

# **GOMBE SAVANNAH**


**JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND  
COMMUNICATION STUDIES (GOSAJOLLCOS)**



**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES  
AND LINGUISTICS  
GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Volume 6 Number 2 & 3  
DECEMBER, 2025**



Savannah Journal of Language, Literature and Communication Studies (SAJOLLCOS)  
Vol. 6 No. 2 & 3: December, 2025 —  ISSN: 2787-0286 & 2811-2261 (Online & Print)

**SAVANNAH JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND COMMUNICATION  
STUDIES (SAJOLLCOS)**

**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS,  
GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY**



**VOLUME 6, NO. 2 & 3, DECEMBER 2025**

**ISSN: ONLINE: 2811-2261, PRINT: 2787-0286**

**A Publication of Department of Languages and Linguistics  
Gombe State University, Gombe State**

**Copyright © 2025 SAVANNAH JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND  
COMMUNICATION STUDIES**  
(SAJOLLCOS) Gombe State University, Gombe State. Volume 6, No. 2 & 3 December, 2025.



© Department of Languages and Linguistics, 2025  
Gombe State University,  
Tudun-wada Jauro Abare, Gombe -  
Nigeria.

All rights reserved.

No part or whole of this Journal is allowed to be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without prior permission of the Copyright owner.

**ISSN:** 2787-0286 Print & 2811-2261 Online

**Printed in Nigeria @Six-Sweet Printers and Publishers**

GSU, Gombe, Gombe State.

**Phone No:** +2348039511789

**E-mail:** alameenalfira@gmail.com

### **The Journal**

Gombe Savannah Journal of Language, Literature and Communication Studies (GOSAJOLLCOS) is a peer-reviewed journal of the Department of English, Gombe State University. The journal is committed to the development of communication arts through researches in Language, Linguistics, Literature, Theatre Arts, Cultural Studies, Creative Arts, Media and Communication Studies. It has both print and online versions. The Editorial board hereby calls for thoroughly researched papers and articles on the subject areas already mentioned. Submissions of papers are accepted all year round but publication is expected to be done in May/June annually. All manuscripts should be accompanied with the sum of ten thousand (**₦10,000**) naira only. On acceptance of any manuscript, contributors will pay the sum of twenty five thousand (25,000) naira only as publication fee.



### Editorial Committee

Dr. Abubakar Mohammed Gombe	Editor-in-chief
Dr. Leah I. Jalo	Editor
Dr. Fatima Shuaibu Gara	Member
Fatima M. Gurama	Member
Mohammad Abubakar Musa	Editorial Secretary

### Advisory Board

Professor Saleh Abdu	Department of English, Federal University Kashere
Professor Emmanuel S. Dandaura University	Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State
Professor Muhammad Dahiru State University	Department of Languages, Yobe
Professor A. S. Abdulsalam	Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ilorin
Professor E. U. Ahidjo	Department of English, University of Jos
Professor Nahum Upah Butari	Department of English and Drama, Kaduna State University
Professor Nesta Alu	Department of English, University of Jos

### Editorial Policy

Savannah Journal of Languages, Literature and Communication Studies is Produced by the department of English and Literary Studies, Gombe State University, Gombe Nigeria. It invites scholarly and well researched articles on any topic related to language, literary and communication studies. Authors of article(s) should adhere to the following requirements:

- Manuscript(s) should be double spaced on A4 paper with 12 points, Times New Roman.
- Manuscript(s) length should not exceed 5000 words, including titles, references and/or notes.



- Abstract(s) should not be more than 250 words, followed by four to five keywords.
- Manuscript(s) sent to SAJOLLCOS must be original and previously unpublished.
- Manuscript(s) should adopt either the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition or MLA 8<sup>th</sup> edition format
- Title(s) and subtitles should conform to the adopted referencing style.
- Manuscript(s) would be subjected to editing and peer reviews prior to acceptance and publication.
- Author(s) should provide a bio-data of not more than three sentences at the end of their paper stating their rank, affiliation, research interest and email address.
- All Manuscript(s) for consideration should be accompanied with non-refundable sum of ₦10,000.00 assessment fee.
- On acceptance of any manuscript, author(s) will pay the publication fee of ₦25,000.00
- Creative work publication fee of ₦5,000.00
- All editorial correspondences should be directed to:

**The editor,**

Savannah Journal of Language, Literary and Communication Studies, Department of Languages and Linguistics,

Gombe State University, Gombe.

Email: [sajolcos@gmail.com](mailto:sajolcos@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.gombesavannahjournal.com>

For further enquiries, please contact: Editor-in-Chief

SAJOLLCOS, HOD's Office,

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Gombe State University, Gombe [sajolcos@gsu.edu.ng](mailto:sajolcos@gsu.edu.ng),

C/o: [amgombe2@gsu.edu.ng](mailto:amgombe2@gsu.edu.ng)



## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

**Abubakar Abba Kaka (PhD)**

Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
University of Maiduguri  
[kakaabba31@gmail.com](mailto:kakaabba31@gmail.com)  
08029166358

**Musa Sabo**

Department of General Studies, Federal  
Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State  
[Musasabo36@gmail.com](mailto:Musasabo36@gmail.com)  
0802276676

**Emmanuel Bunduga Tyogema**

Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University, Gombe  
[emmanueltyogema@gmail.com](mailto:emmanueltyogema@gmail.com)  
08060970565

**Fatima Bukar Abba**

07064198834  
[bukarsaliha@gmail.com](mailto:bukarsaliha@gmail.com)

**Bashir Uba Ibrahim, Ph.D.**

Department of English and Literary  
Studies, Sule Lamido University Kafin  
Hausa

**Nasiru Musa**

Department of General Studies Federal  
College of Horticulture  
Dadin Kowa, Gombe State.  
[nasirugona@gmail.com](mailto:nasirugona@gmail.com)  
07035892599

**Juliet, David Aluke**

Department of Languages and Linguistics  
Gombe State University  
[maxambari@gmail.com](mailto:maxambari@gmail.com)  
08036141429

**Dr. Sammani Hassan Hussain**

Department of Arabic, Federal  
University of Kasherer, Gombe  
[hassansammani84@gmail.com](mailto:hassansammani84@gmail.com)

**Hafsata Ado Ahmad**

Department of English and Linguistics,  
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State.  
[hafsatahmad24@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatahmad24@gmail.com)

**Dr Takim Ajom Okongor**

Department of English and Linguistics,  
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State.  
08037945071  
[takimajomokongor@gmail.com](mailto:takimajomokongor@gmail.com)

**Bunmi Balogun-Oguns**

Department of English and Literary  
Studies, Federal University Lokoja  
[Bunmi.balogun@fulokoja.edu.ng](mailto:Bunmi.balogun@fulokoja.edu.ng)  
08169096071

**Ladan Nujir**

Department of English, Faculty of Arts  
and Social Sciences, Gombe State  
University

**Patience Haya Dakup**

Department of Language and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University, Gombe State  
[patiencehakup05@gmail.com](mailto:patiencehakup05@gmail.com)  
**08066512889**

**Vera Anap Aaron**

Department of English, University of  
Jos, Jos Nigeria.  
[aaronv@unijos.edu.ng](mailto:aaronv@unijos.edu.ng)

**Sandra K. J. Simon**

Department of English, University of Jos,  
Jos, Nigeria.  
[sandrakjsimon@gmail.com](mailto:sandrakjsimon@gmail.com)



**Samuel Edem**

Department of English, Nigeria Police  
Academy, Wudil Kano  
[dmsamuel19@gmail.com](mailto:dmsamuel19@gmail.com)

**Fatima Bawa**

Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria,  
Kaduna State  
[fatimabawa@ymail.com](mailto:fatimabawa@ymail.com)  
08036434451

**Fatima Muhammad Mansur**

Gombe State Ministry of Education,  
Gombe State  
[fatimamuhhammadmansur@gmail.com](mailto:fatimamuhhammadmansur@gmail.com)  
07036928762

**Hadiza Musa Amshi**

Yobe State University, Yobe State  
[Hadizaamshi2@gmail.com](mailto:Hadizaamshi2@gmail.com)

**Dr Takim Ajom Okongor**

Department of English and Linguistics, Faculty  
of Arts and Social Sciences,  
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State.  
08037945071

**Hafsat Ado Ahmad**

Department of English and Linguistics,  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,  
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State.  
[hafsatahmad24@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatahmad24@gmail.com)

**Adamu Yusuf Fari**

[Ayfari763@gmail.com](mailto:Ayfari763@gmail.com)  
Department of Languages and Linguistics  
Gombe State University  
08140103030;

**Hadiza Musa Amshi**

[Hadizaamshi2@gmail.com](mailto:Hadizaamshi2@gmail.com)  
Department of Languages and Linguistics  
Gombe State University

**Amos, Michael**

[amos22367@gmail.com](mailto:amos22367@gmail.com)  
Modibbo Adama University, Yola

**Kabiru Zubairu**

[kabeeruzubairu@gmail.com](mailto:kabeeruzubairu@gmail.com)  
08149396464

**Prof. Audee T. Giwa**

Department of English and Drama,  
Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University,  
Kaduna.  
[08036000928, [audee436@gmail.com](mailto:audee436@gmail.com)]

**Amina Nasiru Haruna**

Department of English and Drama,  
Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University,  
Kaduna.  
08033334218, [aminasaj158@gmail.com](mailto:aminasaj158@gmail.com)

**Naomi ALU**

Department of Languages and Literary  
Studies, Babcock University  
Ilishan Remo, Ogun State  
[alu0003@pg.babcock.edu.ng](mailto:alu0003@pg.babcock.edu.ng)  
+234 903 376 9496

**Ngozi Gift OKATA**

Department of Languages and Literary  
Studies, Babcock University  
Ilishan Remo, Ogun State  
[okatag@babcock.edu.ng](mailto:okatag@babcock.edu.ng)  
+234 806 375 9800

**Prof Bulus Wayar**

Department of Language and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University  
[buluswayar@yahoo.com](mailto:buluswayar@yahoo.com)  
0906 561 7731



**Kabiru Zubairu**

Department of Language and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University  
[kabeeruzubairu@gmail.com](mailto:kabeeruzubairu@gmail.com)  
08149396464

**Ibrahim Bala Kanti**

Department of English and Drama,  
Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University  
[ibrahimbkanti@kasu.edu.ng](mailto:ibrahimbkanti@kasu.edu.ng)

**Musa sabo**

[musasabo36@gmail.com](mailto:musasabo36@gmail.com)  
08022766769

**Hannatu Fibemi Makka**

English Unit  
School of Management Science and  
Technology, Federal Polytechnic Bali,  
Taraba State  
[hannatufemakka@gmail.com](mailto:hannatufemakka@gmail.com)

**Habibu Sule**

Department of General Studies, Abubakar  
Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi  
[habibusule@gmail.com](mailto:habibusule@gmail.com)  
08035430572

**Nkeiruka Esther Gordons**

Department of General Studies, Abubakar  
Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi  
[nkeirukagordons@gmail.com](mailto:nkeirukagordons@gmail.com)  
08128887914

**Muhammad Dayyib Auwal, PhD**

Department of Nigerian Languages,  
Northwest University, Kano  
[tayyibtayyibabba@gmail.com](mailto:tayyibtayyibabba@gmail.com)  
+23408037340691

**Yusuf Ahmed Gwarzo, PhD**

Department of Nigerian Languages,  
Northwest University, Kano  
[aygwarzo@yumsuk.edu.ng](mailto:aygwarzo@yumsuk.edu.ng)  
+23408068028076

**Bilkisu Abubakar Arabi**

Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University  
[bilkisuarabi7@gsu.edu.ng](mailto:bilkisuarabi7@gsu.edu.ng)  
07037713059

**Professor Maureen Amaka Azuike**

University of Jos  
08037032322

**Professor Jeff Godwin Doki**

University of Jos  
[dokijeff@yahoo.com](mailto:dokijeff@yahoo.com)  
+2348034529344

**Lamido Muhammad Tukur**

PG24/PHD/LANG/1004  
Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University  
08036535202  
[lamiid@live.com](mailto:lamiid@live.com)

**Adi Shimoudi Jonathan**

Department of English and Literary  
Studies, Federal University Wukari,  
Taraba State, Nigeria.  
Phone No.: 08038569967  
Email: [shimoudijonathan@gmail.com](mailto:shimoudijonathan@gmail.com) &  
[adis@fuwukari.edu.ng](mailto:adis@fuwukari.edu.ng)

**Rasika Shiranthi Samanmalee  
Somasundara**

Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University  
[rshiranthi@gsu.edu.ng](mailto:rshiranthi@gsu.edu.ng)/[rshiranthi@gmail.com](mailto:rshiranthi@gmail.com)  
+2347036178704

**Abba kuka**

[kakaabba31@gmail.com](mailto:kakaabba31@gmail.com)  
08029166358



**Khadijah Saleh Abdu**

Department of Language and Linguistics,  
Gombe State University  
[ummi25th@gsu.edu](mailto:ummi25th@gsu.edu)  
07063122584

مختار منصور محمد

جامعة سعاد زنغر، ولاية بوتني - نيجيريا  
[mmmuhammad@sazu.edu.ng](mailto:mmmuhammad@sazu.edu.ng)  
08062688078/09075556767

**Dr. Aminu Suleiman**

School for Continuing Education,  
Department of English Education  
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola  
08034821236

**Bello Alim Babi**

School for Administrative and Business  
Studies, Department of General Studies  
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola  
[alimbabi@gmail.com](mailto:alimbabi@gmail.com)  
08039470634

**Muhammad Umar**

Department of Religious Studies, Faculty  
of Arts and Social Sciences. Gombe State  
University  
[abuannas1973@gmail.com](mailto:abuannas1973@gmail.com)  
+2347036826684

**Ismail Bala**

[ibgarba@gmail.com](mailto:ibgarba@gmail.com)  
08065380091



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Effect of Home-Model on the Spoken English of the Nigerian Child <b>Bunmi Balogun-Oguns</b>	<b>1-14</b>
Phonological Variation of English Loanwords in Duala Dictionary <b>Abubakar Abba Kaka (PhD) and Musa Sabo</b>	<b>15-30</b>
Societal Revitalisation: A Post-Colonial Reading of Tor Iorapuu's <i>April 1421</i> <b>Emmanuel Bunduga Tyogema</b>	<b>31-39</b>
Female Empowerment and Liberation of the Mind in Aiwanose Odafen's <i>Tomorrow I Become a Woman</i> <b>Fatima Bukar Abba</b>	<b>40-50</b>
Language Shift, Maintenance and Death in Hadejia Emirate: A Sociolinguistic Survey <b>Bashir Uba Ibrahim, Ph.D.</b>	<b>51-68</b>
Literary Exploration of Forced Marriage: a Postcolonial Feminist Analysis of Zulu Sofola's <i>Wedlock of the Gods</i> and Ola Rotimi's <i>our Husband has Gone Mad Again</i> <b>Ladan Nujir</b>	<b>69-80</b>
Poverty as Offspring of Corruption: An Analysis of Leadership Failure and Militancy in <i>Night Rain</i> by Chris Anyokwu <b>Patience Haye Dakup</b>	<b>81-92</b>
Oral Prose Narratives in Green: An Ecocritical Reading of Mwaghavul Folktales <b>Vera Anap Aaron And Sandra K. J. Simon</b>	<b>93-106</b>
Language and Hate Discourse: A Pragmatic Investigation of Sam Omasetye's' <i>From Don to Done'</i> : <b>Samuel Edem</b>	<b>107-127</b>
Artificial Intelligence In Islamic Media and Da'Wah: Opportunities, Ethical Challenges and the Role of Maqasid Al-Shariah <b>Muhammad Umar</b>	<b>128-145</b>
Phonologic al Variation of English Loanwords in Duala Dictionary <b>Abba kuka and Musa Sabo</b>	<b>146-163</b>
A contrastive analysis of kanuri and Kurama language sound system <b>Dr. Sammani Hassan Hussain</b>	<b>164-183</b>



Analysis of Move Operation in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

**Hafsat Ado Ahmad and Dr Takim Ajom Okongor**

**184-202**

Linguistic Choices and Process Types in Governor Inuwa Yahaya's Inaugural Speech

**Adamu Yusuf Fari, Hadiza Musa Amshi, and Amos, Michael**

**203- 214**

Creativity in Students' Slang Usage

**Nasiru Musa and Juliet David Aluke**

**215-225**

Logico-Semantic Relations in Abubakar Othman's Palm of Time: Systemic Functional Analysis

**Fatima Bawa, Fatima Muhammad Mansur and Hadiza Musa Amshi**

**226-235**

Narrative Discourse Analysis of Qur'an and Hadith Using Labov and Waletzky (1972) Schema

**Kabiru Zubairu**

**236-252**

Examining Lacanian Ideation of Patriarchy in Lola Shoneyin's *the Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*

**Prof. Audee T. Giwa and Amina Nasiru Haruna**

**253-262**

Pragmatic Implicatures of Animal Metaphors in Selected Nigerian Pidgin English Proverbs

**Naomi ALU and Ngozi Gift OKATA**

**263-280**

Comparative Analysis Of Stylistic Deviation Of Social Roles Register In Terrorism Discourse: A Case Study Of Joe Biden's And Sanusi Lamido Sanusi's CNN Interviews

**Prof Bulus Wayar and Kabiru Zubairu**

**281-291**

Exploring The Concept of Hybridity and Mimicry in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

**Khadijah Saleh Abdu**

**292-302**

Womanist Perspectives on Female Struggle and Survival in Razinat T. Mohammed's *Habiba and Other Stories*

**Hannatu Fibemi Makka and Ibrahim Bala Kanti**

**303-312**

ظاهرة الموازنة في التراث العربي والنيجيري: دراسة وصفية

**مختار منصور محمد**

**313-330**

A Linguistic Stylistic Analysis of the Inaugural and Independence Day Speeches of General Ibrahim Babangida and President Muhammadu Buhari: A Comparative Approach

**Habibu Sule and Nkeiruka Esther Gordons**

**331-341**



An Analysis of Urhobo Language Meronyms

**Muhammad Dayyib Auwal, PhD and Yusuf Ahmed Gwarzo, PhD** 342-351

Authorial Pessimism in Northern Nigerian Female Character Portrayal: A Study of Razinat T. Mohammed's Habiba

**Bilkisu Abubakar Arabi, Professor Maureen Amaka Azuike, and Professor Jeff Godwin Doki** 352-370

Exploring The Island's History, Cultural Heritage And Aftermaths of Colonialism in Michael Ondaatje's Anil's Ghost

**Rasika Shiranthi Samanmalee Somasundara and Professor Jeff Godwin Doki** 371-389

Pragmatic Strategies, Politeness Forms, and Power Relations in Conflict Talk: A Linguistic Analysis of the "I Am Not a Fool, Sir" Interaction in Nigerian Institutional Discourse.

**Lamido Muhammad Tukur** 390-396

A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness In Nasir El-Rufai's Speech and Social Media Users' Responses: Polite Language as a Tool for Social Inclusion and Sustainable Development

**Adi Shimoudi Jonathan** 397-414

Rhetorical Patterns in Political News Reporting: A Corpus-Driven Genre and Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Newspapers

**Bello Alim Babi And Dr. Aminu Suleiman** 415-428

A Review of: *The Songs of a Bard* by A. I. Sabo (Lagos: Something for Everybody Ventures, 2021, 49 pages)

**Ismail Bala** 429-433

A Review of: *Songs of Silence*

**Abdullahi Ismaila** 434-437



## Womanist Perspectives on Female Struggle and Survival in Razinat T. Mohammed's *Habiba* and Other Stories

**Hannatu Fibemi Makka**

English Unit

School of Management Science and Technology, Federal Polytechnic Bali,  
Taraba State

[hannatufemakka@gmail.com](mailto:hannatufemakka@gmail.com)

and

**Ibrahim Bala Kanti**

Department of English and Drama, Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University

[ibrahimbkanti@kasu.edu.ng](mailto:ibrahimbkanti@kasu.edu.ng)

---

### Abstract

*This paper examines female struggle and survival in Razinat T. Mohammed's Habiba and the short stories "Laila" and "Sterile Water" using womanism as a framework. The study argues that Mohammed presents women as victims of patriarchy but also as strong individuals who struggle for dignity, respect, and survival. The paper discusses major issues such as lack of sisterhood among women, preference for male children, objectification, forced marriage, and violence. It shows that women sometimes contribute to their own oppression by supporting harmful cultural beliefs. At the same time, the stories emphasize education, economic independence, unity among women, and cooperation between men and women as possible solutions. The study concludes that Mohammed's works reflect the core values of African womanism, which focus on survival, dignity, family, and communal harmony rather than separation from men.*

**Keywords:** Womanism, Female Struggle, Survival, Patriarchy, Northern Nigeria

---

### Introduction

African literature has played an important role in reflecting the social realities of African societies. In many early African literary works written by men, women were often presented in limited roles such as wives, mothers, and silent supporters of male authority. Although writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka made significant

contributions to African literature, critics observe that female characters were frequently confined to traditional and domestic spaces (Davies, 1986). These portrayals reflected the patriarchal structure of many African societies where men occupied positions of power in the family and community. However, as more women began to write and publish their works, African



literature started to witness a shift in the representation of women. Writers such as Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Nawal El Saadawi began to challenge patriarchal narratives by presenting women as active subjects rather than passive objects. Their works highlight issues such as forced marriage, economic dependency, gender inequality, domestic violence, and lack of education.

These writers insist that women's voices and experiences are central to understanding African society. While many of these works have been discussed under feminist theory, scholars have argued that Western feminism does not always fully capture African women's realities. African societies are largely communal, and relationships between men and women are often built around cooperation, family continuity, and cultural values. As a result, African gender theories tend to emphasize negotiation and balance rather than confrontation. For example, Obioma Nnaemeka (2004) proposes "nego-feminism," which stresses negotiation and compromise in addressing gender issues. Similarly, Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (1985) explains that African womanism focuses on family-centeredness, motherhood, and harmony between men and women.

The concept of womanism was first popularized by Alice Walker in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983). Walker defines a womanist as a woman committed to the survival and wholeness of her entire

community, both male and female. Unlike radical strands of feminism that sometimes promote separation from men, womanism encourages cooperation while still challenging injustice and oppression. It recognizes the importance of culture, motherhood, spirituality, and communal survival. African scholars later adapted womanism to suit African realities, making it a relevant framework for analyzing African women's literature. It is within this context that this paper examines *Habiba*, "Laila," and "Sterile Water" by Razinat T. Mohammed. Mohammed's stories are set within the socio-cultural environment of Northern Nigeria, where religion, tradition, and patriarchy strongly shape women's lives. Her female characters experience forced marriage, domestic violence, preference for male children, economic hardship, and limited access to education. However, they are not portrayed as completely helpless. Instead, they demonstrate resilience, courage, and the desire to improve their conditions.

In *Habiba*, the author exposes the practice of forced marriage and the commodification of young girls. Habiba's dream of education is sacrificed due to family pressure and economic challenges. The story criticizes traditions that treat women as property while also showing the emotional and psychological effects of such practices. In "Laila," the focus shifts to the importance of education and dignity within marriage. Laila insists that a woman needs education and self-respect despite



opposition and abuse. "Sterile Water" presents the economic struggles of women who are left to shoulder family responsibilities when men fail to provide. Through Kulu's determination to survive and care for her children, the story highlights women's strength and resourcefulness.

These stories reflect key womanist concerns. They challenge injustice but do not promote hostility between men and women. Instead, they call for reform, understanding, and shared responsibility. Mohammed portrays both oppressive and supportive male characters, suggesting that change requires cooperation rather than division. This balanced approach aligns with womanist thought, which emphasizes survival, dignity, and communal harmony (Ogunyemi, 1985; Walker, 1983). Therefore, this paper argues that *Habiba* and the selected short stories can be effectively analyzed through a womanist perspective. By foregrounding women's struggles while still valuing family and community, Mohammed presents a vision of empowerment rooted in cultural reality. Her work contributes to ongoing discussions about gender, tradition, and social transformation in Northern Nigerian literature.

### **Circumventing Sisterhood in "Habiba" and "Laila"**

One of the five major tenets of womanism is sisterhood. Womanism believes in the sense of kinship that unites every black/African woman to

another. It is grounded in the knowledge that African women are linked together by the same bond of oppression that permeates their existence and so the struggle for freedom and liberation becomes futile when the same struggle for the emancipation of women is being thwarted by women themselves through their cruel and inhuman acts towards their own gender. The attitude and response of Hamsatu, Kande and Saude shows that patriarchy negates the struggle against women emancipation and oppression. The act of cruelty among women circumvents the bond of sisterhood as it helps to strengthen the bonds of patriarchy and the continuity of the oppression of women in the society. In Mohammed's *Habiba*, Hamsatu chooses to continue the vicious circle of hatred that was meted out as a result of her inability to bear more sons for her husband "Hamsatu had herself borne six girls five of which died in infancy, leaving only Maimuna and an only son, Saleh...her fears had been her husband's name would terminate if he did not have sons in his lineage to carry on his family name" (7). For someone who has lived an experience similar to Kande, one would expect empathy and kindness from Hamsatu towards her young daughter-in-law; instead, she is unhappy with Kande for giving birth to another female child instead of a male child. Hence she registers her disgust and disappointment at Kande "this woman will fill your house with women, she had said with disgust" (6). Apart from this statement being hostile towards



Kande, it also conveys her disdain for female children and treats Kande and her daughters without affection. Her negative attitude towards Kande leaves the young mother heartbroken and makes her question why Hamsatu hated her “why should this woman hate me so?” (6). Instead of trying to make her son’s marriage with Kande work, she becomes a clog in the wheel of their happiness. Her presence in the home fills everyone with bitterness and unhappiness. Hamsatu is further responsible for Habiba’s unhappiness and ill-fated marriage to Mallam Zubairu. She begins Habiba’s marriage processes that end Habiba in Mallam Zubairu’s house without Habiba’s consent, “even Habiba did not have the slightest clue as to what had been happening in the house since the first day that Mallam Zubairu stepped foot in the house” (58). The quotation can be seen as utter disregard of Habiba’s individuality and reason enough to make her unhappy. Hamsatu’s reason for waiting to marry Habiba out is to prevent the family from shame. She tells Sadia, “I don’t want Saleh to make mistake by allowing that daughter of Kande’s to grow wild like Abubakar’s daughter who brought shame to her family by getting pregnant out of wedlock: all in the name of going to school” (43).

Hamsatu represents the symbol of patriarchy in the sense that she creates an atmosphere of hostility and transfers her pent up aggression of her inability to have more sons on her son’s wife. She complains and

makes the poor woman miserable by her attitude, and words.

Mohammed also portrays the theme of cruelty among women in “Laila”, showing how jealousy can foster disunity among women in polygamous situation. This is illustrated in Saude’s attitude towards Laila when she becomes her co-wife. Saude’s dislike for Laila pushes her to incite Mohammadu the security guard to disregard and disrespect Laila. Hence the reason for Mohammadu’s disregard for Laila’s instruction to split firewood and his subsequent reply to Laila thus, “... you have no respect for people at all. I am a man you know, with a wife like you at home. So I am not your errand boy at all...Do you understand?” (54). Laila discovers Saude is behind Mohammadu’s utter disregard for her when “she turned in time to catch a glimpse of Saude’s disappearing shadow...” (55). The incident between Saude and Laila depicts disunity among women, Saude allows jealousy to influence a negative attitude towards a fellow woman, instead of supporting Laila’s quest for education and economic independence, she takes to jealousy and encourages disregard from men to Laila, hence causing disunity between them. Her actions towards Laila depict cruelty among women. Saude represents women who maliciously sabotage other women whom they think are better than them. Instead of improving herself as a woman to become better and self-reliant like her co-wife Laila, she goes out of her way to cause hurt and pain to her co-wife.



The three episodes involving Hamsatu and Kande, Hamsatu and Habiba, Kande and her daughters, and Saude and Laila evidently demonstrate instances where women are active oppressors of members of their own gender. It is ironical to note that it is women who pick up the oppressive tendencies of patriarchy. Mohammed's *Habiba* and "Laila" amply portray the otherwise hidden fact that lack of bond among women can double the impact of oppression on women, such that while they are being oppressed by the men, they also aid and abet the men to further the cause of patriarchy which in most cases is to the detriment of the women. By such portrayal Mohammed tends to shift blames from the patriarchy to women, her depiction more directly blames women for some of the problems they face, thereby condemning cruelty which brings disunity among them. Mohammed opines that it is not only the men that need to change their attitude and thinking, women of all cultures and religions need to drop malicious and vindictive ideologies that entrench the negative aspects of patriarchy and continue the oppression of women.

### **Motherhood under Patriarchy: The Pressure to Bear Sons**

Women of Africa find their femininity evaluated in terms of their capability of mothering (preferably males). The ability or inability of a woman to conceive is blamed on the woman. The ability to give birth to female children is considered as a 'misfortune' in the community.

The society considers giving birth to only female children as not good enough and sometimes, it is wished they were never born as in the case of Kande who should be very happy she has female children. This is not so because, for Kande, there is nothing victorious about having female offspring. Herreas on is that she cannot afford to bring up female offspring when the culture demands from hermale offspring. Hamsatu, who is a symbol of that culture which looks down upon female children, is not amused by such an un called for gesture of having another girl child. Kande Metaphorically describes her new born daughter as her "bundle of unhappiness" (7), giving a clear insight of the mood and state of her mind as a result of the girl's birth. Another thing to note, because Kande's new born daughter brings her unhappiness, she carelessly drops her on the bed from where she falls on the concrete floor leading to the infants tragic death (8). The death of the child serves as a point of recognition for Kande who suddenly realizes the negative effect of her attitude and that of her mother-in-law on her innocent child. Hamsatu's meanness weighs Kande down and makes her not to see the good in her new born daughter; she is envious of women who give birth to male children and abhors women desperate for female children. Her question, "what can they possibly want with female children?" (7), confirms the foregoing. The use of the above rhetoric question underscores the effect of Kande's plight on her. The rippling effect of



Hamsatu's mean attitude towards Kande is seen to affect her new born daughter in a tragic manner. In addition, Hamsatu does not show concern for the death of the infant. When she hears of her death from Saleh, she makes the following comment: "Cheer up... it is for the best, that is to say, if the child is truly dead. God the giver has taken back his gift... it was a frail gift anyway" (3). Hamsatu's comment indicates, the way female children are viewed in a patriarchal society, even after the death of the child, she doesn't grieve for the child's loss or even try to comfort the bereaved mother, she sees its death as a blessing in disguise from her comment to her son Saleh. Kande demands divorce from Saleh (3) and goes on to marry Sabiu with whom she gives birth to a male child. From this foregoing, it is important to note that the sex of a child is not the fault of the woman as the man is responsible for that but because of ignorance; the woman gets blamed for having female children.

It is obvious from the above that Mohammed does not prescribe a separatist approach to solving women's plights with men, her approach obviously seeks a cooperative union between the men and women in order to peacefully co-exist in the society. Hence, Kande is not completely done with men despite her bad experience with Saleh; she leaves him but does not stay off men "fourteen days after the burial of the baby, Kande asked Saleh for a divorce which he gave in three pronouncements" (13). Her marriage to Sabiu whom she finds by all means

a more loving husband (13) reveals Mohammed's movement towards harmony and progress and the tolerant ideology engrained in womanism. Kande's delivery of a male child with Sabiu is also a vindication of the women folk who are always blamed for the sex of the baby if it is a female child as in the case of Kande.

### **Women's Struggles Against Oppression and Objectification in "Habiba" and "Laila"**

Womanism recognizes the history of oppression and violence that black women have faced in the past; it also recognizes that women are survivors in a world that is oppressive on multiple platforms, in doing that, it depicts the lived experiences so as to give validity to the contribution of the past, present and future in their resistance against patriarchy. Examples of this oppression are; commodification and objectification of women, and violence against women. Oppression of women through Commodification and Objectification according to Evangelia Papadaki "is a notion central to feminist theory" (n.pg). Papadaki further defines objectification "as the seeing and/or treating a person, usually a woman as an object" (n.pg). Martha Nussbaun identifies seven features that are involved in the idea of treating a person as an object (Papadaki n.pg), enlisted below are five of the features relevant to this study;



1. That the person is treated as a tool for the objectifier's purposes.
2. That the treatment of the person is one lacking autonomy.
3. That the person is seen as interchangeable with other objects.
4. That the person is treated as something that is owned by another person.
5. That the person is treated as an object whose experience and feelings need not be taken into account.

Rea Langton also adds three features that are involved in the idea of treating people like objects. One of them is relevant to the study, that is, "the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak" (Papadaki n.pg).

The theme of commodification and objectification of women is evidently portrayed in Mohammed's *Habiba* and "Laila". In *Habiba*, Habiba's father uses her as settlement to offset his debt to Mallam Zubairu and who on the other hand uses her as a piece of object or property one purchases for use as deemed fit. When Saleh is unable to pay off the six hundred thousand Naira (N 600, 000) loans he owes Mallam Zubairu, he decides to use Habiba as a last resort to pay off the loan. He therefore concludes that "a sacrifice or price has to be made" (126) and makes up his mind to give Habiba out to Mallam Zubairu, In this regard, Habiba is transformed into a commodity and used for trade. She is used as collateral to offset an unpaid

debt or ransom paid to set her father free. Her value as a girl is monetized. Consequently, Mallam Zubairu who marries Habiba also treats her as his property, an object he purchases for satisfying his unbridled sexual desires. His assumption below proves his intention for marrying Habiba: "Old age was something dreadful and a constant reminder of the fact that one was on the verge of expiration. To handle that, he needed a blossoming youth that he found in the girl, Habiba. The freshness of youth was to him, magical and as the saying goes, 'an old wine put in a new bottle; was all that one needed to spice up one's life. His life would do with some rejuvenation that marrying Habiba promised" (116). The quotation reveals Mallam Zubairu's selfish intent for waiting to marry Habiba. He does not put into consideration Habiba's feelings and wants; all he cares for is the purpose for which he intends to marry her and how he intends to use her as an object for self-gratification. Due to this commodification of the girl child as an item of exchange for a bride price between two families, she also loses some privileges including formal education because her upbringing is tailored toward straining her to become a submissive wife within the culture.

Laila's first husband marries her and demands that she remains at home to be at his beck and call without putting her own aspirations into consideration. This effectively makes her an object for manipulation. Laila's first husband does not approve of her continuing her



education after they got married; he intends to keep her in his house as a piece of object he buys to serve his comfort and purpose. "... he did not approve of married women going to school instead of keeping their houses and being there whenever they are needed by their husbands who could pop in at any time of the day" (52). This quotation proves Salisu's perception of women as commodities or objects that can be manipulated by men for selfish gains.

In both *Habiba* and "Laila", Mohammed depicts how women are used as 'things' or commodities for exchange and consumption by men. Her depiction shows that the objectification of women is at odds with the concept of womanism which seeks respect for the women as individual entities. Perceiving women as mere objects has a dehumanizing effect on their personality and allows men to use them as inanimate objects that exist to be only manipulated. Hence *Habiba* is used as collateral by her father to settle his debt to mallam Zubairu, who purchases her for the purpose of rejuvenating his old age and *Laila* is married solely to be at the beck and call of her husband whenever he needs her. All three situations do not put the needs of the woman into consideration; the woman simply exists as consumable for the men. These cases clearly depict objectification of women.

Furthermore, Mohammed depicts violence against women in *Habiba* and "Laila" as a result of protests by women against their objectification.

Mohammed shows how men assault women physically and use forceful means to indulge sexually with them simply because the men want or desire it. *Habiba* resolves after her marriage to Mallam Zubairu not to give in her purity (156) and allow him to take away her innocence. She resists Mallam Zubairu's sexual advances until, "he could no longer bear what he thought was her insolence slapped her hard on the face, she saw white light engulf the room, and that was it. In a sadistic mood, he tore through her flesh, pouring his stored up bile into her stomach. Moments later, when she opened her eyes, her laps were covered with his seed that was yet to dry and had an itchy sensation. She attempted to sit up but felt a weight around her waist. She could not explain what it was... she was in pain. She wondered how an old man like Mallam Zubairu could do that to her" (156-157). This incidence confirms the perpetuation of sexual violence against women. In order for Mallam Zubairu to satisfy his desires, he resorts to physical assault which weakens *Habiba*'s defenses and gives him the leverage to take sex forcefully from her. *Habiba* further confirms the perpetration of sexual violence against her when she says that Mallam Zubairu "had raped her each time she was asked to visit him" (168). This is evidently suggestive of violence against women.

It is observable that *Habiba* is a self-aware and assertive character, this is seen in the way she resists Mallam Zubairu's advances each time he invites her. Her resistance always



leads to sexual abuse (168), yet she proves to be a character that knows her right and is ready to always fight for it. By this, Mohammed seems to be calling on girls in Habiba's situation to wake up, stand up and fight for their freedom from such "desecrated monsters" (120) like Mallam Zubairu, and not to sheepishly submit to their wish in fear as if they do not have dreams, rights and wills that need to be lived like every other human being.

In depicting violence in "Laila", Salisu who disapproves of Laila's education is angry with her for leaving their ten months old baby with a neighbor to go to school. He returns home before her and is infuriated by her absence and crying baby in need for food. When she returns, he angrily beats her up, "...he landed a hard blow on Laila's face, sending her to the floor" (53). Salisu's action towards Laila also confirms the perpetration of violence against women. It is important to note that Laila does not regret being beaten by Salisu for insisting education (53), this attitude suggests the womanist attribute of self-sufficiency and confidence of women towards being self-assertive and reliant. The womanist philosophy is further seen in Laila's acceptance of men in spite of the way Salisu ill-treats and divorces her. Her decision to marry Ahmed after her bad experience in her first marriage proves that her quest is not to hate men but to pursue a cause she believes in which is the need to be educated and self-reliant. In her pursuit for self-actualization and the need to have more and be more than

a just a housewife at the beck and call of her husband, she still wants to be married and stay married. She understands like every woman with a dream, that she must have the will and desire to achieve it. Importantly though, is the desire for the men they love to be cooperative and supportive of them in their pursuit as the lack of it makes the struggle for self-actualization for most women a herculean task.

### Conclusion

This study has shown that *Habiba*, "Laila," and "Sterile Water" present the realities of women's lives in Northern Nigeria in a clear and powerful way. Through her female characters, Razinat T. Mohammed highlights serious problems such as forced marriage, son preference, domestic violence, poverty, and the treatment of women as property. These challenges reflect the strong influence of patriarchy in society. However, the stories also show that women are not helpless. Characters like Habiba, Laila, and Kande demonstrate courage and determination even in difficult situations. They seek education, personal growth, and better living conditions. Their actions show resilience and a desire for self-respect. The study also reveals that oppression is sometimes strengthened by women themselves when they internalize patriarchal values. Characters like Hamsatu and Saude weaken female unity through jealousy and harsh attitudes. This lack of sisterhood makes women's struggles harder. The paper



therefore stresses the importance of unity and support among women. The stories do not promote hatred or separation from men. Instead, they suggest that real change can only happen through cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect between men and women. Marriage and family are not rejected, but they must be built on fairness and dignity. Mohammed's works offer a balanced and culturally grounded vision of women's empowerment. They call for education, unity, economic independence, and social reform while maintaining the importance of family and community. Through a womanist perspective, the texts affirm that true liberation lies in dignity, resilience, and collective survival.

## References

- Razinat T. Mohammed. (2019). *Habiba and other stories*.
- Davies, C. B. (1986). *Ngambika: Studies of women in African literature*. Africa World Press.
- Nnaemeka, O. (1997). *The politics of (m)othering: Womanhood, identity, and resistance in African literature*. Routledge.
- Ogunyemi, C. O. (1985). Womanism: The dynamics of the contemporary Black female novel in English. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 11(1), 63–80.
- Walker, A. (1983). *In search of our mothers' gardens: Womanist prose*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Oyèrónké, O. (1995). *The politics of postcolonial culture*. Routledge.
- Gubar, S. (1982). *Writing with a vengeance: Essays in feminist literary criticism*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Obioma, N. (2004). Nego-feminism: Theorizing, practicing, and pruning Africa's way. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 29(2), 357–385.
- Oyewumi, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Mama, A. (1995). *Beyond the masks: Race, gender and subjectivity*. Routledge.
- Mohanty, C. T. (1991). *Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.