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The Prevalence of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria, Implications for Acccess, Use, and Enduring Management: A Framework For Research

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Introduction

Arabic and Ajami manuscripts constitute an important aspect of the intellectual heritage of the peoples of Northern Nigeria. Their value in administration, law, scholasticism, historical construction and cultural preservation cannot be overemphasized. Their subjects matter are diverse which cover Languages and Linguistic, History, Diplomacy, Law, Sociology, Economics, Politics, Education, Literature, Culture, Geography, Architecture, Medicine, Communications, Science, Technology, Epistemology, Philosophy and Logic. (Batiste, 2007 and Saeed 2007). They imbibe a veritable body of knowledge which can be sustainably explored for the benefit of present and future generations of humanity. However, this can only be possible if under conditions of optimum access and use by information seekers which may include Administrators, Politicians, Scholars, Researchers, Members of the Judiciary and even Social Workers. Indicators such as the literature suggest ample abundance of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Northern Nigeria. These

manuscripts however, are held at scattered locations and under various, sometimes undeterminable conditions of management and care, which greatly affect access to them and their use as well as enduring maangement.

In order to ensure access, effective use and maangement, it is imperative that a study be conducted to determine their prevalence (existence) and the conditions under which they are held, managed and preserved. This paper presents a modest attempt at providing a framework for undertaking the study by highlighting the major elements of the study and its subsequent report.

Statement of the Problem

Arabic and Ajami manuscripts abound in Northern Nigeria in great amount with actual and potential values for administration, research, teaching/learning, language development, cultural preservation and acquisition of general knowledge. They cover wide range of subject areas including politics, linguistics, law, history, medicine, sciences, culture, technology, architecture, philosophy, spiritualism and logic. Those manuscripts are held, and managed by varied agencies, individuals and families, in scattered and sometimes undetermined locations and conditions.

In order to attain their maximum value, there should be optimum access to them and their effective use by interested groups and individuals such as Administrators, Politicians, Scholars, Researchers, Artists, and Social Workers.

In order to ensure such access and use as well as enduring management, there is the need to first empirically determine their existence (including types, amount, subject coverage, locations and ownership), and conditions of management including preservation. Lack of such empirical knowledge is considered a problem worthy of been addressed.

Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions.

- What Arabic and Ajami manuscripts exist in northern Nigeria?
- What are their estimated volumes and intellectual contents?
- What are their Forms and ages?
- Where are they been held and by whom?
- Under what conditions are they been held in terms of management?
- Who utilize them and for what purpose(s)?
- To what extent are they accessible and utilized?
- What bibliographical control mechanism can be established in regards to those manuscripts?
- What are the constrains associated with their management, accessibility, and use?
- What measures can be taken to address those constrains?

Research Objectives

The study will seek to achieve the following objectives

- To determine the existence and nature of Arabic and Ajami manuscript in northern Nigeria
- To determine their volumes and intellectual contents
- To determines their forms and ages
- To determine their custody
- To determine their conditions of management
- To find out who utilize them and under for what purposes

- To establish bibliographic control mechanism of those manuscripts
- To determine the extent of their accessibility and use
- To identify problems associated with their management, accessibility and use
- To propose measures that could address the problems

Review of Related Literature

Literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings:

1. Theoretical Framework

2. Historical Generations, Perspectives on the Use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts.

3. History of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria.

4. Contemporary State of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria: Availability, Management, Preservation, Accessibility, and Use.

5. Challenges of Access, Use, and Management of Arabic and Ajami Manuscript in Northern Nigeria.

Operational Definitions of Research Concepts

Research concepts to be defined operationally for clarity in understanding the study and its report may include

- Prevalence
- Arabic and Ajami manuscripts
- Northern Nigeria
- Access
- Use
- Management
- Preservation

Methodology

1. Research Techniques

- Survey, Descriptive and Content analyses of documents

2. Agencies and persons to be contacted for data on the study should include:

- Kaduna: Arewa House Center for Research and Historical Documentation,Ahmadu Bello University
- Nigerian National Archives,Kaduna
- Kano State History and Culture Bureau,Kano.
- Centre for Islamic Studies, UDUS, Sokoto
- Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau,Sokoto
- Kenneth Dike Library and the Center for Arabic Documentation, Institute of African Studies,Ibadan University,Ibadan
- Bayero University Library, Kano

(Batiste, 2007)

Others may include:

- Libraries of relevant academic faculties and departments in universities

Viz: Ahmadu University,Zaria, Bayero University,Kano, Usmanu Danfodio University,Sokoto, University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), and University of Maiduguri(UNIMAID) with biases in Languages, Islamic studies, History and Law.

- Libraries of special institutes with biases in Languages, Islamic studies, History and Law such as the Arabic Village at Gamboru-Agala in Borno State, Colleges of Islamic and Legal studies at Misau (Bauchi State) and Ilorin, Aminu Kano College of Islamic Legal Studies (Kano State), School of Arabic Studies (SAS), (Kano State) ,
- Qur'anic College, Gadon Kaya, (Kano State), Ado Bayero Qur'anic College (Kano State) etc. others are:
- Prominent Ulamas and their families such as Mal. Dahiru Usman Bauchi, the families of Late Sheik Nasiru Kabara, Mal.Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, Late Alhaji Waziri Junaidu Sokoto, Late Alhaji Garba Abubakar Saidu, etc.
- Prominent Khadis, Magistrates, and Court Registrars
- Traditional rulers and their families.
- Book sellers/Vendors
- Mosques
- Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)
- Individual scholars such as (past and present) teachers of Islamic studies, Arabic, Religion Knowledge, Law, History, etc.

Instruments for Data Collection

- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Documentary analysis
- Research assistants may include Arabic and Ajami Translators

Research Report

Literature Review

Historical perspectives on the generation and use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts

- History of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria
- Contemporary State of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria; Availability Management, Preservation, Accessibility and Use.
- Challenge of Access, Use, and Management of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria.

Choice of Research Technique

- Population of the Study
- Subject for the Study
- Instruments of Data Collection
- Administration of Research Instrument
- Method of Data Analysis

Presentation and Analysis of Data

- Response Rate
- Availability of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts
- Volume and Subject Coverage of Manuscripts
- Forms Ages of Manuscripts
- Responsibility for Holding and Managing Manuscripts
- Conditions of Management and Preservation of Manuscripts

- Users and Purposes of Using Manuscripts'
- Extent of Accessibility and use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts
- Problems Associated with Management, Accessibility and use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts Collections
- Discussion
- Major Findings of the Study
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

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