

Historical Trends of Women In Pursuit of Knowledge

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Theoretical Framework

Synopsis

Qur'anic verse – Sura al-Alaq (96 vs 1-5).

1. Proclaim (or read) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created.
2. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood
3. Proclaim! and thy Lord is most bountiful
4. He taught (the use of) the pen
5. Taught man that which he knew not ...”

Hadith of the Prophet

“Go forth in search of knowledge even to Sin (China) ...”

“Honestly, God has blessed ladies with beauty, brain and wisdom. Its only transport fare that is remaining”

Whitney Michelle (2020)

A brief account on the history of women in pursuit of knowledge (not formal education) could be traced to the Golden Age of Islam when the prophet 22 April 571 – 8th June 632 AH of Islam (Rasulullah, PBUH) established schools for his Sahaba amongst which was his beloved wife Nana Aisha bint Abubakar Saddiq. Most Muslims know how significant Aisha is with regards to al-Quran, Hadith, Sirah and social life of the Prophet.

Her contributions, images and statues in Islam has an unprecedented position to the extent that the holy Prophet directed that his Umma could get half of the knowledge from the “red haired Lady” (Aisha).

Islam spread to the Western Sudan from the Hijaz through the activities of Sahabas, missionaries, merchants etc. Borno, Katsina, Kano, Mali became centres of Islam and commerce in the 11th and 15th Century. Islam became the predominant religion. The growth of education in Islamic sciences among Western Sudanese people, was perhaps the most far reaching factor in the transformation of the religion from a thing accepted on the basis of a mere belief to a faith based on a true awareness of the stipulations of Qur'an and

other sources that govern its practices. Leadership of these influential development was not provided by the kings but by a rising class of educated elites known as the Ulama – learned men. Islam thus grew out of the royal cult and soon left them lagging behind in the pursuit of true knowledge and practices. Islamic sciences, literature, poetry, arts etc became fields of studies. The jihad of Shehu Uthman Danfodio 15th December, 1754 – 20th April, 1817 in the 19th Century soon reinforced the zeal and development of these knowledge. Prior to this, Hausa land was not only chaotic but suppressive particularly to women and the downtrodden. The Jihadists were not only empire builders, but excellent writers, poets, medical scientists, philosophers and administrators. Amongst these knowledgeable people were Nana Asma'u bint Fodio, (1793 – 1864).

Nana Uwar Daje (as locally called) was a fountain of knowledge, she taught, wrote books, poems etc in both Arabic, Fulfulde and Ajami. She exemplified Nana Aisha in the movement. She was not a feminist nor a gender advocate but had contributed a lot to the jihad movement especially on the womenfolk and family life. Schools were opened in the household where fiqh, grammar, hadith, poetry were taught and learnt in the 'kulle' households. Seeking knowledge was however restricted at this very moment, in fact, it was one of the focus of the jihadist to liberate the women-folks from the subjugative stands of the Hausa-Fulani males. The similar roles of Asmau bint Fodio were played and further enhanced by outstanding women educators such as Umar Makaranta (the teacher of the late Emir Ado Bayero), Malama Tasalla Nabulusi, Umma Khulsum Kassim, Dr. Zaharau Muhammad etc.

With the collapse/defeat of the Caliphate in the early 18th century, the missionaries took over education of the colonies. Knowledge was now restricted further, women education per se was not very much pronounced under colonial administration. Women were rather seen than heard. The central focus of colonial education was for the development of the 3Rs i.e Reading, Writing and Arithmetics. By 1950s, the British Colonial Government instituted the Psych's Education Commission which came out with recommendation to among others establish girls – women education centres

in the Northern Protectorates. WTC Kano, GGC Dala and Shekara Provincial Boarding Primary School were established right in the heart of Kano City. Katsina, Zaria and Sokoto had similar schools established in 1950s and 60s.

They produced refined ladies into all aspects of lives for instance Shekara produced the following:

S/N	NAME	DESIGNATION
1.	Prof. Aisha Abdu Tofa	Bayero University Kano
2.	Dr. Aisha Nalado	Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital
3.	Aisha Shehu Maimota	Lecturer, Aminu Kano School of Legal Studies
4.	Laurat Ado Diso	Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education Kano
5.	Halima Umar Muhd	Lecturer
6.	Mariya Danamu	Commissioner
7.	Arc. Hauwa Hassan	Federal Inland Revenue Abuja
8.	Safiya Bala	Dep. Director Bureau for Land Management
9.	Ma'azatu Isah Dutse	Permanent Secretary
10.	Bilkisu Shehu Maimota	Permanent Secretary
11.	Amina Abdulkadir	KERD
12.	Shafaatu Sani Hanga	Lecturer Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education
13.	Prof. Rukayya Rufai	Former Minister of Education, now at BUK
14.	Zuwaira Rabi	Zonal Director Nassarawa Zone
15.	Ramatu Mukhtar Tofa	School Director GGC Dala
16.	Dr. Fatahiyya Ibrahim	Saadatu Rimi College of Education

Later on Government Girls' College, Dala and Women Teachers' College were established in 1953 and 1957 respectively and produced fantastic educationists, lawyers, engineers and professors as follows:

1.	Mrs. Hansu Iro	Educationist Katsina State
2.	Hon. Chief Mrs. Elizabeth Ata	Ex Minister of State & Business Tycoon Ivase
3.	Hon. Justice Hansen Donil	Chief Justice Kaduna State
4.	Hajiya Rabi Aliyu Tambuwal	Provost FCE Gusau
5.	Hajiya Tabawa Abdulsalam	Ex Commissioner
6.	Dr. Safiya Muhammad	Perm. Sec. Fed. Min. of Women Affairs & Social Dev.
7.	Chief Mrs. Violet Young	Business Tycoon
8.	Hajiya Nafisatu Kabir	Ex-Commissioner
9.	Hajiya Umma Sunusi Bayaro	Ex-Manager Daula Hotel
10.	Dije Yusuf	DG Finance Bauchi State
11.	Stella Mamsel	Director General Adamawa State
12.	Zulfa'u Umar Sadiq	MD Zuma Limited, Lagos
13.	Naja'atu Ali	Great Politician
14.	Hajiya Umma Odey	Former GM Hamdala Hotel
15.	Hajiya Toma Ibrahim	Former Zonal Commissioner National
16.	Hajiya Hadiza Levks	Educationist Bauchi
17.	Hajiya Hafsatu Kawu	Ex-Perm Sec.
18.	Justice Rail Elelu	Chief Justice, Kwara State
19.	Aishatu Yakubu	Great Politician
20.	Aishatu Zaharaddeen	Per, Com. Pension Board

21.	Balarabe Lawan	Ex Commissioner
22.	Yardada Maikano Bichi	Ex Commissioner Current Advisor on NGO
23.	Aishatu Ja'afar	Ex Commissioner Current Advisor on Feeding
24.	Lami Zakari	Retired Manager (NEPA)
25.	Prof. Fatima M. Umar	Former Executive Secretary, Scholarship Board.
26.	Sadiyya Adamu	Educationist and Activitist SCROE

Prominent students of GGC Dala

1.	Prof. Rukayya Ahmad Rufai	Former Minister of Education
2.	Mrs. Maryam Sani Abacha	Former First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria
3.	Mrs. Pauline Tellen	Minister for Women Affairs
4.	Mrs. Saudatu Sani	Former House of Representatives
5.	Hajiya Bilkisu Waziri	Former Permanent Secretary Water Resources
6.	Hajiya Laurato Ado Diso	Current PS Minister of Education
7.	Hajiya Atika Bala Maiyafe	Aminu College of Education
8.	Prof. Gaji Dantata	Faculty of Legal Education
9.	Hajiya Furaira Zakari	Former PS Jigawa State Governor
10.	Hajiya Bilkisu Shehu Maimota	PS Kano
11.	Hajiya Muazatu Dutse	PS Kano
12.	Hajiya Maimuna Kabir Khalid	Former Commissioner Women Affairs
13.	Hajiya Sa'a	M.D ARTV
14.	Hajiya Salamatu Muhd	PS Women Affairs
15.	Aisha Ismail	Former minister
16.	Binta A. Kwalli	Journalist
17.	Dr. Huda Datti	Deputy Provost SRCOE

Courtesy: WOTCOSA in Action Vol. 2. No. 002 (2020) [2].

Around the world, women now have more influence over decisions that affect their lives. In even the most conservative societies, feminists and gender advocates have been able to forward more equitable policies and outcomes.

Important drivers of women's political power and influence include improved access to education and material assets, more equal and inclusive politics, strong women's movements and women being effective political operators.

Increases in women's political powers are not uniform. Some women have more influence than others, both within and between countries. Men continue to dominate some sectors and the most powerful positions in society.

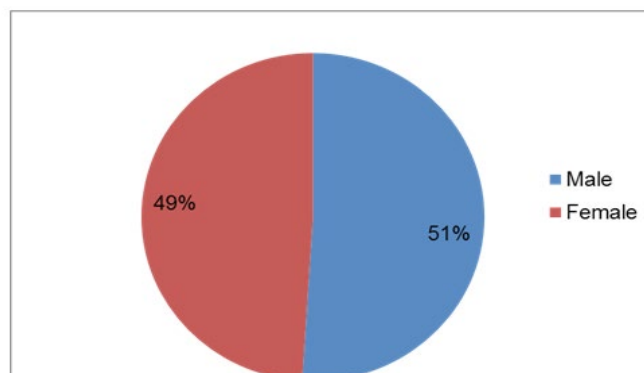
Women in positions of power may not champion gender quality. Women and their interests are diverse.

The international community can better support women's political

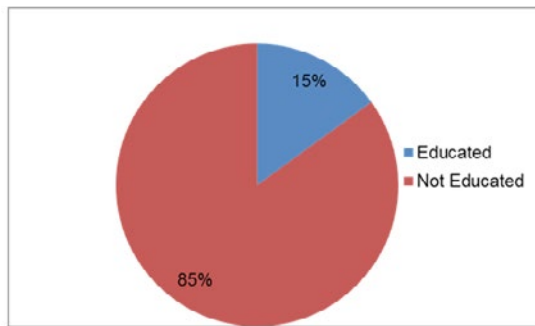
leadership by investing in women's education and economic assets, their organisations and their political apprenticeship, focusing on political systems and not just election, and supporting locally led and problem-driven responses.

The Bombshell

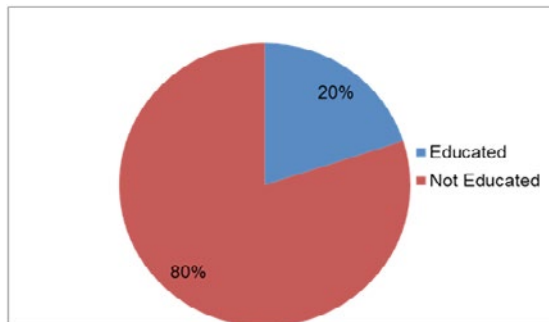
The population of the Federal Republic of Nigeria according to World Bank (2017) was 190.9 million: 51% is male, 49% is female.



Northwest



Northwest



Kano State has 13.4 million out of school which 60% is male and 40% is female. Out of this 40%, only 10% is pursuing education i.e literate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

By way of concluding, women are far left behind in this part of the country been half of the total population and breeders of the second half, radical measures must be taken to first of all educate and empower them. In view of these, I strongly recommend mass education using mother language at the basics, non-governmental, civil and liberty organisations must join hands with government to design and execute programmes that could enhance female education, failure to do so jeopardizes the society to the havoc of drug addictism, rapes, incest, hawking and other vices.

References

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2. WOTCOSA in Action. 2nd Edition, February, 2020. Vol. 2, No. 002
Oral Interviews with Staff of GGC Dala, GGC Shekara etc.

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