic Development).
Kano State (1976a) *F.d2~cation Review Committee Final Report* (The Galadanchi Report). January 1976 (Kano, Government Printer).
Kano State (1976b) *Government views on the Report of the E.d7/cation Review Committee.* (White Paper), June 1976 (Zaria, Gaskiya Corporation).
Kano State (1983) *Report of Committee on Problems and Prospects of Er1?/.cation ill Kano State (The Tijjani Isma'il Report).* (Kano, Institute for Higher Education).
Kano State (1985) *Number of Post-Primary Institutions and their total enrollments 1984/85-* A mimeo. (Kano, Ministry of Education, Statistics Division).
Kano State (1988) *Views and Comments of the Kano State Government on the Report of the Committee for Women Affairs.* (Kano, Government Printer)
Williams D H (1960) *A short Survey of education in Northern Nigeria.* (Kaduna, Government Printer, Northern Region).