

## **Nigerian Women Interview**

### **Martha Sani Kaurah**

**Note:** Martha is her given name. Sani is her husband's first name and Kaurah is her husband's surname. Before she got married, Martha's last name was her father's first name. Martha has worked as a domestic staff for a missionary family for about ten years. She has recently gone back to school part-time to complete a diploma at the University of Jos in Catering and Hotel Management. She was raised in Jos.

### **Demographics**

1. Age: 33
2. Age at which married: 19
3. Age at which had first child: 20
4. Children: Linda (14 years); Kaifas (boy, 12); Laura (6); Lois (girl, 3)
5. Education: Completed secondary school but didn't do well on her final exam. After was married and had children, she went back to secondary school for 2 years. Upon completing the secondary school exams, she began the diploma program at university.
6. Husband's profession: Owns his own welding shop

### **Behavior**

#### **B1. Daily Schedule:**

- A. *What time do you typically wake up?* 5:00
- B. *What is your daily schedule?* Pray, fetch water (about ½ mile away), wake children to pray and do daily devotion, bath children, put uniform on children, give breakfast. Dad takes children to school. Then prepare myself to go to school or go to work. Leave around 7:30 am for school. Get home from work/school around 5 or 6 pm. When get home, buy ingredients for soup. Then make soup and tuo for children to eat. Around 7:30 or 8:00 pm when finish dinner. Then spend time with children. After eat, then pray. Then help children with homework let children play small. Send children to bed at 8 pm. After children go to bed, then study and go to sleep. Wake up around 2:00 am to pray, then go back to sleep. If I don't pray at 2:00, then my quiet time will be on motorcycle ride to work.
- C. *What activities do you spend the most time on each day?* School.
- D. *What are the one or two daily activities you enjoy the most?* Work the most.

#### **B2. Non-Daily Routines**

- A. *What are the activities that you regularly do, but not every day?* Go to the market. Supposed to go every day, but I only go every other day. Every other day I wash clothes for my young children, but not my husband's clothes. I do my husbands' innerwear, but his employees wash his clothes.

#### **B3. Responsibilities around the house**

- A. *In your household, what duties are you responsible for?* Women have to make sure there is firewood and kerosene. I have to sweep, make the bed, wash the dishes. Make sure there are spices for food. Wash clothes.

- B. *What duties is your husband responsible for?* That's a big thing. Only thing that I know that my husband, he changes the batteries when the clock is weak. That is the only thing he will change or he will watch TV. Sometimes he will dust the TV and the radio. [Shoulder shrug.] Then bath and go to his work.
- C. *What duties are your girl children responsible for?* Linda (oldest) is very good girl. Even yesterday with the rain, she collected and washed all of the window curtains. I've handed the kitchen to her and she will tell me when we need spices. Laura (3<sup>rd</sup> child). I am trying to make her learn how to wash her socks and uniform when she comes home from school. Lois (youngest) I teach her how to clean her place after she eats – take her plate to the sink.
- D. *What duties are your boy children responsible for?* You know men... Sometimes you have to shout to them before they do, before they help. But, well, sometimes I send him to fetch water with Linda. Sometimes I force him to wash the plates, but it is force because he doesn't like to do that. Linda can do things even if you don't tell her. She knows what to do. But Keifas, you have to tell him to wash his clothes. Linda, all the work I normally do, that is what she is doing.

#### B4. Holidays

- A. *How do you celebrate festivals?* In village, around December when they want to bring the corn that they planted, they want to bring it home, so they make a big celebration, they cook food, they dance ... They harvest the food and leave it in the farm, so the time of celebration they bring it home where they store it.
- B. *For major holiday celebrations, what role do you have in the ceremonies?* (Specifically asked about a wedding) To prepare, for wedding if you are related to the family you have to provide, you have to buy them rice or you help them with money, plenty huge money (N3000-5000) or if you are related to the girl she will come to your place to ask you to buy her a gift. You make some cano (a type of drink), fry some meat, cook before the day. During the ceremony, in the village they make tuo and rice, coco-yam. If they are rich people, they kill some goat.

#### B5. Money

- A. *How do you earn money?* Work for the McCains.
- B. *How do you spend money?* The money is not enough for us to be because we have a lot of things to do at home. Especially for our culture here, we have plenty responsibility to run the house. The husband brings corn and rice, so some of the ingredients for the women to bring at home. Like the month end, I will just list things...spices...soap...I will just list these things...Creyfish, dry fish, we women like to keep these things in the home. So you will just go to market and buy those things.

### Values

#### V1. General Societal Views

- A. *What makes a good woman?* She is supposed to be a responsible woman: looking, dressing, the way she dress, the way she handle her home and the way she talk.
- B. *What makes a good man?* [Laugh] You know men, yeah sometimes the way they stay at home because normally the woman, they respect that they stay at home... Then the

- woman say the man is a nice husband because he stays at home. If a husband stay at the main road talking with friends, well, he's not too nice because he always stay outside with friends. Nice husbands take care of house, provide food for family, pay children's school fees.
- C. *Think of differences between men and women. What are things that women should do that men shouldn't?* Go to the market. Women know how to bargain for things but men go to market because they think that if their wife goes to the market, then the women just buy what they want. Men should not go to market. When the seller sees the man bargaining things, he will say 'What kind of woman are you?' and start shouting at you. Sometimes it is good for men to go to market so they know what the price is. Men might not agree that that is the price for something, so at the market they can see that things are expensive.
- D. *What are things that men should do but women shouldn't?* [Thinks for a long time] There are many things in the home that a man supposed to do: stay at home and boss/talk because he is a man but is not good for a woman to do these kinds of things. Women just be talking, talking when the man is looking at her which is not right. Not right for a woman to take the head of the house.
- E. *What things would you like to do but can't because you are a woman?* Yeah, you know, especially with our men here, many things if you have something to say or to do but you think that kai! I am a woman so I can't do this. There is many things that you want to do but don't because I do not want my husband to think that I am trying to overthrow him. The things are mostly things I want to say or buy.
- F. *Do you think it is better to be a man or a woman?* Better to be a woman. I look at it because we woman we have more – we love to share with one another and we like to fellowship with one another together and we bring more suggestions and we learn from each other but men sometimes don't do that. Even when a man tries to correct man: 'Why do you want to correct me? Why are you? I can run my house!' Women can listen to one another so she can correct some of her things.

## V2. Rites of Passage

- A. *When is a girl considered an adult?* When she starts her menstruation. Especially when my daughter get 12 years I start to tell her this is a stage she will find herself with some development, changes in her body so I try to talk to her and tell her what she should do. Clean yourself, don't leave yourself dirty. By 12-13 years.
- B. *Are there any ceremonies or rites of passage that you had to go through before you became an adult?* No.
- C. *How did your life change once you became an adult?* There are many responsibilities by that time you have to be. Before that time you can just leave yourself anyhow. But when you see these things you have to start tidying yourself. Buying some earrings, bras...Responsibilities coming, asking money for things to wear. I want this, I want this...

## V3. Marriage

- A. *Did you look forward to marriage?* I was too young when I got married and it was not my time to get married. My mother has 11 children and these children...My elder sister is a nurse because she went to school. At my age my parents started saying they

- did not have money to sponsor us in school again. Nobody to find a job for me or take me to school so for me to stay like this I have to find a true husband.
- B. *How did you find your husband?* [Summary] Long story... He lived in our area there and to me, I didn't have anything to do with him and my sister he would greet my sister but not me. By that time I'm in secondary school. He would call to me when I walked to school and I wouldn't talk to him because I was too busy. One afternoon I went to a friend's room and we took some biscuit to eat. I didn't know that my husband was laying on his bed because he was hidden by curtain. I saw a card that said that Sani is sick but I threw down the card and said 'Who is this Sani!?' Then I saw his leg and when I saw him I left. I went home and felt bad. I needed to apologize so I went and met him there. When I apologized, he said he wanted to see me and I said you are seeing me now. Later I said ok he could see me so I went home. Then my friend said Sani wanted to see me. Sani gave me an envelope and it had a letter where he said that he loved me. That's the way the friendship started. We went for a wedding and he was there. He touched me and I slapped his hand. I said I didn't like the guy. Whenever I saw him, I would go away. When I talked to him, I said that if he was serious, he should come to my house and greet my parents. Then the friendship went.
- C. *How much was your bride price?* N30,000 and they brought 2 boxes of clothes with some blankets, a goat, 2 wrappers for my mother, and palm oil, a dozen of bottles of lotion, a bag of salt. With the money, they bought me a pot, made a bed, and buy the plates, spoon. My father's senior brother has 4 wives so they call 1 wife and hand my hand to. My real mother was not involved in good preparation for the wedding. If there is any problem, my husband's family will go to her, or if there is anything with the bride price, they will discuss with her.

#### V4. Children

- A. *What are things you want to teach your girl children?* Especially Laura and Lois (youngest), I teach and warn them not to collect anything from anybody, not let anybody touch your bumbum [indicates to private parts]. Not allow any man try to deceive you to sleep with him. If she wants to ease herself, let her cover herself well, well and prepare her clothes and dress fine. Try to teach them to appreciate people or how to greet and how to call onto God. Teach them how to pray.
- B. *What are things you want to teach your boy children?* How to wash themselves inside (indicating private). When I teach the girls, I make sure the boy is not there, and when I teach the boy I make sure the girls are not there. Mostly the work goes on the girls because they have more attention for the mother to spend her time with them. I tell them they should not hear anything from the outside about sex. Not let their mind to hear it. Leave that place! When I was pregnant, Kaifas asked what I ate to make my stomach like that. By that time, he was 9 years so I told him that I would talk to him later about it. I had a book about girls development and I read the book to Kaifas, I tried to tell him that when he gets this age if he has contact he will impregnate her. You will not try that because you will wait until you get married. But when you get married you will be free. When I grow up, my mother, we were 6 girls but she was a busy woman, wake up go to market then do this late. She didn't have time to teach us sex education. We observed from our older sisters. The first time I saw my

- menstruation I cried for morning to evening my mother came late and I went to my father. My daddy gave me the maturation talk. He said it was a sign that in the future you will get children. My mother was busy, busy. Women will have to at least limit our time so we have time to spend with our children, especially the girls.
- C. *Are your children in school?* Linda is in Secondary School 1 at boarding school. Kaifas is in Junior Secondary School 1 at boarding school. Linda is in Primary 1. Lois will go to Nursery 1 next year.
- D. *How much school do you want your girl children to have?* My prayer, I don't want any of my children to get married before finishing her school. I know that what I am going through isn't easy. Sometimes I say Kai! Why now. Sometimes I am just piled with things and they are just over my head.
- E. *How much school do you want your boy children to have?* Same.

#### V5. Community

- A. *Who are your good women friends?* My good friends are those who I attend fellowship with them because I always have 2-3 hours to spend with them because mostly my hours are my office my school. There are women when they get home from work they go they chat but I don't have time for that. They are friends with women that aren't good women, they are not helping themselves to be going around themselves. There are many women like that. Good to join the women in my church to associate with them in the programs in the church and we benefit from that. Women's fellowship: We have a book of Elizabeth George, she have a topic on a woman owns God's heart so that book is a really encouragement book. How to raise your children, how to clean your home, how to welcome your husband when he comes back from work, how to entertain people, visitor, very encouragement that book. We use that book for 1 year. Main fellowship at the end of the month we have prayers and fasting. Meet twice a week – Monday and Friday.