

# CHAPTER 1 ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSLIM STATES IN WEST AFRICA

## Objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- examine the impacts of Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad on other Jihads in West Africa;
- discuss the emergence of Seku Ahmadu;
- describe the areas covered by his teachings and Jihad;
- discuss the significance of the Jihad of Seku Ahmadu;
- describe the rise of Alhaji Umar;
- discuss the details of his religious affiliation and his teachings;
- discuss the effects of his political activities and the Jihad;
- discuss the similarities and differences of the Jihads;
- discuss how Muslim states face European invasion in West Africa.

## Introduction

The 19th century saw the rise of Islamic states formed as a result of the Jihads that took place. The significance of the Jihads was the establishment of theocratic states operating based on Islamic law.

### 1.1 Impact of Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad on Other Jihads in West Africa

Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad took place in Hausa in the year 1804, which led to the establishment of a caliphate and the consequent overthrow of the Hausa state. The caliphate was established based on Islamic law and justice. It was divided into emirates consisting of Sokoto, Gwandu, Katsina, Kano, Daura, Zazzau, Hadeija, Katagum, Bauchi, Gombe, Misau and Kontagora. Usman Dan Fodio succeeded due to the support he got from the people who were exploited in the form of heavy taxes and forced labour. Thus, he was efficient to have achieved such success.

Dan Fodio was not the military commander of the Jihad, he only guided the Jihad intellectually.

Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad inspired Seku Ahmadu of Masina and Alhaji Umar to carry out similar Jihad in their areas with the intention of purifying Islam. Usman Dan Fodio gave them all the necessary encouragement and support by pointing out the significance of the Jihad in societies such as theirs that were faced with religious decline, exploitation of the peasants in the form of high taxation and forced labour by the rulers. In fact, the success of the Sokoto Jihad was indeed a source of inspiration to other leaders. Usman Dan Fodio defeated the Hausa state, notwithstanding the Hausa army which consists of both horsemen and foot soldiers, who used variety of war implements such as

spears, shields, arrows, produced in the state. Seku Ahmadu who was in sokoto caliphate in 1805 the time when Jihad was fought collected a flag from Usman Dan Fodio as a sign of authority which made him to get the support of his people.

Similarly, Alhaji Umar was inspired by Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad because he visited Sokoto caliphate at the time of Muhammad Bello, son of Usman Dan Fodio in the 1820s and got all the necessary encouragement from Muhammad Bello.

## **1.2 The Jihad of Seku Ahmadu and the Establishment of Masina Caliphate**

The Jihad of Seku Ahmadu took place in the 19th century in Masina, a place located around rivers Niger and Senegal in West Africa.

### **(a) Factors the Led to the Jihad**

In 1818, Seku Ahmadu declared a Jihad in his area and was supported by the Fulani's and the Soninke people. He received a flag and a letter from Usman Dan Fodio as a sign of authority

to carry out the Jihad. The Diallo chief sought for the support of Bambara of Segou but Ahmadu defeated them based on the factors listed below.

- (i) **Religious Factor:** The Jihad was fought with the aim of purifying Islam. The chief of the area and his followers were nominal Muslims, which means they did not observe the Islamic tenets. In fact, the majority of the followers of the chief of Diallo were pagans. Thus, Seku Ahmadu wanted to revive Islam as well as introduce Islam to the pagans.
- (ii) **Political Factor:** The rulers of the area exploited their peasants. The Fulanis were made to pay heavy taxes on their cattle and were asked to go to war against their fellow Muslims.
- (iii) **Economic Factor:** The rulers compelled their followers to economic exploitation in terms of heavy taxes, forced labour, and there was no security for the merchants to carry out their trade. Thus, these merchants supported Seku Ahmadu to carry out the Jihad so that there will be security for their trade.
- (iv) **Social Factor:** The Muslim Fulani and the Soninke, faced segregation in terms of payment of high taxes unlike the Bambara and Bozo people.

**(b) Significance of the Jihad of Seku Ahmadu**

- (i) **Religious:** The Jihad led to the purification of Islam, the pagans were converted and Islamic laws were strictly adhered to in the area. Thus, Islam was revived.
- (ii) **Political:** Seku Ahmadu established a caliphate which he divided into emirates and appointed an emir to govern each emirate. He also appointed a Kadi to each emirate for the implementation of Islamic law. Seku Ahmadu established a theocratic state which all the executive, legislative and judicial powers were centred with the caliph and was assisted by 40 Islamic scholars who worked for the operation of Islamic custom. He established the capital of the caliphate at Hamdullah.
- (iii) **Social:** The Jihad led to equal treatment of citizens irrespective of tribe or area. The people lived in peace and harmony under the Islamic umbrella.
- (iv) **Economic:** There was reduction of excessive taxes and security for trading activities was provided by the caliphate which led to the development of the economy.

### **1.3 Jihad of Alhaji Omar and the Establishment of Tukolor Empire**

The Jihad of Alhaji Omar took place in the 19th century in Futa Jallon area of West Africa, close to river Niger and Senegal in 1862.

**Causes of the Jihad**

- (i) **Religious:** Alhaji Umar wanted to revive and preserve Islam religion from decadence in the area which was why he carried out the Jihad.

- (ii) **Economic:** The Fulani's of Futa Jallon faced high exploitation of tax in the area, and there was no protection for trade.
- (iii) **Social:** The Fulani's were few in numbers compared to the non-Fulani's and were asked to pay taxes higher than that paid by the non-Fulani.

### **Significance of the Jihad**

- (i) **Religious:** It led to the revival of Islam as Islamic laws were implemented in governing the area and administering of justice.
- (ii) **Political:** It led to the establishment of an empire which was divided into emirate that brought political unity in the area. The capital of the empire was established at Dinguiray.
- (iii) **Economic:** The Jihad led to the promotion of trading activities and industries and there was also the abolition of excessive taxation in the area.
- (iv) **Social:** The people received equal treatment as segregation based on ethnicity was not practiced in the caliphate.

## **1.4 Similarities and Differences between the Jihads of West Africa**

### **(a) Similarities of the Jihads**

- (i) The three Jihads of 19th century West Africa were similar in nature because they wanted to revive Islam and prevent it from decadence in their respective areas.
- (ii) All the Jihad led to the overthrow of existing governments. Usman Dan Fodio overthrew leaders of Hausaland, Seku Ahmadu overthrew leaders of Masina and Alhaji Umar overthrew the government in Futa Jallon.
- (iii) There was the establishment of caliphates in the areas. These include: the Sokoto caliphate, Masina caliphate and Tukolor empire.
- (iv) Another similarity lies in the way the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio inspired the Jihad of Seku Ahmadu and that of Alhaji Umar.

### **(b) Differences in the Jihads**

- (i) Usman Dan Fodio and Seku Ahmadu belong to the Qadriyya sect while Alhaji Umar belonged to the Tijanniya sect brotherhood.
- (ii) Usman Dan Fodio did not command the Jihad military. While Seku Ahamadu and Alhaji Omar commanded their Jihads and fought at the war front.
- (iii) Usman Dan Fodio provided great intellectual aspect to the Jihad and left the military front to his brother Abdullahu Fodio and his son Muhammad Bello, while Seku Ahmadu and Alhaji Omar commanded the Jihad military and did not contribute greatly to the intellectual aspect of the Jihad.

## **1.5 Muslim States and European Colonization of West Africa**

At the time of European conquest of Africa in the 19th and 20th century, the Muslim states of West Africa were threatened. In fact, they were conquered by the British and the French. The Muslim states that were conquered at the time of European colonization were the Sokoto caliphate, Masina caliphate and Tukulor empire.

Such state first encountered the Europeans in the name of explorers like Clapperton, a 19th century explorer who went to Muhammad Bello in Sokoto to discuss trade relations.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, French conquered the area around Senegal river where it established its rule. Masina caliphate and Tukulor empire were conquered and subdued by the French. The system of administration in these two states collapsed with the conquest of the areas.

Sokoto caliphate was conquered in 1903 after a battle between Caliph Attahiru and the British at Burmi. The war was fought because the Caliph refused to surrender to the British, but instead, he decided to make a hijra (emigration), the British followed them and a war occurred. The Caliph and his followers fought and challenged the superior weapons of the British. The Caliph and large number of his followers were killed, but some of the British army officers lost their lives in the battle.

However, due to the centralized nature of the Sokoto caliphate, the British adopted it and tried to use it in the administration of Northern Nigeria under the indirect rule system.

## Summary

- Usman Dan Fodio inspired Seku Ahmadu and Alhaji Umars jihad.
- The Jihad of Seku Ahmadu took place in Massina in 1818 and the causes of the Jihad were adulteration of Islam with paganism, excessive taxation on the Fulani and Soninke.
- Seku Ahmadu received a flag and a letter of authority from Usman Dan Fodio.
- The jihad of Seku Ahmadu led to the establishment of Masina caliphate that was divided into emirates governed by governors.
- Seku Ahmadu established a theocratic state based on teachings of Islam.
- Alhaji Omar went to Sokoto in the 1820s where he met Muhammad Bello and was inspired by the Sokoto Jihad.
- Alhaji Omar overthrew the government of Futa Jallon and established the Tukulor empire in 1862 which he divided into provinces.
- The similarity between the three Jihads of West Africa is that they all aimed at purify Islam the jihad led to the overthrow of the pre-existing political systems in the area and there was the establishment of caliphates.
- The Muslim states faced Europeans during colonization.

## Objectives Questions

1. The Sokoto caliphate inspired the Jihad of Seku Ahmadu and that of  
A. Alhaji Omar

- B. Ahmadu Bello
  - C. Abdullahi Fodio
  - D. Hausa rulers
2. The Jihad of Seku Ahmadu took place in \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Hausaland
  - B. Masina
  - C. Yorubaland
  - D. Mossi states
3. Seku Ahmadu received a flag and a letter of authority from \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Usman Dan Fodio
  - B. Alhaji Omar
  - C. Mansa Musa
  - D. Seku Toure
4. \_\_\_\_\_ established theocratic states based on Islamic teachings.
- A. Seku Ahmadu
  - B. Usman Fodio
  - C. Alhaji Omar
  - D. Samour Toure
5. Alhaji Omar visited Sokoto and received the guidance on his Jihad from \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Usman Dan Fodio
  - B. Abdullahi Fodio
  - C. Muhammad Fodio
  - D. Mohammad Askia
6. Alhaji Omar founded the \_\_\_\_\_ empire in 1862.
- A. Masina
  - B. Sokoto
  - C. Bornu
  - D. Tukulor
7. The Jihads in West Africa led to the overthrow of the pre-existing \_\_\_\_\_
- A. states
  - B. village
  - C. local government
  - D. ideas
8. Usman Dan Fodio and Seku Ahmadu belong to the Qadiriyya sect while Alhaji Omar belong to \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Shi'ite sect
  - B. Muslim sect
  - C. Tijanniya sect

- D. ideology sect
9. Seku Ahmadu established his capital at \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Hamdullahi
- B. Katsina
- C. Senegal
- D. Timbuktu
10. The capital of Tukulor empire is \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Jenne
- B. Timbuktu
- C. Dingirary
- D. Sokoto

### Essay Questions

1. How did Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad inspire other Jihads in West Africa?
2. Discuss the significance of Seku Ahmadu's Jihad.
3. Examine the causes of Alhaji Omar's Jihad.
4. Discuss four similarities between the Jihads of West Africa.
5. Examine the challenges faced by Muslim states during European colonization