



THE ADMINISTRATION OF UTHMAN BIN FODIO AS A MODEL FOR GOOD AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN LEADERS

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Abstract

Uthman dan Fodio is one of the renowned Islamic scholars in Africa and a very good administrator who revived the administration of the Hausaland of Sokoto Kalifat of his time. He was born in North Western Gobir of Hausaland. Shaykh Uthman dan Fodio was known of his good and effective leadership in Hausaland and environs, the country Nigeria is found among the countries in Africa and is known as the giant of Africa this paper will be looking into the conceptual clarification of the terms used in the work such as: Leadership, Good and effective governance, contemporary leadership and the Administration of shaykh Uthman dan Fodio. The methodological approach in this research is descriptive and proscriptive.

Keywords: Shaykh Uthman, Leadership, Good-Governance, Nigeria.

Introduction

Leadership is not a plaything; it is a serious business. The Prophet of Islam Muhammad (S.A.W) gave an instance in his saying that: if two people are embarking on a journey, they should choose a leader among them. To tell you how important leadership is to the human endeavor, which, without it, no society will survive, since the prophet of Islam will encourage two travelers to choose a leader among themselves for the smoothness of their journey, so what will you say of a society that comprises more than two people? Good and effective governance is the most essential thing the country Nigeria has been agitating for, for years some of the Nigerians have little test of good and effective governance wheal others have no opportunity of meeting this proud, all they were able to meet is bad and ineffective governance, which deteriorated the social economic and political development of the county leading to corruption, leadership crisis, unemployment, poverty, emergence of deferent militant and insurgent groups such as: Niger



delta militant and Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herdsmen, kidnapers among others (Yusuf 118).

The administration of Shaykh Uthman dan Fodio is one of the best administrations in Hausa-land, where he was able to liberate the masses of Hausa land from the hands of the able rulers when they become tyrannical to the subject.

Leadership is the main factor that determines if a nation will develop or not. Perhaps in an authority position as a leader, one must provide good leadership for their subjects. This means that leadership has to do with the management of people with clearly defined goals or objectives. It involves mobilizing and motivating people for greater productivity. It is also the ability to operate effectively through other people, making them accept the goals of a leader while the leader still has the freedom to do things their way. Categorically, leaders could be effective, transactional, transformational, charismatic, or inspirational. (Eze 20).

Leadership is also seen according to Winston and Patterson as one or more people who selects, equips, trains and influences one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities, skills and focuses the followers to the organizations mission and objective causing the followers to willingly and enthusiastically expand spiritual, emotional and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives (3-8).

Good and effective governance: knowing the concept of good and effective governance is essential to see what governance is, since good and effective are used interchangeably. Most academics employ the word Governance to connote a complex set of structures and processes, both in public and private administration, whereas many popular writers tend to use it synonymously with the word 'government' (Al-Buraey in Yusuf 119). According to the new Webster's international dictionary (1999), the term governance is: an act, manner, office, or power of governing; government, state of being governed; or method of government or regulation".

The sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated, and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest. (Lamb 22).

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ("ESCAP"), states that good governance is responsive to the present and future needs of society. The eight key components of good governance are:

1. Accountable
2. Transparent
3. Responsive



4. Equitable and inclusive
5. Effective and efficient
6. Follows the rule of law
7. Participatory
8. Consensus-oriented. (Weiss and Silke 1549).

Concept of good governance: Islamic perspective

Allah (SWT) describes good governance as the rule of justice, ethical order, and observance of rights and obligations in society (Yusuf 120). The Glorious Qur'an says: O you who believe! Stand out firmly as just witnesses, and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do. (Qur'an5:8) That is to say, those in authority should behave according to this verse of the Glorious Qur'an by being just to those they have authority over and not allowing enmity and hatred to make them the victim of bad governance. The best example of good governance can be well traced to the leadership of the prophet (SAW) in Madinah he live and govern the people of Madinah with justice and fairness by allowing the immigrant and the Madinah Muslims to understand and agreed that they are brothers i.e brotherhood also came into agreeing with the none Muslims of the then Madinah which gave him the easier way of having good governance on the people.

Conceptually, the Islamic governance system can be best described by the most popular concept for governing the state, which is known as *Siyasah al-shar'iyah* (governance that follows the rule of Shariah). The word *Siyasah* is literally derived from the Arabic word *sasa*, meaning 'to arrange, to manage, to rule, or politics. As a concept, good governance is not something new, though it has become a frequently used term alongside terms like sustainable development, civil society, transparency, devolution of power, and accountability. Muslim Scholars view *Siyasah al-shar'iyah* as a source and framework of effective governance, for instance. Ibn Qayyim al jawziy defines *Siyasah al-shar'iyah* as an act of providing benefit and protecting it from any destruction, even if the action is not specifically mentioned by the prophet (SAW) nor revealed by Almighty Allah in the Glorious Qur'an. According to Abdul-Wahhab Al-Khallaf, effective governance means administering a general matter that is in line with Islamic law, including promoting benefits and protecting haram. In a more general definition, Al Maqrizi categorized effective governance into fair or good governance, which is the type of governance that follows the rules of Shariah, which is known as *Siyasah al-shar'iyah*, while the other category is known as bad or unfair governance (*Siyasah al-Zalimah*), and vice versa is the case in this category. (Abd Rahman and Sharifaah 619).

Brief Biography and the Account of Shaykh Uthman Bin Fodio's Leadership

Shaykh Uthman Bin Fodiyo was born in Marata, in 1754 C.E in a much-respected family. His father, Muhammad Fodiye, was a knowledgeable scholar. Uthman first studied from him. He



was educated according to the traditional system (Mafara 5). After finishing at home his basic education of reading and writing Arabic, memorization and translation of the Qur'an, some knowledge of Hadith and jurisprudence, grammar, and arithmetic, he then obtained the advanced knowledge of Islamic sciences from specialized professors of the subjects. Some of his teachers include Shaykh Abd Al-Rahman b. Hammadah, his maternal uncle Uthman Bidduri, Muhammad Sambo, Muhammad b. Rajab, and Jibril b. Umar (). Shaykh Uthman was a writer who wrote over one hundred and fifteen books on almost every subject or issue that had relevance, importance and meaning in the life of the Islamic community. Throughout his life, the Shaykh was motivated by the desire and ambition to create an Islamic Ummah (Community) based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as explained by several Islamic scholars before him (Sulaiman 40).

As for student Shaykh Uthman has many who assisted him in and out of his family. He was always available to them, in teaching, answering, and clarifying for them. He always preached intellectual discussion and prepared his students to discuss rather than fight. This, among others are the pioneer in the success of establishing the Caliphate, as is evident in the writings of Shaykh Abdullahi bin Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello in *Tazyinil al-waraqataq and infaqul al-maisur* respectively (Bala 473).

His writing style was simple, easy to read, and understandable. He reflected the organic relationship between all aspects of life, which Islam discusses from a holistic point of view. It was realized that his preaching was excellent, that in compliance with the Qur'an, he preached with wisdom and good exhortation, and his training of the men around him and his call to people were all based on knowledge. Thus, the Shaykh fully utilized the sciences (ulum) in his efforts to transform his society; the sciences of *Tawhid*, Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, economics, and politics, etc. Among his contributions in politics is *Kitab al-farq bayn wilayat ahl al-islam wa bayn wilayat ahl kufr* (Bala 474).

The Account of Shaykh Uthman Bin Fodio's Leadership

Being the first to establish an Islamic State in Hausa-land after the victory of his jihad against the tyrannical Hausa rulers.

Ethical development of leadership was the primary concern of Uthman to establish the Islamic state. He thus told the new Muslim leaders of Hausa land that Allah had given them the inheritance of the land by conquest, but he was afraid to pray for them so that the world will corrupt them like the Hausa rulers. So, he requested them to swear that they would not be corrupted by power like that of the Israelites in the wilderness. He advised them to avoid: worldly aspiration, envy, mercilessness, feuds, the pursuit of wealth, and falling into the strife that makes a man a Muslim in the morning and a pagan by evening (al-Wasewi 16).

Socio-political Impact

Issues of justice were addressed, and every citizen was asked to comply with the law (Sheriff 44). As a result of that, the Caliphate was "peaceful. Honest, pious, and scholarly judges were



appointed throughout the Caliphate. According to Sambo Wali Junaidu, in fact, descendants of these judges, like the Qadi Qudat (Chief judge), still retain the titles, if not, the functions. We also have other figures like the sa'i, who takes charge of the collection and distribution of Zakah. Others are the Sarkin Yaki (war commander), the title still held by the descendants of Aliyu Jedo, the war commander at the time of the jihad, and the Muhtasib (Censor of Morals). As for Waziri, the Shaykh appointed four viziers, namely Abdullahi Ben Fodiyo, Muhammad Bello, Umar Alkammu, and Malam Sa'adare. When the Caliphate became stronger, the vizier ship positions were reduced to only two. The western flank, under the charge of Abdullah, has its own vizier, as was the case with the Eastern flank under Bello. However, as Muhammad Bello became the second Caliph, the vizier-ship position of the Caliphate held by Abdullahi shifted to Uthan Godo, to look into people's affairs (Sheriff 44).

Educational Impact

Caliphate leaders tried to promote learning and scholarship. This promotion was vigorously pursued by the Caliphate so much that there was no Islamic revivalist movement in the whole of Africa during that time that had been bequeathed to the generations of the Sokoto Caliphate. Shaykh Uthman had written not less than one hundred books and manuals in the three languages, namely: Fulfulde, Hausa, and Arabic. It was also done by his son Bello, Abdullah, and Emirs, who received flags from the Shaykh. All the flag bearers were at one time or another students of Sheikh Uthman b. Fodiyo, who in turn encouraged scholarship in their own areas of jurisdiction (44). He later left the day-to-day running of the government in the hands of his brother Abdullahi, his son Bello, and the Emirs, and then he devoted his time to research, teaching, and writing. (al-Wasewi 16).

Economic Impact

The transformation of the Caliphate provided opportunities for greater economic relations among people in the region. In the socio- economic field, the Sokoto Caliphate leaders contributed a lot to economic growth, no doubt, the most profound and easily visible impact of jihad in the Caliphate was economic development, especially in Agriculture. According to Abdulkadir Adamu, sustainable development formed the bedrock of the economy by which the leaders provided food for the population and raw materials for the industries (Adamu 100). The Sheykh mentions heads of expenditure of *bayt al-mal* (public treasury) as fortification of Muslim cities, teachers' salaries, judges' salaries, *mu'azzins'* salaries, and all those who work for Islam and the poor. "If anything is left after all these heads, the surplus is to be kept in bayt al-mal for emergencies. The fund may also be used for building mosques, freeing Muslim captives, freeing debtors, and can be used for helping those without means to marry or those without means to go for hajj, etc. (Gusau 151). Dan Fodio made an amendment on the issue of land tenure; he declared all the land under his administration as *Waqaf* (endowment), and that all the land is held by the state for the benefit of the community. But the leader can grant for cultivation. He also encouraged the issues of distribution of Zakah locally, immediately, and properly, and banned illegal taxes such as the cattle tax (*Jangali*) and the land tax (*Khraji*), which attract immigrants to the territory (al-Wasewi 17).



Al-Wasewi explained further on how dan Fodio enacted the law to be observed in the markets, market fraudulences such as; middle men (*Yan soke*) who will buy cheaply from the farmers or producers and sell to consumer at higher price, middle men (*YanTarbe*) who always interrupt the direct contact between the producers and the consumers which is causing full in supply until demand became acute for exploitative profit and speculator (*Yan Ingidi*) who will buy in advance and hoard, were all banned or restricted. (17)

Sheikh was able to establish, out of warring city-states, the largest state in Africa of its time, with an efficient government, well-grounded in Islam, a reminiscence of the early period. His life strivings were for reform of Islamic practices, and he succeeded in establishing the state and institutional framework to enforce it, and he provided the intellectual wherewithal. He set the process for accelerated Islamisation. On the material dimension of development, the Islamic state, unprecedented in its scope and complexity, found a solution to the crisis and disequilibrium of the societies and politics of the region, most importantly, peace and unity for development (Al-Wasewi 16).

His administration also did a lot for the economy of the Hausa-land.

The shaykh supports economic growth with emphasis on an increase in permissible and useful goods and services. Thus, he encouraged people to strive to provide in abundance through farming, commerce and occupations (industries), to protect the sustainability and success of the economy Bin Fodio established *Hisba* (police) for protection of life and properties of the people, also to protect and execute the Islamic maxim of “commanding the right and prohibiting the wrong” (al-Wasewi 16).

Dan Fodio’s Model Nigerian Leaders

Dan Fodio have left many legacy for the contemporary Nigerian leaders such as; establishment of justice among them and all their subject (no one is above the law), checking on the Governors, requesting them to swear that they would not be corrupted by power, adopted the division of the functions of the government, putting in position people that are God fearing, banding of unnecessary taxations, banding of unnecessary middle men, establishment of well-armed and effective police, supporting economic growth, establishment of schools, producing of scholars, payment of salaries for the government workers without delay.

Conclusion

This paper explains the concept of good and effective governance from the Islamic perspective and that of the contemporary, listing the features of good and effective governance. The paper also focused on the administration of shaykh Uthman Bin Fodio for his good and effective governance which mealy concentrated on the Islamic perspectives by establishing justice, checking on the governors, (check and balancing), God fearing people as representative, transparency, scholarship e.t.c a lot of reformation was introduced during his leadership in Hausa-land and the people really gained and sees lot of changes in the economic, social, and the politics of the land. For that, the exemplary model of Shaykh Uthman dan Fodio’s administration



or leadership style remained an example for contemporary leaders not only in Nigeria but also in other parts of the world. Nigeria is facing a lot of challenges because of its poor leadership since after the independence till date, and the only way to get out of these challenges is to adapt and practice good and effective governance, then Nigeria will be free from its challenges.

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IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities

Vol. 12. No. 1, (2026)

ISSN: 2488- 9210 (Print) 2504-9038 (Online)

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University, Umuanya
Indexed: Academic Journals Online, Google Scholar, Igwebuike Research Institute

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