

ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN UNDER SOKOTO CALIPHATE: A LESSON FOR CONTEMPORARY WOMEN IN NIGERIA

<https://uia.e-journal.id/spektra/article/view/3592>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34005/spektra.v6i1.3592>

Murtala Hanafi

murtalajibril@gmail.com

Department of Islamic Studies, Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto, Nigeria

Abstract: *This paper economic rights of women under the Sokoto Caliphate, a lesson for women of contemporary Nigeria, discusses the various economic activities in which women engaged themselves in Sokoto without interference from the men. Women's Rights have occupied a prominent place in the Islamic affairs scheme since the Islamic message. It is no longer history to state that the Prophet (S.A.W) upgraded the status of women from what it used to be and made them equal with the male gender throughout his Prophethood. Part of the rights accorded women in the early days of Islam includes economic rights. This paper highlights some of the entrepreneurship women engaged in and the challenges they faced in the caliphate before now. It also discussed the rights enjoyed by Muslim women in Sokoto. Adequate attention is devoted to the proprietary and employment rights of women in Sokoto as well as other such challenges affecting the enjoyment of rights accorded Muslim, women in Islam to cater for their economic well-being. The paper is structured into major parts starting with the proprietary right of women in Islam contemporary to the economic rights of women in Nigeria. As a lesson and challenge to the contemporary women in Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative research method where secondary sources of data were utilized and analysis as its methods of analysis.*

Keywords: *Economic Rights of Women, Sokoto Caliphate, Contemporary Women*

A. INTRODUCTION

In most parts of the world, women are regarded and considered as inferior to their male counterparts in the economic development of society. Certainly, the role of women in any society is very enormous. They are the mothers and, thus, the backbone of any society. The saying that every successful man there is a woman has been verified by the vicissitudes of time. Yet, the most striking thing is that very little attention has been accorded to their



Spektra: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4. International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

contribution it is a well-known fact that various conferences and seminars were held all over the world to investigate and find out the role of women in various societies. The available records and literature were nevertheless very scanty despite women's positions and activities which led them, to play such a vital role in any society. However, some women in other parts of the world made significant contributions to the economic development of their society but were not publicized.

In West Africa, so many years of research have been spent diffing and staying on women in different societies of the region. The findings, however, were not adequate societies of the region. The findings, however, were not adequate and well-informed. There is therefore, the need for serious attention to be given to the role of women in many old or contemporary societies, more especially in the Islamic West African Sub-region which recorded various progressive societies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among these societies include the Sokoto Caliphate, where women left an indelible mark on the success of the Jihad movement. They contributed to the development of this society intellectually, morally, and economically.¹

This necessitates the need to set out an outline of the contribution of women to the economic progress and prosperity of this great Caliphate. These women scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate were not only distinguished but also unique, and therefore deserve better treatment in our history books. Therefore, in this chapter, we are going to show how unique was this contribution of women to the economic development of the Sokoto Caliphate. This is because the development of any contemporary society is measured in terms of its economic progress, for the economy appears to be the bedrock of any modern society.

Before the *Jihad* of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo which led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, the position of women in the entire Hausaland was not recognized, because they had no dignity, integrity and nobility. Most if not all aspects of womanhood were highly corrupted. Most if not all aspects of womanhood were highly corrupted to the extent that one could realize and see both the young and the old women being paraded along the streets, marketplaces, and other public places without any decent dress on them. Moreover, it was the women rather than men who used to attend marketplaces, which is like European

¹ J. Boyd, the Role of Woman Scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate, M. Phil Seminar Paper, Department of Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano Nigeria, 1984.

practices.² Also women used to do manual work on farms for the upliftment of the societal status of men, which resembles the pagan practices of our modern Nigeria. On the inheritance, a woman is entitled to one-half of a male share. But it was appropriated by the elder male members of the family, and thus, denying them their right of inheritance. The women's dowry on the other hand, was appropriated by the parents, elders in the family and influential scholars of the society.³

Islam as a total way of life sanctifies the lives of women like any other human being. It also calls for equal treatment of both males and makes children. Islam also recognizes the right of women married or single to own property. Women were also not left behind in the process of redistribution of wealth. They were, therefore, even given half of the share of a male in the inheritance. This shows that the role of women in the societal economic development of an Islamic state is quite distinct from that of other ideologies. Islam aims at balancing their transcendental and material values. That was why perhaps the women of the Sokoto Caliphate left one kind of indelible mark or the other in the success of the Jihad movement and more specifically the economic progress and development of this Caliphate.

The success of women's contributed to the economic development of the Sokoto caliphate was as a result of a concrete attempt over a long period to mobilize women as agents religieux.³ This point we can see very vividly at the end of Shehu's career when he was no doubt satisfied that as far as he could, he had mobilized women through education, brought them into the mainstream of life, and above all, produced women of sufficient caliber in Islamic history.⁴

Nothing, perhaps, motivated and encouraged women more to realize their role and give their own contribution for the betterment of the then society. The call is contained in his book titled, *An-Nasiha al-wadi'a'* In fact, it made them lead a righteous life. In this book, Muhammad Bello expresses his fear over the evil of materialism which is seriously penetrating the hearts of Muslims and consequently affects the Muslim society in totality. Muhammed Bello expresses his fear over the evil of materialism which is seriously penetrating the hearts of Muslims and consequently affects the Muslim society in totality.

² H.U. Malami, *The Role Women in the Economic Development of the Sokoto Caliphate*, UDU, Sokoto.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ J. Boyd, "The Role of Woman Scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate", M. Phil Seminar Paper, Department of Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano Nigeria, 1984.

Muhammad Bello then went further to appeal to Muslim women to give their help to defeat the potential evil and destroy the stem of societal decay. In essence, Muhammad Bello was seriously emphasizing on the Ideas which all Muslim women should aim at achieving. He also guided them towards the models that they should try to emulate and ultimately showed them that there was practically no limit to the spiritual, moral, and (Intellectual) heights they could attain if they made the necessary efforts and reminded them that their role in uplifting the society is very crucial.

In any society it is women that lead it into joy, comfort, and luxury. This situation of engaging in pleasures and luxury was feared most for the people by the prophet S.A.W as well as Muhammad Bello. Muhammad Bello also tried to draw the attention of women to remember the time when riches began to flow in Medina, and the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) requested more comfort for themselves, Allah then rebuked them and gave them a choice of either this world or the hereafter upon which they always preferred the hereafter.

In essence, Muhammad Bello wanted women to seek their livelihood, and to insist on being given only lawful and wholesome resources from their husbands. This implied that they should reject from their husbands, “property looted from the public treasury, or seized from the poor, or acquired by swindling, fraud and trickery.” Muhammad Bello goes on to say that one of the principal duties of a married woman in Islam is that of protecting her husband’s property. His position with regards to women is, therefore, very clear, “women can play a useful role without going out to mix with men.”⁵

Women in the Caliphate as far as Muhammad Bello was concerned, should be deeply devoted to Allah, mount their saddles in Jihad, and orient their children towards the noble cause and endear them to martyrdom. He cited an example with various women, among whom were his contemporaries such as Aisha b. Muhammad, A wife of his father, Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo who exerted herself in acquiring lawful earning, and spent her resources in the cause of Allah. He also cited his own mother Hauwa B. Adam, whom he described as the one who ate only from her lawful earning, or from the sweat of her brows.

The debates between Shehu and Mustapha Goni with regards to allowing women to attend the Shehu’s public lecture reached up to the point of their involvement in trade and

⁵ S.A. Gusau, (Ed), *The Economic Thought of Seven Great Muslim Scholars*, U.D.U, Sokoto Nigeria, 1991.

professions and their going out of the house for their needs. Shehu then responded with utmost respect and said that it is obligatory on a woman to acquire a full knowledge of the religious obligations such as prayers, fasting, Zakat, Hajj, as well as the worldly matters which has to do with trade and transactions. It was even lamented by Shehu for the women's failure to demand their rights to education in the same way that they would demand their right to maintenance and other needs, if not given.

The Glorious Qur'an in many verses commands Muslims to demonstrate respect to their mothers and serve them well even if they left Islam and remain as unbelievers. The prophet (peace be upon him) states insistently that the rights of the mother are supreme.⁶ In Islam women are most respectable and honourable "if she is a wife, she is life partner, if she is as a mother, the paradise is under the feet of mother, if she is daughter it is blessing of Almighty Allah". Allah in a lot of verses states the rights of women in the Glorious Qur'an:

When the news is brought to one of them of a birth of a female child, his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief, with shame, does he hide himself from his people because of the news he heard? Shall he retain her on contempt or bury her in the dust? Ah! What an evil they decide on⁷.

He also says in another place to disprove those that considered the birth of female as a taboo and element of poverty, and so they killed them:

"Kill not your children for the fear of poverty, we provide for them and your"⁸
Kill not your children because of the fear of poverty, we provide sustenance for you and them.⁹

Allah in the Glorious Qur'an has summed up the issue of equality in a single verse, which reads:

O mankind! Verily we have created you from single pairs of a male and a female and made you into nation and tribes that you may know each other¹⁰

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

⁶ A. R. Doi, *Women in Shari'ah (Islamic Law) (4th Ed.)*. Kuala Lumpur: A. S. Noor-deen, 1992, P, 36

⁷ Qur'an, 16:58-9.

⁸ Qur'an 17:31

⁹ Qur'an 6:12

¹⁰ Qur'an 49:13

A woman is defined as an adult female considered inferior to a man, with distinct characteristics from the opposite sex.¹¹ In Nigeria, an adult is described as a person of 18 years old.¹² Though a female person below 18 years is not regarded as an adult in Nigeria, the word “woman” is used in this dissertation to refer to a female irrespective of age or marital status.

Rights are entitlements that accrue to a person based on their position as members of the human family. Human rights can be defined as demands or claims which an individual or group is expected to make on the society where he or she reside, some of which are backed up and protected by law.¹³ The general concept of human rights is that every individual irrespective of age, gender or origin are entitled to enjoy existing rights without any discrimination. These rights that accrue to us as members of the human family are inalienable (cannot be taken from us), inherent (inborn), and apply to all equally (universality).

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, a Woman is a female human being. The term woman is usually reserved for an adult, with the term girl being the usual term for a female child or adolescent. The term Woman is also sometimes used to identify a female human, regardless of age, as in phrases such as "women's rights". Women of typical genetic development are usually capable of giving birth from puberty until menopause. Regarding gender, a woman may also be a person whose sex assignment does not align with their gender identity or who has sexual characteristics that do not fit typical notions of male or female (intersex). The work will be useful to this research, as it is the definition of woman which is the main subject of this research work.

Klingorova in his work discusses the status of women in society and its outcome based on religious interpretation and cultural and institutional set-up of religious communities. He furthers the importance of the participation of the female gender in the upliftment of the society in which they live.¹⁴ Verveer deliberates the role of religion regarding gender and participation of women in the economic educational sector. And that the involvement of the female in this aspect is obviously, complex and it varies across time and space.¹⁵ Sinclair

¹¹ A O Otoluka, 'Women and Children under Nigerian Law' 1989, (6) *Federal Ministry of Justice Law Review*, 95.

¹² *Child's Rights Act* 2003, Cap 50 LFN 2004 (CRA 2003), s 31.

¹³ O W Igwe, 'International Protection of Human Rights' (Unpublished Course Note, Rivers State University 2019,1.

¹⁴ K. Klingorova, *Genderové Rozdíly ve vybraných světových chnáboženstvích*. In Doboš, P., Honsnejmanová, I. (eds.), *Geografický výzkum: Prostorové transdisciplinaritě*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2015.

¹⁵ M. Verveer, *The Political and Economic Power of Women*. Center for International Private Enterprise, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/rem/2011/167142.htm>, on 22nd October 2020.

argued that gender and the participation of women in economic activities as important factors for the progress of any society. And added to it, is that women are back borne social, and democratic progress of the development world. This process is influenced by institutional norms, as well as culture and tradition, which are both largely determined by religion.¹⁶

Similarly, Carmody, argues that women in pre-Islamic Arabia how lived in misery and were victims of culturally approved discrimination, dehumanization, and social deprivation. That *Jahiliyya* Arabs had a custom of burying their female children alive. It was an acceptable cultural practice for women to dance nude around the vicinity of Ka'aba during the annual festival. He advances to explain the social reforms by Islam that stopped such obnoxious criminal practices and as such, Islam has done much to enhance the status of women more than any other world religion. And he also discusses that Islam inspires women to engage in educational and economic activities in their domain.¹⁷

Furthermore, Turkes-Habibovic discusses the status of women as accorded them by Islam and their participation in the public sphere. The author mused on the importance of women's participation in the counseling profession to assist their female counterparts in dealing with their health or psychological problems.¹⁸

Folarin,¹⁹ critically examined Nigeria's conformity with the key points of the 1995 Beijing Conference platform of action. The author identified some factors such as customary and statutory laws as contributing to women's discrimination *vis-a-vis* their rights to property and called for a reform. Oloba,²⁰ on the other hand critically examined the ownership rights of women over land in Nigeria and was able to contrast this marginalization with the fundamental provisions of the CFRN 1999 on Discrimination.²¹ Folarin, also brought in a new approach which is the Beijing Women Conference held in 1995, a time when Nigeria was still under Military Regime. Nigeria though it has made giant strides in recognizing women, has always been found to be wanting when it comes to their international commitments. Both

¹⁶ K. Sinclair, *Women, and Religion*. In Dudley, M. I., Edwards, M. I. (eds.), *The Cross-cultural Study of Women: A Comprehensive Guide*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1986.

¹⁷ D. Carmody, *Women and World Religions*, UK, Prentice Hall, 1988.

¹⁸ M. Turkes-Habibovic, *Social Context and Muslim Women's Attitudes towards Counselling* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation) New Orleans: University of New Orleans, 2011.

¹⁹ S F Folarin and O D Udoh, 'Beijing Declaration and Women's Property Rights in Nigeria' (2014) *European Scientific Journal*, 239.

²⁰ B Olagbegi-Oloba, 'Women's Right to Land Ownership in Nigeria: A Critical Examination' (2015) 1(1) *Afe Babalola University Journal of Public International Law*, 3.

²¹(n86).

authors took into cognizance the Beijing conference which this dissertation applaud but it is important for Nigeria to first honour the national instruments before the international ones.

C. METHODOLOGY

The study used secondary sources of data and qualitative content analysis as its methods of analysis. The secondary sources involve data collected from textbooks, journals, the internet, published and unpublished works, and write-ups. The approach used in writing this paper is a literature study approach. The literature study is the same as research in general, but the research data obtained is secondary data using the literature study method. The three steps that the researcher will take in preparing this article include: first, finding and collecting reference sources that are relevant to the theme of this research. Second, several scientific papers that have been collected are then processed and elaborated, to comprehensively explain the inter-sections of this article. Third, as the last step, the researcher concludes by specifically referring to the title raised in this study, economic rights of women under the Sokoto caliphate, and the lessons for contemporary women in Nigeria

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Women and their Rights

A woman is defined as an adult female considered inferior to a man, with distinct characteristics from the opposite sex.²² In Nigeria, an adult is described as a person of 18 years old.²³ Though a female person below 18 years is not regarded as an adult in Nigeria, the word “woman” is used in this dissertation to refer to a female irrespective of age or marital status.

Rights are entitlements that accrue to a person based on their position as members of the human family. Human rights can be defined as demands or claims which an individual or group is expected to make on the society where he or she reside, some of which are backed up and protected by law.²⁴ The general concept of human rights is that every individual irrespective of age, gender or origin are entitled to enjoy existing rights without any discrimination. These rights that accrue to us as members of the human family are inalienable (cannot be taken from us), inherent (inborn), and apply to all equally (universality).

²² A O Otaluka, ‘Women and Children under Nigerian Law’ (1989), (6) *Federal Ministry of Justice Law Review*, 95.

²³ *Child’s Rights Act* 2003, Cap 50 LFN 2004 (CRA 2003), s 31.

²⁴ O W Igwe, ‘International Protection of Human Rights’ (Unpublished Course Note, Rivers State University 2019)1.

Women's rights are fundamental human rights that were enshrined by the United Nations for every human being on the planet nearly seventy (70) years ago.²⁵ These rights include the rights to live free from violence, slavery, discrimination, education, property possession, health, fear of hearing, dignity and to earn fair and equal wages.

According to Inter Press Service on a Global Scale, women cultivate more than half of all the food that is grown.²⁶ In sub-Sahara Africa and the Caribbean they produced 80% of basic foodstuffs.²⁷ In Asia there is about 50% of food production, and in Latin America, they engaged in subsistence farming, horticulture, poultry, and raising small livestock. Yet women often get little recognition for that. Many go unpaid.²⁸ As many societies don't pay them which requires them to buy equipment etc., forgetting that there is a change in the traditional roles of the globe. UNICEF noted that women faced a lot of discrimination as regards lives in line with work and pay. This underpayment is due to low-status jobs compared to men, thus equality in employment. So also, feticide and infanticide-where there is a clear economic or cultural preference for sons, and misuse of pregnancy diagnostic tools can facilitate feticides. Motherhood and old age of women are essential periods when the pernicious effects of both poverty and inequality are combined.²⁹

Nana Asma'u Bint Usmanu Foduye and Rights of Women in Sokoto Caliphate

Asma'u View on Rights of Women in Sokoto Caliphate Nana Asma'u Bint Usmanu Foduye whose name was coined after bint Abubakar was a legendary 19-century Nigerian Muslim woman whose ideologies and philosophies contributed to the fabric of African feminism with an emphasis in Sokoto caliphate. She grew not only into a conscious woman from one of the most powerful kingdoms in Africa at the time but also as a person respected for sharing a rare gift of belief in change and working to accomplish it while touching those she met. She is an admirable public figure, ensuring that Sokoto women played a vital role of substantial constructive authority in education, politics and social reforms to battled

²⁵ UN, *Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics*, Geneva, Oas Limited, 2012.

²⁶ R. Agbalajoba, *Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare*, Philosophy Studies, 2010.

²⁷ P. Nnoli, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remarking of World Order*, Institute of Peace, 1981.

²⁸ D. Nekola, and P. Petesch, *Voice of the Poor: from Maryland's*, Columbia Voice, 2006.

²⁹ R. Agbalajoba, *Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare*, *Op. Cit.*

patriarchy. With this unrestrained passion that Nana Asmau combined prolific writing, teaching and poetry to projects her views.³⁰

Looking at Africans, Nigeria has always created political pathways, social responses, and ideologies to restore the rights of women in connection with reproduction, domestic violence, maternity leave, sexual abuse, etc. African feminism is for African women to engage in issues that they are confronted with that limit their full functions or freedom of will and expression, and the practice here may not be based on Westernized terms. While English women writers in the 1800s would take on a male pseudonym to be published, elderly Muslim women in Sokoto established the title of senior *faqih*. This enabled the Muslim women in Sokoto to ply via independence means in the direction of self-actualization and more connected and sustainable communities.³¹

Asma'u was nonetheless a prominent early feminist icon who knew and understood what it meant for women to be active decision-makers in shaping communities as well as the advantages of bolstering dual gender roles. Her roles expand to several parts of West Africa, and even to the banks of Nile and outskirts of the Middle East.³² This is to ensure a balance of control. She walks in her father's shoes, as her father preached that the marginalization of women in education and the community bred corruptions in a society. Asmau stated that men deceive you when they preach obedience to your husband without telling you of the obedience, which is primarily due to Allah and His Prophet (S.A.W). They seek only their satisfactions and that is why they imposed task upon you, which the task Allah did not imposed it upon you alone. Such as preparation of food, clothes washing, and other duties upon you and they refused to teach you what Allah and His Prophet (S.A.W) said in true prescribe for you.³³ Thus, obeying Allah is more important than the husband. This gave Asma'u and her allies to travel to preach from place to place in teaching women to rise for their rights.

³⁰ A. K. Fatima, Review of Nana Asma'u on the Rights of Women in Sokoto Caliphate. *Lapai International Journal of Administration (LIJAD)*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2021.

³¹ A. K. Fatima, Review of Nana Asma'u on the Rights of Women in Sokoto Caliphate. *Lapai International Journal of Administration (LIJAD)*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2021.

³² A. K. Fatima, Review of Nana Asma'u on the Rights of Women in Sokoto Caliphate. *Lapai International Journal of Administration (LIJAD)*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2021.

³³ M. Klein, & G. Bssaller, Introduction to Comparative politics 5th edition, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010.

Be a poet, scholar, teacher, polymath, and intellectual in her own rights, her contributions removed mythical stereotypes of Muslim women in the society. This made women Muslims voice to be heard in exchange to silence and relegation to domestic activities have always resulted to concrete body of society. British colonizer found it hard to contend with when they met the intellectual milieu of the Sokoto society. Her educational movement called '*Yan Taru'*-agile female educators or *jaji*, with time she become a guidance to Sokoto rulers. Having memorized the Qur'an as well as the *fiqh* (jurisprudence), wrote over 60 published works that are used for research and studies. Her emphasis on poet is for Sokoto women movement exploring the used of classical Arabic literature in their texts. As said if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (nation). This concept was applied to eighteen women, thereby edified families, and that which was a community suffering from aftereffects of war developed scholars.³⁴ Her liberation struggles have sprung up all over the continents and in some cases efforts of resistance are aimed at removing the holds of colonialism where it is bound to patriarchy. Some of the women fought alongside male colleagues for women's rights and equal standards in society. This yield to women fights in Africa- Cassey Hayford and Margret Ekpo of SierreLeonian women's right activist and Pan-Africanist who resisted corrupting patriarchy, often via protest.

On the Home Front

Women in the Sokoto caliphate, as in most societies, continued to be the main caretakers of the family. Generally, they did not go out to work and engage in gainful employment except when it was necessary. Most women remained at home performing their reproductive and nurturing functions. They brought up their children. Performed household chores, take care of the sick the disable and the elderly in the family. In addition to these, traditional functions performed by women, contributed immensely to the economy of their communities.³⁵

On Farms and Fields

³⁴ T.C. Idris, The State, Governance and Socioeconomics Development Realities in Nigeria, A Paper Deliver at National Conference on 24th august, 2009.

³⁵ S.A. Gusau, (Ed), *The Economic Thought of Seven Great Muslim Scholars*, U.D.U, Sokoto Nigeria, 1991.

Agriculture was one of the dominant occupations of the people of the Sokoto Caliphate. This is because apart from the full-time farmers, even the gainfully employed in other sectors engaged themselves in farming and rearing of animals. This was not only peculiar to men but also the women who engaged in agricultural practices all year round. The agricultural produce, which includes Guinea corn, millet, rice and beans, were stored in the local storage called *Rufewa*. It was the responsibility of women to process grain which must be done prior to sale or consumption. Thus, women performed the most crucial economic functions on the farm and in the fields. Even though their labor was generally unpaid.³⁶

Rearing of Animals

Most if not all the Fulani were engaged in cattle rearing which was their predominant occupation. Due to intermarriages between the Fulani and the Hausa, many Hausa have also come to adopt cattle rearing as their main occupation. Women used to feed and milk the cows at home. They stored and fermented the milk and separated the *Afarai and Manshani* (butter) from the milk, which were then used in cooking for added nutrition.

Even when the cows, sheep, and should be taken to the fields for grazing, the younger ones usually remained at home, Birds, such as hens, ducks, guinea fowls, etc. were also kept at home. All these were under the carts of the women. Thus, women made substantial contributions to the pastoral economy-which was sustained by their unpaid and unending labour on the farm and around the home.

Food and Catering

Another economic sector where women provided their contribution which is closely related to the agricultural sector, is the food and catering industry. Their service in this industry was not only limited to the production of food for family consumption. They also processed and cooked different types of food for sale outside the family. Among the solid food, they cooked *tuwo of masara, dawa and masa, bula, danwake, madidi, danjagai, danshanana* etc. were among the popular commercial items. The morning drink such as *kunu* or *koko* and the *hura* which is extensively consumed during the summer season, and ident types of snacks, such as *kosan rago, kusan wake, lubani*, etc., were all prepared by women at home for family consumption as well as for sale.³⁷

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ S.A. Gusau, (Ed), *The Economic Thought of Seven Great Muslim Scholars*, U.D.U, Sokoto Nigeria, 1991.

Groundnut was widely produced in this area. Women used groundnuts to produce many different items for both family consumption and for sale. The shell of groundnuts, for instance, was grounded into seed. Power form to make *dussa* which was used to feed cows and sheep. The groundnut kernel was pressed, and oil was extracted. This oil was used in the older days as fuel (Paraffin) as well as food. The solid part of the groundnut kernel was made into *Kuli-kuli* and put to many uses such as in making *Datu* and as cake snacks.

The making of *dussa* for animal food, the extraction of groundnut oil as well as the making of *Kuli-kuli* were all the works of women. All these products were utilized for both domestic and commercial purposes.

Daudawa: The Local Sauce

Women dominated the catering industry throughout the Caliphate. There were many ingredients which women used in preparing the soup or stew among which the most important was the sauce. The making of local sauce was one of the pre-occupations of women throughout the Caliphate. Throughout the manufacturing process. It was only women who were involved. They controlled about ninety-nine percent of its use. One can only find a very small number of men who sell *daudawa* sauce. The use of *daudawa* as an important ingredient in making stew or soup has blocked the sales of such market favorites as ‘Maggi Cube’. Knorr”, or Ajino Moto”. The majority who live in rural areas now continue to rely on the local sauce *daudawa*, Perhaps, this is why the Nigerian Food and Beverages Company decided to come out with a new brand name for the modern sauce base called *Daudawa Cubes*.³⁸

Manufacturing Soaps and Cream

Women in the Sokoto Caliphate used to participate fully in the manufacturing and production of detergent and toilet soaps for family consumption. This was known locally as *sahulun salo*. Which was as effective as the modern detergents. It was used as clothes detergent, dish and utensils detergent as well as toilet soap.³⁹

Sahulun salo and its derivative *taka* were also used as medicine. *Sahulun salo* was used as a remedy for dysentery and the relief of constipation. It was also the women who produce

³⁸ S. Muhammad, *Sokoto Women and Entrepreneurship*, Kaduna, Arewa Book, 2006, p. 78.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 90.

mankade a local cream which was used in place of the modern “pure petroleum jelly. This cream, however, was stored in water during the summer season.

Local Cigarettes (*Taba Gari*)

The people in the area have their own indigenous form of cigarettes. The basic raw material was the same as the one used in the modern cigarettes. But the form and mode of using the two differ. Whereas, the modern cigarettes are smoked, the local one was simply placed in between the lower teeth and the lower lip, and its filling was in powder form. The making of this local cigarette was the occupation of both men and women though some major tasks in the production process were performed exclusively by the women.

As in the case of the local sauce, the popularity of the local cigarette has affected to a very great extent the acceptance of modern cigarette by the people of the area. This is particularly true in the rural areas, where the production and consumption of local cigarette superseded that of the modern cigarette. Now, most of these in the urban areas are switching to modern cigarettes.⁴⁰

Hair Dressing and Hair Plaiting (*Kitso*)

The hair of black African women is different from that of the European or Asian women. The hair of a European or Asian lady falls on her back if it reaches a certain length. However, the hair of an African lady does not fall at her back, but rather, it keeps on going up and up. This is the natural out lock of the black African lady’s hair. This leads to the development of the art of plaiting the hair a contexture of three or more interlaced strands of hair.

There were no specific charges per head and in normal circumstances the hair painting was done only to women and by women. A lady in normal circumstances must remain at her home. Thus, she must receive the expert hair plaited at her home. This service was monopolized by women. The hair plaited was referred to as *Maikitso*, where *kitso* means hair plaiting and *mai* is a prefix which means who does or has (in certain context). There are different designs such as *Zamen Yawo* which was very popular among the older ladies.

Manufacture of Mats (*Wundnaye*) Covers (*Faya-Fai*) and Local Fans (*Maferfetal*)

⁴⁰ I.A. Sa’adatu, Skills and Crafts among Muslim Women in Sokoto, *East Asian Journal of Modern Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2017, p. 261.

The major raw materials in this manufacturing sector are palm tree which used to be very abundant. This industry was not the monopoly of either men or women. Both men and women engaged in the manufacturing of *mata* or *carpeta/Wundaye* and *Tabarmi*. It is evident that the manufacture of covers-*Foya fai*, and local fans *maferfetal* was the women's monopoly.

Pot Industry

Women enjoyed a certain degree of monopoly in the pottery industry, though men exercised the same on other specific items. 15 A major raw materials for this industry are the clay soil, usually taken from the valleys. The best clay could be found from the *Fadasma* valley. The items manufactured in this industry included random and *Tukunya*, pots which are used for storing water, or as regular cooking utensils.

Other manufactured items in this industry included the *Kasake* earthenware bowls or basins, which served as water containers used in the bathroom and the smaller *shantali*, earthenware kettles for ablutions and the like. The manufacture of these two items was certainly the monopoly of the women, other products included *tuluna* (pitches, ewars) *Mazurari* or *indaro* (roof drain) used on buildings and *assusu* (earth ware save).⁴¹

The women even manufactured several different toys for the children. These toys were meant of help socialize children in the culture of the local society. For example, specific *toya* were manufactured to familiarize young girls with their future role as mothers and home makers. The same strategy was applied to the toys for the boys which would teach them their later social roles and family responsibilities. The design and manufacturer of these children's toys was the responsibility of the women in the household.

Spinning and Weaving

The textile industry involved three stages in the process of production. 16 women played important role in mall the three, spinning was a female preserve and the making of cotton thread was a women's monopoly. Two types of cotton thread were produced, the course (*abawa*) and the thin used for fine waving (*Arafiya*) *tsamiya* the silk-thread on the other hand, used to be processed by both men and women. Spinning as a household industry provided ordinary women a source of income with which they could satisfy some of their needs and supplement the family income.

⁴¹ I.A. Sa'adatu, Skills and Crafts among Muslim Women in Sokoto, *East Asian Journal of Modern Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2017, p. 261.

It was the responsibility of women to produce string for trousers which served as a belt (*zariya*) and wick (*lagwani*). These were produced after spinning the cotton thread and weaving. Both processes were performed by women.

In the waving industry, women along with the men engaged also in the making of *Kwadodo* and *Lizzame*. These are decorations done on the men's wars near the neck and on the surface of the men's clothing. They also engaged in the manufacture of multicolored caps (*Kube* or *Zanna Bukar*). Among the artistic works of the women folk were the designs on bedsheets (*Zanen gado*), pillowcases (*Hilo*), and mattresses (*Katifu*). These were all done by skilled women in their own homes.

Leather Works

Apart from participating in the manufacture of various goods for everyday use, women were also skillful in the production of leather goods. Some of these products were exclusively for men's use such as the *titimi* or the leather pillow.

Grain Seller (*Maisayar da Hatsi*)

Women are also involved in grain selling like their male counterparts. Women participated in the selling of grains particularly the old ones. They sued to sell it either in the marketplace or at home. In addition to selling theirs, they also used to sell for other people, thereby acting as commissions against.

Making The Sieve (*Matankadi* or *Rariya*) And Mixer (*Maburkakki*)

The *matankadi* or *Rariya* means a sieve which is used in rifting ground grain from the coarser bulk. It is made up of a circular wood frame with a taut cloth which has tiny holes, enough or bring out only the softest powder of grains. The making of this gadget was done by both men and women.

The *Maburkaki* (mixer) was also made by women. It was designed from a long finger-width wood with two smaller pieces crossing one another at the bottom end. The larger size was used for making the soup or stew. Whereas the smaller size was used in stirring and thinking fermented milk (*nono*).⁴²

⁴² J. Boyd, *The Role of Woman Scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate*, M. Phil Seminar Paper, Dept of Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano Nigeria, 1984.

Spinning

Spinning in the textile industry was specifically a female dominated occupation. The women used white line in spinning and calabash decoration. In fact, the making of cotton thread was women's monopoly. Spinning was in totality a household industry which afforded the ordinary women a source of income with which to satisfy some of her needs thereby supplementing the livelihood and expenses of the family. The bulk of cotton thread trading activities between Sokoto and the countryside was in the hands of women who were able to collect the produce of households either through direct purchase or as commissioned agents (*Dillalai*) because of the crucial role they used to play.⁴³

Commission Agents (*Dillalai*)

Just like members on the more formal stock exchange market, the old women actively engaged in serving as commissioned agents or *dillalai*. This was because only the older women were allowed to go out of their homes. They used to move from house to house looking for items to sell. For instance, they used to engage in large scale trade in thread that was also manufactured at home by the women. They used to collect these home-made products either as commissioned agents (*dillalai*) or through direct purchases. These women also engaged in the sale of newly produced and second-hand clothes. They also sold food items both in and outside their homes. These items were brought by people of all age groups and they fetched a lot of income to those women manufacturers and sellers.

The activities of commissioned agents were strengthened because the nature of social attitudes and values in Sokoto as we mentioned above, were such that certain buyers and sellers, such as the women in *purdah* would not go to the market or out in the public to buy or sell. They, therefore, had to do through the commissioned agents or *dillalai*.⁴⁴

There was the existence of the mini market such as Kofar Rini, Kofar Taramniya and Yarmarina, which served the immediate needs of their people. In these markets, a significant if not the greater proportion of those who sold goods at these (except for butcher's, menders of calabashes, sellers of grasses, etc.) were old women and children. However, in spite of the two-tier system of markets in the metropolis of Sokoto, not all trading activities had passed through these markets. A very significant and considerable number of trading activities took

⁴³ A. Zayyanu, Issues in Entrepreneurship Concepts among Women in Sokoto, *Sahara Journal of Multi-Disciplinary*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 162.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 165.

place directly between households in neighborhood without going through the mini markets, talk less of the central market. This kind of trading activities was mostly conducted by women and was from all indications concerned with food and clothing items for the most part of it and beauticians, and it was done primarily though not exclusively in barter.

CONCLUSION

For most of the economic activities in the Caliphate women were secluded. This is because, the demand of domestic life such as child rearing and general home management restricted their role to ka few areas in the economic sector. They were engaged only in some small trade which were largely being carried out in the retail of food and other domestic product such as knotting, waving and pottery.

As far as Barth was concerned among the women the most important trades in the Caliphate were spinning, warbling, dyeing, tailoring, pottery and leather works. He was however able to note that the women did the spinning mand some of the pottery, but the rest of the work was performed by the man. He then described the activities of ka housewife in Kano city. Where he saw a matron in a clean black cotton gown round her waist busy preparing the meal for the absent husband or spinning cotton and at the sometime urging the female slave to pound the corn.

Women in the Sokoto Caliphate engaged in the industrial activities of waving upon which they made thread ball which was used in the textile industry. Apart from this, they were also engaged in the pottery industry. Here they used to manufacture or produce local pots, jars, tanks for storing water and some of the cooking utensils, for both home and foreign consumption. Most of the potters at Rumbukawar Gabas were female who monopolized the industry not only that, but the women also mused to manufacture mats, local fans mand locust beans for him as well as external trade.

REFERENCES

- Agbalajoba, R. (2010). Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare. Philosophy Studies.
- Boyd, J. (1984). the Role of Woman Scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate M. Phil Seminar Paper, Dept of Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano Nigeria.
- Child's Rights Act*2003, Cap 50 LFN 2004 (CRA 2003), s 31.
- Doi, A. R. (1992). Women in Shari'ah (Islamic Law) (4th Ed.). Kula Lumpur: A. S. Noor-deen.

- Fatima, A. K., (2021). Review of Nana Asma'u on the Rights of Women in Sokoto Caliphate. *Lapai International Journal of Administration (LIJAD)*, Vol. 4 No. 1.
- Folarin, S.F and Udoh, O.D., (2014). 'Beijing Declaration and Women's Property Rights in Nigeria' *European Scientific Journal*, 239.
- Gusau, S.A. (Ed), (1991). *The Economic Thought of Seven Great Muslim Scholars*, U.D.U Sokoto Nigeria.
- Idris, T.C. (2009). *The State, Governance and Socioeconomics Development Realities in Nigeria*. A Paper Deliver at National Conference on 24th august, 2004.
- Igwe, O.W., (2019). 'International Protection of Human Rights' (Unpublished Course Note, Rivers State University 1.
- Klein, M. & Bssaller, G. (2010). *Introduction to Comparative politics 5th edition*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Klingorova, K., (2015). Genderové Rozdíly ve vybraných světových chnáboženstvích. In Doboš, P., Honsnejmanová, I. (eds.), *Geografický výzkum: Prostorvesvé transdisciplinaritě*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Malami H.U., (1998). *Economic Principles and Practices of the Sokoto Caliphate*, Institution of Islamic Sciences Sokoto.
- Malami, H.U., (1998). *The Role of Women in the Economic Development of the Sokoto Caliphate*, UDU, Sokoto.
- Muhammad, S., (2006). *Sokoto Women and Entrepreneurship*, Kaduna, Arewa Book.
- Nekola, D. and petesch, P. (2006). *Voice of the Poor: from Maryland's*. Columbia Voice.
- Nnoli, P. (1981). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remarking of World Order*. Institute of Peace.
- Olagbegi-Oloba, B., (2015). 'Women's Right to Land Ownership in Nigeria: A Critical Examination' 1(1) *Afe Babalola University Journal of Public International Law*,3.
- Otaluka, A.O., (1989). 'Women and Children under Nigerian Law' (6) *Federal Ministry of Justice Law Review*, 95.
- Sa'adatu, I.A., (2017). Skills and Crafts among Muslim Women in Sokoto, *East Asian Journal of Modern Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2.
- Sinclair, K., (1986). Women and Religion. In Dudley, M. I., Edwards, M. I. (eds.), *The Cross-cultural Study of Women: A Comprehensive Guide*. New York: The Feminist Press.

- Smith, R, (1973), *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabiprj* United Publi- shers, Beirut.
- The Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, (ND), *“The position of women in Islam”* The Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, 19 Roebuck Road, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14, Ireland, (NP), (NP).
- Turkes-Habibovic, M., (2011). *Social Context and Muslim Women’s Attitudes towards Counselling* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation) New Orleans: University of New Orleans.
- Uddin, M., & Hossain, M. F. (2017). *A Textbook on Hindu Law: Theory and Practice* (2nd Ed.). Dhaka: Hira Publications.
- UN (2012). *Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics*. Geneva: Oas limited.
- Verveer, M., (2011). *The Political and Economic Power of Women. Center for International Private Enterprise*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/rem/2011/167142.htm>. Retrieved on 27th May 2023.