

THE CONTRIBUTION OF B.B.C HAUSA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN LITERATURE IN 21ST CENTURY: REFLECTION FROM HIKAYATA COMPETITION

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Abstract

B.B.C Hausa is one of language services broadcasted by B.B.C World service since 13 March 1957, dedicated in providing information, enlightenment and ample opportunities to their listeners especially the vulnerable ones. *Hikayata* programme is an annual literary competition organised by B.B.C Hausa services in Hausa speaking nation of West Africa. It was started in 2015, where young Hausa women participate and compete with short stories of not more than one thousand, five hundred words. Apart from awards of honour and prizes of huge amount of money to the winners (1st, 2nd and 3rd), the competition opens window to such young women to acquire the skills of writing especially artistic writing. Though no theme is given in the competition, women are at the liberty to write on the themes of their choice but naturally most of them writes on the challenges of women in Hausa society of today where issues affecting women such as gender violence, poverty, insecurity, and unemployment are the most written themes received by BBC Hausa in the last five years of the programme. This paper brings out the relevance of this programme in developing fictional writing among Hausa women as well as addressing the challenges of women in Hausa society especially in the area of education and writing.

Key words: Women, Literature, Opportunity and Challenges

Introduction

Hausa women even before the advent of writing use oral literature to express their feelings, views and opinion about their lives and that of their society. The emergence of writing and literary skills gave them more freedom and opportunity to use fictional writing in voicing out their worries and challenges as well as their thoughts and hobbies Ibrahim (2009).

Hausa literature both oral and written developed rapidly because of its dynamic nature that goes with modernism and it is the easiest means of communication among Hausa society. Hausa literature especially narratives is among the fastest way of communication through artistic use of language. David (1986) affirms that the advent of writing in Hausa land made it possible for artist to write in the language, published and document most of the oral narratives like tatsuniya (folktales), almara, and hikaya (Fiction)

Hausa women were introduced to writing fiction after acquiring western education and skills of writing around middle of 20th century. There are prominent writers among Hausa women that

researchers like Ibrahim (2009) and Furniss (2000) Dangambo (2015) testify their efforts in developing Hausa literature through their writings. Hausa young girls were also influenced by 20th century writers and develop their writing skills through reading their works such as the works of Hajiya Bilkisu Salisu Ahmad, Fauziyya D. Suleiman, Maimuna Sani Beli, and many more.

Hausa Women and Literature

Fictional writing in Hausa started since the era of colonial masters when western education was introduced in Hausa land. At that time, it started with competition organized by Dr. R.M East in 1933. The wisdom behind introduction of literary competition among scholars and students at that time is to provide reading materials in Hausa language that will enhance teaching and learning the language. Yahaya (1988) opines that women did not participate at that time because they are not introduced to western education at that time. Most of the participants at that time are either students of Katsina College like Abubakar Imam, or Scholars like Muhammad Bello Kagara.

Hausa women started engaging in fictional

writing in the mid of twenties century, but even before the advent of writing in Hausa land they use oral literature to express their feelings, views and opinion about their lives and that of their society. The emergence of writing and literary skills gave them more freedom and opportunity to use fictional writing in voicing out their worries and challenges as well as their thoughts and hobbies (Ibrahim, 2009)

Hausa women played a vital role in the development of Hausa fiction especially Kano market literature. Most of the prose fiction of late 80's to mid 90's are works of women (Furniss, 2013). Though women work mostly centred on Feminist issues such as the works of Hajiya Bilkisu Salisu Ahmad and that of Rahma A. Majid to mention a few but also it touches many aspects of life including economy, security, education and culture (Isa, 2019)

The emergence of social media and globalization boost the fictional writing of Hausa women, young girls now open their platform and share stories to their readers through whats'app, wattpadd.com, face book e.t.c this is as a result of the rapid change from the reading culture of youth from hard copy book to e-books. Though such stories are not considered as books but are considered as prose fiction of 21st century and they are playing a vital role in the development of Hausa literature as well as enhancing e-literature in Hausa language.

Hikayata Programme of B.B.C Hausa

Hikayata meaning 'my story', is a coined Hausa term from the word Hausa Hikaya meaning 'Fiction'. Hikaya is a short story narrated or written in a style that is close to reality than other forms of narrative. It is one of the Hausa forms of literature that means an imaginative creativity written or narrated in a stylistic form that expresses the thought, worldview, emotions, myth and reality of a society.

Hiyakata is an annual Hausa essay competition organized by B.B.C Hausa where young girls are given opportunity to write short literary stories of not more than 1,500 word in any theme of their choice, but for the story to be considered and selected among the best, there are certain criteria of literary skills that must be considered in writing the story such as the use of

standard Hausa, mode of presentation like use of orthography and style, as well as the structure or plot of the stories. The stories are normally screened by judges at different categories. The programme started in 2015 with more than 300 stories of different themes. The judges normally select first second and third for the awards while the fourth to the twelve's position will be aired by the host of the Hikayata programme and be published on B.B.C website. The paper discusses some major themes from B.B.C Hausa *Hikayata* Competition of 2021 for exemplification. The writers of the selected themes are the winners of 2021 competition. The first story titled *Hakkina* (My Right) was written by 18 years old, Aisha Musa Dalil. Aisha Musa Dalil is a student of Department English and French Studies Umaru Musa 'Yar'adua University, Katsina and her story came first in the competition. The second story titled Butulci was written by Aicha Hamissou Abdoulaye from Tawa Niger Republic and the writer came second in that completion, the yardstick of selecting these stories is not about winning the competition but the themes of the stories that showcase the challenges of young girls and women in Hausa society of today.

Some Themes from Hikayata Competition

As it was said earlier, the major themes of Hikayata competitions are based on the issues concerning women. Most of the stories send to B.B.C are normally a reflection of the situations that women find themselves in 21st century such as poverty, insecurity, illiteracy, inequality, sexual violence, force marriage, human trafficking and kidnapping. Though there are stories that touches women involvement in politics, participation of women in jobs that are not peculiar to women in Hausa land like police, solders engineers and the challenges that are attributed to these professions. There are also stories of hope and enlightenment, stories of cultural beliefs and superstitions and the stories of current phenomenon in the world like issue of corono and how it affects relationship between women and their spouses. All the stories of Hikayata are reflection of what is happening in the society especially what effects the young girls.

The Story of Aishatu Musa Dalil titled *Hakkina*
Hakkina (My Right) is a story of a young

orphan called Fatima that was raped by her mother's husband. Fatima sustained severe injuries in her body but her mother hides her in a room and threatens to kill her if she discloses the issue to the public. Fatima's mother knew of the injuries of Fatima and the implication of not treating the wounds but she was afraid of losing her marriage and the stigma that will affect her life and that of her daughter. Fatima beg her mother to take her to the hospital because she was severely beaten by her rapist in trying to rape her, she even broke her leg, but her mother did not say anything to her husband who raped her daughter, instead, she decided to threaten Fatima with death if she mention the issue to anybody:

"Fatima tashi mu yi magana." Na ji muryarta a zafafe. Yunkurin tashin na yi, sai dai gangar jikina ta gaza taimaka mini, dole na hakura. "Ma..ma... na kasa tashin." Kara matso ni ta yi tare da dalle mini ido da hasken tocilan waya. matashin da kaina ke kai ta daga tare da janyo wani abu a kasa. "Mene ne wannan?" Ta nuna mini abinda ta janyo da hasken tocilan. Gabana ya fadi cikin tsoro da rawar murya. "Mama wuka ce?" "Tabbas kuwa Fati, wuka ce, kuma na adana ta ne, don na kashe ki!" Duk iya kokarin da na yi don na motsa jikina na kasa, tsananin tsoro ya ratsani na runtse ido ina jin wani irin suya. "Ma....maaa! Me na yi miki don Allah?" Wani ruwa na ji ya sauka kan fuskata wanda ya ba ni tabbacin hawayen Maman ne. "Ba ki yi mini ba a yanzu Fati, watakila ki iya yin sa a nan gaba." "Mama me ya sa zaki kashe ni a kan abin da ban aikata shi ba..." "Fatima wake up, I want to talk to you," I heard her voice like a thunder in my ears. I tried to sit up but I was weak, my leg cannot carry my body, "Mom! I can't get up; she came close to me and lights my eyes with the light of her cell phone. She lifts my pillow and brings out a knife and shows it to me:" what is this? She asked, my body started shivering because of fear, I said mommy it is a knife," she replied

yes, it is, and I will use it to kill you Fatima if you disclose this matter to anybody. I was seriously confused and scared because i don't know my fault that my mother decided to punish me, I ask her "mommy what did I do to you? "You did not offend me Fatima, but I am warning you do not try to tell anybody this issue. "Mother why did you choose to punished me on the issue that is not my fault?"

The rapist continues enjoying his freedom while Fatima continues living in pain for days. When Fatima realised that she is not going to endure the pain anymore because it may lead to her death, she decided to find a way out for herself as follows:

"Mama, Baban Umar ya yi mini duka da icce mugun dukan da ya yi sanadiyyar ji mini ciwuka wanda nake jin har da targade, bayan nan ya saka mini kyalles ya rufe mini baki ya aikata mini fyade, duk da karancin shekaruna a matsayinsa na babban mutum, kin ce muddin na fada sai kin kashe ni, sannan kin ki kai ni asibiti duk da irin azabar da na ke ji, dole na yi miki tambayar nan" Zama ta yi gab da ni jikinta asanyaye. "Fatima na yi hakan ne don rufin asirina da ke! Idan na fada da ni da ke tamkar mun kashe kanmu ne, wa zai aure ki wa zai aure ni? A karshe gidanmu zan koma, sa'ido da gulmace-gulmacen mutane ya ishe mu, rayuwar mace tamkar matacciya ce, dole ki yi hakuri ko dan guje wa mummunan tabo" "Yanzu Mama saboda hakan kika gwammace ganin gawata? Tabbas wannan lalurar zata iya kashe ni, shi kuma Baban Umar fa?" Girgiza kai ta yi tare da fashe wa da kuka. "Mama kada ki manta ni da Amina da Saude, ba 'ya'yansa ba ne, ya aikata mini haka ba a dauki mataki ba, bakya tunanin rayuwarsu...." "Ya isa haka Fati!....." Rufe bakinta daidai da kutsowar Malamin makarantarmu da 'yansanda. Cikin kuka na kalle ta. "Ni na rubuta dukkan abin da ya faru a wasifa na ba wa Saude ta kaiwa Malaminmu don ya kawo mini dauki, ki yi hakuri Mama dole ne hukuma su dauki mummunan mataki a kan Baba, Dan shi ne ya dace da shi." "Mama Baban Umar beat me severally

which led to the injury in my leg, apart from that he tight my mouth with a rag and raped me. He did not consider my young age and his position as an old man. You said if i disclose it you will kill me, and you refuse to take me to the hospital after all the pain and injuries in my body, i must ask you if you choose to see my dead body. Mama dont forget that I, Amina and Saude are not his children, if he is not punish, are you not afraid of their lives? "it is enough Fatima," she said with a low voice. As she kept silent she notice the presence of my teacher and police, she was shocked. I said it was i who wrote all what happen and send Saude to my teacher so that i may get help. Sorry mommy, the rapist must be punish. I was relieved now that i know Baba was arrested.

It is indeed a sad story that normally happens in real life in some houses. The issue of hiding the case of rape is like a norm in Hausa society, people think of the stigmatization more than the situation of the girl that was raped. Rape is a crime that must be reported to the security and justice must be done in order to save the girl child and women from the harm of that rapist. The story is about challenges of young girls especially the issue of poverty and illiteracy, their opportunity of seeking justice by all means and the hope for a better life.

The Story of Aicha Hamissou Abdoulaye titled *Butulci*

Butulci is the story of a newlywed pregnant woman who was anxious to announce her pregnancy to her beloved husband who she thinks will be happy to know about the pregnancy. To her surprise, he married her just to be able to enrich himself from the wealth of her father and marry somebody else. Samir arranged for the kidnapping of his wife and demanded huge amount of money from her father who he think will pay the money in good time so that he can abandoned her and run away with the money. Fatima was able to escape from the captives and came back home thinking that her husband is worried and is looking for her. But unfortunately for her she finds out that her husband was behind her abduction:

"Da alama mahaiƙin Fatima so yake na shafe babinta a doron kasa don ya fiye taurin kai da yawa. Tunda na sa aka yi

kidinafin dinta mun bukaci ya bayar da kudade amma ya tsaya yana neman jan zancen, yana so ya shigo mana da jami'an tsaro cikin harkar. Hello kina ji na!" Ya dan tsahirta, da alamu magana wacce suke wayar take yi masa don kalamansa na karshe suka tabbatar mini waya yake. Damar da ni ma na samu kenan na fara nadar sautinsa da wayar Ozil ta hannuna.

"A'a kada ki damu ai mun yi kyakkyawan shirin da asirinmu ba zai taɓa tonuwa ba. Dama fa na sa an yi kidinafin dinta ne don na samu kuɗin aurenki, amma kuma mun saka masa kuɗin fansar ya tsaya yana jan kafa." Ya sake yin shiru da alamu yana sauraron maganar wacce suke waya.

"Kada ki damu insha Allahu babu matsala, yanzu ma na canza shawara muna karɓar kuɗin fansarta zan sa su Ozil su kara mata gudu gari mai arahar gyada, kin ga shikenan ke sai na samu kuɗin aurenki, mu yi auren mu babu wacce za ta takura mana."

It looks like Fatima's father want me to banished his daughter because of his arrogance. I demanded the money since the day i arrange for her kidnapping, but he is take the issue lightly, he want to involve security into the matter." Hello, are you hearing me? I kept quite for a while, like he is listening to the person he is make call with. That is where i got the courage to record his conversation with Ozil phone. He also paused for i while like he is listening to the phone call.

"No dont worry, we have a very good plan that no body will even suspect us, i arrange for her kidnapping just to get money so that i will marry you, but we told him the amount for the ransom but he is yet to respond. He kept quite for a while, listening to the phone call.

"dont worry, there is no problem by God grace, i have now change the plan of collecting the ransom, i will give

directives to Ozil to just kill her, that is all, i will just marry you without any obstacle.”

Fatima recorded all the conversation of her husband while he was making a call, he did not notice her presence. She was able to ran away with the intention of going to her fathers house, she informed her parent that she was able to gain her freedom, but her husband was behind everything. Samir discovered that Fatima escaped from his boys, he made another attempt of kidnapping her parent but it was unsuccessful for him. He was later arrested but Fatima and her parent sustain serious injurities on the process, she even lost her pregnancy because of the horrible situation she find herself.

This is the story of betrayal and deception that women suffers in the hand of some men nowadays. Many incidences similar to this story happen in real life especially this era of kidnapping for ransom. Though the writer is not from Nigeria, but the theme of her story reflects the problems that are facing women in Nigeria and some part of Africa like Niger republic where the writer came from. The issue of kidnapping is a global issue now, and it normally affect women.

Most of the stories of Hikayata shows the reflection of what is happening in the society especially issues that affect women and children. The contribution of B.B.C Hausa in assisting women to voice out their challenges is quite

tremendous. Women now learn how to use fiction to communicate and enlighten the society about the danger of child abuse, violence and insecurity. Their creativity did not stop in exploring the problems but also expatiating on the way out of these problems through their writings.

Life is full of obstacle and challenges, and women in every society face so many challenges due to their vulnerable nature. Some of the challenges of women are universal while some are peculiar to certain society. With all the globalisation and educational development in Northern Nigeria, Hausa women in 21st century face a lot of challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, inequity, insecurity, to mention a few.

Conclusion

Fictional writing among women in 21st century is rapidly developing because of the efforts made by B.B.C Hausa in introducing literary competition among young women. The benefit of the competition is developing literary skills and encouraging women to consider writing as an occupation that women can learn to sustain themselves and their family. However, Hausa women from different part of Africa and some of Hausa women in diaspora normally participate in the competition and they normally develop interest in writing after the competition. Hausa reading culture is also reviving as a result of the Hikayata programme.

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