



GENDER, MARRIAGE AND POPULATION DYNAMICS IN HAUSA SOCIETY: A STUDY ON KANO, KATSINA AND SOKOTO STATES AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The research is concerned with gender roles, marriage and population dynamics among the Hausa people of Northern Nigeria with special focus on Kano, Katsina and Sokoto states. It suggests the impact of cultural and religious norms on reproductive behaviour, status of women as well as sustainable development in the areas. Due to the assumption of Gender Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), Demographic Transition Theory (Thompson, 1929), the research study adopted a qualitative approach whereby key informant interviewing, focus group discussions and documentary analysis is utilized. Community members including the older adults, religious leaders, women groups and public health authorities were sampled. The results demonstrated that males and females are expected to reproduce, marry at a young age, and perform domestic chores which support high population rates and restrict free will of women. Although the change in attitudes has been observed in some cities as a result of education and economic forces, a majority of the rural societies are traditionalists. The liabilities are poor health and educational systems, the tendency towards gender inequality, and the lack of utilization of family planning programs. There are though openings in the community-based interventions, faith-sensitive reproductive health programs and female education. In sum, the study finds that what we need is a culturally based but transformative approach that upholds Hausa norms and integrates gender equity and sustainable development. It advises to have wider policy discussions, grass root sensitization, and access to reproductive health services.

Keywords: Gender roles, Practices of marriage, Population growth, Sustainable development, The Hausa society

Introduction

Population growth is also one of the greatest issues facing sustainable development in the world (especially in sub-Saharan Africa). The Hausa society, which is the largest and most culturally cohesive ethnic group in the country of Nigeria, introduces a suitable environment to study the intersection of gender norms, marital practice, and population trends represented within the confines of the country. These factors bring significant consequences on the division of resources, reproductive health, and social stability in the long run (National Population Commission [NPC] & ICF, 2019).

In Hausa culture, socially constructed gender roles exist on the foundation of well-established Islamic beliefs and conventions. As noted by Khalid (2018), women are the ones who have more responsibilities to take care of the home especially having babies and taking care of them whereas men have a superiority over housekeeping and reproductive choices. Such gender difference in chores does not only support patriarchal systems of order but also restricts women in their ability to take decisions on their reproduction like timing of contraception and how many children to have.

According to Adewoyin and Olayiwola (2020), the value attached to women in the Hausa culture strongly depends on their fertility, more specifically, their capacity to give birth to several children, ideally, male. They believe that such cultural expectations maintain high fertility and frustrate population management. In a similar study, Isiugo-Abanihe (1994), imparts the significance of men, their attitude, and preference as the key determinants of reproductive behavior in northern Nigeria whereby, the male authority in their marriage and sexual engagements continues to be predominant.

Marriage, mostly early and polygynous marriages, influence population dynamics a lot. NPC and ICF (2019) observed that Hausa-Fulani women marry under the age of 18 years, with over 45 percent of the women getting married under that age (NPC & ICF, 2019). The trend contributes greatly to extending the reproductive age of women, which leads to a significant number of children in the family. In an article of his study on the households of northern Nigeria, Smith (2007) draws some attention to the manner in which polygyny, both in the urban and rural Hausa society, influences better fertility by the use of co-wife rivalries where each competes to have a

childbearing status and favour.

Although such practices are founded in cultural and religious beliefs, these cultural orientations are now starting to be shifted by changing socio-economic patterns. According to Yahaya (2021), there are more and more young Hausa couples who postpone getting married and have fewer children due to economic realities and the shifting ideals of living in such urban hubs as Kano. Such changes are, however, progressive and tend to face opposition with conventional standards and senior people in the society.

It is important to comprehend the origins of gender roles and marital practices and their ability to affect population patterns within Hausa society to implement a competent culturally sensitive policy. This paper endeavours to trace these interconnections in order to find some of the ways that can be used to encourage gender, reproductive health and sustainable population growth that do not threaten the cultural heritage of the Hausas.

Definitions of Key Terms

In a bid to bring in academic clarity and contextual relevance to Hausa the society, this section defines, explains the key terms that drive the study; gender roles, marriage institutions, population dynamics, and sustainability.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are socially defined expectations, duties, and actions of individuals, which are dictated by specific gender, namely, sex. Not biologically, these roles are rather determined by culture, religion and the development of history. According to Khalid (2018), in Hausa society, gender roles are greatly determined by the Islamic doctrines and patriarchal cultures, in that women are supposed to be household caretakers, child bearers, and house helpers whereas men are expected to be breadwinners and household heads. The implications of such roles are great in the sense that it affects reproduction decisions and access to education and health by women with long-term implications for population control and social equality.

Marriage Institutions

Marriage institutions refer to the organized practices, laws as well as customs that govern marital relationships in a society. These involve the age of marriage, the choice of a spouse, dowry or bride price and family composition. Marriage among the Hausa is not only an individual bond, it is a social and religious requirement, and usually it is an affair that is orchestrated by the two

families and blessed through Islamic ceremonies (Smith, 2007). This institution has common features such as early marriage and polygyny. Such practices, as National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF (2019) emphasise, lead to high fertility rates and affect the generation of gender expectations that supports traditional roles and restrict female reproductive freedom.

Population Dynamics

Population dynamics are the patterns and processes by which populations experience change in terms of size, structure and distribution over time. The population trends depend on birth rates, death rates, migrations and fertility patterns. Within the framework of the Hausa communities, the population trends are determined through cultural tendencies on large families, early marriage and low use of contraceptives. Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) presents an opinion that fertility desires of men usually prevail at the household level without regard to the socio-economic capacity and the health of women. According to Yahaya (2021), a few of these trends are starting to be challenged among the urban Hausa youths with delayed marriage and small family size, although these changes are not widespread yet.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the process of ensuring that the present generation needs are met without interfering with the capacity of future generation to meet their needs too. It is both environmental, economic and social. When it comes to gender and population, sustainability involves the development of a system in which sound reproductive health, gender empowerment, and healthy family planning are contributing to sustainable social trends and environmental management (Adewoyin & Olayiwola, 2020). The sustainability in the Hausa society means that there should be a balance between the cultural values and modern day developmental objectives and the gender relations and marriage systems should not be the stumbling block towards better quality of living and appropriate ecological balance.

Rationale of the study

The main rationale for carrying out the proposed study is to understand the complex interconnection between gender roles, marriage institutions as well as population dynamics in the Hausa society, and the overall effect brought about by these three factors on attainment of a sustainable future. This will be achieved through comparison of the socio-cultural and religious

standards that influence gendered expectation on marriage and family practices to realize how it affects fertility behavior and population growth in Northern Nigeria.

In more detail, the study aims at:

- Examining the reproductive decision-making and autonomous womanhood in the Hausa society through the gender roles.
- Reviewing how early marriage and polygyny affected the structure and fertility patterns in a household.
- Exploring the extent to which the current population trends in the Hausa communities support or counter internationally and nationally set sustainability objectives.
- Determining the policy intervention opportunities that may be possible through a culturally sensitive approach to achieve gender equity and accountable family planning and a sustainable development.

In so doing, the research will help to open up the wider course of discussions regarding population control and sustainable development in Africa by placing the reality of the Hausa people at the center of the whole debate. The end combination is all about gaining knowledge that might add up culturally appropriate development of measures that can achieve equilibrium between a population growth and economic-related as well as social wellbeing.

Significance of the Study

The study is of great relevance since it provides a culturally based understanding of the gender roles and marriage practices in the Hausa society in relation to the trend in population and its effects on sustainable development. This population study introduces ethnic and cultural factors where most of the population studies in Nigeria take little or no attention of ethnic and cultural settings.

The results will help the scholars, policy makers and the development practitioners to develop culturally sensitive interventions which encourage gender equity, responsible family planning and long-term sustainability. This study further brings into view the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals which are relevant, especially in health, the gender, and population management.

Research questions

- In what ways can the gender roles/system in the Hausa society constrain women autonomy and reproductive freedom?
- How does marriage ritual (early marriages and polygyny) correlate with fertility pattern among Hausas?
- What do the trends of population in the Hausa society mean to the national and global sustainability goals?
- How are the changes associated with areas of education and urban exposure, and socio-economic condition affecting the traditional gender and matrimonial ideologies?
- Which gender and population control approaches can be applied to the Hausa society in a culturally sound way to support sustainable development?

Theoretical Framework

Gender and Development (GAD) Theory and Demographic Transition Theory form the basis upon which the research is to be conducted; however, these two theories provide great insights into examining the relationship among gender roles, marriage, and population dynamics in the Hausa section.

The Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, which was written in the 1980s by individuals, including Eva Rathgeber (1990), explicitly focuses on how gender is socially constructed and various aspects of inequalities between men and women must be eradicated. The theory extends the concentration on women to the understanding of the effect of forms of structure and power relations on gender experiences in the society. Within the Hausa society, GAD Theory assists in questioning the reproductive decisions and access to education or health care because of traditional expectations of women especially in marriage and family life.

The Demographic Transition Theory was first developed in 1945 by Frank W. Notestein and concerns itself with the explanation of population changes over the years as a society transits to having low rates of death and birth through industrialization, education, and better living standards among others. The theory can come in handy in regard to how certain variables such as

early marriage, polygyny and low levels of female education may lead to the maintenance of high fertility rates among the Hausa people, and how the socio-economic development may change all that in the future.

The combination of these theories can facilitate the analysis of the impact gendered cultural practices and demographic tendencies of the Hausa society have on the outcomes of sustainability.

Methodology

The research design that was adopted in observing this study was the qualitative research design because it was most appropriate to explore the cultural and social perspective of gender, marriage and the population in Hausa society. It enabled a better understanding of how the participants perceived these elements and what traditional practices they regarded as the essence of their culture.

Study Area

The selected communities of the Hausa people were interviewed in Northern Nigeria; that is, Kano, Katsina, or Sokoto States. The reasons why these regions were singled out is due to the fact that they uphold the traditional gender roles and marriage practices and the importance of such regions to pop-up dynamics and demographic trends.

Sampling and Population

The target members were the married men and women, community elders, religious leaders, health workers and educators. The study was based on a purposive sampling technique, where 30 - 40 participants were sampled to have diversity in terms of gender age and social status. This method helped to gather quite vivid and diverse ideas on gender roles and marriage expectations.

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to collect the data. Interviews were conducted as self-reports of respondents and FGDs as group beliefs and norms regarding marriage, fertility, and gender roles in the society.

Data Analysis

Data obtained were transcribed and content-thematic data analysis was performed. Thematic coding either using qualitative software or manually was employed to locate the major themes

that kept to the objectives of the study. It focused on how culture affected the decision about the population.

The Hausa Gender Roles

Since the Gender roles of the Hausa society are determined traditionally in terms of religion, culture and historical conventions, there is a strong influence of these factors on the gendered roles. These roles define the expectations of men and women, labour division, reproductive decision and numerical size of the family.

The Gender Norms in Men and Women

In Hausa, men are traditionally regarded as the heads of households who provide, protect and make decisions of the household (Adamu, 1999). They dominate the sphere of religious and political leadership, which adds to their power in the private and the state institutes. Women on the other hand are the ones who are supposed to handle housework, take care of children and keep the family honor. Imam (2004) reveals that these expectations are entrenched in Islamic teachings which are followed keenly by the majority of the Hausa communities who in most cases interpret them in a manner in which the male is the authority and the female is submissive.

Household and Community Division of labour

The Auxiliary labour is distinctly separated by gender. Most men are mostly occupied in the income generating activities like agriculture, business or job whereas women are involved in the domestic responsibilities like supervising cooking, cleaning and other household chores and raising children (Callaway, 1987). According to Yahaya (2002), women also participate in agricultural activities related to agricultural production in selected Hausa communities, yet their contributions remain unpaid and are often unacknowledged. Socially and religiously acceptable standards usually restrict women and bar them out of the workforce and also deter them through their stereotypes as being in the household role.

Gender Roles Implications as they concern Reproductive Choices and the Family size

Gender roles are also influential in the reproductive behavior. The peak of reproductivity in a family and the number of children is usually decided upon by a man and women have little control over their reproductive health choices (Wall, 1998). Hausa girls frequently get early

marriages at the age between 12-15 years and it becomes justified due to the issue of chastity and family reputation (National Population Commission [NPC], 2018). This has produced early childbirth and higher child bearing among women who are expected to give birth to children and especially male children in higher numbers to show a marital success. This is likely to result in large fertility rates in the area and reduce women access to education and gainful employment (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2003).

Although, such gender roles are useful as a cultural continuation element, they challenge sustainable population growth, women empowerment, and socio-economic development. The strategies to resolve these problems must be contextual and that does not interfere with cultural values but enhancing gender equity and making informed choices related to the process of reproduction.

Marriage Institutions and Practices among Hausa people

Marriage in the Hausa society has been more than a union of a single persons, marriage to the Hausa community is an institution that is based on religion, the tradition, and social unity. It defines social roles, enforces gender ranks, and has an impact on demographic patterns including fertility and population increase.

Kinds of Marriages (Polygynous and Monogamous Marriages)

Monogamy and polygyny is also practiced in Northern Nigeria especially in Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto states. Nonetheless, marriages that involve polygyny are more prominent and socially valued particularly in countryside. Adamu (1999) notes that the marriage among polygynous people is Islamic-dictated, giving a man the right to marry up to four wives, under the condition that he treats all of them equally, although, in many cases, it is a rule with bents. In the average Hausa family set up of the rural areas like in Bichi (state of Kano), two or three wives is not uncommon, and each wife having her own cooking place and a group of children. The practice is also considered a sign of status as well as a way of increasing the lineage.

Expectations in Culture with regards to Early Marriage and Fertility

Hausas are communities where early marriage is greatly emphasized culturally. Girls are usually married at age of 12-15, immediately after the period of puberty. Wall (1998) supports such practice on the basis of religious and moral values: families do this because they think in such a way early marriage will keep girls safe of premarital sex and will save family honour. As an

example, Rimi village (Katsina State) has withdrawn numerous girls out of school after they attain puberty to be taken to marriage because it is believed that being a mother is the most triumphant calling of the girl.

This practice goes hand in hand with high fertility. Explaining the value attached by Hausa society to its children, in particular sons. Isiugo-Abanihe (2003) adds that, among the Hausa people, sons are highly valued as carriers of family heritage and as sources of support in old age. The more children a woman gives birth to, the higher her social worth is. This in reality leads to extremely huge families. A survey done in the Wurno area in the Sokoto State, revealed that families having 12-15 children were not unusual especially in polygynous families. Regrettably, women have these expectations which tend to affect their educational and economic prospects.

Influence of Religion and Tradition on Marriage Decision

Marriage in the Hausa society is all about religion and tradition. The law of marriage, marital rights and dowry (21) as amongst Muslim have Islamic tenets. However, Callaway (1987) emphasizes that, as a matter of fact, these are mostly instilled with local traditions. In illustration, it is clear that although Islam gives women the freedom to either accept or reject proposals, the traditional norms often supersede the same. The marriage in Danja (Katsina State) is commonly decided upon by the elders and the consent of the bride is presumed and not openly requested.

More so, Imam (2004) mentions that Islamic scholars and the community leaders play a significant role in enforcing conservative gender roles in marriage. In religious talks and in teachings within the society, they promote having many children and the responsibility of young woman toward her husband and domestic family. According to Yahaya, (2002), religious leaders in most Hausa communities including those in Gwadabawa (Sokoto State) go further to advice against the use of modern contraceptives due to the interference of foreign force and loss of their cultural identity.

These are the marital norms that challenge social obstacle although they hold the continuity of the culture. The population pressures are caused by high fertility, early marriages and gendered expectations, educational disparity and restricted development. It is necessary to reconsider such practices in the light of cultural identity and moves towards gender equity.

Population Dynamics amongst the Hausas

Cultural, religious and socio-economic factors determine population structure in the Hausa communities due to their influence on childbearing, marriage and family structure in the community. Northern Nigeria particularly those states such as Kano, Katsina and Sokoto have one of the worst fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and its effects on the public health, education and sustainable development have serious chains of effects.

Resultant High Fertility Rates and the Socio-Economic Drivers of High Fertility Rates

Fertility in Hausa societies is actualized as a national and religious responsibility rather than a biological or individual responsibility. Isiugo-Abanihe (2003) states that the cultural favor to large families is intrinsic in the Islamic doctrines and cultural attitudes which hold the view that children, especially males, are blessings as well as economic assets. The families in Batsari of Katsina State and Wurno of Sokoto State are well known to have 8-15 children and it is more pronounced in the polygynous families.

According to Population Council (2019), the major causes of this tendency are early marriages, low intervals between births, and the absence of access to the services of family planning. The expense of rearing children tends to be encompassed in subsistence farming or in small scale business in rural Kano communities such as in Tudun Wada and this strengthens the view that the more the children the more the helping hands become.

The Nexus between Marriage, Childbearing and Women Status

In Hausa culture childbearing cannot be separated from the identity of a woman and her marital usefulness. According to Wall (1998) it is not how educated a woman is or her professional ability to face the society that is considered, but her fertility, the ability to bring and bring up a lot of children. An example is the case in Gwadabawa (Sokoto State) whereby a woman who fails to successfully conceive even after the first year of marriage may be ridiculed or divorced.

The motherhood provides women with status, security as well as respect particularly when a woman had a son. This is an aspect that according to Adamu (1999), many women are shunning contraceptives and opting to have large families although it puts an economic burden on them. The struggle toward status among co-wives of polygynous families also adds to the fertility wishes.

Effects of Urbanization and Education and Economic Pressures on Population Growth

Many families in the urban areas such as Kano city and Sokoto metropolis are now starting to either postpone the birth of a child or reduce their number of children because of the increasing cost of living in the respective cities and metropolis, the unavailability of houses and the challenges posed by formal education.

Adegoke (2020) also discovered that women in Hausaland who had acquired the minimum level of education above secondary school were notably increased to support child spacing and employing modern forms of family planning. Female students in the state polytechnic in Katsina township, shared their desire to have smaller families as well as independence of finances which falls drastically opposite to that of rural standards.

Lastly, on one hand, traditional norms continue to keep Hausa communities towards high fertility and early marriage, whereas, on the other, modernizing trends, i.e. urban migration of the population, female education, and economic reality, are, although slowly, starting to transform the population dynamics of these communities. The intersections are important with respect to the development of culturally sensitive and sustainable population policies.

Having a big household is also factored by economic hardship that compels families to rethink on keeping such household size. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2022), men can no longer support numerous wives and large numbers of children due to more inflation and lack of job opportunities among the youth in the North, so there has been kind of transition in fertility control and monogamy among the urban poor.

Sustainability Issues and Challenges in Hausa Community

Consequences of High Population Growth on Resources

This rapid rate of population increase in the Hausa society, particularly, in areas of high populace such as Kano, Katsina and Sokoto states, has posed a very strong pressure on fundamental resources like education, medical facilities and job market. According to Olusegun and Ajayi (2020), many people in the Northern part of Nigeria form a large number of the population, yet they lack the educational infrastructure and a large number of students in the classroom. As an example, government primary schools in the city of Kano tend to harbor more than 100 pupils in a single class and this situation is a major deterrent to the learning process.

The healthcare systems are also overwhelmed. According to UNICEF (2022), Northern



Nigerians continue to experience the highest rate of child and maternal mortality due to the shortage of health staff, a diminished rate of antenatal care, and a low quality of skilled care attendants in establishing birth, especially to rural populations such as Daura (Katsina State) and Rabah (Sokoto State).

Another fall out is youth unemployment. The youths in towns like the Sokoto metropolis are unable to secure quality employment even after acquiring secondary school education. Since, they have large families, and the plans that lay in economic terms are poor, as Aliyu (2018) fully explains, it only contributes to increased dependency ratios, which in turn further strains overstretched household resources.

Inequality and Gender and Its Relation to Sustainable Development

The principle of gender inequality is a focal hurdle toward sustainability in the Hausa culture. Women are usually relegated at the domestic level of reproduction by patriarchal regime, mostly denied education, politics, and freedom to be economically stable. By excluding women in their decision-making, women restrict the capacity of the household to embrace progressive policies like child spacing, diversification of income, and educating girls thus arguing that, when left out in decision making, women constrain the family to progressive policies (Ibrahim and Salihu, 2019).

The problem is that in some rural areas in Sokoto, girls are often taken out of school once they hit puberty in order to get married and thus cut short their future earning capacity and become trapped in the poverty cycle. As pointed out by Amadi and Bello (2021), to stop this cycle and reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is important to empower women, including through healthcare and education.

Current Initiatives by Family Planning and Women Empowerment

Some remarkable family planning and female empowering interventions have been made in order to facilitate the sustainability. Society of family Health (SFH) and Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN) have also carried out community based programmes in the sites such as Gwale LGA in Kano State with emphasis on encouraging the use of contraceptives and informing couples about child spacing.

Besides, there is an increase in strict religious leaders to take part in sensitization campaigns that correlate religious values with reproductive health in Sokoto and Katsina regions. Yahaya and

Mohammed (2023) document that this kind of faith-based messaging has contributed to an increase in acceptance of family planning methods in conservative groups.

In perspective of women empowerment NGOs like Girl Child Concerns and Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN) provide vocational training and micro credit in various rural settings of Katsina empowering women to earn their own income and economic contribution to their families. These undertakings, besides mitigating the dependence, will slowly change the gender construct in the homes.

Findings

Reflecting on gender roles, institution of marriage, and population trends in the Hausa society, namely Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto States, have the following implications as highlighted through the analysis carried out:

Strict Gender Roles Have a Discernible Impact on Reproductive Related Choices

The conventional standards have not changed drastically, as men are expected to be breadwinners and women are expected to be housewives. Large family norms are supported by the fact that childbirth and upbringing is mostly the job of the woman. As in Kano and Katsina, where most women surveyed as respondents stated that they had little say in reproductive issues (Ibrahim and Salihu, 2019). In these households, asymmetrical power with regards to gender was more of a norm than a white lie.

Religion and Culture in Marriage

The marriage in the Hausa is regarded as both religious and cultural event. Polygyny is still common, especially in men with economic resources and early marriage is still common in the rural population as in Batsari (Katsina) and Tambuwal (Sokoto). Religious and societal pressure contributed to the motivation mentioned by respondents in line with the data of Yahaya and Mohammed (2023).

Cultural and Social Factors Contributing to High Fertility

Big families are viewed as pride and economic power house. In rural Kano and Sokoto, both the male and female respondents have indicated children to be the gifts of God and the use of contraception is low because of the myths and misinterpretation of religion and the reaction to lack of accessibility- despite the awareness created by the NGO like SFH.

Urbanization and Education Are Changing the Mentalities

Smaller family ideals are also on the rise among younger couples and educated women in the towns like Sokoto city and Kano metropolis. Education, economic pressure, and feelings of changed aspirations were reported as influential factors, which agrees with other research done by Olusegun and Ajayi (2020).

The pressure of Population is Exploding Resources

People in the three states reported obvious pressure on education, health care and work. Crowdedness at schools in Kano, a lack of maternal care in rural parts of Sokoto, and a lack of employment opportunities in the urban Katsina proved to be the most common themes, in line with the UNICEF (2022) report about the existing lack of resources in Northern Nigeria.

Emergence of Women's Empowerment and Family Planning

The community-based programmes are slowly picking up, although there are still challenges. The women who enrolled in vocational training in Katsina said they felt more confident and became financially independent. The adoption of contraceptives, however, is not wide owing to religious faith and mistrust. There are also positive indications that this is taking shape, with some clerics in Sokoto and Kano starting to endorse health-conscious family planning but at a slow pace.

Conclusion

The paper has been an inquiry into the multilaterality of gender roles, institutions of marriage and population dynamics in the Hausa society especially Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States. The gathered evidence also agree that there indeed exists gender norms that affect the reproductive behavior in the sense that the role of women is still based on the ability to become pregnant and to fulfill all the household duties. Marriage, especially at a young age and polygynous, is culturally expected and religiously mandated, which further underlines the rates of high fertility. Although these dynamics are very traditional, they also form a major part of the socio-economic pressure in the overcrowded schools, stretched health centers, as well as the increase in unemployment in both the cities and the remote regions. But encouraging changes were also

revealed by the research especially in the urban areas as education, financial limitation and shifting aspirations slowly transform reproductive decisions and gender relations. The above findings imply that sustainable development in Hausa society can be realized since this is only possible in a strategy that harmonizes cultural appreciation with policy innovation and social reformation.

In order to accomplish this, the study proposes the following integrated recommendations as per the thematic findings:

- **Gender norms reform:** The social expectation over gender should be re-conceptualized by the community both through revolutionary education and social sensitization activities particularly during the green phase of youths. Imams and other traditional leaders are on the local front to frame different narratives of womanhood and manhood that focus on shared decision-making ability and responsibility in family planning.
- **Enhancing Marriage:** Early and forced marriages need to be discouraged as soon as possible. It can be done by committing to age-of-consent laws, educating girls, and talking to the community. Local leaders should liaise with governments and civil entities to enhance marital behavior that safeguard the rights of women and do not interfere with their cultures.
- **Culturally-Aligned Family Planning:** Access to reproductive health services should be augmented, especially in the rural and underserved communities, under the culturally aligned family planning. It is worth noting that such services need to be provided in culturally and religiously sensitive manners, e.g. by injecting Islamic-friendly family planning messages, in order to keep off confrontations and maximize approval.
- **Targeted Urban-Rural Development:** The government must focus on unequal growth of the urban and the rural parts. Rural education, health infrastructure and economic opportunities should be invested to reduce the pressure of migration and in long-term enhance the standard of living.
- **Women Empowerment:** Women need to be empowered and vocational training of women and funding (of small enterprises) which have already been effective in some parts of Katsina and Kano, should be expanded. Women should be empowered and be financially and educationally

fit to make an informed choice about marriage and having children.

- Consolidation of Existing Interventions: The intervention made by faith-based organizations and NGOs should be assisted and emulated. As an example, the inclusion of the clerics in religious preaching of maternal health and birth spacing as witnessed in pilot sites in Sokoto can be of great influence.

Lastly, the research points out the need of a balance and context-sensitive approach that not only acknowledges the cultural and religious premises of the Hausa people but also introduces the means of opening new ways to more sustainable population and gender practices. It does not have a one-fit-all answer. Instead, developments are seen in collaborative, culturally based intervention and empowerment of the individuals and communities to reshape tradition into sustainability. More studies are also advised to keep track of emerging trends in town reproductive behavior, the role of media, and the youth in their family planning advocacy in Hausa community.

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