

THE IMPACT OF THE 19th CENTURY JIHAD IN KANO

By

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This article discusses the general impact of Usman Dan Fodio Jihad of 19 century in Hausa land, the study in Kano emirate Islamic religion originated in Mecca at the year 610 A.D and by the year 622 A.D. an exile Islamic government was established in the neighboring city of Medina. By the year 630 A.D. Mecca was conquered by the Muslims after series of battles between the two forces and Islam was fully established in Mecca and Medina region. By the 7th century, the Islamic Jihad in North Africa under Uqbah Bin Nafiq was halted after recalling the borders of Kanem Bornu. By the 10th century A.D. Islam had started to find its ways to West Africa through trade relations and by the 12th century A.D. Islam began to grow steadily in the western Sudaese society and expanded west wards. There wasn't Jihad in the introduction of Islam in West Africa because the great Sahara desert seemed to prevent that. In the Nigeria region, the first place to receive Islamic influence was Borno area as mentioned earlier through trade relation. Islam began to find its ways into Hausa land through the Sahara desert from North-Western part of Hausa land which was under some influence of Songhai Empire was the first area to get the direct Islam influence. Songhai Empire suddenly collapsed after Moroccan invasion. The effect of the collapse of the Songhai empire on Hausa land, was that scholarship and economic activities of the area shifted to Hausa land and Borno. Islam first reach Kano since early 14th century and there is evidence to show that by 1500 A.D. some rulers of Gobir, Zazzau, Katsina and other areas were Muslims. By the 16th century, Ahmed Baba, a Tumbuktu base Hausa scholar confirmed that Kano, Katsina and Borno were Muslim states in the 16th century. As Islamic religion grew in Hausa society, it gradually undermined Hausa traditional political system, economic and social values.

Introduction:

Islamic religion originated in Mecca at the year 610 A.D. and by the year 622, an exile Islamic government was established in the neighbouring city of Medina. By the year 630 A.D, Mecca was conquered by the Muslims after series of battles between the two forces and Islam was fully established in Mecca and Medinan region. Soon, all other parts of the Arabian Peninsula became Islamised. By the year 634 A.D, Islam reached Syria while in 636 A.D. Persia was conquered by the Muslim forces. In the year 641, Egypt became under Muslim control and by the year 709, A.D Islamic influence reached the Maghreb and crossed over to Andalusia (Spain) in 711 A.D. In fact, the whole Spanish Peninsula was effectively occupied by 750 A.D and a good Muslim Caliphate was established (Clarke: 1982).

By the 7th century the Islamic jihad in North Africa under Uqbah bn Nafi was halted after reaching the borders of Kanem Bornu. By the 10th century A.D. Islam had started to find its ways

to West Africa through trade relations and by the 12th century, A.D. Islam began to go grow steadily in the Western Sudanese society and expanded east-wards. There wasn't Jihad in the introduction of Islam in West Africa because the great Sahara Desert seemed to prevent that.

In the Nigerian Region, the first place to receive Islamic influence was Borno area as mentioned earlier through trade relations first between Ghana and Morocco which later extended to other nations south of the Sahara, east and up to the coast of Atlantic. From the east a trade route extended from Tripoli [Libya] to Kanem Bornu after crossing Fezzan and Bilma. Islam had already been established in North Africa during the reign of the second Caliph of the Islamic empire, Umar bn Khattab when a group of Muslim Jihadists returned from Palestine under Amru bn Al-as and conquered Egypt and overran its headquarters of Alexandria in the year 642 A.D. From there they extended their jihad westward through Cyrenaica up to Tripoli. Since that time the region continued to receive the influx of Muslim Arabs from the Arabian region to aid the jihadists to the extent that the Romans who were colonizing the region failed to defend themselves and therefore defeated.²

In the year 670 AD the commander of the Muslim forces Uqbah bn Nafi built the town of Alqairawan in Egypt and made it his administrative headquarters. From here he continued with his conquest to the regions of the Barbar Arabs until they reached the Atlantic coast. On the other hand, Uqbah continued with his conquest up to the borders of the Sahara and to the southern areas near the nation of Khawar in the year 666 AD until he was halted when approaching the black people of Bornu. Since the 8th century, most of the North African Barbar Arabs had accepted Islam and by the end of the 9th Century AD, the Tuaregs of the Lamtuna régions and other Barbar Arabs of the Audaghust régions had all accepted Islam.³

Islam first reach Kano since early 14th century and there is evidence to show that by the 1500 AD, some rulers of Gobir, Zazzau, Katsina and other areas were Muslims (East: 1933). By the 16th century, Ahmed Baba, a Timbuktu based Hausa scholar confirmed that Kano, Katsina and Borno were Muslim states in the 16th century (Hodgkin: 1975).

As Islamic religion grew in Hausa society it gradually undermined Hausa traditional political system, economic and social values. It should also be noted that the process of Islamisation of the Hausa society was gradual since the vast majority of the citizens were pagans. From the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries however, a substantial growth of Islam was noted all over Hausaland and beyond. More and more people were becoming Muslims. Islamic education was gaining ground (Clarke: 1983). Towards the end of the 16th century, a group of well-versed Muslim scholars began to emerge not only in Hausa land but throughout the Western Sudan. These people were seen as leaders of the converted people rather than the traditional rulers. This led to sharp division between the political and religious leaderships.

By the end of the 18th century, the Ulama were not only engaged in preaching purer Islamic ideas and were calling for reform. This was because the Ulama had realised that Islam as practiced in Hausa land was not a pure form of Islam. The religion was mixed with traditions. The Ulama also accused the Hausa leadership of doing nothing to reform Islam. It should be noted that Hausa rulers owed their positions not because of Islam, but because of their traditions which in most cases were against Islamic practices. This was the situation all over Hausaland and beyond

² M. J. Abba, 2007, pp.39 - 40.

³ S.A. Balogun, op. Cit. p.210.

such as Borno, Nupe, Ilorin and other places at the end of the 18th century. Most of the learned and daring scholars were Fulani.

Kano has always been great in this region of Central Sudanese society since the foundation of the polity as reported in Wakar Bagauda (1972). Between 1512 – 1513 A.D, Leo Africanus or more correctly, al-Hassan b. Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Zayyati, claimed to have visited the states of Hausaland, Borno, Gao and the Nile valley and said of Kano that “...it inhabitants are skilled craftsmen and wealthy merchants” (Trans: John Pory 1956). Anania, (1573) quoted a native of Ragusa (Dubrounik) in Croatia who had lived in Kano for sometimes in the late 1560s and early 1570s and described Kano at the time of his stay as the third city in Africa after the two north African cities of Cairo and Fez with some 7500 houses (John Lavers: 1997). Kano was also a commercial and industrial centre exporting high quality dyed cloth, (Shea: 1973) tanned and dyed leather and sandals, (Barth: 1857/1965), importing cotton from Zaria, and iron from southern Katsina, Birnin Gwari, Zamfara, Fika, Potiskum and other places (Jaggar: 1994), imported Kola from the Akan forest of the present modern state of Ghana, (Lovejoy: 1980), salt from the Central Saharan Region, nitron from the Saharan Region and Gumel for industrial purposes and human and animal consumption (Lovejoy: 1980).

For whatever reason (it is not yet clear), Kano was said to be not very strong militarily and probably economically in the 18th century and the early years of the 19th century. In 1700 AD it was defeated by Zamfara and between 1731 and 1743 fought hard battles with Gobir (East: 1934). Kano was also weakened by constant wars with Katsina and Kwararafa.

The Jihad in Kano.

It was during the reign of Muhammad Alwali [1781-1807] that the Jihad of Sheikh Uthman Danfodio erupted in Kano. There were six major Fulani clans in Kano who were seriously preaching for reforms and social justice as follows: -

- The Mundubawa who were mainly in the city and the first Fulani Emir, Suleiman was from this clan.
- The Yolawa, who were living to the north west of the city and their leader was Malam Jibir;
- The Danbazawa, to the north and their leader was Malam Muhammad Dabo.
- The Danajewa live to the north-east and were led by Malam Danzabuwa.
- The Sullubawa clan whose leader was Malam Jamo.
- Jobawa whose leader was Malam Muhammad Bakatsine and were mainly living in the south-east of Kano around Wudil, Garko and Utai complex, (Dokaji: 1954).
- There is also the Hausawa clan headed by Malam Usman Bahausha who established himself in Kano city up to Tamburawa in the south

The Kano Fulani were in close conatacts with Shehu Uthman Danfodio long before the Jihad was declared. For instance, three of the most important clan leaders were with Sheikh Danfodio at the time of the Hijra to Gudu. Later, Shehu asked them to return to Kano to organize their people for the Jihad, (Johnston: 1967). When the Kano Fulani approached the Sarki of Kano Alwali, they could not agree on peaceful settlement, so they bacame ready for show down.

Quickly, under the leadership of the clan heads, they formed a war camp at a place called Kwazazzabon Yar Kwando, about 70 kilometres west of the city around Karaye, Kiru and Bebeji area. The first assault was against Karaye which was successfully taken. Soon other places were

attacked and the Sarki of Kano was forced to flee but was eventually killed at Burum-burum after a fierce battle at Dan yahya. The city was taken and the Jihad was over in 1807, (Johnston: 1967). Suleiman, the youngest but the most learned leader of the Mundibawa clan was appointed by Sheikh Uthman Danfodio as the first Emir of Kano.

The objective of this paper is to examine the general impact of the Jihad on Kano and will be presented in the following order:

- Political impact
- Economic impact
- Transport and communications
- Agriculture and animal husbandry
- Trade and industries
- Establishment of new frontier towns
- Expansion of Kano city.
- Settlement of new immigrant communities
- Religion and education, and
- Military impact.

Politically, the Jihad resulted in the transformation of the leadership system from kingship to a caliphate system of administration and therefore a shift from traditional laws to a theocratic state governed by the sharia laws. Kano Emirate also emerged stronger after the Jihad and was internally stronger than most others. For example, Katsina Emirate could not contain the threat of the displaced Hausa dynasty that re-located themselves at Maradi and continued to raid and plunder their former Kingdom throughout the 19th century (Smith: 1967). In Kano, the internal revolts which came after the selection of Ibrahim Dabo as the new Emir in 1819 was short lived as it was put to an end within five years (M.J. Abba, 1999; Kano Gazetteer: 1971). Kano was able to ward off the continued raids by Maradawa, the Damagarawa, and the Ningawa into its territory. In fact, the boundary of Kano which was clearly defined since the time of Ibrahim Dabo was only tempered with when the Districts of Birnin kudu, Dutse, Gwaram, Kiyawa and Ringim were excised from Kano Emirate to form the new state of Jigawa with Headquarters at Dutse.

Economically, the impact of the Jihad on Kano is visibly clear for everyone to see. Certainly, the economy of Kano expanded tremendously. Kano was competing with Katsina for the control of Trans – Saharan trade routes. There was a time when merchants of Kano transferred to Katsina during the time of Sarkin Kano Kumbari (1731 – 1743) because of heavy taxation, (East: 1934). But as soon as the Jihad war was decided and the second Fulani Emir crushed all internal foes, the economy of Kano became the strongest in the Sokoto Caliphate throughout the period of its existence (Mahdi: 1989). Trade to and from Kano expanded to all directions, North African region, Sokoto, Bauchi, Borno, Adamawa, Yoruba land, Gwanja, Nupe land and other places. Kano traders took Kano grown products in case of grains, manufactured articles like cloth; both dyed and undyed, dyed leather and leather goods, mats, ropes, livestock, slaves and other items. The items when sold, such as salt, potash, European manufactured goods-beads, paper, blades, razors, needles, Kolanut were brought back to Kano, (Marian Johnson: 1983). Kano thus, by the 19th century was according to (Clapperton: 1824) the “*great emporium of the kingdom of Hausa*”. Also Kano market was described 40 years afterwards by Barth as “*the market-place of Kano in the middle of the 19th century attracted traders and goods from all parts of Western*

Central Africa”. It also exported large quantities of grains to less favoured regions (Morel: 1968). Because of the economic and fame of Kano in the 19th century, it was called by Lugard (1903) as *exceeding anything he had ever seen or even imagined in Africa*.

By the end of 19th century, Kano became the centre of international trade and major trade routes radiated from it. For example; from Kano there was a trade route to Asante; the Kolanut area of Gwanja. The traders of Kano took mainly Kano cloths, potash, cattle, slaves, dried onion leaves (gabu), leather goods and so on and exchanged them for Kolanut which they brought to Kano. There was also a well maintained route to Adamawa region which the traders used to transport cloth and leather goods and returned to Kano with slaves and elephant tusks which they resold to trans-Saharan traders. From Kano, traders took to Borno, black and white cloth and brought back horses, donkeys, cattle, slaves and nitron, ostrich feathers and other goods for industrial, human and animal consumption.

There was also another trade route to North African region known as the north-south trade route which is the oldest and most popular. The Arab traders sold goods which they bought in Kano markets, while dates, Fez caps and European goods were imported through the Mediterranean Sea and purchased Kano cloths, leather goods, slaves etc, which they took to North African coast. Roads were safe throughout Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate in general.

Agriculture and animal husbandry were encouraged by the Jihad leaders of the Sokoto Caliphate. Sultan Muhammad Bello advised the Emir through the book he wrote at the request of the first Fulani Emir of Katsina, Umaru Danlajé, *Usul as-Siyasat* (Principles of Politics). Bello declared that amongst the responsibilities of the Emir was the rearing of crafts men and encouragement of artisans, building roads and maintaining them, building new towns and improving existing ones, encouragement of agriculture and other development efforts.

In Kano Emirate, agriculture was encouraged. The Emirs of Kano maintained large slave estates at different locations all over the Emirates. The popular royal plantations which readily come to mind in the 19th century were as follows: *Yokanna, Gasgainu, Sawaina, Wase, Gogel, Yalwan Danziyal, Dorayi, Nassarawa, Gandun Albasa and Gurjiya*. The Emir also encouraged all *Hakimai* (District Heads) to engage in agriculture and livestock rearing. The common peasants whose main occupation was farming were also encouraged. Agriculture reached highest level of development in Kano as correctly observed by Morel in 1911 “in Kano the science of agriculture has attained remarkable development. There is little we can teach the Kano farmer. There is much we can learn from him. Rotation of crops and green manuring are thoroughly understood--- in fact, every scrap of fertilizing substance is husbanded by these experts and industrious agricultural people”. (Morel: 1911/1967)

The Jihad leaders were fully aware that a society which is not free from economic needs could not prosper. That was why they did everything to encourage and develop trade and industries. The volume of manufactured goods which Kano produced in the 19th century is proverbial. Kano imported raw iron from the districts of Bakori, Pauwa and Ketare in southern Katsina for its iron industries. It also according to the same source imported iron from Zamfara and Potiskum and Fika for its smithing industries (Jaggar: 1994). The smithing industries of Kano in the middle of the 19th century produced large consignments of horse equipment, agricultural hand tools military hard-ware, and formed a considerable part of Kano trade. For example, about 50,000

sword blades of German origin were imported across the Sahara Desert, improved by local smiths, re-exported to Borno, Nupe kingdom and other places. Locally produced horse equipment were purchased in Kano and exported to Borno. There was also extensive trade of agricultural tools from Kano to both Damagaram and Nupe (Barth: 1857/1965).

Another important commerce of Kano in to mid-19th century was cotton industry woven and dyed in Kano City or in the neighbouring towns (Barth: 1857/1965). It was made in many forms and styles such as gowns, turkudi (dark blue colours worn by women), the Zane, of various colours, the dyed black turban hotly sought after by the Tuaregs, and others. The impact of Kano cloth industry in the 19th century extended in the north as far as Murzuk, Ghat and Tripoli, to the west it extended to Timbuktu and the shores of Atlantic. Towards the east, the impact of the Kano cloth industry in the 19th century was felt throughout Bornu. To the south, the Kano cloth industry was seen in Igbira and Igbo area. To the south-east, Kano cloth invaded the whole of Bauchi and Adamawa regions (Barth: 1857/1965). Besides cloth, another very important industry of Kano in the 19th century which affected the well beings of many families and had a wide market was sandals. The sandals were made with great neatness and exported to distant places. The famous so called Morocco leather was in fact, from Kano and its region (Barth: 1857/1965).

Another important commerce of Kano was the trade by Kano merchants of nitron (kanwa), from Bornu to Nupe, and some parts of Yoruba land. The Kano traders employed the services of pack animals such as donkeys, pack-oxen, horses and asses for this very important trade. Salt was also very important trade of Kano brought from North African region through Katsina. The trade in grains which were abundantly grown in Kano was another very important commerce of Kano. Large quantities of guinea corn, millet and other variety of grains were purchased from Kano and its regions by Arab or Tuaregs merchants and transported by camels across the Sahara to central Sahara and North African regions. Trade and industries went hand in hand in Kano and according to Barth (1857) *almost every family had a hand in it*.

Trade in Kolanut was another important commerce of Kano in the 19th century, which is a very old trade, started in the 15th century according to Kano chronicle (East: 1954). The peaceful nature of Kano's environment after the jihad as well as the extensive markets made it possible commerce to prosper because trade prosper where peace prevails. Kolanut was a product of the Akan forest some 5,000 miles to the south west. Each dry season several thousands of caravans travelled with Kano manufactured goods to Gwanja and exchanged the items for Kolanut which was a luxury items in the Sokoto Caliphate. The demand of kola according Lovejoy (1980) was increased after the successful execution of the Jihad. It went the only readily available central nervous system stimulant allowed by Islam. Alcoholic liquors were prohibited by Islam and the position of tobacco was ambiguous. The Kolanut merchants of Kano in the 19th century grew so wealthy that they quickly metamorphosed as the leading groundnut, cotton, cattle and European manufactured goods in the 19th century such as the trading families of Dantata, Sharubutu, Maikano Agogo, Nagoda, etc, (Dan Asabe: 1987).

In terms of transport and communications, pack animals-donkeys, mules, oxen, camels and human port rage were extensively used. The well-beaten roads from Kano to different directions were maintained throughout the 19th century up to the first decade of the 20th century. The use of the 19th century roads were only discouraged when railway system was fully developed in

Nigeria in the 20th century. Kano city expanded tremendously as a result of the jihad. In Kano city, certain residential areas were first settled by immigrant traders and Malams from places outside Kano even in pre-Jihad times.

The influx of immigrants into Kano and the area which Mortimore (1967) described as “close settled zone” was enormous; Zangon Barebari, settled by Borno immigrant traders and Malams, Tudun Nupawa by Nupe traders, Unguwar Ayagi by Yoruba traders, Yalwa and Qul Qul settled predominantly by Katsina traders of North African origin who came to Kano during the time of the second Fulani Emir, Ibrahim Dabo (1819 – 1846) (Uba Adamu: 1967)). Yalwa got its name when after a brief stay at Kan Tudun Madabo area, the leader of the newly arrived merchants and artisans from Katsina complained to the Emir through Ma’ajin Watari, a slave official in charge of royal treasury, that his house was too small to accommodate his family and followers. He was given the land on the north-west side of the city. The Emir supposedly said; *that area has more space* (yafi yalwa), since that time the area was identified with that name (Paden: 1973). Koki was first settled by Wangarawa merchants and scholars in the 14th century but the 19th century the Katsinawa and Agalawa traders settled up to the Sarari section. The Agadasawa was established by Agadez immigrants, Daurawa by Daura immigrants, Dandalin Turawa by Arab traders, while Soron dinki was settled by the Fulani immigrants after the successful execution of the 19th century Jihad [M.J. Abba, 1999, ch.1]

It was not only in Kano city where immigrant communities settled. Rural Kano was also settled especially in the closed settled zone. The Agalawa, the Tokarawa and Kambarin Barebari settled in Kano City as well as in the villages around Kura, Bunkure, Bebeji, Kumurya, Garko, Utai, Sumaila, Madobi, Gora, Lambu, Zabainawa, Kunya, Bichi, Damargu and other places where they came to dominate the trade of Kano Emirate and Sokoto Empire ((Dan Asabe, 1987) and Lovejoy: 1985).

Religious and educational impacts of the Jihad of Sheikh Usman Danfodio are also there for all to see. New legal system based on the Sharia was established. The Sharia affected the total life of the people including trade, politics and administration. Before the Jihad, Sharia was not fully implemented. Islam also expanded widely in the rural areas after the jihad in Kano Emirate. Many people who were not originally Muslims became Muslims and the nominal Muslims became devout Muslims. Islamic education also expanded as a result of the Usman Danfodio Jihad in Kano. The Jihad leaders of Kano were first class scholars. They were teaching and preaching before the Jihad. After the Jihad was successful, more schools were established and more Malams migrated and settled in Kano from North Africa, Katsina, Bornu, Birni Kebbi and other places (Paden:1972). The family of the famous 19th century scholar who eventually stetted in Togo, Imam Imoru migrated from Kebbi and settled in Magoga Ward in the 19th century. The Imam moved with some members of his family to Togo where they settled permanently (Ferguson: 1973). The family of Malam Salga also moved from Katsina to Kano according to Paden (1972) in the 19th century.

Militarily, Kano emerged as the strongest Emirate in the Sokoto Caliphate especially after the Jihad and the defensive position of Kano increased as opposed to the 17th and 18th centuries. Kano was partially protected from the incursions of the enemies of the Caliphate. To the north, Kazaure, Daura, and Katsina, protected Kano’s position from the Damagarawa and Maradawa, to the north-eastern direction, Kano was shielded by Hadejia, Katagum, Gumel, Misau and Jama’are. Bauchi occupied a similar role to the south-east, although the independent Ningi state

located between Kano and Bauchi continued to harass Kano throughout the nineteenth century and Zaria Emirate to the south completed the encirclement of friendly neighbours who suffered most of the attacks.

Kano military contributions to the central government at Sokoto were also enormous. This was possible according to Mahdi (1989) because, it was strategically located between the northern and southern borders, and between the western and eastern parts of the Caliphate. In terms of military movements, it was easy to move troops from Kano to Birnin Kebbi, Zamfara or Gobir area to assist the Caliph than from Adamawa, Nupe or Ilorin. Kano troops as reported by Hugh Clapperton in 1829 were considered to be *“the best and found to be more orderly than any of the others”*. By the middle of the 19th century, Kano was on the position of raising an army of about 7,000 horses and 20,000 foot soldiers making it to be the strongest Emirate in the Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century, (Barth: 1857/1965). That is perhaps, the reason why Abdullahi Mahdi called Kano *“the economic and military nerve centre of the Sokoto Caliphate”*. This was as a result of the Jihad. Before the Jihad, Katsina, Gobir, Zamfara and Kwararafa appeared to be stronger militarily than Kano.

Conclusion

The paper discussed the impact of the Sokoto Jihad on Kano. It traced the History of Islam from the far away Middle East to our region by peaceful means across the Sahara Desert by traders and other visitors. There was no Jihad to introduce Islam in West Africa as was the case in Northern Africa. By the beginning of the 19th century A.D Muslim communities in Hausaland were strong enough to challenge the traditional leadership throughout West Africa.

In the Gobir and Zamfara area, the leading scholar was Uthman Dan Fodio who was eventually recognised even by the traditional authorities. He was able to secure some concessions from Sarkin Gobir Bawa to preach freely and for his growing community to wear uniform of identity-turbans for men and veils for women and others. It was the withdrawal of these concessions by the successors of Bawa that led to open rebellion of the Muslim Ummah. In other parts of Hausaland and beyond, Muslim communities also revolted at the beginning of the 19th century.

In Kano region, the open rebellion against the oppressive traditional leadership was led by seven major Fulani clans and one Hausa clan in 1806. Within only three years, the fighting phase of the Jihad was over when the Sarki of Kano was killed at Burum-burum where he took refuge. Suleiman of the Mundibawa clan emerged as the first Fulani Emir of Kano. A new era had begun. The impact of the Jihad on Kano was discussed as follows – politics, economy, transport and communications, agriculture trade and industries, development of frontier towns, expansion of Kano city, settlement of new immigrant communities, education and religion, and the military impact.

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