

جمع التراث العلمي وحمایته: حالة المخصوصات العربية والمكتوبة بالحرف العربي في دار الوثائق بولاية سوکوتو النيجيرية

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مدير دار الوثائق بولاية سوکوتو النيجيرية

لقد قضى عدد غير قليل من علماء المسلمين حياتهم عبر القرون في تأليف مؤلفات هائلة عبر القرون أصبحت تراثا هائلا يتباهى به الشعوب. تُمثل حركة التجديد التي أقامها الشيخ عثمان بن فودي أبرز حركات التجديد في غرب إفريقيا في القرن التاسع عشر الميلادي، الحركة التي أسفر عنها تأسيس خلافة سوکوتو، التي تمثل أكبر كتلة سياسية في إفريقيا قبل الاستعمار. لقد شملت تلك الخلافة العملاقة مناطق وممالك واقعة في نيجيريا الحالية ودول الكميرون والتشاد والنيجر وبركينا. قد عاشت تلك الخلافة لأكثر من قرن حتى سطا عليها الغزو البريطاني. لقد أثبتت الخلافة أن نيجيريا بصفة خاصة وإفريقيا بصفة عامة كانت منطقة/قارة متحضرة و مثقفة وصاحبة تاريخ وثقافة، بل قدوة في قيادة ذات مواصفات معترفة في العدالة الاجتماعية.

إن إنتاجات أولئك العلماء والمجددين شملت مختلف مجالات المعرفة من فقه وتوحيد وسياسة وإدارة وطب وعلم نجوم وشعر وخط وجميع فروع اللغة العربية... ومن المؤسف أنه لم تُعدّ معظم هذه المؤلفات مستعملة في المدارس والجامعات، إذ لا تزال في أيدي الأشخاص الذين لا يملكون خبرة لائقة في حمايتها وطرق صيانتها. ولقد أدت هذه الحالة إلى بُعدها عن متناول الأكاديميين والباحثين وآل كثير منها إلى التلف لفقدان وسائل الصيانة اللائقة.

في عام 1973م أسست حكومة ولاية سوکوتو النيجيرية بالتنسيق مع مجلس سلطان سوکوتو (أمير المؤمنين في نيجيريا) ومجموعة علماء من جامعة أحمد بلو زاريا - نيجيريا، مركزا تاريخيا سُمّي "دار الوثائق بولاية سوکوتو" بهدف جمع وحماية كل

الوثائق والمخطوطات ذات قيمة تاريخية ووثائقية بما في ذلك التراث العلمي لحركة الجهاد ولعلماء معاصرين.

لقد استطاعت دار الوثائق جمع ما يربو على عشرة آلاف (10، 000) مجلدًا من كتب عربية وأخرى مكتوبة بالحرف العربي وأدوات ووثائقية وصور تاريخية وصحف. إن أغلب الكتب والصحف في هذه المؤسسة من أصل غرب إفريقيا جنوب الصحراء. تسعى هذه المداخلة إلى توضيح وضع هذه الآثار الوثائقية والثقافية لعلماء إفريقيا ولأثريين وخبراء المكتبات وصناع القرار وكافة الناس حتى تظهر ضرورة حمايتها للتقدم العلمي. وسوف نتطرق المداخلة أيضا إلى حاجة ترجمة هذه المخطوطات وتحقيقتها وتحليلها بغية الحصول على الحلول لمشاكل إفريقيا المختلفة.

Introduction 0.1

The intellectual contribution of Sokoto Jihad leaders and the subsequent successes in the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate in the early 19th Century were significant in the spread of literary works in Hausa land and beyond.

Another significant factor which led to the emergence and spread of intellectual activity was the works of pre-jihad scholars in the Hausa land like the Almagili, Imam Al-Shadibiyyi, Ahmad Alkatsinawiyya, Dan Marina, etc.

It is therefore the intention of this paper to highlight on these works, the preaching and literary activities carried out by both pre-jihad and jihad scholars in Arabic and Ajmi languages of Fulfulde and Hausa and indeed efforts made in the collection and preservation of these materials at the Sokoto History Bureau Museum.

Through the forty-two years of its existence, the history Bureau, Sokoto State has been able to collect and preserve significant volumes of Historical materials including artifacts, Museum objects, weapons of historical importance; Colonial archival records, photographs, maps, charts, scholarly and most importantly, Arabic and Ajami materials.

It is the intention of this paper to highlight on the importance of this centre to both Nigerian and foreign researchers. Today the Bureau established in 1973 is one of the most important repositories of knowledge in the West African sub region. The volumes of records and archival materials as well as historical materials preserved are considered as very significant in the understanding of pre colonial; and colonial and

indeed post-colonial Nigeria and Africa in general. Indeed the Bureau is one of the most important research centers in Nigeria.

Arabic and Ajami manuscripts held by the Bureau are the largest in Nigeria. The Bureau has continued throughout its existence to collect and preserve such intellectual materials. The paper has also highlighted some problems especially in the methods of collection and preservation adopted through the years. I have also prepared solutions to some of the problems in order to make the Bureau modern, up to date and very relevant in the studies and understanding of Nigerians and African History and of course present challenges confronting political and economic governance of Africa.

02 The Sokoto Caliphate:

A Caliphate is simply defined as an Islamic State governed by a Sultan or a Caliph. The Caliph exercised both political and religious powers. The revivalists (Mujaddid) movement led by Shehu Usman Danfodiyo an Islamic Scholar in Hausa Land and beyond led to the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate in the early years of 19th Century. The caliphate started when Danfodio, some members of his immediate family and some peasant were dissatisfied with the un-Islamic pagan practices common in Hausa Land and so being scholars, they started preaching and teaching and calling on Hausa rulers and people to practice religion of Islam without adulteration and rulers. The Hausa rulers saw this as a threat to their authority and went to launch war against Shehu. Therefore, in the process of defending themselves and their religion, they migrated from one place to another cutting across all over Hausa land and eventually establishing and founding settlements and towns. They overthrew the Hausa rulers and established Islamic rules based on universal concept of justice and according to Qur'an and Sunnah and eventually founded the Sokoto caliphate. It consisted most parts of old Hausa kingdoms, present Northern Nigeria, Northern Cameroons, Niger, B/Fasso and Benin including Yoruba etc. it was perhaps the largest political entity in pre colonial Africa.

The Caliphate was ruled by Shehu's most trusted lieutenants in their capacities as Muhajiroon, Ansar, and Flagbearers. They continued to rule those Emirates for the next 100 years until the arrival of the British in 1903 when the Caliphate authority was abolished by the colonial invaders. Eventually in 1903, the Caliphate was invaded by the British colonialists. There were fierce resistances of the British rule by Sultan Attahiru I both at Sokoto and in Gombe where he was eventually killed. His Army continued with the resistance until they reached a place called Sheikh Talha in present day Republic of Sudan.

03 - The Intellectual activities of the Jihad Scholars:

The Sokoto Jihad leaders were eminent scholars throughout length and breadth of Africa and indeed the Islamic world. BALOGUN, (1986) stated that “The 19th Century was an age of unique importance in Nigerian History. It was the century in which Arabic intellectualism reached its peak. The religious controversy which sparked a train of intellectual debates, led to an increasing spread of Arabic intellectual tradition which along with other factors evolve a society which was probably more advanced than any other hitherto produced in Black Africa.”

Indeed, the intellectual foundation of Sokoto Caliphate provided the vast treasure of invaluable source materials for the studies and understanding of historical, social and economic life of the people. The greater percentage of these documents are in manuscripts form in Arabic language and in some local languages, in Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Nupe, Yoruba etc. These intellectual activities gave way for the promotion of literary heritage in the caliphate territory and beyond.

With the arrival of the British in the early 20th Century and eventual formation of the colonial system of the governance, the literary tradition of the Sokoto Caliphate was threatened. The introduction of western system of education undermined the spread of the Arabic system. The legal system introduced by the British used new Roman (Scripts) as against Arabic. The Ajami system of Arabic letters in local languages was undermined by the use of English Alphabets in social and economic life of the common people within the colony.

Although, the British tried to use the intellectual system they found in the caliphate only to enhance and facilitate their colonial administration (NA), later they stopped, for fear of eventual political confrontation by the common people, especially then some rationalists' movements had started emerging. The colonialists believed that the less people were literate, the easier they were ruled.

04. The Establishment of Sokoto State History Bureau.

The British ruled Nigeria in which Sokoto Caliphate territories were included for nearly 60 years. A decade after political independence of Nigeria in 1960, the Literary Heritage of the caliphate were still very much in use by the locals and of course from one Emir to another. Coupled with vast spread of the literary tradition and availability of paper technology throughout the region, a significant number of literary heritage were found laying waste in the length and breadth of Sokoto region and indeed some of other regions despite the negative influence of colonialism. The literary activities continued to shape and mould the

behavior and religious traditions of people. The Ulama'u continued to write on different subjects and disciplines and so massive literary materials were found in schools, homes, mosques, villages and cities halls. The library system introduced by the British did not take care of this massive Arabic materials scattered all over the region, but rather materials of significant interests for the British especially in propaganda for support in the two world-wars and other colonial records.

It is at this time when a lot of these Arabic materials were almost lost to lack of good preservation and conservation, decay, insect attacks, weather deterioration and other calamities, that a number of concerned Ulama consisting mostly religious leaders and Historians envisaged this dangerous trend. They observed with serious dissatisfaction the unhealthy situation and dangerous condition of this Arabic manuscript and therefore must be salvaged at all cost.

The scholars advised the Sokoto state government (NWS) under Alh. Usman Farouk, to establish a museum which would eventually be charged with the collection and preservation of these invaluable materials. Thus in the early years of 1970 's, a committee was set up under the leadership of Dr. Waziri Junaidu, a Sokoto Caliphate counselor, an Arabic scholar and historian comprising some scholars and historians from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Ibadan University to come up with modelities and responsibilities of the proposed Historical Centre. Eventually, the Bureau came into being through Act no. 3. of 1973 of Sokoto State Government spelling out all the statutory responsibilities and duties of the Bureau. They included among others the collection and preservation of all materials of historical and archival importance for the purpose of research for both Nigerian and foreign researchers.

It is therefore in respect of this statutory responsibility that a Museum edifice was built and staff were engaged especially in the collection and preservation exercise. BASTISTE, (2007) noted in her report of a survey tour to the Northern Nigeria Arabic Manuscript that "the Arabic manuscripts of the Northern Nigeria can be found scattered in repositories in Asian, American and European countries, notably, bibliothetique Nationale France, Paris; the British museum, London, etc". By 1973, the formation and consolidation of the Bureau has reached a considerable stage. The Bureau embarked on massive collection of these materials. Today, after forty-two years of its existence, the Bureau has made significant stride in the collecting available records from private hands, and private libraries, schools, scholars, research institutions, Emirs, Chiefs village/districts rulers and other members of the public. Despite all the challenges.

05: Establishment of Arabic/Ajami Manuscript Section

As pointed out earlier in the paper, the enormous literary tradition of Sokoto caliphate gave way for the wide spread and development of literary materials. The Bureau, when established in 1973, was charged with so many responsibilities including collection and preservation of artifacts and crafts; weapons used during the Jihad movement; the maintenance of Historical sites, monuments and battle fields among others. However, the priority of its responsibilities was centered on literary activities of pre-Jihad and Jihad heritage. This is because the introduction of Islam as well as the commencement of Arabic and Ajami form of writing has been considered by the people and government as the single most important legacy in the cultural, intellectual, socio-political and economic development of Nigerian people in particular and sub-Saharan Africa in general.

This significant development according to IBRAHIM & others, (2010) “has proved beyond reasonable doubt that Africa is civilized and literate continent”. Therefore the emergence of Arabic/Ajami section of the Bureau was an important landmark.

The section was not only to collect literature of the Jihad leaders but also a significant number of pre-jihad literature emanating from the 15th Century when literacy activities started in Hausa Land. Therefore the Bureau began the collection of various literary heritage of scholars like Sheikh Abdurrahman Al-Suyudi; Imam Asshadibiyyi; Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sabbaqh (Dan Masani); Muhammad Almagili; Sheikh Dan Fodiyo, Mallam Abdullahi Danfodio, Muhammad Bello, Nana Asma’u, etc. These earlier collection by the Bureau formed the foundation of this section. Interestingly, a number of these materials were found in the custody of scholars, rulers and researchers. Therefore this giant effort made a remarkable beginning in discharging its major responsibility.

06- Collection Methods of Arabic/Ajami Manuscripts

As already observed, the greater percentage of manuscripts is in Arabic language including religious text, legal proceedings, and official records of Sokoto legacies; letters of diplomacy. They also included little percentage in Nigerian languages – rendered in the Arabic Alphabets (Ajami.). SAID, (1974) observed this arrangement was a result of “the great Islamic influence in this part of the world”. Not only in Nigeria, but also in Asia and Middle East, some languages like Urdu Hindi, berber, etc have been rendered into Arabic Alphabets because of Islamic influence.

Therefore, long before the Jihad of Danfodio and as early as the 15th Century, the people of northern Nigeria had contacts with North African countries of Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Mali etc through Caravan routes.

Among the commodities of this ancient trade were books transported to Hausa land many of such books were copied by individuals and made available among scholars, students etc.

It is therefore important to note three major methods were adopted by the Bureau, in its collection development efforts they include.

06.1- Purchase

The government which established the Bureau was not hesitant in releasing funds for the purchase of some manuscripts in the hands of individual scholars and students. Few people would like to donate their valuable possessions to the Bureau. This is because they misconceived the Bureau as agents western imperialists and they suspected their literary works might eventually be adulterated with the western culture or tempered for the benefits of infidels (Westerners). Some would not surrender them without remuneration. In this situation, the Bureau had no other option but to purchase. Researches are first carried out for the identification and location of manuscripts owners in various villages and towns. Bargaining takes place before the eventual purchase, the price depending on the quality, originality and size of the material. This method has always been adopted whenever there is purchase season. A significant number of Arabic/Ajami manuscripts have been gathered through this method.

06.2- Donation

As I mentioned earlier, Waziri Junaidu, an erudite scholar and Sokoto Historian was a significant factor for the establishment of the Bureau. He used his position as a senior counselor in the caliphate council to start collecting through donations from private individuals and scholars in 1966. He held these collections in his official residence at Gidadawa Area in Sokoto City. They were in his custody until the museum complex of the Bureau was built in 1975 and so the collection was deposited into the museum. This process of receiving donations from individuals continued up to the present day. Some scholars or their families are identified and letters would be written to them through the sultanate council requesting for donations of those valuable documents. Most of the scholars who are modern and enlightened responded passively to the requests and eventually the materials are donated. The Bureau through the years organized seminars for village scholars and their donation are exhibited for the public. All these measures have tremendously assisted in the success of acquiring a significant number of materials. Some scholars have also left wills (Wasiyya) to their families that valuable materials be donated to the Bureau for public use after their death. This has also been a very important source of collection development.

06.3 – Photocopying, Photographing and hand Copying:

As we earlier observed, some of the areas through which Arabic manuscripts became widespread in Hausa land was through copying made by copyist (scribes). One of the principal Arts work found among the scholars (Mallams). Therefore this method was adopted whereby a document found worthy of collecting and the owner was not ready to sell, donate or release willingly, the copyists hand copy the document and left the original with the owner. Another aspect of copying- whereby each page of the Arabic manuscript is photographed (when photocopying was not available). This method also enriched the Arabic Manuscripts collection of the Bureau. Closely related to this, the use of photocopiers. In later years, whereby the owner is left with the original copy while the bureau embarked on page by page photocopying.

06.4 Inter – Library Exchange of Catalogues:

Another very important method of Arabic manuscripts collection is inter-library exchange of catalogue and materials. The Bureau is in Liaison & cooperation with other historical centres across the country and outside. They included Arewa house, Kaduna. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, centre for trans Saharan studies Maiduguri, university of Ibadan; SAVAMA in Mali, IRSH in Niger, British Museum; library of congress USA; WAMP in Burkina Fasso, etc. In many cases the Bureau exchanged catalogues with these libraries and copies of a number of these materials are acquired through copying, transfer (A situation whereby some libraries have multiple copies of a particular documents.) etc.

07 - Classification Method

It is almost impossible to adopt one particular method of manuscript classification in the Bureau. Arabic manuscript heritage in Northern Nigeria as observed by BATISTE (2007) “is a vast treasure strove available sources of materials on the period of the Islamic revolution in the west African sub region and shows also contributions of Islamic scholars to the Islamic heritage and world civilization as would be seen, the organization of knowledge is a necessary endeavor to make that knowledge accessible easily to the researchers. Manuscripts are written testimonies of African skills in the area of Religion, Science Astronomy, Mathematics, Geometry, Chemistry, Medicine, Politics and many other branches of knowledge. The organization of knowledge is therefore very crucial. This is because of the different circumstances which led to their production and the subject they cover.

Having collected a number of manuscript materials through the years, the Bureau discovered that some of the manuscripts were written in different periods and on different disciplines by different authors which have been categorized as follows:

- i- Copies of Holy Quran

- ii- Copies of major Tafasir
- iii- Copies of major Ahadiths
- iv- Manuscripts written by authors during pre-Jihad period
- v- Manuscripts written during the Jihad period
- vi- Manuscripts written by scholars in contemporary times.

It is therefore imperative to the bureau to device convenient means by which these materials would be easily accessible by the readers.

Nos. i – iii are regarded as general readers and traditional books of Islam. Although the originals are widely published, and printed for general use, their manuscript forms are very important materials. It is assumed that most of them were copies of works written and brought into Hausaland from the Islamic world since the 15th Century for the purpose of spreading Islam. Most of the scholars and copyists are contended with copying them that is why multiple copies of them are available. The Bureau does not give them any particular class mark because they are general readers whose printed versions are publically available. The bureau has collected their manuscripts forms for the purpose of preservation only. Their originality continues to possess some degree of value and pride and in most cases they are for displaying purposes not for consultations.

Nos. iv-vi are categories of manuscripts which have particular authors and subjects. This is the period during which most of the manuscripts are believed to have been written. As SAID (1974) noted “the Sokoto Jihad leaders were learned people whose contribution to the study of the history of Africa were immense. Their earlier contacts with Maghrib of North Africa and Turkish Ottoman must have encouraged their learning skills and production of more manuscripts. A large volume of this category have been collected and classified in the following order:

07.1- MSS (Class A) Shehu Usman Danfodio:

An erudite scholar, whose family came from intellectual pursuits and piety. He was the founder of Sokoto Caliphate one of the most important political entity in pre colonial Africa. He was born in 1754 AD in Gobir Hausa land and his family moved to Degel from where he received his basic education and went out to Agadaz for advanced learning. He commenced his teaching and preaching career in his home Degel from where he went out to neighboring Hausa States of Zamfara, Gobir and Kebbi.

Danfodio was the foremost writer who had about 200 works to his credit. Most of the works were on religious theology, jurisprudence, administration, and Shari’ah. A comprehensive list of works as compiled by BALOGUN, (1982) and reviewed by MAFARA, (2003) is contained in Appendix A.

07.2- MSS (Class B) Sheikh Abdullahi Danfodio

Another erudite scholar of the 19th century was Abdullahi Danfodio, Shehu Usman brother. He was born in around 1760. Like his brother, Abdullahi grew up in the intellectual community of Degel and followed his brother wherever there were preaching and teaching sessions in neighbouring Air, Zamfara, kabbi and Gobir. He was an prolific writer who wrote extensively on Shariah, Geography, Sufism, classical grammer, tafsir, hadith, Sciences, Mathematics, Administration, etc. He had more than 200 known works to his credit, the famous which included Tafsir, “*Diya’u Ta’awili fi ma’anit Tanzil*”; *Diya’ul Hukkami, tazyinil warakat, etc.*

Abdullahi Fodio contributed tremendously to the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate. He led many battles and wrote extensively. A comprehensive list of his work as arrived by BALOGUN, (1982) and reviewed by MAFARA, (2003) is contained in Appendix B.

07.3- MSS (CLASS C) Sultan Muhammadu Bello.

The third of the Sokoto Caliphate triumvate was Sultan Muhammadu Bello, the Son of Sheikh Usuman Danfodio. He was born in 1780 AD and acquired his basic education from his father and uncles in the intellectual settlement of Degel. He had his advanced studies under the totulage of Abdullahi his uncle. He was very close to his father which gave him much opportunity of acquiring knowledge, scholarship and tradition of writing. He was one of the architects of Sokoto Caliphate. A soldier who has participated in more than 40 battles: A political thinker and administrator, who said laid the political foundation of Sokoto Caliphate and a prolific scholar and writer who had more than 160 works to his credit. He wrote extensively on politics, History, Geography, Medicine, Astronomy, Mathematics, and Theology. His famous works included *Infāq-Al-Maisuri; Ad-daruru, Zaharariyyah, Sardul- Kalami*, etc. BALOGUN, (1982) compiled list of Sultan Bello works and reviewed by MAFARA, (2003) is contained in appendix C.

07.4- MSS (Class D) Other Scholars

In this context the works of a number of Jihad Scholars have been classified. They included Waziri Gidado Danlaima; Abdulkadir IbnMustapha, Nana Asma’u; Maryam bint Sheikh Usuman Danfodio and many others.

In this class there were also manuscripts written before the Jihad of Danfodio whose originals were copied and transported to Hausaland through trade route. They mostly included used textbooks for teaching Islam. Like *Mukhtasar* of Khalil bn Ishaq; *Ishiriniya* of Al-fazazi, *Sahih Al- Buhari* and many others. Although some of these materials have been published, the Bureau has been able to collect and classify their

manuscripts forms for what HALIL, (1974) considered the fact that “Local people find it rather difficult to read printed books. Moreover because of dogmatic nature among scholars, who felt that hand written book is more authentic than printed one”. In this class, also the pre-Jihad works of Hausa scholars like Al-Maghili, Dan Masani, etc.

It is very important to note that after the Jihad, the tradition continued to be learning and literary activities. The successors to the Jihad leaders tried to maintain the growth of learning throughout the parameters of the Caliphate. Therefore, a number of scholars have extensively written and thousands of those manuscripts have been collected and preserved by the Bureau and classified under “MSS (Class D)

08- Preservation methods

For the forty- two years of its existence, the Bureau has been able to collect and classify over 3000 volumes of manuscripts of different categories. There is no clear formal method of preservation adopted. However, some of the following techniques have been used for the purposes of local preservation they include:

08.1- Restoration: Local use of tools and tapes to carryout restoration of damaged materials collected.

08.2 – Boxing: In the early years of collection, the local use of leather covers were used to protect the material against dust and other harsh weather conditions. Later the use of cartoon boxes was thereby adopted in which materials are kept inside boxes cut from non acidic cardboards according to the sizes which the Bureau adopted from Mali Libraries. That method is still in use.

8.3- Chemical application: Although this method has been proposed through the years and even a conservation Laboratory set up. It has been abandoned afterwards for lack of professionals and chemicals However, Fumigation exercise is periodically carried out to attack insects, reptiles and other pests that might be detrimental to the materials.

08.4 – Shelving and displaying: Some of the materials are shelved and maintained in glass showcases according to their classification numbers. They are professionally handled and in most cases photocopies of the originals are provided to the users, while the originals remained in their show cases and archival boxes to be produced only on special cases.

08.5- Air conditioning system:

Most of the stack rooms housing the manuscripts have been provided with the Air-conditioning system to prevent unfavorable and harsh weather attacks on the materials.

08.6- Microfilming: Although this method is being overtaken by digitalization world wide, the use of Microfilming has been adopted by

the Bureau in the early years of its inception and therefore a significant number of these manuscripts have been microfilmed.

08.7- Computerization and Digitalization: a number of foreign universities and organizations have indicated their interest in this direction, but yet no concrete agreement has been reached with the Bureau. The governments of Sokoto state has provided the Bureau with some desktop computers but they are only used for cataloging and bibliographic purposes.

08.9 – Dusting and cleaning:

This is the most widely used method carried out everyday. The actual materials are brushed and dusted periodically, while the boxes in which they are kept, and the shelves and cabinets are dusted and cleaned every day.

09- Accessibility by Visitors, Scholars, Tourists and Students:

The Arabic /Ajami manuscripts were preserved and made readily available to a teaming number of scholars and researchers. There is a basic list of the holdings which includes author/title/remark. There is currently proposed works on comprehensive catalogues and bibliographical works. The classification is author catalogue and marks as MSS, Class A, MSS class B, MSS class C and MSS class D are currently used to locate a particular item. BATISTE, (2007) reported that “all manuscripts at the History Bureau, Sokoto are numbered and bear the stamp/seal of the History Bureau authority. They are generally in good condition”.

At the microfilm section, the machines are used to access the microfilm copies. Visitors especially foreign researchers are usually registered with the Bureau at a certain amount of charge fees, photocopying and reproduction is allowed under strict circumstances. Display and exhibitions are also periodically carried out on public occasions to generate public awareness.

10- Government funding and foreign aids:

As was discussed earlier, the preservation of these invaluable materials is a universal responsibility. At its inception and up to this day, the Sokoto State Government solely funded the activities of the Bureau. This include the General administration, training, collection, development; preservation and research. Universities both from Nigeria and outside have indicated their intentions to give technical aids, but up to now no concrete arrangement is arrived at in this direction.

11- Findings and recommendations:

Through the forty – two years of its existence, the Bureau has significantly observed the following problems and accordingly has preferred solutions:

11.1- Collection development

At the point of collection by the documentalist, private individuals would not be ready to release their originals through selling, donations or copying. This was because they had no faith in organizations who had come earlier for their manuscripts in the name of borrowing and could not return them. Sometimes borrowed materials are found on display in some research centers.

People have valued their original manuscripts heritage they inherited from their forefathers and therefore could not release them at any rate. There are a significant number of manuscripts which are lying waste and damaged in some identified homes of scholars, Imans and individuals. They prefer to hand them down to their descendants than to release them to public institutions for permanent preservation.

Scribes and copyists are not well trained professionally they take longer period to reproduce materials. Photocopiers, cameras etc are sometimes not very efficient and inadequate. There is also the problem of identification of real owners of the manuscripts. Some prefer not to reveal their possessions publically. This is due to the lack of efficient awareness machinery. People must therefore be made to be aware of the importance of preservation and they must have faith and confidence in the organization they release their documents to.

Unprofessional means of dating material is also another problem in collection system. Some manuscripts are very difficult to be dated for lack of facilities. The dating takes place locally. Sometimes from information related by the owner. There is also lack of concrete means of arriving at the authenticity and originality of the materials and even its contents. Only local comparison and in-depth research revealed such attributes.

Adequate funding for the collection and dating of documents is seriously required to purchase and reproduce such documents that might otherwise not be collected or donated. Various efforts have been done through the years. I would like to agree with SAID, (1974) who suggested that the final success of collection could “only be accomplished when all various organizations in charge of manuscript unite themselves and work together for better results”.

Therefore, there is a need of cooperation among the scholars librarians and archivists and among their establishments in the area of collection through the union catalogue, bibliography and transfer.

11.2 – preservation and conservation

These are critical areas for the survival of not only literary culture, but also other materials of historical significance. The use of chemicals and tools for the restoration and conservation of materials should be seriously enhanced, professionalism, should be adopted as in any other profession of human life. Preservation should not only be left to untrained personnel. Interests and commitment should also be encouraged. Sultan Muhammadu Bello (1807) noted that ‘‘people without knowledge are like forests without trees.’’ Therefore knowledge without organization is like recovering a needle in the ocean. Professionals must be adequately employed in the business of the organization of knowledge. At present much has been made in the area of collection in Bureau. Much is also needed. Technical and expertise capacities as well as financial resources, to manage and preserve those collections with a degree of efficiency are mostly what is required.

12 CONCLUSION:

The Sokoto state History Bureau established in 1973 by the Government of Sokoto State is one of the most important repository of Arabic Manuscripts in Nigeria with a collection of over three thousand (3000) consisting of Arabic Manuscripts emanating since 15th Century and largely Sokoto Jihad literature founded by Shehu Danfodio in the early 19th Century. The materials were carefully but locally collected and preserved without modern system of preservation. They are accessible to scholars and researchers world wide at affordable research fees. The collection is a mixture of original and photocopies most of which are in Arabic Language but few are in ‘Ajami’ indigenous form.

Generally speaking, a lot of intellectual and literacy heritage of African people are found all over the continent in a sorrowful state. They are mostly covered with thick harmattan dust, mould, moisture, and in many cases papers damaged or became brittle by insects attacks and harsh weather conditions which constitute a serious trait to their future.

Scholars worldwide have noted that these priceless Arabic manuscripts collections represent one of the most important sources of literary heritage of the African and Islamic world. The understanding of their contents encourages the intellectual discourse in shaping and molding the religious, political, and economic lives of the people from the early times till date. It is therefore very crucial to evolve and organize comprehensive ways of application of the contents to the present day situations in order to solve most of the African problems emanating from the damages made in the misrepresentation of Islamic Ideology.

Institutions of similar nature must increasingly be set up by the Governments and their laws and statutory responsibilities should be strengthened to enhance the protection of the intellectual heritage.

Similarly, grants should be made by donor organizations worldwide to facilitate collection, preservation and protection of these rich cultural materials to prevent their extension. Concerted research activities should be carried out on their contents which by extension are believed to proper solutions to Africa's most fundamental challenges being faced by the Present generation.

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