**INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the North —  
A land over a hundred million souls call home.  
A place of warmth, not just from the blazing sun overhead,  
but from the hearts of its people — kind, resilient, deeply rooted.

This is a land blessed beyond measure —  
rich in culture, in stories, in both human and hidden wealth beneath the soil.  
Here, the earth sings with history, and the air hums with prayers carried by the wind.

The sun rises the same way each day — golden, relentless, and silent.  
It shines over dusty towns, where boys chase tyres through winding alleys,  
and old men sit beneath neem trees, sipping bitter tea, wrapped in thought.  
It watches everything… but says nothing.

Under this sun, lives unfold — quietly, fiercely, beautifully.  
Dreams are born, some nurtured, some forgotten.  
Traditions hold strong, even as the world beyond shifts and spins.

This story begins here —  
in the heart of the North,  
where survival is second nature,  
and living… truly living… is the real journey.

But for all its beauty, for all its blessings,  
poverty still sits at the center of the land — like a quiet king.  
Despite the potential, only a handful — maybe 5% — ever make it to the top.  
And most of them? They were born with the ladder already beneath their feet.

For the rest, life feels like a race you’ve lost before you even began.  
Here, circumstances don’t just challenge you — they crush you.  
Babies are born into struggle,  
into generational debts they never signed up for,  
into systems that don’t see them — or expect much from them.

And so, what was once a land of pride and promise  
now feels more like a prison.  
Not one made of bars or walls,  
but one that wraps itself around the mind.

People aren’t just hungry for food anymore.  
They’re hungry for peace.  
For sleep without fear.  
For a future they can believe in.

But when survival becomes your full-time job,  
when your dreams are buried under daily hustle,  
you begin to forget that the world is bigger than this.  
You forget that hope is even an option.

**This is the story of a man born beneath that sun**. A son of the North. Born not into poverty nor wealth, but into something heavier—expectations. In the bustling markets of Kano, the quiet streets of Katsina, or the windswept plains of Maiduguri, boys are taught early how to endure, how to obey, how to survive. But rarely, if ever, are they taught how to think. His name is not as important as his journey. He could be Musa, Bala, Idris—any man from this land. His life, like many others, was shaped by duty, family, faith, and fear. He worked hard. He prayed harder. But somewhere along the road, he lost the ability to ask, \*What if? \* What if he had made different choices? What if he had questioned more, listened better, or dared to dream beyond what was handed down to him? This book is not just about what happened. It is about what \*could have been\*. It is a portrait of regret, resilience, and reflection—a quiet plea to look again at the life we live under the northern sun, and to ask whether it is enough to simply survive… when there is so much more within reach.

CHAPTER 1

**A Life Under the Northern Sun**

He was born on a Thursday morning, just after the muezzin’s call cracked through the dusty dawn. In a small compound on the edge of Katsina town, wrapped in faded Ankara cloth and welcomed by a circle of tired but joyful aunties, he came into the world with little fanfare—but with many expectations.

His name was **Sani**.

He was the first son of a tailor and a market woman. They didn’t have much, but they had hope. From the beginning, Sani was told he would be different. He would go to school, learn the ways of the white man, wear a tie, and sit in an office. He would become the bridge between the old and the new. Between hardship and possibility.

**Primary School: The Curious One**

Sani walked barefoot to school, carrying his slate and chalk. The classrooms had no doors, no ceiling fans, just wooden benches and the occasional lizard darting across the walls. But he was always at the top of the class. Teachers praised him. Neighbours pointed at him and whispered, *“That boy will go far.”*

At home, while other children played football in the sand, he read old newspapers his uncle brought from town. Words became his escape. Numbers, his pride.

**Secondary School: The Promise Blossoms**

He got a scholarship to a government boarding school. It was the farthest he had ever been from home. There he learned discipline, endured bullies, tasted homesickness. He saw students from rich families arrive with provisions packed in cartons while he nursed his garri and groundnuts.

But he endured. He excelled. WAEC came and went, and Sani's name was pinned to the result board — all A’s and one B.

**University Life: A New World**

Ahmadu Bello University welcomed him like a distant cousin — familiar, yet foreign. The lectures were big, the city louder, the girls more confident than he was used to. Still, he thrived. Studied hard. Worked as a tutor for others. Skipped meals sometimes. Sent part of his allowance home.

It was during his third year that he met **Aisha**. She was quiet, book-smart, with eyes that saw too much. They met during a library strike. Exchanged notes, then glances, then letters. By final year, they were inseparable.

After NYSC, he got a job with the civil service — not glamorous, but stable. The family ululated. Prayers were said. *“You’ve done us proud,”* his father whispered with teary eyes. He married Aisha that same year, in a modest ceremony under a mango tree.

**Marriage and the Weight of Becoming a Man**

Married life was good. Quiet. Aisha gave birth to their first child, then another… then another. Soon they had seven. Boys and girls who filled the compound with laughter and chaos. But with each child came more pressure — school fees, clothes, food, medicals.

And then there were *them* — the relatives.

Uncles who wanted connections. Aunties whose sons needed jobs. Younger brothers who wanted school fees. Cousins who wanted to “stay with him in the city.” Everyone called him *Alhaji* now. He was the first to make it, and to them, that meant he owed everyone something.

**Success, Respect… and a Second Wife**

By 45, Sani had risen in the ranks. A senior director. Two cars. A house of his own. Respect in meetings. Salutes from juniors.

And one day, during a wedding in Zaria, he met **Maryam** — younger, educated, but soft-spoken. She reminded him of a version of himself he had lost.

Six months later, after prayer and hesitation, he took her as his second wife. Aisha was hurt, but she swallowed it like northern women are taught to do. She stayed — for the children, for the family name, for peace.

Maryam gave him five more children.

Twelve in total.

**The Cost of Many Blessings**

But blessings, when too many, become burdens. He tried. Oh, he tried. He registered them in public schools — there were too many for private. He paid teachers. Bought books. But the schools were broken, the teachers tired, the classes overcrowded.

One child failed WAEC three times. Another dropped out. The youngest barely knew how to read.

Sani began to wonder… had he tried to carry too much? In lifting his family, had he buried himself?

**Retirement: The Slow Decline**

He retired at 60. There was a party. Speeches. Praise. But after the cake was eaten and the guests left, silence returned.

The pension was late. Bills were not.

He sold one of his cars.

Then his land.

Then the guest house.

Still, the calls kept coming.

“Uncle, my child needs hospital.”

“Baba, school fees don come again.”

“Daddy, please, just this last help.”

The weight became too much for one man.

**The End of the Road**

At 65, in the middle of Harmattan, Sani suffered a stroke. He couldn’t speak. Couldn’t walk. He lay in a hospital bed, staring at the ceiling, trapped in a body that had carried too much, for too long.

Two months later, he died.

Not in disgrace. But not in peace either.

They buried him with honour. They praised his sacrifices. They told his story with pride. But inside the home, Aisha wept not just for her husband, but for the dreams that died with him.

**The Cycle Continues**

Sani was supposed to break the chain. The one who would rewrite the family story.

Instead, he became a chapter in its repetition.

And now, the burden has shifted. To **Musa**, his first son. Already, uncles call him “Alhaji.” Cousins say, *“You’re the man of the house now.”*

And on… and on… it goes.

From generation to generation.

Under the same unflinching sun.

**CHAPTER 2**

**Ghosts in the Capital**

Let’s be honest—for a very long time, this has been our story.

Especially here in the North.

A boy is born. He grows up watching his father carry the weight of ten people on one salary. The boy doesn’t complain. He learns to fetch water before sunrise. Learns that questions are disrespect. Learns that ambition, unless it follows tradition, is rebellion.

He grows up, becomes a man, and takes the same steps his father did. Marries early. Has more children than he can manage. Builds a house back home. Sends money to uncles and aunties. Works a government job until he is worn thin.

Then one day, he looks in the mirror and sees his father’s face staring back at him.

Not in pride—but in exhaustion.

And still, he carries on.

Because in the North, it’s not just culture. It’s ritual. It’s religion. You repeat what your father did, even if it breaks you.

Even if it buries you.

Every now and then, though, someone asks, *“Why?”*

Why must I carry everyone?

Why must I give birth to children I can’t fully raise?

Why should my value be measured by how much I give away, not how well I live?

Why does tradition feel like a cage instead of a compass?

Those are dangerous questions.

But necessary ones.

Some men—only a few—dare to ask them.

And when they do, they start seeing life differently.

They stop attending every family event out of obligation.

They stop sending money to grown cousins who refuse to work.

They choose quality over quantity.

They plan their lives, their marriages, even their children—with intention.

They become disciplined.

They start businesses, invest wisely, build quietly. They begin to breathe in ways their fathers never could. For the first time in generations, someone in the family is **living, not just surviving**.

And then… they leave.

They move to Abuja. Or Lagos. Or even the UK, if they’re lucky.

They start speaking fluent “boundary.” They say “no” without apology. They become the ones others now point at and say, “He’s made it.”

But here’s where it gets sad.

Once they escape the system, they disappear from the struggle. Completely.

They become **ghosts in the capital**.

You don’t see them on youth panels.

They don’t write books.

They don’t speak in schools.

They don’t start mentorship programs.

They don’t create podcasts or show up on radio stations to share their story.

They don’t come back to explain how they broke the chain—how they escaped the trap.

They just vanish. Quietly.

And who can blame them?

They left behind the same system that tried to swallow them. The endless obligations. The guilt trips. The passive aggression. The way people look at you like you've betrayed your roots just because you’ve found a better way.

They don’t want to go back.

But still… in leaving, they leave the rest of us in the dark.

And so, the cycle continues.

Another generation is born.

Another Sani.

Another Musa.

Another Hajara with dreams that die quietly in overcrowded classrooms.

Another house filled with children, half-raised by mothers stretched too thin and fathers too tired to notice.

And all the while, the few who escaped are just a few streets away—in the capital—driving past in tinted jeeps, heading to office buildings with air-conditioning and DSTV.

They see what’s happening. They know how it feels.  
But they keep the secret.

They carry the knowledge like treasure… and bury it.

***A Reflection***

Sometimes I wonder—what if just ten of them came back?

Not with money, but with wisdom. With blueprints. With truth.

What if they wrote letters to their younger selves and shared it with boys in government schools?

What if they told the next Sani, *“You can do this differently, and still be a good man”?*

What if they came back not to be praised, but to teach?

Because until someone returns to break the silence, this sun will keep rising over the same broken ground, the same unfinished dreams, the same tired fathers and confused sons.

And the cycle will continue.

Over and over again.

Until the ghosts return.

**CHAPTER 3**

**The Poverty of Thought**

Most people in the North don’t live.

They survive.

They wake up before dawn, hustle till nightfall, pray, eat if there’s food, then repeat the same routine the next day. Decades pass like this. Quiet. Struggling. Enduring. Aging.

But living?

Truly *living*?

That’s rare.

Not because life is impossible. But because so many of the struggles are **self-imposed**, born from a refusal—or a fear—to pause, reflect, and think differently.

In the North, thinking is not encouraged. It is not taught in schools. It is not modeled at home. A child who asks too many questions is called stubborn. A man who says, *“Why must I marry again?”* is mocked. A woman who says, *“Let’s wait before having another child,”* is accused of rebellion.

Everything is inherited—tradition, religion, even suffering.

But what if we just stopped?

Just for a moment?

What if a man sat down one evening, turned off the radio, silenced the noise, and simply **thought**?

He might realize that if he gave birth to **two children** instead of eight or ten, he could actually raise them well. Give them quality education. Buy them decent clothes, good shoes, nutritious meals. Take them to proper hospitals when they’re sick. Let them sleep in quiet homes, not overpopulated rooms with three other siblings sharing one mattress.

He might realize that **having less** is not weakness. It’s wisdom.

Thinking leads to understanding.

And through understanding, a man might say, *“Why marry four wives?”*

Just one woman. One good woman.

One partner to walk with, grow with, raise a family with.

One marriage where peace replaces competition. Where children are not divided by mothers. Where love doesn’t turn into silent warfare.

But in the North, such a man is seen as **weak**. As a man with “no balls.” No status. No pride.

Here, **marrying multiple wives is not just accepted—it is celebrated.**

A promotion at work? Add a wife.  
You get a new car? Add a wife.  
A good business year? Add a wife.

They say it's Sunnah. But deep down, many just want the **status**, not the spiritual discipline.

It has become culture, not conviction.

Meanwhile, the first wife lives in constant fear.

Not of abuse—but of **replacement**.

She prays for her husband to stay poor so that he doesn’t have enough to marry another.  
She hides joy when he succeeds.  
Because here, a man’s success is a **threat** to his wife’s peace.

And the man, instead of holding himself accountable, blames his urges, blames society, blames expectations—when really, all he needs to do is **think**.

Thinking is not rebellion. It’s not arrogance. It’s survival.

It’s how you realize that more children don’t mean more baraka (blessing) if you can’t raise them with dignity.

It’s how you understand that you don’t need ten sons to carry your name—you need one good child with sense and education to carry your legacy.

It’s how you realize that peace at home is better than praise in the street.

It’s how you break the cycle.

But without thinking, people remain trapped.

Not by poverty.

But by **mental laziness** dressed up as tradition.

So many Northern homes are drowning—not because of external enemies, but because no one has stopped to ask, *“Is this working?”*

They call it submission.  
They call it destiny.  
But sometimes, it’s just fear and the refusal to evolve.

The real poverty in the North is not always in the wallet.

It’s in the mind.

Until that changes, no amount of aid, religion, or prayers will fix what’s broken.

Because **no one can escape a prison they don’t even know they’re in.**

***A Final Reflection***

A man once said, “To think is to be free.”

But in the North, freedom scares people.

And so, they pass the same burden to their children,  
wrap it in a name called “tradition,”  
and call it life.

But it’s not life.

It’s survival.

And the Northern sun keeps rising on people who have forgotten what it means to truly live.

**CHAPTER 4**

**Schools Without Vision, Youth Without Purpose**

There is something deeply broken in the way we understand education in Northern Nigeria.

For decades, we have believed that the mere act of enrolling a child in school is a golden ticket to success. As long as the child wears a uniform, as long as he goes out every morning with a backpack, we sleep better at night.

We tell ourselves,

“He’s going to school. His future is secured.”

But is it really?

Walk the streets of any northern city — Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Gombe, Bauchi — and you’ll find **thousands of young people** who have gone to school and come out with **nothing**. No real skills. No direction. No understanding of the modern economy. No clarity on who they are or what they can offer the world.

We have raised a generation who believe school is **an achievement**, rather than a tool.

**A Miseducated Generation**

Many of them study courses they know nothing about — **Mass Communication, Political Science, Public Administration, Sociology** — not because they are passionate about these fields, but because “na easy to pass,” or someone said, “you go fit get job for government.”

They choose courses not based on their strengths, but on survival instinct.

No career counseling. No guidance. No mentorship.

No one stops to ask them:

* What are you good at?
* What problems do you enjoy solving?
* What does the future of work look like?
* Is this skill still relevant in 2030?

Instead, they are thrown into university like clothes into a washing machine. What comes out may be clean, but it’s still the same shirt.

**The Government Job Illusion**

Worse still, they believe that school is only useful **if it leads to a government job**.

And who can blame them?

For years, we’ve raised children on that myth:

“Just graduate and get a job with government. You’ll be alright.”

So they chase civil service jobs — jobs that are already overcrowded, underfunded, and frankly, disappearing.

Even when presidents and governors go on TV and say:

“The government cannot employ everyone.”

...our people still carry forms to Abuja and keep their ears to the ground, waiting for “connections.”

Meanwhile, other regions are evolving:

* Building businesses
* Learning remote tech skills
* Trading across borders
* Freelancing for companies in Europe, America, and Asia

But the North is still waiting for budget approval.

**Wealth Doesn’t Come from Waiting**

Here’s the hard truth:

**In today’s world, people are paid in direct proportion to the difficulty of the problems they can solve.**

If you can’t solve a real-world problem — technical, social, economic, medical, digital — your value in the market is low.

It doesn’t matter if you have:

* ND, HND, BSc, MSc, PhD…
* First class or Third class…

If you can’t do something **useful**, no one will pay you well.

Productivity is what drives income.

But in the North, we’ve produced **millions of citizens with certificates, but no productivity.**

Ask many of them,

“What can you do?”

And they say,

“I studied Political Science.”

That’s not a skill. That’s a title.

**A Crisis of Pride and Misplaced Priorities**

And even those who try to learn trades or acquire skills are often mocked.

A boy who learns to repair laptops is called *mai gyara.*  
A girl who starts a small skincare business is called *yar kasuwa* with a sneer.

Parents say,

“After all this school, na this work you go do?”

Yet these are the same parents who have **no job** for the child.  
No business capital. No contacts. No plan.

Just pride.

Pride that kills initiative.

Pride that mocks skills but glorifies dependency.

**Education Must Lead to Purpose**

Education, whether formal or informal, must lead to **transformation**.

It should make a person **curious**, **creative**, **capable**, and **conscious**.

It should help someone:

* Start a business
* Improve a process
* Create solutions
* Lead a community
* Earn a decent living
* Raise strong families

But right now, our system just creates graduates who:

* Memorize outdated textbooks
* Wait for NYSC
* Hope for miracle jobs
* Complain endlessly
* Blame government
* Marry early to escape pressure
* Produce more children they can’t care for

And so the cycle begins again.

**A Generation That Must Wake Up**

There’s no other way to say it: **we are late.**

The world is moving with or without us.

Artificial Intelligence is already replacing basic office work.  
Remote workers are earning in dollars from their rooms in Aba and Ibadan.  
Young women are becoming CEOs in their twenties.  
And we are still teaching children to memorize definitions of “Agriculture” and “Family.”

No exposure to:

* Critical thinking
* Digital skills
* Soft skills
* Financial literacy
* Innovation

No real preparation for the economy of the future.

***The Wake-Up Call***

Until we change this mindset, the North will continue to:

* Complain without contributing
* Enroll without educating
* Graduate without growing
* Hope without building

We need to:

* Train teachers differently
* Update our curriculums
* Stop worshipping white-collar jobs
* Celebrate skilled workers and entrepreneurs
* Teach children *why* they are in school, not just *that* they are

Above all, we need to raise a generation that understands:

**No one is coming to save you. You must save yourself.**

Not the government.  
Not your uncle in customs.  
Not the local chairman.  
And definitely not the certificate in your nylon file.

**Final Word**

We cannot afford another generation of young people who went to school — and came out with nothing.

Not when the future belongs to those who can **think, build, and solve.**

**CHAPTER 5**

**The Price of Not Knowing**

Ignorance has never been cheap.  
But in Northern Nigeria, it costs **generations.**  
It’s the quiet thief that robs entire families, towns, and tribes—  
Not of their faith, not of their culture, but of their **future.**

This is **not natural poverty.**  
This is **man-made, self-imposed, fear-fueled poverty.**  
The kind of poverty that builds mosques, but not libraries.  
The kind that buys new cars, but not new ideas.

Let’s speak plainly.

**The Foundation of Artificial Poverty**

From the rich farmlands of Katsina to the bustling markets of Kano, the land is rich but the people are poor.

**Why?**

Because even in 2025:

* Farming is still done with **cutlasses and hoes** instead of tractors and drones.
* We import materials to **Kwari Market** instead of producing them locally.
* Wealthy men store **billions of naira** in bank accounts, refusing to invest.
* Businesses die because no one wants to learn **digital marketing or logistics.**
* E-commerce is treated like a scam, not a revolution.
* Youth empowerment is still reduced to giving ₦10,000 and a wheelbarrow.

And most sadly — any **new idea is feared like wildfire.**

**The Internet is a Village. But We’re Not in It.**

The average Northern youth today has a smartphone.  
But they don’t know it’s a tool — they treat it like a toy.

Instead of Googling how to make money, they scroll endlessly through TikTok.  
Instead of learning skills online, they join WhatsApp groups to gossip.  
Instead of selling to the world, they beg for handouts from tired relatives.

They don’t know that:

A boy in **Unilag** used school WiFi to learn **video editing**  
He started freelancing on **Fiverr**  
Today, he earns over **$500/month** — that’s **₦750,000** — a **permanent secretary’s salary**

Yes, in his hostel.  
With no godfather.  
No government job.  
Just **skill and WiFi**.

But when a northern youth tries to record himself speaking English online, they say:

*"Dan karya"… "Yar karya"*  
*(He’s faking. She’s pretending.)*

Not knowing that content creation is now a business.  
Not knowing that if he keeps going, he’ll eventually earn **$1,000/month** — that’s **₦1.5 million**.  
From **his phone. In his house.**  
That’s more than some commissioners take home.

**The Misunderstood Power of Skills**

In the North, we look down on “handwork.”

Parents only want their children to become:

* Civil servants
* Politicians
* Doctors
* Or nothing

They forget that the **plumber** they hired to fix the pipes in their new house may be **richer than them.**

That plumber?

He just submitted a ₦30 million quote to the State Ministry of Works to install plumbing in the new government secretariat.

If it’s approved, he’s pocketing at least **₦7 million.**

But we still tell our sons that plumbing is for the poor.  
We tell our daughters that tailoring is for dropouts.  
Meanwhile, tailors in Lagos are flying to London for fittings.

**Globalization Has Made the World a Village — But We Are Not Home**

The North has no idea what’s happening outside its bubble.

They don’t know that:

* A girl in Edo State is working remotely with a **UK brand** as a **virtual assistant.**
* A guy in Awka is earning $2,000 monthly by writing **emails** for a U.S. marketing firm.
* Someone in Ilorin just finished a **copywriting course** and now has 4 foreign clients on **Upwork**.

In 2 years, they went from **₦0 to $1,500/month**.

But in the North, nobody talks about these things.

We are still obsessed with:

* Waiting for government jobs
* Buying land and forgetting it
* Blaming “the system” while refusing to study it
* Marrying early and having 10 children we can’t train
* Building 5-bedroom homes in villages where we spend 2 days per year

We still haven’t realized that **education is not just about degrees.**  
It’s about the **ability to solve problems.**

**Professional Certificates and High-Income Jobs**

An average Northerner works **30 years** in government, rises to director level, and retires with a small pension.

Yet, he never knew that if he had taken **two professional courses**, like:

* **Project Management (PMP)**
* **Data Analysis**
* **Salesforce Administration**
* **Business Strategy**

He could have gotten a job with a **multinational** firm making **₦12 million/year** with travel allowances and health insurance.

He simply didn’t know.

And when his son tells him he wants to become a digital marketer, he says:

*“What is that nonsense? Go and get a real job.”*

Ignorance isn’t just painful.  
It’s expensive.

**This is the Real Lockdown**

While other regions of the country are:

* Trading crypto
* Starting tech companies
* Monetizing content
* Running remote service agencies
* Partnering with global brands

The North is still praying for slots in the next **State Universal Basic Education Board** recruitment.

Still applying to **INEC ad-hoc jobs** every election year.

Still waiting for the government to build their future.

The world has moved.  
The village has changed.  
But the North is still at the gate, refusing to enter.

**So What’s the Way Out?**

* **Educate intentionally** — not just school, but **relevant knowledge**
* **Promote skills** as valuable paths — not just white-collar jobs
* **Invest wisely** — don’t keep billions idle
* **Talk about new ideas openly** — don’t mock progress
* **Use the internet to create, not just consume**

Because the **price of not knowing** is this:  
A land full of potential but empty of progress.

We can no longer afford to be blind.  
The time to **open our eyes** is now.

**CHAPER 6**

**The Civil Service Illusion**

There was a time when wearing a lanyard and walking into a government building at 8:00 AM meant success.  
That time is **over**.

But Northern youth still hold on—like passengers waiting for a train that left the station years ago.

They believe in **certificates without skills**, **civil service without backup**, and **salaries without strategy**.

This chapter is about the **danger of waiting**.

**Degrees Without Direction**

Every year, universities in the North graduate tens of thousands of young men and women.  
But most of them have no plan beyond **NYSC**.  
No skill, no experience, no market relevance.

Instead of learning:

* Artificial Intelligence
* Software Engineering
* Digital Marketing
* Robotics
* Data Science
* Electrical Installation
* Video Editing
* UI/UX Design
* Plumbing, Welding, or Solar Installation

They follow the easiest route:

"Let me just study Biology."  
"I got admission for Sociology."  
"I’ll manage Microbiology for now."  
"Public Admin is okay — I’ll look for government work."

No guidance.  
No industry knowledge.  
No passion.  
Just registration and prayer.

Meanwhile, **AI is preparing to replace**:

* Doctors
* Lawyers
* Accountants
* Writers
* Even journalists and bankers

And we are still proudly studying **courses that are already obsolete**.

**The NYSC Trap**

NYSC comes.  
They serve.  
They take photos in uniform.  
They post it on Facebook:

*"Corper weee..."*

Then reality hits.

After service, they start what I call the **Season of Running Around**:

* From one office to another
* From one uncle to another
* Calling “contacts” who haven’t picked their calls in months
* Attending fake interviews and unpaid internships
* Hoping for letters that will never arrive

And the few who finally get that government job?

They celebrate.  
Their parents throw a mini party.  
They print business cards.

Until that first salary lands.  
₦150,000.

**The Salary That Doesn’t Salve**

They realize quickly:

* Rent in a strange new city = ₦50,000/month
* Transport = ₦20,000
* Feeding = ₦30,000
* Utility bills, airtime, emergency = ₦15,000
* Support to parents back home = ₦20,000
* Your unemployed friend is texting you: *“Bro, abeg you fit assist me with 5k?”*

You are already broke by the 20th of the month.

Then one day, you enter a showroom.

You ask:

“How much for that motorcycle?”

**₦1.2 million.**

You pause.  
Your whole **year's savings** can’t buy it.

You do the math:

*“So how many years to buy a car?”*

Forget car.  
Forget land.  
Forget house.  
Forget marriage.

You realize that **this can’t be the dream**.

You wake up.

**Civil Service Is Not a Bad Thing — But It’s Not a Life Plan**

Nobody is saying civil service is evil.  
But **depending on it alone is a trap.**

The North has created a culture where the **highest ambition** is:

* Get a federal job
* Buy a small car
* Rent a small apartment
* Marry
* Get posted to another ministry
* Wait for pension

But this is not **living**.  
This is **surviving**.

Meanwhile, your age mate in the East just made $2,000 on Upwork.  
Your sister’s friend in Lagos is teaching French to kids online — and earns ₦400,000/month.  
Your cousin in Canada learned forklift driving — now earning ₦1 million per week.

But you?

You’re sitting in a dusty office where the printer hasn’t worked since last year.

**Skills Are the New Degrees**

It is time for Northern youth to understand:

**Certificates open doors, but skills keep them open.**

Today, the highest-paid young people in Nigeria are not government workers.

They are:

* Freelancers
* Digital entrepreneurs
* Skilled artisans
* Remote workers
* E-commerce traders
* Creators, not consumers

You can learn **graphic design** in 6 months.  
You can become a certified **Google Ads specialist** in 3 months.  
You can learn **solar panel installation** and start a business in less than a year.  
You can become a **remote email marketer** with just a laptop and the internet.

But instead, you’re studying Public Admin in 2025…  
And still hoping for **customs or immigration recruitment** like it’s 1999.

**The Dream is Dead — Unless You Wake Up**

The government will not save you.  
Your uncle cannot create jobs.  
The old system is collapsing.  
The new world is moving **faster than ever before.**

But here in the North, we’re stuck in slow motion —  
Dragging bags of rice to weddings.  
Spending millions on naming ceremonies.  
Mocking those who dare to dream differently.

It’s time to wake up.

**The Path Forward**

1. **Reform our education goals** — teach relevance, not routine
2. **Guide students into in-demand skills and careers**
3. **Normalize alternative careers** — it's okay to be a coder, tailor, or electrician
4. **Invest in skill centers, not just classrooms**
5. **Teach financial literacy — stop chasing salary, start building assets**

Civil service is not the enemy.  
But if it’s the **only plan** — it’s a **trap**.

If you truly want to live — not just exist —  
**Break out. Skill up. Move forward.**

***By Ismail Umar – Author, Age 30, Just a Concerned Citizen***

I am **Ismail Umar**,  
Just a 30-year-old concerned citizen.  
No political ambition, no special title, no NGO behind me —  
Only a pen, a phone, and a heart that refuses to stay silent.

I wrote this small book not because I have all the answers,  
but because **we have too many unanswered questions** in the North.

* Why are we still sending children to school without purpose?
* Why do we fear new ideas like they are curses?
* Why do we ignore skills, yet worship certificates?
* Why do we hold on to suffering, and call it culture?
* Why do we wait for the government like it’s our savior?

This book is not to shame anyone.  
It’s to **wake us up**.

To remind us that:

***Poverty is not our destiny. Ignorance is not our inheritance.***

The world has moved.  
Jobs are digital.  
Skills are global.  
Opportunities are no longer in Abuja — they are online.

We can’t keep repeating the same patterns that failed our fathers.  
We can’t keep raising children for a world that no longer exists.  
We can’t keep calling it “tradition” when it’s actually **limitation**.

I believe the North is full of brilliance.  
I believe we have potential.  
But potential means nothing if we don’t use it.  
**You can’t plant mango and expect apple.**

**A New Mindset Starts With Us**

Change will not come from government memos.  
It won’t come from billion-naira projects.  
It will come from:

* Young people thinking differently
* Parents questioning the old ways
* Teachers guiding with vision, not routine
* Religious leaders encouraging economic growth, not just sermons
* Communities investing in youth, not just ceremonies

We must build a North that values **thought over tradition**,  
**skill over status**,  
**progress over pride**.

**Final Words**

If you read this book and felt a little uncomfortable — good.  
Growth never comes from comfort.  
If it made you think — better.  
That means the seed is planted.

I am not a celebrity.  
I am not a leader.  
I am just someone who cares.  
I am **Ismail Umar**,  
And this is my way of **starting the conversation**.

Maybe you will be the one to continue it.  
Maybe you will mentor someone.  
Maybe you will start a school, a skill center, a podcast, a movement.

Just don’t stay silent.  
Don’t wait for change — **become it**.

And remember:

***In the land of the blind, knowing is a revolution.***