

Contributions of Women to the Development of Hausa Literature as an Effective Means of Public Enlightenment: The Case of a 19th Century Female Scholar Maryam Bint Uthman Ibn Foduye

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Abstract : In the 19th century, Hausaland an Islamic revolution known as the Sokoto Jihad took place that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1804 under the leadership of the famous Sheik Uthman Bn Fodiye. Before the Jihad movement in Hausaland (now Northern Nigeria), women were left in ignorance and were used and dumped like old kitchen utensils. The sheik and his followers did their best to actualising women's right to education by using their female family members as role models who were highly educated and renowned scholars. After the Jihad with the establishment of an Islamic state, the women scholars initiated different strategies to teach the generality of the women. The most efficient strategy was the 'Yantaru Movement founded by Nana Asma'u the daughter of Sheikh Uthman Bn Fodiye in collaboration with her sisters around 1840. The 'Yantaru movement is a women's educational movement aimed at enlightening women in rural and urban areas. The move helped in massively mobilizing women for education. In addition to town pupils, women from villages and throughout the nooks and crannies of metropolitan Sokoto participated in the movement in the search for knowledge. Thus, the birth of the 'Yantaru system of women's education. The 'Yantaru operates the three-tier system at village, town and the metropolitan capital of Sokoto. 'Yantaru functions include imparting knowledge to elderly women and young girls. Step down enlightenment program on returning home. The most effective medium of communication in the 'Yantaru movement was through poetry where scholars composed educational poems which were memorized by the 'Yantaru, who on return recite it to fellow women at home. Through this system, many women were educated. This paper translated and examines one of such educative poems written by the second leader of the 'Yantaru Movement Maryam Bn Uthman Bn Fodiye in 1855.

Keywords : English, Hausa language, public enlightenment, Maryam Bint Uthman Ibn Foduye

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