

A Social history of the 4 Local Government Areas of the project - Building Collaboration, Partnerships and Political Commitment to Delay Early Marriage and the Onset Of Childbearing in Northern Nigeria



The *Dagatai* of Ajingi sitting in the District Head's Court (Courtesy of Chris Morry), 2015

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A Social History Of Ajingi Local Government, Kano State

Ajingi is the name of a town and an LGA in the Southern Kano state. It was created out of Gaya Local Government in 1996. Traditionally, Ajingi and Albasu are still regarded as part of *Kasar Gaya*. The first settlers were said to be Kanuri people from present day Machina, Yobe state. Their first settlement was a place called Zango. From this place, the population gradually spread to other parts of Ajingi. Although, Kanuri were the first settlers, but now Ajinga is predominantly Fulani, leaving only Gulya as the main base of the Kanuri. It has an area of 714 km² and a population of 174,137 according to the 2006 census.

In the traditional political setting, Ajingi have twenty (20) village heads (*Dagatai*) under the district head. The district head is presently Alhaji Wada Aliyu, a western oriented aristocrat and a former federal permanent secretary. Below is a list of the villages under the twenty *Dagatai*:

1. Toranke	8. Dundun	15. 'Kawari
2. Karad'agaji	9. 'Yan Wawa	16. Guddub'a
3. Gafasa	10. Dabi	17. Unguwar Bai
4. Jiyayya	11. Fagawa	18. Kadiri
5. Karar Makama	12. Balare	19. Gulya
6. Hunk'urawa	13. Cula	20. Fulatan
7. Ajingi	14. Sakarawa	

Ajingi LG have ten (10) political wards each under a councilor who represent the community in the Local Government Council. Each ward is made-up of two villages and they are in the following order:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Toranke- Karad'agaji | 6. Cula-Kawari |
| 2. Jiyayye-Gafasa | 7. Guddub'a-Gulya |
| 3. Kunkurawa-'Kara | 8. Unguwai-Kadori |
| 4. Ajingi-Sakalawa | 9. Fulatan-Dabi |
| 5. Dundun-'Yan Wawa | 10. Fagawa-Balare |



Boys and Girl playing in the street of Ajingi (Courtesy of Chris Morry), 2015

The main occupation of the people of Ajingi is farming. The people specialize in hand craft, especially pottery. There are also people from southern Nigeria mainly Igbo and Yoruba. The southerners are mostly mechanics or shopkeepers. Ajingi has one of the biggest rural markets in Kano called the *Larabar Zango*. It is a weekly market taking place every Wednesday and it is considered the backbone of the economy of the town and the neighboring villages.

The first primary school was established in 1958 in Toranke, and three years after another was established in Ajingi town. Now, there are many primary and secondary schools in LGA. Regrettably, there is no single higher institution of learning in the entire LG. The Village Head of Toranke is very proud of western education when he states that: “The brighter houses in my domain are mostly the houses of the western educated or the parents of the western educated.” There are also modern Islamiyyah Schools in the area and

the traditional *makarantar allo*. *Tsangayar Malam Safiyanu* is one of the famous traditional Qur’anic schools in the area. The life is predominantly rural with little modernity in architecture. The population is almost 100% Muslims. Most of the youth in the area belong to the Izalah sect. The elderly are mostly members of the Tijjaniyya. Ajingi have a total of 31 mosques, out of which Toranke have four Juma’at Mosques.

All the community members interviewed refused to state the minimum age of marriage for the girl child in the community. Their answers were mostly the same: that if a girl is old enough to get married, she will get married. Some of the elderly people were shock when the researcher told them there are ladies who are thirty years of age and above in the city of Kano and are still not married. This is conspicuously odd to the Ajingi community. When the researcher asked them again that what will be their response to the campaign of setting a minimum age of marriage

for the girl child, it was the Maigari's answer that sum-up the perception of the others. He said, they are not aware of the existence of such campaign, and even if there is and they are confronted with it, there will not respond to it. They will maintain a "dignified silent."

A Social History Of Zaria LGA, Kaduna State



An Artist portrait of Queen Amina of Zaria (1533 - 1633?)

Zaria lies between latitude 9⁰ to 12⁰ North, and longitude 7⁰ to 9⁰ East. According to tradition, it is one of the original seven Hausa states known as the *Hausa Bakwai*. The name Zaria is mainly associated with the capital city of the emirate of Zazzau. Historically, Zazzau was the name of a sword that served as a symbol of unity among the different people living in the area known today

as Zaria. The formation of Zaria could be best tied-up with the desiccation of the Sahara which forced people out in search of more favorable settlements (Smith:1987). The first settlers were said to be immigrants from Borno who first settled at a place now known as Kofar Kona. The twenty second ruler of the community was a woman called Bakwa Turunku, who gave birth to two daughters; Amina and Zaria. The two daughters were to become Queens in their own right and the latter even gave her name to the city.

During the 19th century, the emirate of Zazzau covered the whole present Zaria, Jama'a (Kafanchan), Keffi, Nassarawa, Lafia and Doma, When the British occupied Northern Nigeria in the first decade of the 20th century, Zaria province was created excluding the last four vassal states mentioned above. In 1956, the constituencies under Zaria province were:

1. Zaria Urban:consisting Zaria and its environs, Sabon Gari and Zaria Township Districts.
2. Zaria North: consisting Makarfi, Ikara and Soba Districts.
3. Zaria West: consisting Birnin Gwari, Giwa, Igabi and Chikun Districts.
4. Zaria East: Kubau, Kaura and Lere Districts.
5. Zaria South-East: Zangon Katab, Kagoro, and Morowa Districts
6. Zaria South-West: Jaba, Kagarko, Kacia and Kajuru Districts.

Zaria is among the twenty local government areas of Kaduna state. The LGA has thirteen wards under it including Shika, 'Tsibiri and Dakace, the three communities in Zaria where the girls' education projects were implemented. Zaria is a land of many ethnic groups. In the north, the Hausa and Fulani are in the majority. In the south, there are Gwari, Katab, Kaje, Kadara, Kamantan, Ikulu, Piti, Chawai, Kurama, Amawa, Gure and Kahugu. Others are Kumaya, Surubu, Kaibi, Kinno, Kitimi, Dungi and Ruruma. With the exception of Gwari, Katab, and Kurama, most of these ethnic groups are very small. Some of them live closer to each other but they never intermarry. Early in the 20th century, pagan tribes from Plateau migrated to northern Zaria because of forced labor in the tin mines at Jos. They include; Mangu, Angas, and Mayango. The Mangu people settled in Dakace and they are now the main Christian community living in the village.



The Izzalah Mosque built by late Chief MKO Abiola in Dakace, Zaria, Copyright, dRPC.

There are nine (9) churches in the small Mangu community alone in Dakace. The Muslims majority living in the area have two Juma'at mosques, one for Tijjaniyya sect and the other for Izalah. The majority of the Muslims living in Dakace, Shika and Tsibiri are followers of the Tijjaniyya. The same can be said of the whole of Zaria. The Izalah and the Shia follows Tijjaniyya in terms of number of adherents.

An estimated 85% of the children living in the three localities go to western schools. Although a traditional setting, but 90% of the Muslims children no longer go to the traditional *Makarantar allo*, instead they prepare modern *Islamiyyah* schools. Before the establishment of Haruna Soba Primary School in 1978 in Dakace, most of the children in the area attended schools east of Zaria like Dembo, Gyallesu and Tudun Segu primary schools. Zaria is home to Ahmadu Bello University, Nigerian College of Aviation Technology, National Research Institute for Chemical Technology and Barewa College among many other institutions. Shika on the other hand, housed the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital and the National Animal Production Research Institute._

Girls are usually married within the range of (15, 16, 17, and 18) years of age. Some of the community members interviewed saw nothing wrong with this tradition. Although some admitted that it might be because of poverty. Some parents can't sponsor all their children to school and therefore in such occasions when suitor emerged, they don't hesitate in tying up the knot. After all, it

is better for a lady to be in her matrimonial home especially when she is not schooling, they asserted. The age of marriage seems not to be relevant, but the maturity of the girl at whatever age is all that matters. However, there are cases where girls are married while in secondary school and the wife continued her schooling with the permission and the support of her husband. The communities emphasized the importance they attach to character before choosing a spouse. They subject the would-be spouse to scrutiny before accepting him or her into the family. But the Mangu Christian community strongly supported the idea of 18 years as the minimum age of marriage, even though, among them there are under 18 cases of marriages attributed to poverty too, They believed at age 18, the girl, must have completed at least secondary school and is matured enough both physically and mentally to shoulder the responsibilities of a wife.

In his well coined tribute to Zaria, Dahiru Yahya (2009) sum-up the political and social contradictions of the emirate in the following:

Zazzau was, is and will continue to be as the case may be, a meeting point of Hausa and Banza Bakwai, of the need and the needed, of the enslaver and the enslaved, of the conservative and the radical, of the secular and the sanctified, of colonial contingency and traditional certainty and of the patriot and the estranged. It is the Zazzau of the amenable Emir Mamman Sani and the rebellious Emir Kwasau, of the colonising Governor Fredrick Lugard and the self-assured and circumspect

Emir Ja'afaru 'Dan Isyaku. It was the Zazzau of the conservative Premier Sir Aḥmadu Bello, and his assassin, the idealist Major Chukuma Kaduna Nzegwu and the radical Governor Balarabe Musa, of the exoteric Shaykh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi and the esoteric Shaykh Dahiru Bauchi and of the radical conservative Rev. Mathew Hassan Kukah and the revolutionary combatant Malam Ibrahim Zakzaki. It is the Zazzau of the *mashaya* and *matsafa* and of the seminary. It is also the Zazzau of the *ḥalkāh* and of the *zâwiyyah*. Significantly, Zazzau seems able to strike a balance in the normal tendencies of these contrasting outlooks. The ability to effect such equilibrium is a no mean task.

A Social History Of Igabi LGA, Kaduna State

Kaduna is located in the Northwestern part of Nigeria and shares common borders with Zamfara, Katsina, Niger, Kano, Bauchi and Plateau States. To the south west, the state is bordered to the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. The global location of the area is between longitude 9⁰-15⁰E and 08⁰,60'E- 06⁰ East of the Greenwich meridian and also between latitude 09⁰-02' N 11- 32' N of the equator. It is extended from the upper River *Mariga* on 6⁰05' E to 8⁰48'E on the foot slopes of the scrap of Jos Plateau.

Kaduna lies within the territory of the Emirate

of *Zazzau*. Until the coming of the British, the local population around the town was widely scattered. The settlements were mainly of Gwari and Fulani stretching along the bank of river Kaduna. Example of these settlements were kudandan (now referred as Kakuri) which is a Gwari settlements. There was Fulani of Kukogi (now called Gworo) about 15 kilometers from to the north. Other settlements occupied by the Gwari people within the locality were Jima, Kadi, Kokau, Kadupe and Gwasonu.

The area derived its name from crocodiles which infested the river that passed through it, the crocodiles are usually gathered around Kabala village. The earlier settlers used to call the area the river of crocodiles that is “Kogin Kadduna”. This version is contested by the Bagyi people because according to them, ‘Kaduna’ is a corruption of a Bagyi word for a river (Interview, 2015).

The city of Kaduna developed in the dual capacity of garrison town and administrative center of colonialism. It was established in 1913 on virgin land which had adequate water supply. Its centrality in Northern Nigeria made it attractive to the colonial government. The presence of river in the area was very important for the establishment of the town. It is perennial stream, with seasonal fluctuations in water level. It provides water and also serves as a cheap means of transportation into the interior especially before railways and roads were built. It is generally believed that the river was used, from the 1870’s as a route for the movement of Nupe fishermen into Kaduna. The existence of the river may also explain the early settlements

of Barnawa, Rafin Guza and Kurmin Mashi along the banks (Jibril, 2010).

In 1967, when the first twelve states were created by the military Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, Kaduna became the capital of North-Central State. It was in 1976, that Kaduna State was created from the North-Central State. The state now has twenty three (23) LGAs including Chikun, Igabi and Soba, the three communities where the project on Girls’ child education was implemented.

The original inhabitants of the area as earlier mentioned are the Bagyi people. They interact with the Hausa people of Zaria emirate especially through trading activities. For instance, the Nupe fishermen engaged in the supply of both fresh and dry fish into the emirate. There was also exchange of goods such as Horses and other Arabian goods from northern Africa to Nupe land via Zaria emirate. On the other hand, there was importation of European goods to the rest of Hausa land via Yoruba and Nupe lands. The 1804 Usman Dandfodio Jihad had little impact on the people around Kaduna area except for the occasional slave ridings on them and the slow settling of Hausa farmers in the area to the north of the town. The Kaduba river and the presence of tsetse fly prevented easy expansion of Zaria’s influence southward.

The nature of the land and the area, could be responsible for the scattered settlement along the river banks as well as the fertile land. The habit of Bagyi to move away from exhausted soil to fertile ones within the locality, coupled with the need to

maintain their cultural identity led to their scattered mode of settlements. This made it difficult to the historians who are interested in the history of the area to point out categorically a particular location within the vicinity as Bagyi town or village.

There were other migrant communities also living within the metropolitan city of Kaduna. For instance, the opening of the eastern railway lines from Port-Harcourt to Enugu via Kafanchan to Kaduna paved way for the beginning of Igbo migration into Kaduna around 1935. Other migrants groups include the Hausa, Bajju (i.e. Kaje), Fulbe, Kataf and Jaba. Others include Yoruba, Ebira, Igala, Tiv and Idoma. There were also West African migrants from Ghana, Niger Republic and Sierra-Leon as well as expatriates from Europe and Asia. The city in many respects still serves as the unofficial headquarters of the Northern states.

The founding of Igabi was credited to a man from Kukawa in Borno Empire. It was originally a centre of learning of Qur'anic learning and it is connected with the wider incident of the flow of Bornoan scholars into Hausa states. In the account of a German traveller, Paul Staudinger, who journeyed through the Sokoto caliphate between 1885-1886, he described his visit to Igabi as follows:

The morning of the 27th of September was overcast when after having spent such a restless night we got into saddle at six- thirty...close to the walls of another fairly large town, Rikoko, we had to cross yet another river but because of the Zaria

officials presence the Sarkin ruwa got the ferrying done promptly and without any attempts at extortion...from here on our route lay through very swampy terrain but we reached Igabi at one forty-five, having ridden across the fields that belonged to the town for over an hour.

Igabi, Soba and Chikun are all LGAs and at the same time districts under the Zazzau emirate. Igabi and Soba became districts in 1907, while Chikun achieved district status much later. A 1920 table showing the district heads of Zazzau emirate indicated that Igabi was ruled by the *Turaki Babba* of Zazzau. From the 1950s onwards, the district was ruled by the *Dan Madamin Zazzau* Zubairu, *Dan Madami* Umaru and *Dan Masanin Zazzau* Bello Sani.

The people of Igabi are predominantly Muslims with the exception of the Bagyi who were non-Muslims and later accepted Christianity as their religion. The dominant Islamic sects in the area are the Tijjaniyya, Izalah and the Shia'a, all with significant followers. The first primary school in the area was established in 1945, in Rigachikun, the headquarters of the district of Igabi. This was contained in a memo from the Educational Officer, Zaria Province, A.W.A. Spicer, dated 2nd October 1944, to the Resident Zaria Province. The memo reads in part:

I discussed the point with Mr Atkinson on Thursday 28th September, 1944, and it was decided to postpone the Kargi Elementary School until 1st April, 1946, so that the school at Rigachikun could

start on 1st April, 1945 as originally planned.

In 1952, an Adult Education Class was opened in Rigachikun, and Mallam Dalhatu Gayya was posted as Organizer. He supervised Igabi, Kaduna and Chikun Districts respectively. Many more Elementary schools were established in the district. However, post-primary education only came to the area in 1980 with the establishment of the first secondary school in Rigachikun (Sirajo,2007). On the issue of early marriage, they expressed similar views with that of Zaria communities.

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Key Informants Interviewed

S/N	NAME/TITLE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
1.	Sarkin Toranke	Village Head	Toranke, Ajingi	10 th October, 2015
2.	Malam Safiyanu	Qur'anic Teacher	Ajingi	" "
3.	Sarkin Arewa	Ward Head	Ajingi	" "
4.	Malam Salisu Ajingi	An Assistant of the District Head	Ajingi	" "
5.	Malam Abubakar Toranke	Farmer	Toranke, Ajingi	" "
6.	Malam Ibrahim Na Malam	Community Member	Ajingi	" "
7.	Yusuf Muhammad	Printer	Dan Ali, Dakace	11 th October, 2015
8.	Wife of the Head of the Mangu Community	Community Leader/ House Wife	Mangu, Dakace	" "
9.	Malam Muazu	School Teacher	Zaria	14 th October, 2015
10.	Ward Head of Dan-Ali	Ward Head	Dan Ali, Dakace	11 th October, 2015
11.	Malam Ishaq	Civil Servant	Zaria	14 th October, 2015

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