

CHAPTER 1

THE SOKOTO CALIPHATE

Objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- describe the state of Hausaland at the beginning of 19th century;
- assess the place of Islam in Hausaland at the beginning of 19th century;
- examine the circumstances under which Usman Dan Fodio lived and worked in Gobir;
- explain why the Sarkin Gobir and the Muslims fell out;
- describe the organization of the Jihad and the birth of the caliphate;
- describe the administrative structure of the caliphate;
- examine the relationship between the central government and the provincial administration.

Introduction

Sokoto Caliphate was formed in 1804 following the declaration of Jihad in Hausaland by Usman Dan Fodio, the Jihad was fought due to exploitation of the peasants by the rulers. The Jihad led to the formation of large states in Hausaland.

1.1 Hausaland on the Eve of the Jihads

States in Hausaland such as Kano, Katsina, Daura, Zazzau, Gobir were each administered by a ruler known as Sarki. The authority of the Sarki extended to all the parts of his kingdom. Each of the Hausa states were independent of one another. Before the outbreak of the Jihad the rulers exploit their subjects, they compelled them to pay heavy taxes and forced them to work on their farms. The leaders and people engaged in mixing Islam and paganism. That was why the Jihad was declared by Islam.

1.2 Factors that Led to the Jihad

A Jihad is a holy war that is fought in order to purify the tenents of Islam.

Factors that led to the Sokoto Jihad include:

- a) **Religious factor:** The Jihad was fought in Hausaland because the rulers and the subjects were mixing Islam with paganism. There was the desire to establish Islam in purer form and prevent it from being corrupted with paganism.
- b) **Political factor:** The rulers were oppressing and exploiting their subjects, that is why the peasants supported the Jihad to end the oppression.

- c) **Economic factor:** The ruler of Hausaland excessively taxed their subjects. They also engaged them to provide free labour on their farms. The rulers were also engaged in corruption. That was why the Jihad was fought to stop these vices.
- d) **Social factor:** There was discrimination between Hausa and Fulani as the Fulani were not allowed to hold positions in government and the Fulani suffered more taxation imposed on their cattle.
- e) **Intellectual factor:** The Jihad was waged to bring about changes in education and scholarship in Hausaland. This is because education was not given adequate attention before the Jihad.

1.3 Nature and Course of the Jihad

The Jihad was led by Usman Dan Fodio who was born in Gobir in 1754. He received Islamic education at an early age and went to Agadez to further his education. In 1774, Dan Fodio began to preach in Degel and was able to get large followers. He was employed by the king of Gobir to teach his sons which made him more influential. In 1802, Yumfa succeeded Nafata to the throne and became jealous of the activities of the Shehu. Yumfa intended to destroy Degel and kill the followers of Dan Fodio. This made him and his followers to emigrate to Gudu outside Gobir. At Gudu, Dan Fodio was able to get the support of both Hausa and Fulani people. It was while there he was made the Commander of the Faithful. In 1804, Dan Fodio came in conflict with the rulers of Gobir and he was able to defeat their forces. That was the beginning of the Jihad in Hausaland. The Jihad led to the overthrow of Hausa rulers and the establishment of the Caliphate.

1.4 Organisation of the Caliphate

The Caliphate was divided into emirates; each had an emir answerable to the Caliph. The Emirates were: Katsina, Kano, Daura, Zazzau, Kazaure, Hadejia, Bauchi, Katagum, Gombe, Fombina, Agae, Lapai, Hamarua and Lafiagi. The Caliphate was divided into two: the Eastern section was governed by Muhammad Bello, the son of Dan Fodio while the Western part was administered by his brother, Abdullahi Fodio with its headquarter in Gwandu. While Shehu Dan Fodio stayed away from the politics, Islamic law was introduced as a medium of justice administration. In the political aspect, some positions were changed while others that were in existence before the Jihad were retained.

1.5 Impact of the Jihad

The Jihad has the following impacts:

- a) **Political:** It led to the overthrow of rulers in Hausa states. It also led to the establishment of large states that extended from parts of Nigeria to Niger Republic. The Emirs were answerable to the Caliph which shows a kind of unity among states that were independent of one another.
- b) **Economic:** It led to reduction of excessive taxes and forced labour on the farms of the rulers.

- c) **Social:** It led to the equal treatment of all citizens. Discrimination between Hausa and Fulani was abolished.
- d) **Inspired other Jihad:** Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio inspired the Jihads of Seku Ahmadu in Massina and Alhaji Umar in Tukulor.
- e) **Conflict with its neighbours:** The Jihad made the Caliphate to be in conflict with its neighbours e.g. Borno.

Summary

- Sokoto Jihad was waged by Usman Fodio for the purification of Islam and prevention of exploitation of the peasants in Hausaland.
- The Jihad was fought in 1804 and it led to the establishment of states extending from parts of Nigeria to Niger Republic.
- The Jihad brought political unity to independent states of Hausaland .
- The Caliphate was divided into Eastern section headed by Muhammad with Sokoto as its capital while the Western part was governed by Abdullahi Fodio with its headquarters in Gwandu.
- The Sokoto Jihad inspired other Jihads in West Africa.

Revision Questions

Objectives

1. The Sokoto Jihad was fought in _____.
 - A. Yorubaland
 - B. Igboland
 - C. Itsekiri
 - D. Hausaland
2. The Sokoto Jihad led to the establishment of Caliphate consisting of various _____.
 - A. states
 - B. countries
 - C. polities
 - D. Emirates
3. _____ and Alh. Umar in Tukulor were inspired by the Sokoto Jihad.
 - A. Abdullahi Fodio
 - B. Ahmadu Bello
 - C. Usman Dan Fodio
 - D. Seku Ahmadu

4. The following are causes of the Sokoto Jihad except:
- A. Corruption in Hausaland
 - B. Excessive taxation of the peasants
 - C. Discrimination
 - D. Good governance
5. Which of the following is not an emirate under the Sokoto Caliphate?
- A. Katsina
 - B. Kano
 - C. Zazzau
 - D. Nupe
6. Sokoto Jihad was fought in the year _____.
- A. 1960
 - B. 1970
 - C. 1804
 - D. 1904
7. The leader of the Sokoto Jihad was _____.
- A. Usman Dan Fodio
 - B. Muhammad Bello
 - C. Seku Ahmadu
 - D. Alh. Umar
8. Usman Dan Fodio emigrated from Degel to _____.
- A. Kano
 - B. Gobir
 - C. Kano
 - D. Gudu
9. Sokoto Caliphate was divided into: Eastern and _____ part.
- A. Southern
 - B. Northern
 - C. Western
 - D. Middle
10. Sokoto Caliphate extended from parts of Nigeria to parts of _____.
- A. Cameroon
 - B. Benin
 - C. Liberia
 - D. Niger

Essay Questions

1. Explain the causes of Sokoto Jihad.

2. Discuss the nature of Hausaland on the eve of Sokoto Jihad.
3. Discuss the course and nature of Sokoto Jihad.
4. Discuss the nature of administration of the Sokoto Caliphate.
5. Explain the impacts of the Sokoto Jihad.