

Re-inventing Islamic Civilization in the Sudanic Belt: The Role of Sheikh

Usman Dan Fodio

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Abstract: Islamic civilization has left a great impact in Sub-Saharan Africa as a result of several Islamic Empires that existed in the region. Empires like Ghana (790–1076), Kanem/Bornu (700–1376), Mali (1230–1600) and Songhay (1340–1591) were clear indications of the presence of Islamic civilization in the region. However, as time goes, these Islamic empires collapsed, and Islamic civilization declined due to the widespread of vices and illiteracy in the region. From the beginning of the 18th century these practices were partly regarded as part of Islam. So, in response to this depravity, a revivalism and reform movement was organized and led by Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio (1755–1817). This reform movement led to the re-invention of Islamic civilization and establishment of Sokoto Caliphate in the present day of northern Nigeria. This paper discusses the role of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio in reviving and re-inventing Islamic civilization in the Sudanic Belt. The paper analyses his career, thoughts and intellectual activities. It concludes by highlighting some of the books he authored in defence of Islamic civilization.

Key words: Islamic Civilization, Dan Fodio, Africa

1. Background

The presence of Islam in the Sudanic Belt dates back to the eighth century, when the ruling elite in the Kingdom of Ghana accepted Islam and worked tirelessly to spread it among the local indigenes. As Islam spread in the Savannah region, commercial links were established with North Africa and other parts of the world, especially some parts of the Arab world. Trade and commerce also paved way for the introduction of new elements of material culture, and made possible the intellectual development which naturally followed the introduction and spread of literacy. A number of Islamic empires were established in the region and a good amount of scholarship and intellectual activities were firmly rooted. The Islamization of the region could be traced back to Ghana empire (790–1076), which was Islamized and contributed immensely to the spread of Islam. Another Islamic empire in the region was that of Kanem/Bornu (700–1376), which produced a large number of Muslim scholars. Before the collapse of this empire, other Islamic empires emerged in the north, which were known as Mali Empire (1230–1600) and Songhay Empire (1340–1591). All these Islamic empires and city states were clear indications on how Islam got momentum and acceptance from both the rulers and the ruled.

However, as time goes, these Islamic empires collapsed and the true teachings of Islam were mixed with

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local cultures due to the widespread of vices and illiteracy in the region. From the beginning of the 18th century these deviant practices were often regarded as being part of Islam. This, however, necessitated reaction from various Islamic scholars, such as Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio with the intention of reforming and reviving Islamic civilization in the region to its original purity.

In the early 19th century in Hausa land, a reform and Jihad movement was organized and led by one of the prominent Islamic scholars of the century, namely Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio (1755–1817). This reform movement led to the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate in the present day of northern Nigeria. This paper discusses the role of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio in reviving and re-inventing Islamic civilization in the Sudanic Belt. The paper analyses his career, thoughts and intellectual activities. It concludes by highlighting some of the books he authored in defence of Islamic civilization.

2. Dan Fodio's Life and Education

Usman Dan fodio, the founder of Sokoto Caliphate, a religious leader, writer and Islamic promoter was from an urbanized ethnic Fulani living in Hausaland in what is today northern Nigeria. He was born in *Maratta*, a town in the Hausa state of *Gobir* on Sunday 15th December, 1754. Not long after his birth, Usman's family moved to *Degel*, a town of reasonable distance, still within the State of *Gobir*, where Usman spent his childhood. The traditional Muslim educational system in this society demanded children at very early age to learn the Qur'an in addition to reading and writing. Shehu Usman no doubt went through this system perhaps in a stricter manner (Bugaje U., 1979).

According to Iraqi A. A. 1983, Dan Fodio started his education very early where he memorized the holy Qur'an under the supervision of his father, who was himself a renowned scholar. He later studied many Islamic books in the Hausaland from various scholars such as Sheikh Jibril bin Umar in *Agades* (Bugaje U. M., 1979). Subsequently, he moved to other scholars in search of knowledge traveling from one teacher to another in a traditional way of learning that was dominant in the region, reading extensively in the Islamic sciences (Sharif M., 2008).

However, his teachers, as reported by his brother Abdullahi bin Fodio, were too many to be recorded (Iraqi A. A., 1963). Prominent among them, after his father, was Shaikh Abd al-Rahman b. Hammada who taught him syntax and the science of grammar. Another pious and upright scholar was Usman Binduri, who was in fact Shehu's uncle and mentor at the same time. Binduri did not only teach him but influenced him remarkably. Yet another uncle of his was a man of reputable knowledge, Muhammad Sambo who taught him al-Mukhtasar of Khalil. Next in the list of his teachers was Jibril b. Umar, a Tuareg scholar of high learning and revolutionary zeal who had contact with the Middle Eastern Muslim world through his pilgrimage. Much of Shehu Usman's revolutionary zeal has been traced to this teacher whose Shehu himself respected so much. Hajj Muhammad b. Ra-ji and Ahmad b. Muhammad were yet other uncles of Shehu who taught him Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Tafsīr of the Qur'ān respectively. Moreover, Shehu also attended the classes of one Hāshim al-Zamfari where he studied Tafsīr of the Qur'ān again (El-Masri F. H., 1963).

In 1774 Dan Fodio began his active life as a teacher, and for the next twelve years he combined study with teaching and preaching in *Kebbi* and *Gobir*, followed by further five years in *Zamfara*. He focused, in his preaching, on religious, social and political issues criticizing Hausa rulers and accusing them of corruption and tyranny, while on the other hand, accusing the local populous of mixing religious injunctions with their local

traditions and cultures (Iraqi A. A., 1983). After several years of preaching, *Hijrah* and *Jihad*, Dan Fodio established Sokoto Caliphate in 1804. However, in 1811, Dan Fodio retired and left the administration of the empire in the hands of both Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello, devoting himself to scholarship and writing. He died in 1817 and was buried in *Hubare* Sokoto.

3. Dan Fodio's Jihād and Reform Movement

Usman Dan Fodio's reform movement was aimed at eliminating the religious and social corruptions imposed by the various rulers of city-states in Hausaland which culminated in bastardizing and diluting Islamic teachings with local cultures and traditions. His effort to establish a truly Islamic state invited several intellectual controversies particularly from the court *Ulama* whose interest is to defend the system and get their interest preserved.

Tukur, M. 1999, asserted that Dan Fodio's reform was not just a *Jihad* movement aimed at eliminating religious and social vices alone, but it was also aimed at creating a peaceful, descent and egalitarian society solidly formed under effective administration. In view of that, he was able to attract enough students and followers in the wider community of Islam including Tuareg, Hausa and Fulani (Sharif M., 2008). The result of such attraction was the emergence of an efficient and effective administration and military organization possessing a credible leadership and motivated followership.

4. Teaching and Da'awah

Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, like any other *Mujaddid*, began his career with teaching and preaching in order to prepare ground for his next mission. He recognized that teaching and preaching are very fertile methods for conveying his message to the public and prepare them for the coming struggle. So, Dan Fodio started teaching and preaching in his home town *Degel* in 1774. And in the same year, he started moving around *Degel*, accompanied by his brother Abdullah, teaching and preaching. Later in the company of Abdullah and other disciples he began to travel out of *Degel*, to the east and west, *Kebbi* (to the west) being his first station of call. With *Degel* as his base, Shehu Usman and his group travelled to other towns in *Gobir*, teaching and preaching with remarkable success (Bugaje U., 1979).

During the week, he taught his students Islamic sciences such as *Tafsīr*, *Hadīth* and *Fiqh*, and on the weekend he lectured to the general public. The main thrust of Shehu's teaching appeared to have been the expounding of the fundamentals of Islam and correcting the bad practices that had developed over the centuries in Hausaland. He confronted rigidity and extremism among the scholars and false claims made by pseudo-mystics (Quick A. A., 1995). Abdullah reported in his *Tazyīn al- Warāqat*:

“Then we rose up with the Sheikh helping him in his mission work for religion. He travelled for that purpose to the east and to the west, calling the people to the religion of God by his preaching and his poem as in other languages and destroying customs contrary to Muslim law. Some of the people from surrounding countries came to him, and entered his community while we were in his country which had become famous through him.” (Abdullah B. Fodio, 1963).

Shehu divided his teachings into three: the first lesson was to general public commanding them to uphold to the true teachings of Islam and abandon devilish innovations created by some people in the land. The second lesson was for his students teaching them fundamentals of Islam and the need to purify their souls from the

impurities of this world. The third lesson was to scholars and advanced students for revision and special lessons on Sufism (Iraqi A. A., 1983).

At this juncture, Shehu was fully aware of the problems his preaching would raise and therefore prepared himself to take up the challenge. In this process alone, Shehu was reported by Bello (his son) to have written over fifty books. Moreover, for 19 years Dan Fodio was a preacher and a teacher on the move, and wherever he went he stayed long enough to establish a community and then leave one of his students or disciples to continue the job. However, Shehu was not in the habit of visiting the rulers, but when his following became so large he decided to visit the Sultan of *Gobir* Bawa Jangwarzo and explain the true teachings of Islam to him, commanding him to observe and establish justice throughout his lands. With this attempt, Shehu has thrown himself into direct confrontation with rulers and court *Ulama*.

5. Encounter with Ulama and Hausa Rulers

One of the earliest challenges faced by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio was intellectual controversy from the court *Ulama* who resisted his reform and supported the injustice and tyranny of Hausa rulers. Dan Fodio called this category of scholars “*Ulama al-Suu*” or evil scholars whose vested interest lied in the preservation of the status quo. These intellectual antagonisms directed against Dan Fodio lied in the following key points:

(1) The court *Ulama* questioned the legitimacy of Dan Fodio’s *Jihad*, since it was directed against fellow Muslims and took place in *Dar al-Islam* or Muslim land.

(2) They viewed the declaration of Dan Fodio as *Amir al-Muminin* or commander of the faithful as direct challenge to the authority and thus, called his attention to the obedience of the constituted authority as enshrined in the Qur’an.

(3) These scholars believed that whoever commits major sin becomes unbeliever, a view intellectually rejected by Dan Fodio.

(4) Whether or not Dan Fodio is allowed to collect donations from the *Jamā’ah*.

While responding to court *Ulama* Dan Fodio argued that the regimes of Hausaland were corrupt and hypocrite and thus can be considered as legitimate targets for *Jihad*. And the title of *Amir al-Muminin* was given to him by the *Jamā’ah* and such action is not in contradiction with any Islamic injunction. On the case committing major sin, Dan Fodio asserted that it was the *Khawārij* who first initiated the idea and injected it into Islam and thus, it is another innovation that must be uprooted.

These scholars stepped up their criticism against the Shehu and did everything possible to undermine his mission. They have tried several times to question the validity of the central pillar of his mission “*al-Amr bi al-maarūf wa al-nahyian al-munkar*”. On his struggle against this class of *Ulama*, Shehu wrote more than fifty different books as reported by his son Muhammad Bello. As a result of that, Shehu emerged victorious at the end of the tussle and became widely acknowledged as the leading scholar in Hausaland despite his relatively young age.

Now the rulers of Hausaland realized that the success of Shehu’s mission was going to be at the expense of their thrones. So, *Bawa Jan Gwarzoplot* to kill him by inviting him to celebrate *Eid al-Kabir* with him at *Magami*. Shehu Usman, who was said to have attended the occasion, was escorted by nearly 1000 men. Some scholars who had come with *Bawa* were reported to have joined Shehu’s company, making his following yet larger. *Bawa*, bewildered by the number of Shehu’s following, which reflects his growing influence, was said to have abandoned

his idea of killing the Shehu. At the end of this *Eid* prayer, the *Ulama* were presented with gifts, the greatest of which went to the Shehu. All but the Shehu and his following accepted the gifts. Shehu, according to Bugaje, U. 1979, told *Bawa* that he wasn't in need of his wealth, and seized this opportunity to make five demands instead of the material gifts:

- (1) To allow me to call people to God in your land.
- (2) Not to stop anybody who intend to respond to my call.
- (3) To treat with respect anyone with a turban.
- (4) To free all the political prisoners.
- (5) Not to burden the subjects with taxes.

Bawa agreed to these demands and among the prisoners freed was Abarshi the prince of *Zamfara*. This move by Shehu was extremely significant as it displayed his active involvement in the affairs of the people to whom he was preaching to. Surely the freeing of a leading member of the *Zamafara* elite would endear him to the leadership of that region and spread the news of his authority. The demand for the removal of taxes from the people will bring reality of his presence and effectiveness of prohibiting evils into every home in the countryside. Moreover, the Shehu solidified his ability to preach openly and took pressure off his students and followers who were known for the wearing of turban. Sources also stated that all of the scholars present at Magami, who numbered over a thousand, joined the rank of Shehu's following. *Bawa* died the following year 1789–1790 (Quick A. H., 1995).

Nafata who took the throne of *Gobir* in 1796, embarked on attacking the *Jamā'ah* (who were distinguishable from their dressing) waylaying them and robbing their properties in the hope that they will return under his jurisdiction. This, however, had the opposite effect in making the *Jamā'ah* more firm and militant in changing the state of affairs in Hausaland. In the wake of *Nafata's* persecutions, the *Jamā'ah* demanded a showdown with the *Gobir* authorities but Shehu refused to consent to any confrontation. Shehu, however, knew that a confrontation was no longer inevitable. In his efforts to prepare his *Jamā'ah* for the eventual confrontation the Shehu composed a poem apparently in praise of *Shaikh Abd al- Kadir Jailani*, in which he urged the *Jamā'ah* to acquire arms, as it is *Sunnah* (to do so) and prayed to Allah to show him Islamic rule in Hausaland. Shehu's message to both the *Jamā'ah* as well as the kings of Hausaland, *Gobir* in particular, was very clear. *Jamā'ah's* response to this call to arms frightened *Nafata* who was more desperate than ever before, thought to check this “menace” through the following decrees:

- Nobody, except Dan Fodio in person, was allowed to preach.
- No more conversions to Islam were to be allowed and those who were not born Muslims should return to their former religion (paganism).
- Men should not wear turbans and women should not wear veils (El-Masri F. H., 1963).

The decrees, Bugaje 1979 argued, represented *Nafata's* last hope in arresting the growth and potential of the *Jamā'ah* and restoring his eroded political base. That with all his rage, *Nafata* could not dare ask the Shehu himself to stop calling people to Islam. The decrees were of no avail and *Nafata* finally resorted to assassinate the Shehu. The attempt was abortive and soon after that *Nafata* died leaving the throne to his son *Yunfa* in 1803.

Yunfa proved to be more aggressive in approach towards Shehu and his *Jamā'ah*. In fact, *Yunfa* went as far as attacking a certain Muslim community living in the town of *Gimbana* in *Kebbi*, under their leader Abdussalam. This *Jama'ah* migrated to *Gimbana* since the onset of *Nafata's* hostility. Abdussalam and his *Jamā'ah* were attacked, their property robbed, their men and women taken captives, with many left dead and the whole village

destroyed. These captives on their way to *Alkalawa*, the capital of *Gobir*, where they will be enslaved, passed through *Degel* the centre of the *Jamā'ah*. The *Jamā'ah* at *Degel*, moved by the agony of their brothers, ambushed the party, defeated *Yunfa*'s army and released their brothers and sisters. This release of Muslim captures was said to have been done without prior consultation of Shehu, who saw it as a rash action which could have been avoided. *Yunfa* now infuriated by this *Degel* incidence ordered Shehu to leave his *Jamā'ah* and go into exile. Shehu refused this order and in replying *Yunfa* he said "I will not forsake my community, but I and my *Jamā'ah* will leave your land, for Allah's earth is wide. For Shehu and his *Jama'ah*, it is now time for *Hijrah* (Abdullahi M., 1963).

6. Hijrah and Jihad

In preparation of the *Jamā'ah*'s mind set for *Jihad* and *Hijrah*, Shehu authored *Wathīqatahl al-Sudan wa man Shā Allah min al-ikhwān* calling the attention of his *Jamā'ah* for *Hijrah* and preparation for *Jihad*. This twenty-seven point *Wathīqah*, was soon circulated through the network which the *Jamā'ah* had formed in course of the previous thirty years all over Hausaland and Borno. The first seven points of this *Wathīqah* summarized the core message of his movement:

- (1) That the commanding of righteousness is obligatory by assent.
- (2) And that the prohibition of evil is obligatory by assent as well.
- (3) That *Hijrah* from the land of the heathen is obligatory.
- (4) And that befriending of the faithful is obligatory as well.
- (5) And that the appointment of the Commander of the faithful is obligatory by assent.
- (6) And that obedience to him and to all his deputies is obligatory by assent.
- (7) And the waging of Holy War (*Jihad*) is obligatory by assent (Usman B. Fodio, 1961).

Hijrah and solidarity among the believers immediately followed which automatically called for the appointment of the *Imam* (Commander of the faithful) and his deputies. These, besides being "obligatory by assent" are particularly essential to the *Jihad* which the *Wathīqat* is in a way declaring. She asserted in points 11, 12 and 15 that:

(11) And that by assent the status of a town is the status of its ruler; if the ruler is Muslim, the town belongs to Islam; but if he is not the town is a town of heathendom from which flight is obligatory.

(12) And that to make war upon the heathen King who will not say "There is no God but Allah" is obligatory by assent, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by assent;

(15) And to make war against the King who is an apostate — who has not abandoned the religion of Islam as far as profession of it is concerned, but who mingles the observances of Islam with the observances of heathendom, like the kings of Hausaland for the most part — is [also] obligatory by assent, and to take the government from him is obligatory by assent (Bugaje U., 1979).

Many of Shehu's disciples like Abdullah (his brother), Aliyu Jedo and Abdussalam to mention but just a few, were working "round the clock" for the *Hijrah*. Muhammad Bello, who had been away from *Degel* visiting Ali Agali (a Tuareg scholar) was dispatched to *Kebbi* for the organization of the *Hijrah* and distribution of yet another Shehu's pamphlets, this time calling people for *Hijrah*. So, on the twelfth of Dhul-Qa'da, 1218 A.H./February 1804 A.D. Shehu and his *Jamā'ah* left *Degel* for *Gudu* to mark the beginning of Shehu's *Hijrah* (Bugaje U., 1979).

The choice of *Gudu*, a town at the distant borders of *Gobir*, is not without strategic consideration. Located

outside the Sokoto river Valley, reasonably watered and farthest away from *Alkalawa* the capital of *Gobir*; *Gudu* obviously offered some military advantages to the *Jamā'ah*. Soon after the decision to move to *Gudu* was taken, Ali Jedo, a leading member of the revolutionary personnel rushed to *Gudu* to build a dwelling for the Shehu while Agali, the tuareg scholar supplied camels and donkeys to carry Shehu, his group and their precious library from *Degel* to their new found base — *Gudu* (Bugaje U., 1981).

Immediately Shehu arrived at *Gudu*, the *Jamā'ah* began to find their way and assembled there. Alarmed by this mass exodus, *Yunfa* ordered the governors of his town to take captive of all those who migrated to the Sheikh, and they began to persecute them, killing them and confiscating their property. This obvious danger did not dissuade many of the *Jamā'ah* from making their way to *Gudu*. The result was as Abd Allah reported:

“Some (*Muhājirūn*) reached us complete with their families and possession. Some only with their families, some arrived alone, with their possession, no family”. (Abdullahi B. M., 1978).

To this, one could add those who fell prey to the ambush and killings of *Yunfa*'s forces and never saw *Gudu* at all. The readiness with which the *Jamā'ah* faced these formidable dangers and difficulties and flocked to *Gudu* should leave us in no doubt about their courage and above all their commitment to the cause of Islam. In line with the points he raised in the *Masā'il* and *Wathīqah*, Shehu bade the *Jamā'ah* at *Gudu* to elect their Imam. And they unanimously elected him as *Amīr al-Muminīn*. Soon afterwards, the kings became nervous because of the number of people he drew away from them and viewed his community as a threat to authority. However, *Yunfa* considered this as rebellion and launched several attacks on them. This scenario, gave Shehu the authority to declare *Jihad* against the Hausa rulers.

Moreover, having failed to succeed in stopping the *Jamā'ah* from assembling at *Gudu*, *Yunfa* began sending army detachments to raid the *Jamā'ah* at *Gudu*. He must have hoped to exhaust or even nip the nascent Islamic community at *Gudu* before they could master any might. Faced by such raids, the *Jamā'ah* at *Gudu*, under their Imam and commander, organized themselves for defence with their scanty military resources. *Yunfa* took a full-scale military campaign against the *Jamā'ah*. He seemed to have planned a surprised attack but the *Jamā'ah* got to know through a Tuareg informant, and began to prepare themselves against such attack.

As the battle line was drawn, we found on the *Gobir* side a large and heavily armed army ready to pounce on people who have rebelled against their authority and their way of life. While on the *Jamā'ah* side we found a small gathering of *Mujāhidūn*, confident in their Lord and ready for *Shahādah* or victory, in their struggle to check the excesses of *Kufr* and establish Islam (Bugaje U., 1981). Soon after the battle broke out, the *Muhājirūn* were able to route the *Gobir* forces who fled. The commander of the *Mujāhidūn* at least recalled the battle of Badr when describing this battle:

“By the help of him who helped the Prophet against the foe
At Badr, with an army of angels gathered together
And many a great man our hands flung down
And axes cleft his head spilt asunder
And many a brave warrior did our arrows strike down
We drove them off in the middle of the day
And we are an army victorious in Islam.
And we are proud of nothing but that” (Bugaje U., 1981).

And so, the *Jamā'ah* continued recording victory upon victory despite some difficulties and challenges surrounding them until the capture of *Birnin Kebbi* in 1805. And by the year 1810 the *Jihad* was over and Shehu

withdrew to the town of *Sifawa* to continue with his intellectual endeavours, leaving his brother Abdullah and his son Muhammad Bello to administer the affairs of the Caliphate.

7. Establishemt of the Caliphate

The seeds of revivalism and reform planted by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio in the early 19th century in Hausaland resulted in the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate. The Sokoto triumvirate, as they came to be called, was not only imbued with the vision of the society they wanted to establish, but also had the patience and perseverance to struggle for the realization of many aspects of this vision (Hamid B., 2011). The success of the *Jihad* and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate had a profound influence on the entire continent. In fact, much of Usman Dan Fodio's criticism of the rulers in the Hausaland stemmed from the fact that the patronage of Muslim scholars did not necessarily indicate an acceptance of the restrictions and demands which an orthodox Muslim ruler should place upon the polity and society. However, the *Jihad* resulted in a federal theocratic state, with extensive autonomy for emirates, recognizing the spiritual authority of the caliph or the sultan of Sokoto. Therefore, the state developed as a state concerned primarily with military and economic expansion with organized Islamic rule of law. The contribution of people towards the success of *Jihad* cannot be over emphasized, particularly his close associates were his younger brother, Abdullahi, and his son, Muhammad Bello were both actively involved in the *Jihad* that brought about the Caliphate (Sharif M., 2008).

From 1808 until the mid-1830s, the Sokoto Caliphate expanded gradually annexing the plains to the West and key parts of Yorubaland. It became one of the largest empires in Africa stretching from modern day Burkina Faso to Cameroon including most of Northern Nigeria. At its height, the Sokoto Caliphate included over thirty different emirates under its political structure (Falola T. H., 2009).

Before Shehu died in 1817, the philosophy as well as the structure of the Islamic order the movement fought to establish was already laid down. The task of putting in the details and developing the institutions naturally fell on Muhammad Bello, a scholar of high standing, on whom the leadership of the Caliphate fell after the Shehu. It was under him (Bello) therefore, that the frontiers of the state got pushed further south incorporating more policies, which naturally led to the development of more complex government apparatus and a "permanent organized and professionalized military forces". The political structure, according to Bugaje U. (1981), was organized with the Sultan ruling from Sokoto, and the leader of each emirate was appointed by the Sultan as the flag bearer of that city but was given wide independence and autonomy.

After 1811C.E, Usman retired and left the administration of the empire in the hands of both Abdullahi and Bello and devoted himself to scholarship. Upon his death in 1817C.E, his son, Muhammed Bello, succeeded him as *Amīr al-Muminīn* (Leader of the Faithful) and became the Sultan of the Sokoto Caliphate which was the biggest state south of the Sahara at that time. Usman's brother Abdullahi was given the title of Emir of *Gwandu* and he was placed in charge of the Western Emirates, Nupe and Ilorin. The Sokoto caliphate became one of the largest and most powerful empires in sub-Saharan Africa before the arrival of the colonial masters (Sharif M., 2008).

Sokoto Caliphate produced scholars of high calibre and contributed immensely to the pool of knowledge. The founder of the Caliphate Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, his brother Abdullahi and his son Muhammed Bello authored over three hundred and fifty works. Many of these works are still buried in various archival collections scattered in different parts of the world. The few works that have been published are yet to receive wide circulation. Consequently, the seminal ideas of these distinguished leaders and scholars are not easily accessible to

the scholarly community as well as the general readers. Prominent among their works are: *Ihyā al-Sunnah wa Ikhlāḥ al-Bidah*, *al-Amr bil ma'arūf wa al-Nahy an al-munkar*, *Iḥām al-Munkirīn*, *Bayān Wujūb al-Hijrah*, *al-Masā'il al-Muhimmah*, *Wathīqat ahl al-Sūdān wa man Shā Allah min al-ikhwān* for Usman Dan Fodio. And *Tazyīn al-Waraqāt*, *Taqrīb al-Darūrī min Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Sabīl Ahl al-Salāh ila al-Falāh*, *Sabīl al-Najāt*, *Diya al-Sultān* and *Diya al-Anām fi al-Halāl wa al-Harām* for Abdullahi Bin Muhammad Fodio. And *Infāq al-Maysūr*, *Usūl al-Siyāsah*, *Risālah ilā Jamā'ah al-Muslimīn*, *Rasā'il Muhimmah*, *Tanbīh al-Afhām* and *Kashf al-Muhtadīn* for Muhammad Bello bin Usman.

By the end of 1890s the empire began to disintegrate as a result of internal rivalry, an opportunity seized by the European colonial armies to encroach on the periphery of the empire. By 1903 the Sokoto Caliphate fell to the French and British colonial armies. During this period, the British, which controlled over eighty per cent of the empire, allowed the Sultan to remain as a ceremonial ruler.

8. Conclusion

The *Jihad* movement orchestrated and led by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio is one of the most influential Jihad movements in Sub-Saharan Africa. His *Jihad* resulted in the re-invention and establishment of one of largest and most powerful empires in Africa. The reform movement of this great *Mujaddid* can be classified into four main phases: the phase of public *da'awah* and preaching (1774–1793), the phase of planning and organization of the movement (1793–1804), the phase of *Hijra*, *Jihad* and victory (1804–1810) and the phase of consolidation and the establishment of the Islamic order (1810–1817). The empire left a heritage of intellectual and scholarly activities that are yet to be uncovered by the researchers and general public.

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