

## **THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY JIHADS IN WEST AFRICA**

A Jihad is a holy defensive war waged by Muslim reformers against injustices in the society, aimed at protecting the wronged and oppressed people together with their property and at the same time, spreading, purifying and strengthening Islam.

In the Nineteenth Century, West Africa saw a wave of Jihads; however, three were more profound:

1. The Jihads that broke out in Hausaland in 1804 under the leadership of Uthman Dan Fodio. These took place in Sokoto area; and thus came to be known as the Sokoto Jihads.
2. In 1818, another Jihad was conducted in Massina under the headship of Seku (Sehu) Ahmadu. These came to be known as the Massina Jihads.
3. In Futa-Jallon and Futa-toto, another Jihadist called Al-Hajj Umar carried out a Jihad in 1851. This was known as the Tokolor or Tijjan Jihad.

All these Jihads were led by members of the Fulani Muslims and carried out by people of Fulani origin; as such, the Jihads came to be known as the Fulani Jihads.

## **CAUSES OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY JIHAD MOVEMENTS IN WEST AFRICA.**

**Question: Account for the outbreak of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihad Movement in West Africa.**

Although the Nineteenth Century Jihads were religious movements, they had a mixture of political, economic and intellectual causes; and a number of factors accounted for their outbreak in West Africa.

1. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihads aimed at spreading Islam to the people who had not been converted to it. There were areas which had not been touched by Islam such as Mossi, Nupe, Borgu and Adamawa.

Therefore, using the umbrella of Jihads, The Jihadists hoped to spread Islam in the whole of Hausaland.

2. The Jihad movements aimed at the purification and strengthening of Islam in Hausaland and the Hausa society itself. After the collapse of Mali and Songhai Empires, there was decline in Islamic faith in West Africa as it was mixed with pagan practices. Therefore, the Jihadists wanted to eliminate nominal and non-Islamic practices and ending paganism in the Hausa Land.
3. It was the desire of the Jihadists to free and protect the Muslims of West Africa against the oppressive tendencies and mistreatment of the ruling pagan regimes. For example, in Segu, Massina and Futa-Toro the non-Muslim leaders openly attacked men putting on the turbans and women with veils. To this, therefore, the Jihads were a movement for political reforms and promotion of Islamic sanctity.
4. The Hausa states of Gobil, Katsina and Kebbi which were the most powerful states by then in Hausa land were ruled by either pagans or nominal Muslims, who mixed Islam with paganism with the aim of satisfying Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus, such ugly situation could not be left to go unchallenged; hence cultivating fertile grounds for the Jihads.
5. In Hausaland, the few Muslims who practiced total Islam were oppressed by the rulers to the extent of being recruited in the army by force to fight fellow Muslims; a practice that Muslims greatly resented. Other Muslims were sold in slavery by these Hausa kings, a practice that contravened the teaching of the Qur'an.
6. The Jihadists thought that in order for them to achieve religious objectives and goals, political activities in the area had to be cleansed, simply because religious reforms would not succeed in an unfavourable political environment, where the Hausa states were constantly at war with each other.
7. The Hausa rulers had become more dangerous to the development of Islam in West Africa. They censured Islamic Literature and also limited the number of preachers not only to a few people but also to

only in a few areas. So, an attempt to reverse such decision culminated into Jihads.

8. The Hausa and Fulani Muslims hated the evil practice of selling Muslims into slavery to the European traders during the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade as was done by the very Hausa leaders. To the Muslims, this act was not only sinful but also an evil against humanity. They, therefore, saw the urgency of getting rid of this social evil and were to wage war against their leaders.
9. The attempt to stop further conversion of people to Islam also caused Jihad movements. For instance Sultan Nafata of Gobir openly declared that there should not be any more conversion to Islam and that those who had not been born Muslims should denounce Islam immediately. Therefore, the Jihadist had to wage a Holy war against such irreligious leaders who had proved to be deterrent to the spread and progress of Islam.
10. The Hausa courts were being conducted in a sinful manner; punctuated with high levels of corruption and bribery. Judgments for cases tried were always unfair and depended on someone's economic status. To end all these evils, Jihads movements became inevitable.
11. Another factor was the activities of the landlords who had denied other people land yet the poor were forced to pay heavy sums of money; rendering them poorer. Therefore, jihads had to be waged to rescue people from unfair government policies.
12. The West Africa Jihad Movements were influenced by other Islamic Movements, like the Wahabiyyah Revolution of Arabia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Wahabiyyah Revolution, thus spread its influence to West Africa only to inspire revolutionary leaders to wage Jihads against their leaders who were busy pushing Islamic religion to a periphery.
13. The Jihadists were encouraged by wide spread belief throughout the Muslim world of the expected saviour (Al- Mahdi) who was supposed to come during the thirteenth century of the Islamic calendar. This belief raised general air of expectation among the

Muslim world and made them ever ready to accept anyone who would convince them that he was either the expected Mahdi or his fore-runner.

14. The Jihads were also aimed at overthrowing pagan governments and establishing theirs run on Islamic lines. Strict Muslims in West Africa could not tolerate to be ruled by pagans, who at one time forced Muslims to go to war against fellow Muslims.
15. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihads also aimed at creating religious, political, economic and intellectual revolution in Western Sudan by establishing Islamic education. By removing pagan rulers who were against Islamic education, Muslim hoped to create an ideal Islamic society through education.
16. The Fulani also felt that their wealth was insecure under the Hausa rulers, who were openly jealous of the Fulani wealth. The Fulani had amassed a lot of wealth from the proceedings of trade and as a result, they constructed mosques, schools and the like. They, therefore, thought to establish a government, which would guarantee security of their property.
17. The collapse of the Muslim empires of Songhai, and Mali led to the collapse of the Islamic faith in the region. New leaders of the small chiefdoms in the Hausa land failed to maintain Islamic faith and principles. They actually allowed Islam to co-exist with paganism and yet the two are incompatible and against the Islamic Code of Law. The Jihads were therefore waged to cleanse the society, get rid of nominal or pagan leaders and get a ground for creating pure Islamic states.
18. The fanatic Muslims hated living in a society where there were pagans. They felt that it was their duty to convert these people. To them, conversion by persuasion was too slow especially when there was no political will. In order to get mass conversion into Islam, force in form of Jihads needed to be applied.
19. The need to control and counteract the spread of Christianity in West Africa prompted Jihad movements. European Missionaries had

established themselves on the southern coast of West Africa. They were entering the interior spreading Christianity with them. Thus, cleric and fanatic Muslims were prompted to carry out Islamic revolutions and force many people into their faith before they took up Christianity.

20. Muslims and Jihadists got inspired to start Jihads in this region of West Africa in order to gain the political force that would effectively hamper Christian missionaries from entering their states; since Islam and Christianity were always on parallels.
21. Most West African leaders of the time were very corrupt, took bribes and promoted injustices. There was open favouritism and the poor could not litigate the rich. The only way to do away with such evils was to overthrow the existing governments as Uthman Dan Fodio, Al-Hajj Umar ad Sehu Ahmadu did.
22. The threat of the imperialists caused Muslims to fight wars of Jihads. Some Muslim nationalists like Samori Toure and Al- Hajj Umar began Jihads as a way of uniting their people into a strong army and formidable force to face the European colonialists. Indeed Samori Toure was able to resist the French because he had been able to consolidate himself in Mandinka using Jihads as a tool of state formation.
23. In Hausa, the discrimination and overtaxation of the Fulani became a strong cause for the outbreak of the Jihads. The Fulani pastorists hated the way they were being taxed and denied crossing to some areas for pasture. These readily and enthusiastically joined the Jihads to solve the problem of taxation and grazing land.
24. Many Muslims, especially the Fulani Jihadists staged Jihads to address the problems of discrimination in leadership. They were denied the right to hold any political office; yet they were highly educated in Islamic law and philosophy. They were only employed as clerks, interpreters and teachers - moreover serving pagan rulers.
25. The emergence of Muslim fanatics, with unreserved determination accounted for the outbreak of Jihads. Most of such leaders like

Uthman Dan Fodio, Al-Hajj Umar, Sehu Ahmadu and Samori Toure were Muslim clerics and highly learned in Islamic Law. They were able to capitalize on various grievances in their societies to win a lot of support and sympathy to stage Jihads.

## **THE SOKOTO JIHADS OF UTHMAN DAN FODIO**

### **CAREER OF UTHMAN DAN FODIO**

**Question: Examine the career of Uthman Dan Fodio.**

Uthman Dan Fodio was born in 1754 at Maratta in the state of Gobir. He belonged to the Gidda group of the Fulani Tribe, particularly to a subgroup called Toronkawa, which was strongly a Muslim group and many of its members were Muslims teachers and preachers.

During his youth, his father, who was himself a Muslim scholar and a teacher taught him to read the Qur'an.

When he left his father's home, he studied under different Ulamas (Muslim intellectuals) and finally ended up in Agades under a famous teacher called Jibril Umar, who belonged to the Qadariyyah Muslim sect or brotherhood. This sect believed in the strict observation of the Orthodox principles of Islam.

Uthman learnt Islamic Law, Theology and Sufism and at an early age of twenty years, he started his career as a teacher, writer and Islamic preacher at Dengel, where many young men flocked to his base to study under him.

Uthman was concerned and alarmed by the falling standards of Islamic culture following the death of Askia Muhammad Toure. He surfaced so as to revive the religious situation in society that was becoming nasty.

Uthman Dan Fodio preached to his students the need to purify Islam and the need to spread Islam in their own states, especially the Hausaland. Because of his will and zeal to purify Islam, Uthman Dan Fodio came to be known as a puritan Muslim. His students started referring to him as "Sehu" meaning a religious reader equivalent to a "Sheikh" in Arabic.

Uthman Dan Fodio also went on several missionary tours throughout Hausaland especially in Zamfara, Kebbi and Daura. He also wrote many books in Arabic, Hausa and Fulani Languages that carried a message of reform.

In his preaching and writings, also, Uthman Dan Fodio attacked all unreligious practices. He condemned corrupt and unjust governments, illegal taxation and insisted on complete acceptance of spiritual and moral values of Islam.

As a man of great eloquence and learning, Uthman soon built a large number of followers around him; some of whom referred to this great religious leader as Dan Fodio – meaning son of the learned father; while others believed he was the Mahdi or the expected saviour.

His face also attracted the admiration of Sultan Bawa of Gobir, who wanted to employ him at his court; something that Uthman rejected to honour arguing that this would deny him freedom of spreading the word of Allah.

Later in 1780's he got some contacts with Hausa rulers and in this, he visited Bawa, the Sultan of Gobir to explain to him the teaching of Islam. At this level, people started to see him as a person of high status, which increased his prestige among them.

Uthman Dan Fodio's influence and prestige also increased greatly when he successfully negotiated an agreement with Sultan Bawa to release Muslim Prisoners, granting of freedom of worship to all people and exemption of Muslims from unIslamic taxes.

Sultan Bawa had given Uthman a go ahead to preach to people; and indeed, he taught many people. Many students got attracted from far and wide. They gathered around him and they became to be known as a community (Jama-a) meaning and referring to those who were convinced and prepared to accept his religious leadership.

Consequently, constant preaching earned Uthman Dan Fodio a big following but on the other hand this fame and support angered the Hausa rulers. They saw him as a threat to their power and authority. They tried to

bribe him but instead he got an opportunity to reach an understanding with Bawa to preach freely.

However, with the death of Bawa, the pagan aristocracy persuaded Nafata (Bawa's successor) to withdraw the privileges given to Muslims by Bawa. Nafata also took several measures to curtail Uthman's Islamic revolution by ordering that nobody else, save Uthman was to preach, and that there should be no further conversion to Islam. The sultan also ordered that all those who were not born Muslims should denounce Islam with immediate effect and return to paganism.

Nafata died shortly in 1802 and was succeeded by Sultan Yunfa, who was one time a student of Dan Fodio. Many Muslims had thought that Yunfa would restore their privileges. However, Yunfa was surrounded by pagans who were jealous of Uthman's great influence, achievements and radical ideas of reforms which he was spreading.

Faced with the division of the kingdom between Muslims and pagans, Sultan Yunfa decided to strengthen himself and solve the problem of division by assassinating Uthman in Alkalawa the capital of Gobir. However, Uthman got prior information and escaped unhurt.

Following this attempt on his life, Uthman decided to withdraw from Gobir to Gudu, which was outside Gobir territory, in 1804. This withdraw was a sort of Hejira in imitation of Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medinah. Dan Fodio made Hejirah with his brother Abdullahi, his son Muhammad Bello and members of his Jama'a.

As a person, Uthman Dan Fodio was a scholar and a teacher who belonged to a mystic-Sufi Order of the Qadariyyah Brotherhood. So, at the age of 40 years, following his long years of meditation, he claimed to have received a vision ordering him to fight evil in Hausaland.

Thus, in June 1804, Uthman declared a Jihad against Yunfa and his forces. Based in Gudu, Uthman was joined by many Fulani clansmen who started arriving from different parts of Western Sudan.

On hearing that Dan Fodio had declared a Jihad on him, Yunfa sent an army to attack Dan Fodio and his supporters. However, despite Yunfa's



forces looking more superior in terms of military warfare and weaponry, they were defeated by Dan Fodio's forces.

Uthman's victory increased the number of his supporters, though most of them were his Fulani tribesmen. Thus from then onwards, Dan Fodio's struggle was referred to as the Fulani movement. Supporters from other states asked for flags from Uthman to show that they had his support in carrying out the Jihad; and thus, a wave of Jihads swept Hausaland.

In December 1804, Uthman Dan Fodio sent troops to Kebbi and Gobir led by Jedo and Muhammad Bello respectively. He also made Contacts with the Muslim leaders of Katsina, Daura, Kano and Zamfara who also lent a hand in the Jihad.

In 1808, Sultan Yunfa was captured and killed and the capital Alkalawa fell into the hands of the Jihadists. With the elimination of the Sultan, serious resistance against the Jihadists also collapsed.

The major areas of the Hausaland were captured and this weakened any serious resistance against Uthman Dan Fodio in Hausaland; while at the same time marking the end of the Jihad. Dan Fodio then established his capital at Sokoto in 1809; thus, achieving his objectives.

In 1812, after establishing the Islamic Empire in Western Sudan, Dan Fodio appointed his general to take over the administration of the areas that had been conquered. For example, Muhammad Bello was given the region covering Zamfara, Katsina, Daura and Katagwona. He established his headquarters at Sokoto. Abdullah was given the region of Nupe, Dendi, Liptaka, Illorin and Bongo. His headquarters were at Bondinga.

Uthman Dan Fodio was given the title of **Amir Al- Mu'miniin** by his followers as a sign of respect and honour for the good job he had done to bring back Islam to life and not showing any interest of ruling of a large empire.

Uthman Dan Fodio died in 1817, but at the time of his death, the frontiers of the Sokoto Caliphate had firmly been established under the string of Islamic influence. It was indeed the largest state in Western Sudan. Uthman Dan Fodio was succeeded by his son Muhammad Bello.

## SUCCESS OF THE SOKOTO JIHADS

### **Question: Account for the success of the Sokoto Jihads**

Uthman Dan Fodio's Jihad - the Sokoto Jihads - was successful and by 1810, his Jihadists had defeated all the Hausa rulers and captured their states. Reasons for the success of Dan Fodio's Sokoto Jihads that enabled him to establish the Sokoto caliphate included the following:-

1. Uthman Dan Fodio used Islam as a unifying factor that united all his supporters. All Jihadists including the Hausa, Fulani and Tuaregs regarded each other as brothers in Allah because Islam did not recognize ethnic boundaries.
2. Islam also provided courage and inspiration to the warriors. The jihadists felt that they were fighting for a justified cause and they had a belief that if they died fighting, they would have to pass straight to paradise. Because of that belief, the warriors fought with determination and therefore won a number of battles.
3. The Jihadists also had a belief that God was on their side as Allah's soldiers. This enabled them to fight courageously and won over their enemies and rivals.
4. The fact that Dan Fodio and his followers opposed the heavy taxes that were imposed on the cattle keepers of Hausa land drove many pastoralists Fulani to join the Jihads. This made Dan Fodio's forces even stronger.
5. Dan Fodio's warriors and supporters were also encouraged by the spiritual guidance provided by Uthman himself. He did not actively participate in the wars but instructed his generals and warriors to do the work following the principles of Islam.
6. The issue of ethnic unity also contributed to Dan Fodio's success. The majority of warriors belonged to the Fulani Ethnic group. So this kind of solidarity encouraged the warriors to fight with determination against other ethnic groups; because they felt that if they were defeated, the entire Fulani group would be wiped out.

7. The Sokoto Jihads had very important religious causes. It was started by Muslim intellectuals who had a gift and talent of publicizing and popularizing the reforms they wanted to carry out.
8. The intellectual factor also enabled the Fulani to succeed. Most of the Jihad leaders were great-learned men in Islamic disciplines, unlike their Hausa counterparts. This enabled the formers to be eloquent and persuasive to the masses.
9. The Fulani possessed the two essential qualities of a good army, that is, intelligent leadership and high morality of the troops. These two enabled Uthman Dan Folio and his warriors to win the war.
10. The other Hausa forces lacked all disciplines of a strong army; they were not well trained; they were not committed to their work nor were they united. Therefore, the pastolists Fulani deserted the Huasa army and joined Uthman's ranks. This weakened the Hausa army and Uthman exploited the weakness to win the war.
11. The Tuaregs, who at first fought on the side of the Hausa, also lacked commitment; they were power hungry and were after material world gains. During the war, the Tuaregs looted property of the ordinary people. This annoyed the local people, who stopped supporting the Hausa and this led to their defeat.
12. The behaviour of the Hausa rulers also led to their defeat and the success of Uthman Dan Fodio. During the war, the Hausa rulers persecuted the Fulani because they regarded them as possible rebels since they belonged to the same ethnic group as Dan Fodio. Because of the persecution, many Fulani crossed over and joined Dan Fodio's forces.
13. The Fulani in the Hausaland army played a double standard role. This they did by revealing the military secrets and strategies of the Hausa rulers to Uthman Dan Fodio. So, using the revealed secrets, Dan Fodio was able to defeat the Hausa forces with ease.
14. There was also lack of unity among the Hausa rulers. The Hausa failed to form a joint army to fight Uthman Dan Fodio. Each state fought

separately on its own; and because of that, Dan Fodio and his warriors defeated one state after the other and eventually won the war.

15. The popularity of Uthman's revolution also led to its success. Besides his clansmen, Dan Fodio also organized other discontented and oppressed groups who saw him as a liberator who could deliver them from the unpopular and aggressive Hausa Kings.
16. Uthman Dan Fodio used high quality tactics that won him the admiration and confidence from his generals. For instance, he did not participate in the general administration of the empire but assured his followers who had political ambitions that they would become Emirs when they won the war. Thus, this was an incentive to his flag bearers to fight courageously. In fact, after the war, he appointed his officers to lead and govern the empire.
17. Uthman's personality was yet another factor for his success in the war. He was a fine teacher and preacher. He could hold and win attention of the many. For instance, when he criticized the Hausa for their unreligious practices, he was supported by many people.
18. The Jihadists had a widespread belief that the end of the world was near and they expected a Savior (Mahd) to come and prepare the way for the end of the world. This belief raised the general air of expectation among the Muslims and made them readier to accept anyone who would convince them that he was either the Mahdi or his forerunner. So when Uthman Dan Fodio declared the Jihad, many people readily joined him.
19. The success of the Sokoto Jihads can also be attributed to the support given to the Jihadists by the magnalised Hausa peasants. The magnalised peasants had vested all their hopes in Islam to liberate them from oppression and magnalisation.
20. The Hausa rulers had resorted to unwanted detentions; oppressive taxation and what the Jihadists termed as un-Godly practices against the masses. This kind of mal-administration gave the Jihadists courage and determination to fight as masses had got tired of them.

21. Uthman was a reknown propagandist, who had made enough campaign by issuing pamphlets and preaching to the people such that by the time the Jihads broke out, people were aware of the Movement. This inspired people to fight and defeat the Hausa.
22. The systematic persecution of the Fulani by the Hausa rulers was an inspiration for the Fulani to take revenge on their tyrants and for self defence. The Fulani vowed to fight against racial injustices even if it needed dying to the last man.
23. Uthman Dan Fodio adopted a strategy of isolating the various Hausa states and conquering them one by one. He appointed representatives whom he instructed to carry out Jihads in their respective areas of his authority and power.
24. The Fulani also had another strategy of attacking Hausa states in such a way that war broke out at the same time in Hausaland. This made it difficult for the Hausa to mount a united campaign against the Fulani
25. Uthman's action of appointing flag bearers and promising them political rewards once they succeeded in carrying out Jihads in their areas, led to the success of the Sokoto Jihads. This was an incentive to the Jihadists who fought courageously expecting to be made Emirs.

### **MUHAMMAD BELLO AND THE SOKOTO JIHADS**

**Question: Explain Muhammad Bello's contribution to the success of the Sokoto Jihads**

Muhammad Bello was the son and successor of Uthman Dan Fodio. He occupied a very important place in the History of West Africa in general and Islam in particular. However, his importance was profound in his contribution to the foundation and success of the Sokoto Caliphate and its Jihad.

1. Muhammad Bello accompanied his father Uthman Dan Fodio and his uncle Abdullahi in a kind of Hejirah to Gudu. This Hejirah was organized for Uthman to run away from the attempted murder by

Sultan Yunfa of Gobir. It was during this Hejira that the Sokoto Jihads were launched.

2. After establishing the Islamic empire in the names of the Sokoto caliphate, Uthman Dan Fodio appointed his generals to take over the administration of the areas that had been conquered. Bello was given the charge of region covering Zamfara, Katsina , Daura and Katagwona. He discharged his administration at Sokoto as his capital.
3. Bello was a brilliant and successful soldier. Right from the beginning of the Jihad, he was left to lead the Holy war (Sokoto Jihad) together with his uncle Abdullahi. Under his military leadership, the whole of Hausaland was conquered and brought under the Sokoto caliphate.
4. With the death of Uthman Dan Fodio in 1817, it was Bello who succeeded his father as the caliph of the Sokoto Caliphate. In fact it was during the regime of Muhammad Bello that the frontiers of the Sokoto caliphate were firmly established under strong Islamic influence.
5. Through his able and wise military leadership, Muhammad Bello saved the Sokoto Caliphate from an internal Hausa rebellion and external attacks from the people of Gobir and Kanem- Bornu. So, although Uthman Dan Fodio founded the Sokoto caliphate, Muhammad Bello ensured its survival.
6. Muhammad Bello is also credited for organizing and consolidating the empire. Through his mature, tact leadership and diplomacy, Bello was able to keep the empire united by reconciling Abdullahi to his leadership and winning over some Hausa people to support his administration.
7. Bello introduced the policy of replacing military leaders in the local administration with Ulamas (Muslim scholars) who were more popular and acceptable to the people.
8. Bello tried to bring a just administration free from corruption, introduced good laws and unfair taxation policy based on Qur'an and Hadith. This was the direct opposite of the ousted Hausa leadership, which was very corrupt and inefficient.

9. Bello made important contribution to Islam, culture and education of Sokoto caliphate. He continued to promote Islamic religion by laying emphasis in the reformist ideas of the Jihads and attached much importance to an administration run on Islamic lines.
10. Muhammad Bello gave great encouragement to education as a means to converts people into Islam. He made Sokoto a great center for Islamic education; above all, he made a personal intellectual contribution by writing more than 70 books which have remained a valuable asset and source of historical information in Western Sudan.
11. Bello supervised and regulated appointments of Emirs, who paid half yearly tributes to the Sokoto Caliphate.
12. Bello built Ribaats (Monasteries) in the caliphate and on the caliphates frontiers where his army was stationed. He then persuaded the Hausa peasants and Fulani herdsmen to settle down around these Ribaats and were taught agriculture and Islamic education to their children.
13. Bello was careful not to enforce Islam as this might have caused rebellion. According to normal Islamic practice, traditionalists Hausa peasants were allowed to pay special taxes, in return for protection against conversion to Islam by force.
14. Muhammad Bello weakened the power of the Fulani military leaders and thus strengthened his own power. Military chiefs were gradually replaced in the local administration by the well respected Mallam or great scholars in Islamic law.
15. Muhammad Bello made sure there was an important administration of justice. Islamic courts of Law were established and Bello himself checked the courts and frequently over-ruled decisions which he believed were unfair or were against the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith.
16. Muhammad Bello improved relationship with others states. For instance, he took care that there were good relations between Sokoto and the other emirates and did not interfere much in their internal affairs.

17. Bello made sure there was an important and greater links between the Fulani and Hausa, and he himself married one of Yunfa'a wives, and entrusting her son with the command of a Ribaar on the Northern frontier.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOKOTO JIHADS**

**Question: Examine the effects or significance of Uthman Dan Fodio's Sokoto Jihads on the development of Islam in West Africa.**

The Sokoto Jihads were launched in 1804 under the able leadership of Uthman Dan Fodio, who belonged to the Gidida clan of the Fulani Tribe. These Jihads went on until 1808 with the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate.

The Sokoto Jihads were religious movements though they had a mixture of political, economic, social and intellectual significances that affected the people of West Africa.

1. Uthman Dan Fodio and his followers under the banner of the Sokoto Jihads succeeded in creating a vast empire, the largest political entity ever in West Africa, occupying the northern parts of modern Niger and Cameroon.
2. The Sokoto Jihads gave rise to committed leaders who were faithful, sincere and committed to the worship of Allah and the administration of His laws as revealed through Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). As such, people like Uthman Dan Fodio Succeeded in establishing a theocratic state in the names of Sokoto Caliphate.
3. Through the Jihads, many Muslims who had been practicing Islam alongside traditional practices became serious Muslims and those who were not Muslims converted to Islam. Therefore, the Sokoto Jihads created a cultural revolution through teaching and preaching.
4. The Sokoto Jihads brought together different people who had hitherto been enemies. People like the Hausa, Fulani, Nupe , Yoruba and many others were for the first time brought together within a single state under Amir- al- Mu'miniim (Commander of the faithful ones)



5. Islam became a missionary religion as such, when one converted to Islam; he was expected to convert other people. Thus, because of this Jihad, Uthman Dan Fodio's mission of Jihads inspired other people like Sehu Ahmadu, al- Hajj Umar and Samori Toure to continue with the Jihad even after the death of Dan Fodio.
6. Sokoto Jihads facilitated the spread of learning throughout the Sokoto caliphate. This was because Islam as a religion of the book - the Qur'an – upheld the virtue of literacy so that its converts would read the sacred text. Since Uthman Dan Fodio himself was a fervent advocate of education, the Sokoto Jihads represented an intellectual revolution.
7. The teaching of Uthman Dan Fodio and his men belonging to the Jama'a group influenced and inspired the creation of large political units. These replaced the several rivaling and completing ones that existed before the Jihad.
8. The teaching and success of the Jihadists of Sokoto Jihad Movement led to the spread and revival of Islam. This helped to reduce on the widespread moral decadence and animism
9. Due to the increased intellectualism brought about by the success of the Sokoto Jihads, there was widespread learning and education. This in turn improved on the standards of living and development to the people of West Africa.
10. Peace, unity and large political operational areas the Sokoto Jihads brought about, led to expanded trade dealings and prosperity. The trade tariffs and custom duties that had barred prosperity of trade were reduced or done away with by the Jihad policies.
11. The creation of the Mandinka state by Samori Toure was consciously or unconsciously attributed to the success of the Sokoto Jihads. Samori Toure's policies and career were said to have been indirectly influenced by Uthman Dan Fodio's Sokoto Jihads.
12. The Sokoto Jihads stimulated scholarly activities, whereby the Jihad leaders produced several works in form of books that boosted learning and education in general. Dan Fodio alone is said to have written

many books covering subjects like poetry, Arabic, Literature, Jurisprudence and many other disciplines.

13. The success of the Sokoto Jihads and establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate led to development and using of Sharia Law. Legal issues were simplified through discussing the views of the four schools of law. Therefore a universal law was enacted to govern the newly created Sokoto Caliphate.
14. Due to the success of the Sokoto Jihads, Arabic did not only spread, but it also became the official language of Literature and correspondence. This also promoted the spread of Islamic culture in much of West Africa.
15. The Sokoto Jihads undermined tribes and tribalistic loyalties and sentiments. These were replaced by loyalties to brotherhood that had emerged. After the Sokoto Jihads, Qadariyyah was the dominant brotherhood in Sokoto caliphate.
16. There was revival of Islamic morals. This was through doing away with bribery, corruption and many social vices that had swept throughout the whole of the Hausa land before the Jihad.
17. The Sokoto Jihads also led to social reforms, which were aimed at raising the moral tone of the society and providing a social ideology in accordance with Islamic ideals. This mainly rotated around equality and brotherhood which facilitated in the integration of the "Ummah"
18. The Sokoto Jihads had the psychological effect of instilling hope at a time when the old ways no longer worked. As a man of inner belief and conviction, Uthman Dan Fodio instilled confidence with which people felt strong and confident to fight against the oppressors.
19. The Sokoto Jihads made Islam to overtake all cultures of the people in the Sokoto caliphate, who finally adopted it as their culture. People's behaviours therefore changed from traditionalism to Islamism.
20. The caliphate that was formed after the Sokoto Jihads was maintained on Islamic principles which resulted in massive conversion of West

African people to Islam, and in some areas, the nominal Muslims were brought back to the proper folds of Islam.

Despite the great contribution of the Sokoto Jihads to the development of Islam in West Africa, they had a negative significance to the lives of people of West Africa.

21. Much as reform of the Hausa system of administration was carried out, some of the evils of the old Hausa dynasties continued under the new Fulani aristocracy. This was because there were people who joined the Jihad with hidden evil motives that were difficult to eliminate.
22. Some less devout Muslims used the Sokoto Jihads to fulfill their ambitions; for instance some hid under the umbrella of the Jihad as an excuse for slave raiding.
23. The social set up of the people of West Africa was interrupted because of the migrations of the people from one area to another. For instance, the Muslims migrated from Degel to Gudu beyond the borders of Gobir.
24. The Jihads led to the loss of lives of many people especially those who stood to oppose the policies of the Jihadists. There was also destruction of property during the time when the Jihads were going on.
25. The fact that the jihad was largely led by the Fulani, the non-Fulani took it as struggle for the Fulani only and thus, remained skeptical of its aims. This belief created a group of dissatisfied people who went as far as welcoming the British colonialists.
26. The inclusion of the non-Muslim Fulani in the Sokoto army, gave the Jihadists hard task of re-asserting the influence of the scholars and Islamic principles on such people. This brought in internal sectarian tendencies.
27. The Sokoto Jihadists failed to consolidate their goals; in that much as they tried to eliminate non-Islamic practices and ending paganism in

the Hausa society, in some areas, Islam continued to be mixed up with animism.

## **THE MASSINA JIHADS OF SHEIKH AHMAD**

### **CAREER OF SEHU (SHIEKH) AHMAD**

**Question: Examine the career of Sheikh (Sehu) Ahmadu of Maccina**

Sehu Ahmadu was a great scholar, Muslim leader and reformer. He became reknown when he led the second Jihad in Western Sudan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Sehu Ahmadu was born in 1775 to a Mullah (Muslim teacher). He belonged to the Bari family of Songare clan of the Fulani tribe. He received much of his earlier education from his father and many scholars who including Uthman Dan Fodio. He was, thus, moulded into a great scholar in Islamic science.

Sehu Ahmadu became determined as his teacher to revive and purify Islam in accordance to the teaching of the Qur'an. He, therefore, traveled widely searching for more Islamic knowledge, especially in the Hausaland. It was during one of these travels that he came into contact with Uthman Dan Fodio and his disciples.

Uthman Dan Fodio and his disciples very much influenced Ahmadu to carry out a Jihad to purge the society of infidelity as Dan Fodio himself had done. Sehu Ahmadu's Jihad took place in Maccina, where the Muslim Fulani and Soninke lived side by side with pagan Bambara, Bozo and pagan pastoral Fulani.

It so happened that by the time Uthman Dan Fodio declared his Jihad in 1804, Sehu Ahmadu was in Hausaland and must have watched its development keenly. This provided him with the inspiration to challenge the leaders of his own area and later to declare his own Jihad.

After his travels in Hausaland, Sehu Ahmadu returned to his native Massina area and he settled in a small village near the busy commercial

and religious town of Jenne, where he started teaching and preaching. He accused the Hausa leaders of unIslamic practices and promised the exploited and oppressed a new and just society based solely on the rule of Islamic law.

Sehu Ahmadu's teaching, preaching and activities won him accolade of the local population; the popularity that antagonized him with the Arma (leaders of the day). He was thus expelled from Jenne.

Ahmadu, like Dan Fodio performed a Hejira in 1818 and moved to a town called Sono in the district of Sebera where he settled down to teaching. He opened a Qur'anic school near Massina in which he taught people Islam and argued them to turn to pure Islam. He soon drew around him a big following of enthusiastic disciples.

In the meantime, the Muslim population in Jenne called upon Sehu Ahmadu to come and deliver them from the oppressive rule of the Arma rulers. Ahmadu sent a representative to the city to rule over them.

However, the king of Massina called Ardo Diko and the Bambara chief called Dadyara opposed Sehu Ahmadu's representative. They then declared a war on Sehu Ahmadu by plotting to arrest and imprison him.

It was this act of the two rulers of plotting to stop the Islamic revolution and the Massina king, who happened to be a Muslim, calling upon a pagan Bambara chief to help him against a Muslim that forced Sehu Ahmadu to declare a Jihad on the Massina authorities.

With determination, Sehu Ahmadu besieged Jenne, supported overwhelmingly by the Muslim population of Jenne and captured it in 1819. This earned him popularity among the local populace, who decided to join him in a fight against the rest of the oppressive regimes of Bambara rulers. He registered success after success, conquering and annexing Segou, Kaarta, the Tuareg principalities and Timbuktu in 1828.

By 1830, Sehu Ahmadu had converted all the conquered states into a new empire of Massina. He went ahead to conquer other areas such as Kowari on the banks of River Bani where he established his capital, which he named Hamdallahi.

At Hamdallahi, Sehu Ahmadu became the master of the empire which engulfed the region lying between Jenne and Timbuktu, and like Dan Fodio, his followers granted him the title “Amir-al- Mu’miniinah” or leader of the faithful. He also got many visitors including al-Hajj Umar, who was on his way home from Hajji.

By the time of his death in 1844, Sehu Ahmadu had extended his authority and influence of Islam to over the eastern and western regions of the Niger and the banks of the Volta River and the Suru in the south up to Timbuktu.

After his death, Sehu Ahmadu was succeeded by a string of rulers, who did not hold the Empire together as Sehu Ahmadu had done. Thus, the influence of Islam again went down scale until the empire fell into hands of another religious reformist Al-Hajji Umar. Al-Hajj Umar waged a Jihad against the Massina authorities and captured Hamdallahi.

### **EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MASSINA JIHAD OF SEHU AHMADU**

**Question: Assess the effectiveness of the Jihad of Sehu Ahmadu.**

Sheikh or Sehu Ahmadu’s Jihad was the second in Western Sudan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century after the Sokoto Jihads of Uthman Dan Fodio. Sehu Ahmadu’s Jihad took place between 1818 and 1844 in Massina where the Muslim Fulani and Soninke lived side by side with pagan Bambara, Bozo, and pastrolists Fulani; hence the name Massina Jihads.

The Massina Jihads were considered effective because of the success the jihadists registered and because of the positive reforms that were instituted in the Islamic Empire after the Jihad.

1. After the success of the Massina Jihads, Sehu Ahmadu was able to build an empire based on Islamic lines that were planned by God, implemented by the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and perfected by the four rightly guided caliphs. The features of the established Islamic state made historians regard it as the most genuine Islamic state ever established in West Africa.
2. Before his death in 1844, Sehu Ahmadu was able to establish a well-organized administration based on firm Islamic principles. He was the

head of the empire and was assisted by a council of 40 governors who were mainly scholars in Islam. His administration was indeed largely guided by the teachings of Islam.

3. For effective administration, Sehu Ahmadu divided the empire into five provinces he called emirates and appointed a governor or Emir as the head of each province, assisted by a judge (Qadhi). The two, together, were assigned with establishing law and order along the Islamic lines based on the Qur'an and Hadith. They were able to ensure that fair play and justice prevailed on the land.
4. The appointed Emir was an inspector of public morals who was to promote honesty and morality of the people. He was also to administer the taxation system; that is; the Zakat by making sure that it was properly collected without inflicting any harm on the people.
5. Sheikh Ahmadu reinforced the administration of Zakat by establishing the Bait ul-Mal in each province, which became the state bank. The tax was divided according to Islamic teaching and portion of it was used to maintain the poor and the needy. No one of his predecessors had organized and administered Zakat as he did; thus the effectiveness of his Jihad.
6. Sehu Ahmadu succeeded in creating a theocratic government based on the laws of God as laid in the Qur'an and Hadith. He also centralized the state with a supreme body which governed the whole nation.
7. Sheikh Ahmad also succeeded in creating a genuine Muslim state which unified a number of small Bambara, Arma and Songhai kingdoms into a single highly centralized Fulani Islamic Empire of Massina which lasted up to 1862.
8. Unlike Uthman Dan Fodio, Sheikh Ahmadu was actually involved in the direct supervision of the affairs of the people in the Empire. He also actively participated in Jihad and commanded his forces. After his success, Ahmadu established the Islamic state that had all the characteristics of the Islamic state.

9. Sheikh Ahmad also paid attention to military matters that he established a military force in each province. The army ensured security of the empire and facilitated further dissemination of Islam among the natives.
10. The judges or Qadhis from the different provinces of the empire formed a council of state of the Shura council kind and chaired by Sheikh Ahmad himself. This was a sort of parliament of the state responsible for designing policies and implementing them. Thus all the Islamic Affairs of Massina were planned by this supreme organ of the state.
11. Following the Jihad, the dissemination of Islam was held with high esteem in Massina as it became the primary goal of the Amir al-Mu'miniinah. Islam was systematically preached and many pagans of Bozo, Sono and Bambara got immersed into the Islamic faith and culture.
12. In Matters of infrastructures, Sehu Ahmadu built many mosques and schools to promote education. These mosques and schools were fully funded by the government and the students who graduated from these schools helped to keep the flag of Islam up.
13. Shiekh Ahmadu succeeded in improving the moral life of the people of Massina based on Islamic principles. On the moral aspect of the people, an official was appointed to oversee public moral so that people caught drinking alcohol, smoking, dancing and committing adultery would be severely punished.
14. Sheikh Ahmad also passed a ruling to the effect that alcoholic drinks and smoking were totally prohibited in the Empire. Music was also unheard of in the Massina Empire.
15. Sheikh Ahmad also succeeded in making people accept the strict code of Islam because Ahmadu himself was a humble and pious man. He obeyed the laws of the faith of Islam just like other pious people before him and listened to the opinions of great and learned men.



16. Sheikh Ahmad succeeded in setting up a fund to support and cater for the widows, orphans, the aged and the pilgrims to Mecca. From this fund also, Sehu was able to pay pensions of the military personnel and other state officials.
17. After the Jihad, towns in the whole of the Massina state were cleansed up of the vices that had been brought about by unlawlessness in the pagan Bambara and pre-jihad Massina communities.
18. With the jihad, Sheikh Ahmad was able to do away with the oppressive chiefly classes of the pagan Bambara states. He provided his supporters with the necessary religious zeal and commitment which enabled them to overthrow the bad and pagan rulers in Bambara and Massina.
19. Sheikh Ahmad also succeeded in bringing up a just administration free of corruption, introduced good laws and fair taxation policy based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. This was the direct opposite of the defeated Bambara and Massina leadership which was very corrupt and inefficient.
20. Shiekh Ahmadu made an important contribution to Islamic Culture and education in the Massina Empire. He promoted Islamic religion by laying emphasis of the reformist ideas of the Jihad and attached much importance to an administration run on Islamic lines.

## THE SUCCESS OF MASSINA JIHADS

**Question: Account for the success of Sehu Ahmadu's Massina Jihads.**

Sehu Ahmadu's Massina Jihads were the second of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihads in West Africa. They were staged between 1818 in Massina; and led to the establishment of the Massina Empire that engulfed the whole of the river region of West Africa between Jenne and Timbuktu.

The reasons for the success of the Massina Jihads that resulted in formation of Sehu Ahmadu's Massina Empire included the following: -

1. Sehu Ahmadu's participation in the early stages of the Sokoto Jihads in Gobir under Uthman Dan Fodio, enhanced and inspired him to go and stage another Jihad in Massina. In fact, he had witnessed how the Sokoto Jihad had been staged.
2. There was also the continued influence of Sokoto scholars and Jihadists on Massina. These scholars and Jihadists influenced both Sehu Ahmadu and his followers by giving them the necessary encouragement and tactics that helped them overcome their pagan counterparts.
3. The coalition made between King Ardo Diko of Massina who happened to be a Muslim and a pagan Chief Dadyara of Bambara also accounted for the success of Ahmadu's Jihad. This was due to the fact that most of the fighters of King Ardo Diko later left the coalition and joined Sehu Ahmadu. This broke down the coalition and the pagan forces led by chief Dadyara were defeated by the Massina Jihadists.
4. Sehu Ahmadu received blessings from Uthman Dan Fodio by posting to him flags to declare the Jihad. This moral support inspired and made Ahmadu feel morally obliged to act and win the war staged against the Massina and Bambara pagans.
5. The presence of oppressive rulers to the people of Bambara states also accounted for the success of the Jihad. The people of Jenne and the Bambara states rallied behind Sehu Ahmadu to fight and defeat the oppressive regimes of the Bambara rulers. So, the success of the

Massina Jihad was a result of getting massive support from the discontented elements of the people.

6. Muktar, one of the 18<sup>th</sup> century scholars in Massina belonging to Qadiriyyah Brotherhood, through his teachings had prepared grounds for the success of Ahmad's Jihad. His teachings left the masses aroused and ready for revolutionary tendencies, which Sehu Ahmadu exploited to carry out successful Jihad.
7. Sehu Ahmadu's personality as a scholar and teacher also helped him to succeed in his Jihad. He used his teaching to enlighten the masses of what was taking place in Massina. This enlightenment, in turn provided his supporters with the necessary zeal and commitment with which they fought a successful Jihad.
8. Sehu Ahmadu launched propaganda throughout the Massina land that was instrumental to the success of his Jihad. He traveled widely while at the same time sent missionaries far and wide promising reforms to the masses if the Jihad succeeded. The masses overwhelmingly supported Ahmad in carrying out a successful Jihad.
9. Sehu Ahmadu was a charismatic and able leader, who frequently interacted with the victorious Sokoto Jihadists; who provided him with the necessary military knowledge and tactics in mobilizing the masses. He indeed used these leadership qualities to launch a successful Jihad.
10. Sehu Ahmadu and his men got inspired by the Sokoto Jihad. Ahmadu himself had been in Sokoto before the declaration of his Jihad. He and his men learnt several tactics as well as acquiring the necessary military knowledge that was needed for the success of the Massina Jihad.
11. The Massina Jihadists had very strong military personnel and also had an outstanding army that was unmatched and would not be compared to a generally weak and disunited Bambara and Massina warriors who could not put up stiff resistances against Ahmadu and his men.
12. The Massina Jihadists were well organized as opposed to the people they were fighting against. Such brilliant element of organization in

addition to a high degree of unity exhibited by the Jihadists was vital in propelling them to success. For instance, at one time King Ardo Diko of Massina broke off from a coalition with chief Dadyara of Bambara rendering their ranks very weak.

13. The Massina Jihadists had an overwhelming vigour and determination to conquer Massina that they portrayed themselves as reformers; people of Massina area were waiting for. This religious zeal enabled the Jihadists to overthrow the Pagan rulers of Bambara and unIslamic leaders of Massina.
14. In the process of fighting, Sehu Ahmadu attacked Massina states at once. This worked to the advantage of the Jihadists as the disorganized Bambara pagans were isolated and could not help each other as they were all engaged.
15. Sehu Ahmadu also had a chance of being called upon by the people of Jenne and Massina to take over their areas and protect them from the oppressive rule of their rulers. This goodwill of the people helped to lead the Massina Jihadists to success.
16. The fact that Sehu Ahmadu easily re-asserted the influence of the scholars following period of Islamic stagnation accounted for the success of Massina Jihads. He supported them, and hence they helped guide the Jihad with uniform ideals with which people struggled for.
17. The role of the Qadiriyyah brotherhood which Sehu Ahmadu cherished cannot be overlooked. The Massina Jihadists used the Qadiriyyah teaching to cement people's relationships through bringing them together for a common cause. The Jihadists felt obliged to cause change and reformation of the society through launching a successful Jihad.
18. Sehu Ahmadu carried out a Hejirah, when he migrated to Sebera. With this Hejira, he managed to escape the plots which Ardo, the Massina king had planned against him. This enabled his movement to continue existing with strong leadership in the person of Sehu Ahmadu.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF MASSINA EMPIRE UNDER SEHU AHMADU.**

**Question: Describe the administration of the Massina Empire under Sehu.**

Sehu Ahmadu was a great scholar, Muslim leader and reformer. He became reknown when he led the second Jihad in Western Sudan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century after the Sokoto Jihad by Uthman Dan Fodio.

Sehu Ahmadu's Jihad took place in Massina where the Muslim Fulani and Soninke lived side by side with the Pagan Bambara, Bozo and pagan pastoral Fulani. Thus, Ahmadu's Jihad came to be known as the Massina Jihads.

Using the Massina Jihads, Sehu Ahmadu was able to create a new empire of Massina covering the eastern and western regions of the Niger, the banks of the Volta River and the Suru in the south up to Timbuktu. He established his capital at Hamdallahi.

After establishing the Massina Empire, Sehu Ahmadu built a well organized administration based on the firm Islamic principles and lines that were commanded by Allah, implemented by the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and perfected by the four rightly guided caliphs.

Sehu Ahmadu was the head of the Massina Empire and he was assisted by a council of 40 governors, who were mainly Muslim scholars. His administration was indeed largely guided by the teachings of Islam.

For effective administration, Sehu Ahmadu divided the empire into five provinces he called Emirates. He went on to appoint a governor or Emir as the head of each province, assisted by a judge. (Qadhi)

The Emir and Qadhi, together, were assigned the duty of establishing law and order along the Islamic lines based on the Qur'an and Hadith. They were also entrusted with ensuring that fair play and justice prevailed in the land.

The appointed Emir was also to act as an inspector of Public morals, who was to promote honesty and morality of the people. He was also to administer the taxation system; that is, the Zakat, by making sure that it is properly collected without inflicting any harm on the people.

The Massina state was governed by a grand council of forty scholars. This council had executive, legislative and judicial powers for the state. There was also a secret or privacy council consisting of three people – Ahmadu himself and two other members from the grand council.

In case the grand council conflicted with the privacy council of the three, a council of 40 people from the sixty members and independent scholars chosen at random sat as arbitrators and their decision was taken as final.

Sehu Ahmadu passed a ruling to effect that all councilors to the governing councils must have reached a mystic (Sufi) age of forty (40) years.

Sehu Ahmadu paid great attention to military matters that he established a military force in each province of the Empire. The army ensured security of the empire. With security guaranteed, Islam spread.

The judges or Qadhis from the different provinces of the empire formed a council of state of the Shura council kind and chaired by Sehu Ahmadu himself. With this council, law and justice were observed in the Empire.

The Council of state was also a sort of state parliament and was responsible for designing policies and implementing them. Thus, all the Islamic affairs of the Massina empire were planned by this supreme organ of the state.

Sehu Ahmadu created a genuine Muslim state which united a number of small Bambara, Arma and Songhai kingdoms into a single highly centralized Fulani Islamic empire of Massina.

Sehu Ahmadu set up an efficient system of administration highly observing Islamic law based on the Qur'an and Hadith. This meant that he succeeded in establishing a theocratic government.

Sehu Ahmadu ensured loyalty of his people by ruling the empire with the title of "Amir al- Mu'miniin, which meant "Leader of faithful." With this title, all members of the ruling councils closely respected his orders and guidance.

He instituted an organized state treasury. The basis of the income of this treasury was the taxes that were raised within the state. The sources of

income were taxes raised from harvests, war booty, fines, confiscation and legacies.

Sehu Ahmadu reinforced the administration of Zakat by establishing the Bait ul-Mal in each province, which became the state bank. The tax was divided according to Islamic teachings and a portion of it was used to maintain the poor and the needy.

Sehu Ahmadu held the dissemination of Islam with high esteem in Massina as it became the primary goal of the Amir al- Mu'miniin. Islam was systematically preached and many pagans of Bozo, Sono and Bambara embraced Islam.

Sehu Ahmadu also succeeded in making people accept the strict code of Islam because he himself was a humble and a pious man. He obeyed the laws of the faith just like other men and listened to their opinions.

Sehu Ahmadu set up a fund to support and cater for the widows, orphans, the aged and the pilgrims to Mecca. From this fund, also Sehu was able to pay pension of the military personnel and other state officials.

Sehu Ahmadu organized official spies with the intention of freeing his administration of corrupt members and officials. Indeed he set up a just administration free of corruption. He also introduced good laws and fair taxation policy based on the teaching of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Sehu Ahmadu established state controlled granaries throughout the state. These granaries were intended to provide food during hard times like drought seasons and during times of war. He also ordered his people to set up granaries in their homesteads.

Sehu Ahmadu created a strong education system and an Islamic culture in Massina Empire based on Islamic discipline. He promoted Islamic religion and education by laying emphasis on the reformist ideas.

The features of the Islamic state that Sehu Ahmadu established made historians to regard Maccina Empire as the most genuine Islamic state ever established in West Africa.

## THE TOKOLOR OR TIJJAN JIHADS OF AL-HAJJ UMAR

### THE CAREER OF AL-HAJJ UMAR

**Question:** Examine the career of Al- Hajj Umar.

Al- Hajj Umar was a Tokolor, born in Futa-Toro in 1794. He was born in a well educated family and his father was a Tokolor Scholar .Umar himself was a well educated scholar in Islamic science; though he got his elementary education from his family.

Al-Hajj Umar was a much traveled man who visited many places like Turkey and Egypt. He also made pilgrimage to Mecca in 1826, where he was initiated into the Tijaniyyah Sufi Brotherhood, which was one of the Muslim factions determined to spread and strengthen the Islamic faith.

Due to his movements, he witnessed two of the greatest Islamic movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These were the Wahabi struggle in Arabia and the revolution of Muhammad Ali of Egypt against the Turkish.

Later, Umar returned from Pilgrimage to his home making a stopover for some time in Sokoto, spending several years with Muhammad Bello, son and one of the top commanders of Uthman Dan Fodio. He even married one of the daughters of Bello; therefore, Umar was a disciple of Dan Fodio.

While in Sokoto, Al-Hajj Umar assisted Bello in the campaign against evil. This greatly influenced the personality of Umar and prepared him to revolutionalise Islam against evil in Western Sudan as he was exposed to the methods of carrying out a Jihad while in Sokoto.

Because he had been a Khalifa and head of Tijaniyyah Sufi Order in Western Sudan, Umar made extensive tours to several places between 1839 and 1848, preaching Islam in Tokolor and Mandinka states, urging people to turn to pure Islam.

He preached equality and justice, attacked Muslims and non-Muslim chiefs who oppressed their subjects and condemned them of mixing Islamic practices with paganism. Indeed, he influenced many people to convert to Islam; especially to his Tijaniyyah order. His fame too, increased as he



initiated the former members of the Qadiriyyah into his Tijaniyyah Brotherhood.

This move strengthened him and made him more obliged to declare a Jihad. Basing in Segou, he was expelled in 1848 by the leaders of the Qadiriyyah Brotherhood who had ruled since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and regarded Umar's preaching and activities as a direct attack on them.

Like the previous leaders – Dan Fodio and Sehu Ahmadu – Al-Hajj Umar also resorted to performing Hejira; first to Kangaba, before he settled in Dinguiray. He continued teaching Islam and also stressing the importance of his Tijaniyyah Brotherhood. He received disciples and students from many parts of West Africa whom he gave good training and armed them with guns.

Having carefully prepared himself and filling his soldiers with religious propaganda, he first turned to meditation for forty days asking Allah for His vision and assistance before he declared a Jihad against all infidels in 1852.

Using Dinguiray as his headquarters, Al-Hajj Umar attacked the northern areas and conquered Tamba, then took over the states of Bambuku in 1854 and Kaarta in 1857. He then turned his Jihad to the French imperialists who were viewed as more dangerous than the black pagans, but Umar's forces were defeated at the battle of Medinah in 1857.

Having been defeated by the French, he turned his attention eastwards and attacked the powerful town of Bambara state of Segou which he overran in 1861. He then advanced to the Fulani state of Massina created twenty years earlier by Sehu Ahmadu in spite of it being a Muslim state.

Umar justified his actions and attack against Massina by claiming that they were hypocrites. Ahmadu III of Massina had made an alliance with the pagan rulers of Segou and therefore deserved to be treated like a pagan. He also wanted to spread his Tijaniyyah Brotherhood and end the Qadiriyyah teachings there.

However, his attempt to introduce the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood in an area that was dominated by Qadiriyyah came to no avail as it was resisted by

the Massina authorities. In the struggles that ensued between Tokolor and Massina in 1864, Al-Hajj Umar was killed.

Before his death, Al-Hajj Umar had nominated his son Ahmadu as his successor. At the time, the Tokolor Empire covered a very large territory around Niger and Senegal Rivers. It also had all the qualities of a modern state and an Islamic culture.

Ahmad, Umar's successor, faced many difficulties throughout his reign of power. His own brother and other governors waged a war against him perhaps aiming at regaining the states Umar had conquered so as to become independent rulers.

Ahmadu was also disturbed by the French when they incessantly attacked the Empire and finally defeated him. He fled to Nyoro in 1884, then to Sokoto where death claimed him in 1893. The Tokolor Empire continued to exist until 1898 when the French overran it.

## EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TIJJAN/TOKOLOR JIHADS.

**Question: Assess the effectiveness of the Tokolor Jihads under the leadership of Al-Hajj Umar.**

Al-Hajj Umar was born in 1794 in Futa Toto in Tokolor, where there were several pagan states like Segu and Kaarta which lived along side the Tokolor Muslim states of Futa-Toro, Futa-Bondu and Futa-Jalon.

The existence of the Muslim states along side the pagan ones inspired Al-Hajj Umar to carry out an Islamic revolution. This revolution or Jihad took place in Tokolor; and hence, came to be known as the Tokolor Jihads of Al-Hajj Umar. They were also called the Tijjan Jihads because their leader Al-Hajj Umar was also the head of Tijaniyyah Sufi Brotherhood.

The Tokolor Jihads could be considered effective basing the following reasons.

1. Al-Hajj Umar was successful in launching the Jihad and subsequently establishing the Islamic Empire that emphasized strict observance of the teachings of Islam.
2. Between 1839 and 1848, using Futa-Jalon base Al-Hajj Umar made a number of preaching tours among the Mandinka and Tokolor. In his preaching, he initiated the former members of the Qadiriyyah into his Tijaniyyah Brotherhood.
3. Al-Hajj Umar's preaching of equality and justice, attacking Muslim and non-Muslim chiefs who oppressed their subjects and condemned mixing Islamic practice with paganism, helped to increase his fame and converted many people to Islam.
4. Al-Hajj Umar succeeded in establishing a capital at Dinguiray where he based to conquer Bambuku and Kaarta. He also captured Segu and the Fulani state of Massina.

However, on a far greater extent, the Tokolor Jihads cannot be considered effective because of the problems the Jihadists encountered in executing their Jihad: -

1. Al-Hajj Umar tried to extend his Jihad to the Fulani state of Massina after accusing the Muslims there of being hypocrites. He was however resisted by the Massina authorities.
2. Al-Hajj Umar also made attempts to impose his Tijaniyyah beliefs and practices in Massina; an area dominated by Qadiriyyah. He also wanted to end the Qadiriyyah teaching there. However, his attempts came to no avail as he was resisted by the Massina authorities. In fact, Umar lost his life in the struggle that ensued.
3. At one time during his Jihad, Al-Hajj Umar turned against the French imperialists, who he had viewed as being more dangerous than the black pagans, but his forces were defeated at the battle of Medinah in 1857.
4. At one point, also, Al-Hajj Umar's Tokolor Empire covered a very large territory around Niger and Senegal Rivers. The Empire had all the qualities of a modern Islamic state. However, Al-Hajj Umar was killed as he was attempting to impose his Tijaniyyah doctrines over the people of Segou in 1864.
5. Although Al-Hajj Umar succeeded in establishing the Tokolor Empire having the qualities of an Islamic state, his successor Ahmadu did not consolidate it as his own brothers and other governors waged a war aiming at creating independent empires.
6. The death of Umar did not spare his charismatic nature and ability, which left the Tokolor Empire in a state of anguish. He died when he was still struggling to combat evil in Massina and their pagan allies.
7. There was a problem of the local chiefly classes who were opposed to Al-Hajj Umar's Tokolor expansionist policies. As opponents to Umar, the chiefly classes allied with the French in order to crush the Tokolor Empire.
8. Al-Hajj Umar did not succeed in doing away with the nominal Muslims, who continued to exist throughout his lifetime. These played a double standard role behaving like Muslims in the open but when

they were away from the public, they allied with pagan chiefs to oppose Islamic movements.

9. The Tokolor or Tijjan Jihads brought about with them ideological conflict between the Qadiriyyah scholars and Tijaniyyah Brotherhood which was the major order for Tokolor. This conflict therefore hindered a united action.
10. The Jihadists who staged the Tokolor Jihads were divided regarding their attitudes towards Umar. Some were scholars of Qadiriyyah order yet others were believers in Tijaniyyah brotherhood. The Qadiriyyah leaders and followers were often Umar's strongest opponents.
11. Al-Hajj Umar was fooled into accepting cooperation with the French that enabled him to further his territorial expansion with minimal barrier. However, his principle of equality of man as laid in the Tijaniyyah order scared the French. The French broke the initial cooperation with Al-Hajj Umar, who they considered worse living with ruling chiefly classes in the area.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY JIHAD MOVEMENTS.**

**Question: Examine the relationship between the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihad movements in West Africa.**

A Jihad is a holy defensive war waged by Muslim reformers against injustices in the society aimed at spreading purifying and strengthening Islam.

The Nineteenth Century saw a wave of Jihads in Western Sudan region , however, three were more profound. The 1804 Sokoto Jihads of Uthman Dan Fodio, the 1818 Maccina Jihads of Sehu (Sheikh) Ahmadu and the 1851 Tokolor or Tijjan Jihads of Al-Hajj Umar.

Although the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihads in West Africa took place at different times of the century, they had several similarities and differences between their mode of operation and the way they were carried out.

### **SIMILARITIES**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihads in West Africa had areas in which they were similar.

1. The Jihadists of the Sokoto, Maccina and Tokolor Jihads had similar aims; that was to purify and strengthen Islam that had been greatly adulterated with evil practices. They also aimed at spreading Islam to the people who had not been converted to it.
2. Though Sehu Ahmadu created the most genuine Islamic state ever established in West Africa, his government and that of Al-Hajj Umar copied the examples of Uthman Dan Fodio of dividing their empires into provinces or emirates, each under a governor or Emir to administer law and order.
3. All leaders of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century West African Jihads were Fulani; that is why their movements are commonly known as the Fulani Jihads. However, much as all leaders were Fulani their uprisings were not driven by ethnical prejudice.

4. The Maccina and the Tokolor Jihads were influenced by the Sokoto Jihads. For instance, Sehu Ahmadu, while searching for more knowledge on Islamic science, he got into contact with the disciples of Dan Fodio, who taught and stimulated him into starting a Jihad.

Likewise, Al-Hajj Umar of the Tokolor Jihad made a stopover in Sokoto, as he was returning from Mecca for Pilgrimage, spending several years with Muhammad Bello, son and one of the commanders of Dan Fodio.

5. The spirit of the three Jihads was killed by the imperialist's designs, who were fighting tooth and nail to uproot the Islamic systems and establish the colonialist influence in West Africa. The Sokoto Jihads were dominated by the British; while the Massina and Tijjan systems were dominated by the French.
6. The leaders of Jihads used the influence and participation of their tribesmen to gain success in their endeavours. For instance and in fact, the Fulani greatly participated in the Sokoto, Maccina and Tokolor Jihads. Thus, the success of these Jihads was greatly attributed to the support rendered by their kinsmen.
7. All the 19<sup>th</sup> Century religious movements resulted in creation of a uniform system of administration based on Islamic culture. For instance, in all empires – Sokoto, Massina and Tokolor were purely Islamic states built on a firm foundation of emirates under Emirs, Qadhis and consultative councils, which were Islamic in nature and of a Shura system.
8. In all the three Jihads, the attack was first directed to animists, pagans and nominal Muslims and then to the Muslims who allied with pagan leaders against the Jihadists.
9. In all the three jihads, their leaders used the idea of Hejira as a method of avoiding danger of persecution by the then pagan leaders. Uthman Dan Fodio made Hejira from Gobir to Gudu; Sehu Ahmadu moved from Jenne to Sebera; while Al-Hajj Umar moved from Futa Jalon to Dinguiray.

10. All the three Jihads took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century; as such, they came to be known as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century West African Jihads. This state of affair showed that evil was rampant in West Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

## DIFFERENCES

However, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihads in West Africa had a number of differences:-

1. After completion of the Jihad, Uthman Dan Fodio retired to his home and never participated in the administration of the empire apart from giving advice to his officers. Sehu Ahmadu and Al-Hajj Umar actively participated in the general administration of their empires as leaders.
2. The Massina and Tijjan (Tokolor) Islamic empires were completely eroded away by French imperialism which was fighting to wipe out Islam in West Africa and replace it with Christianity. The Sokoto Empire, though dominated by the British, had no direct confrontation with the imperialists. In fact the British hoped to use the Sokoto leaders to foster the British indirect rule system of administration.
3. The leaders of the Jihads belonged to different Islamic brotherhoods and this made their Jihads follow their lines of thinking. Uthman Dan Fodio and Sehu Ahmadu belonged to the Qadiriyyah Brotherhood whereas Al-Hajj Umar belonged to the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood. In fact at one time Al-Hajj Umar attacked the Maccina state trying to influence people there to his Tijaniyyah Brotherhood.
4. Uthman Dan Fodio never commanded his force in the battlefield but simply gave advice through writing pamphlets. On the other hand, Umar and Ahmadu were real commanders of their forces in the battlefield; actually Al-Hajj Umar died while fighting against the Maccina state.
5. Whereas Uthman Dan Fodio and Sehu Ahmadu never used force to turn people to Qadiriyyah Brotherhood, Al-Hajj Umar at one time employed force to seize Hamdullahi and turn people there to Tijaniyyah Brotherhood. In fact, he died in the battle field unlike the first two Sheikhs.



6. Unlike Dan Fodio, who was an intellectual and spiritual guidance ruler, Sehu Ahmadu and Al-Hajj Umar were militants in their organization which explains the success and failures of these Jihads.
7. The Sokoto and Maccina Jihads accorded the scholars much more prestige than warriors. In Tokolor Jihads, the warriors stood in higher prestigious positions in the face of the Jihadists than the scholars.
8. The Sokoto Jihad was largely an intellectual movement where Uthman Dan Fodio, Abdallahi and Muhammad Bello acted as idealists, poets, historians, writers and thinkers. Umar stressed continued warfare while Sehu Ahmadu combined both intellectual and military operations to advance his cause.
9. Both Maccina and Tokolor Jihads had something to copy from the Sokoto Jihads; yet the latter did not copy anything from the former. Both Al-Hajj Umar and Sehu Ahmadu visited Sokoto before they declared Jihads in their areas.
10. Al-Hajj Umar of the Tijjan Jihads directly crashed with the colonialists; that is; the French imperialists that were seriously advancing in the area in a bid to conquer Africans. Uthman Dan Fodio and Sehu Ahmadu never had such direct clashes although the French contributed to the collapse of the Massina Empire.

### **IMPACT OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY JIHADS**

**Question: Discuss the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihads on the people of West Africa.**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century West Africa Jihads were declared against all those who stood in the way of Islam like the nominal Muslims and the pagan leaders. They were fought between 1800 and 1880 and had a great impact on the peoples of West Africa.

#### **POSITIVE EFFECTS**

1. The Jihads led to the formation of large powerful political states or empires in West Africa, comparable to the ancient glorious empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Small states and principalities were

converted into large empires like the Sokoto Caliphate of Uthman Dan Fodio, Sehu Ahmadu's Maccina Caliphate, the Tokolor Empire of Al-Hajj Umar and the Mandinka Empire of Samori Toure.

2. The Jihads led to the extensive conversions of the pagans to Islam and at the same time strengthening the faith of those nominally attached to Islam. Furthermore, Islam was spread to areas where it did not exist before. The dominance of Islam in West Africa today is largely a result of these Jihads.
3. The Jihads led to the revival and purification of Islam. The teachings of the Qur'an of equality justice and helping the poor were greatly encouraged by the governments established by Jihadist. Thus, true Islamic Judicial, political and institutions were established.
4. The success of the Jihads accounted for the decline of the African traditional religions. Leaders of the traditional religion and other people who refused to embrace Islam were executed. Idol worshipping and shrines were demolished and replaced with mosques.
5. The West Africa Jihads controlled the spread of Christianity in West Africa. That is why over 60% of West African population are Muslims. European Christian missionaries were deterred from entering the Muslim controlled and dominated areas. Christianity mainly operated at the coast where the influence of Jihads had not been felt.
6. The political units which were established; like Sokoto, Maccina, Tokolor and Mandinka Empires had better administrative machinery than the old regimes. These political units were more just, peaceful, orderly and less corrupt. This was a remarkable achievement for the Jihadist government.
7. The Jihads came with them a new blood of political leaders. Uncommon and disregarded men like Uthman Dan Fodio, Samori Toure of the Mandinka, Sehu Ahmadu of Massina and Al-Hajj Umar of Tokolor were able to replace the old hated corrupt pagan rulers.
8. Another impact of the Jihads was the formation of states that became formidable enough to resist European infiltration. Jihads united the

masses behind their leaders and they also became a tool for the defence of their territories against the imperialists. That is why Samori Toure was able to give a resounding challenge and resistance to French.

9. As a result of the Jihad movements, a new order of administration was created in West Africa. Jihadists created centralized system of administration and ruled in accordance to the requirements of the Qur'an. In Sokoto caliphate, provinces called Emirates and ruled by Emirs were created for efficient governance. When the British took over this land, they maintained the emirates in their indirect rule system.
10. After the Jihads had ended, peace, tranquility, unity and stability flourished in West Africa. Interstate wars were brought to an end as the smaller states were merged to form bigger ones. Thus, there was internal security in the Islamic government states and empires.
11. Another effect of the Jihads was in the field of education. The Jihads greatly expanded and cherished Islamic literacy especially in Hausa and Fulani speaking areas. This was due to the fact that the leaders of these Jihads were Muslim scholars who wanted very much Islam to be taught.
12. In the field of education, also, Islamic schools were built especially in Southern areas of Western Sudan. Islamic education became very strong and prevented the spread of Western education into West Africa until recently.
13. The Jihads led to the undertaking of education in Muslim beliefs which led to intellectualism. The once closed Islamic universities of Gao, Timbuktu and Sankore were re-opened. Many other Islamic and Qur'anic institutions that emphasized Islamic Law and philosophy were also established.
14. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihads produced the first elite group of Africa in Western Sudan. Men like Al-Hajj Umar, Uthman Dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello wrote numerous books on Islam and Muslim beliefs to justify their activities and aims of educating people.

15. Because Muslims of West Africa were always associated with Arabia and Muslim North Africa, Arabic culture and language easily spread in the region. Books written by Muslim scholars in Arabic were distributed in schools and Arabic language became the official language and Linguafranca for the created Islamic states.
16. Many libraries and learning centers in area like Sokoto and Segu were built; as Qur'anic schools were widely spread to cater for the education of the children. Through this education, Islam was able to spread.
17. With peace prevailing in the Sokoto Caliphate, commercial and industrial activities boomed. For instance, the growing of cotton, Kola nuts, palm oil etc, were greatly supported and encouraged. This greatly boosted agriculture in the region which in turn supported the lucrative industry.
18. The Jihads helped the new empires to restructure their economy, whereby the new leaders revived the Trans-Sahara trade that had declined. They, however, chose to have trade links with fellow Muslim North Africa traders rather than trading with the predominantly pagan south where European Christians were based.
19. The new economic order encouraged the Islamic state to develop agriculture, pottery and industries. For instance, cotton and textile industries were established in Kano; while the city of Zaria became famous for pottery.
20. In the Sokoto Caliphate, the triumphant Jihadists encouraged the Fulani pastoralists to carry out settled agriculture. Since it was the Fulani who played a key role in the Jihads, when they succeeded, government revenues were used to settle the Fulani.
21. The Jihads led to the stabilization and efficient management of the economy in the Islamic states. These Islamic states started abolishing the unlawful taxes and levied taxes that were stipulated in the Holy Qur'an. Corruption and mismanagement of the state funds that had characterized the pagan regimes were also stopped.

22. With the booming trade and other commercial activities and establishment of market centres, there was development of new towns and commercial centres like Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Hamdullahi and many others. These towns improved people's social well being in the area.
23. There was improvement on the moral standards of the people; and this opened up a new chapter to the good social behaviour based on Islamic doctrines and principles. In the post Jihad states, immorality like drunkardness, prostitution and other social evils were strongly condemned and severely punishable under strict measures designed to purify Islam.
24. The Jihads led to better moral behaviours because of the punitive measures and punishments that were administered for some crimes. There was a tremendous reduction in adultery, fornication, taking alcohol and smoking. Veiling by women and putting on turbans by men became mandatory.
25. Tribalistic loyalties were replaced by loyalty to Muslim brotherhoods based on showing good qualities of a Muslim; like moral uprightness; no matter how much one was learned, popular or wealthy. The Jihads, therefore, created cohesion among the West African populace.
26. Non-Muslims, though always influenced to Islam, were accorded due respect and were allowed to pray according to their traditions. They were, however, supposed to pay a certain tax called Jiziya for protection. It was because of this gesture that the great shrine at Choko for non-Muslims remained intact even after the Jihads.
27. The Jihads, further led to the overthrow of the formerly despotic and inefficient rule of Hausa aristocracy and led to the creation of a better administration based on Sharia. In this case, oppressive taxation system, arbitrary arrests and unfair laws especially those against the noble teaching of Islam, were stamped out.
28. The Jihad movements also gave birth to Africa Nationalism in West Africa. The spread of Islam led to the emergence of revolutionary people, like Samori Toure, who instilled a sense of brotherhood and

belongingness among his people. This cemented unity within people of different cultural groups and against colonial intrusion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

29. The success of the Jihads in some parts of West Africa encouraged; yet other Jihads to break out. For instance when Uthman Dan Fodio's Jihad that began in 1804, was heading for success, it encouraged yet other Jihads to be fought among the Bambara, Illorin, Maccina and Mandinka.

### **NEGATIVE EFFECTS**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihads had some negative effects of the people of Western Sudan as follows:

1. The Jihads led to the destruction of many kingdoms and states. Where these new empires and states were formed, the old states and kingdoms were destroyed; for instance, the Hausa states were destroyed and replaced by the Sokoto Caliphate.
2. The Jihads created some divisions among the people of West Africa, even within the Muslim ranks. This could particularly be seen in Al-Hajj Umar's Caliphate, who made no distinction between outright non-Muslims and Muslims who did not belong to the Tijaniyyah brotherhood.
3. In their zeal to convert to Islam, the Jihadists sometimes used force which brought misery and untold suffering especially to those who were reluctant to join Islam.
4. The Jihads led to massive destruction of life and property during their course. Because of the continuous insecurity, the Trans-Saharan Trade and Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade were disrupted and were partly brought to a halt.
5. During the course of the formation of the Islamic states, there was chaos, turmoil and unrest. This political instability was witnessed in all territories that underwent Islamic revolution like in the Hausaland, Kanem-Bornu and Oyo.

6. The Islamic basis of the Jihads provided the states with Arabic as a national language and an Islamic culture. Though many Muslims from Muslim World flocked to the post Jihad caliphates and established learning centres for Islamic learning to improve intellectual awareness, the imperialists used this as a weakness. They translated many books of Christian religion to local languages understood by many people. Thus, some of the locals took to Christianity in favour of Islam.
7. There was revival of slave trade, where Muslims captured non-Muslims and sold or used them as slaves; yet the Islamic Law does not allow slave trade and slavery by the Muslims whether they dealt in pagans or non-Muslims. The slaves were sold to North Africa. This created enmity and, therefore, people were not willing to join Islam.
8. The Jihad movements also influenced Europeans to quickly take over the African territories. The Missionaries serving in West Africa and European traders were alarmed of such revolutions. They called upon their home governments to give them protection. The European powers responded by fighting and defeating the Jihadists as a means of protecting and defending their nationals in West Africa.
9. The Jihads caused economic slump in some ways. At the time when the wars were going on, trading activities could not be carried out. Some businessmen pulled out or lost their merchandise. The new Islamic leaders discouraged having trade with the South Coast Merchants because they were European infidel merchants or pagan Africans, who were their enemies.
10. The Jihads resulted into a number of deaths, as many people were killed during the wars. Both pagan and Muslim in the forces were killed in the wars. Some civilians also died. After the establishment of the Islamic states, many people were executed for refusing to change to Islam or killed for breaking the laws governing Islamic principles.
11. There was the destruction of property and disruption of the family life. Some settlements and crops were destroyed. People fled their homes, which resulted into family break down. Famine also set in because

crops had been destroyed and wartime could not allow normal cultivation to go ahead.

12. The Jihads resulted into antagonistic brotherhoods; like the Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah, that played to the disadvantages of Islam. They were irreconcilable and often quarreled with each other. The Tijaniyyah Brotherhood was mainly of highly educated members who under looked the Qadiriyyah who were less learned. Thus, these divisions accounted for easy defeat of the Muslims by European colonialists.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN OCCUPATION OF WEST AFRICA ON THE SPREAD OF ISLAM.**

**Question: Assess the impact of European occupation of West Africa on the spread and development of Islam in the region.**

Because of the lucrative trade and the desire to get for themselves colonies, the Europeans took interest in occupying and exploiting West Africa. The European occupation of West Africa started during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in what came to be known as the scramble for Africa. It was basically the French and British who occupied West Africa; however their occupation had a great impact on the spread of Islam.

After the establishment of colonial rule in Africa, the colonial powers devised systems on which to govern their colonies. The British used Indirect Rule and the French used Assimilation Policy.

#### **THE INDIRECT RULE SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION**

The Indirect Rule is the system of administration under which traditional or local rulers were allowed to rule their people under the supervision of British officials. To the British point of view, the Indirect Rule system had an advantage of being inexpensive.

This system was devised by Fredrick Lugard because after reaching West Africa, he found out that he had an acute shortage of European trained personnel from home who could come to Africa to help him run the administration.

After a ruler had accepted the over-lordship, the British would confirm him in his position and let him continue to govern as before although they did restrict him to some extent.

#### **EFFECT OF THE INDIRECT RULE SYSTEM TO SPREAD OF ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA**

Despite Europeans going to West Africa to stamp out Islam from the region and replace it with Christianity and to foster their colonialistic tendencies,

many things they did to promote colonialism in some ways favoured the spread of Islam.

1. In their early days of colonialism, the Europeans confirmed Muslim chiefs over the states their predecessors had conquered and placed others over the disorganized people. This was because Europeans had not yet understood the nature of authority Africans used among themselves. The chiefs the colonialists used helped in the rapid Islamisation of many pagan areas like Nupe, Illorin and Nigeria.
2. The Europeans pacified many areas by creating peaceful stable conditions free of slavery, interstate conflicts and civil wars. The peace created in the region enabled free movement of people from one area to another. The Muslims, too, exploited this chance to spread Islam to those areas where they went.
3. Europeans established free markets in Western Africa in which interaction between Muslims and other people became easy. These free markets became converting centers as Muslims and other people interacted freely and in the process Islam was disseminated.
4. The European occupation of West Africa followed an Islamic revolution in form of Jihads in which Islam was spread, purified and strengthened. When the Europeans introduced Christianity, the Muslim agents moved to other regions which had been formerly isolated. In the process, Islam was spread to such areas.
5. The Europeans used chartered companies and commercial companies, like the Royal Niger Company, to colonise parts of West Africa. The Arab Muslim traders for fear of competing and antagonizing with the Europeans penetrated the region which had formerly been closed out of trade activities; in the process, Islam also spread in those areas.
6. The Europeans colonialists developed transport and communication by building roads, railways and ports. These facilities were intended to facilitate the movement of their troops, officials, traders and transportation of goods to and from the colonized countries. Nevertheless, the Muslims also used these facilities to spread Islam.

7. In the social field, the European colonialists finally laid to rest the evil trade in slaves that had labeled Arabs and Muslims a bad tag. The situation and environment created later showed the masses that Islam does not accept slavery. Therefore, the name of Islam that had been tarnished earlier on was improved.
8. The British imperialists were not fluent in speaking local languages of West Africa, yet the implementation of their policies needed people who knew the local languages and the African system of administration very well. Therefore the British resorted to indirect rule where African chiefs were left to govern their people. Many chiefs had converted to Islam; thus they used their positions to influence their subjects to Islam.
9. Similarly, when the colonialists arrived in West Africa, they found centralized states headed by Emirs (Muslim Governors). The British took advantage of the existing political setup to apply Indirect Rule. Accordingly, their powers were strengthened. These Emirs and Muslim chiefs used their positions to influence the locals to Islam.
10. Furthermore, the Emirs were allowed to continue collecting taxes for the treasury and to keep part of the taxes for local development. Emirs, thus, used some of the proceedings from taxes to fund Muslim activities like building mosques and schools.
11. The British system of Indirect Rule brought with it what the British colonialist desired. First, it was cheap; and secondly, it brought peace, order, harmony and development. The system stopped slave trade, wars and raids. Thus, people settled in peace. With peace prevailing; people interacted freely and in one way or the other, Muslims influenced others to Islam.
12. Some colonial masters were against Christian influence in Muslim dominated areas of West Africa; in fact they had warned scramblers to be very careful not to antagonize with Muslims. Captain Lugard, the then governor of Northern Province, also restricted missionaries from operating in predominantly Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria. This was a hindrance to Christianity and a blessing to Islam.

13. In demarcating areas of Influence for themselves, Europeans put people together in labour camps and in the same protectorates. This made interactions between Muslims and other people easy. Muslims, who already knew that it was incumbent on them to pass Islam onto others, started preaching the faith to the non-Muslims.
14. The British established plantations of various crops such as rubber, groundnuts and palms. Many West Africans went to work on such projects in order to earn a living. Therefore, many young men got converted to Islam when they interacted with the Muslims they found there.
15. The secular forces which the Europeans went with in West Africa weakened the power of African traditional religious knowledge and their beliefs which were discredited as being un-Godly. This gave Islam a chance to penetrate pagan societies with much ease.
16. Where the British put up courts of Law, Muslims were employed in lower administrative positions; like being interpreters. This brought Muslims into contact with other people. Slowly, the pagans got used to the outward beauty of Islam and later accepted the faith.
17. The British applied very little supervision to the African chiefs who had accepted to work under the system. In this way, the British were able to govern huge areas using very few European officers. This was advantage to Islam because the already Islamised Chiefs continued to advance the cause of Islam.
18. Since the traditional rulers were generally allowed to continue ruling, there was very little change in day to day administration and so the spread and development of Islam in the already Islamised areas were not antagonized with.
19. Because the traditional political system was largely maintained, colonial conquest did far less damage to community life. This means that those Muslim scholars who were found on the work of spreading Islam continued doing so in broadday light.

20. Indirect Rule was based on the belief that the already existing civilization was to be valued in its own right. This belief made it easier for the British to work with the local rulers as colleagues than superiors. This good relationship between the British and local chiefs made it easier for Islamised chiefs to use their positions to continue spreading Islam.
21. The system entrusted colonial administration to the native chiefs whose positions were rooted in people's customs and therefore commanded the loyalty of their people. This was good to Islam because the local people continued following the ways of their native chiefs.

## **THE FRENCH SYSTEM OF COLONIAL RULE AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA**

**The** French in governing Africa did favour direct control from Paris because they wanted to turn the people they ruled into Frenchmen and ultimately make colonies an integral part of France. Thus, the cornerstone of French colonial administration was **assimilation**.

**Assimilation** is derived from French verb “**Assimiller**” meaning to **cause something to resemble**. Therefore, this policy was designed to transfer to the French West African colonies all aspects of French political, social and economic organization or administration.

The Assimilation Policy aimed at turning people of the French colonies into French citizens by substituting their indigenous culture with French culture, language, law, civilization and religion.

The French, inspired by their republican slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity, presumed that all people were equal and those who were not equal to the French had to be assisted to reach that level.

To the French, their civilization was considered the best in the world and felt that it was their duty to extend it to their colonial subjects. Thus, the

French regarded their areas of occupation as oversea provinces rather than areas for imperial exploitation.

### **EFFECT OF THE ASSIMILATION POLICY SYSTEM TO SPREAD OF ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA**

1. The ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity (brotherhood) which were the products of the French revolution of 1789, made the French recognize Africans as equal human beings. So, the French had to assimilate Africans so as to help them be like the French. However, the ideals that the French were preaching were no better than the Islamic ideals of equality and brotherhood. So, many people ignored the French ideals and continued with Islam.
2. The French occupation of West Africa followed an Islamic revolution in form of Jihads in which Islam was spread, purified and strengthened. When the French introduced Christianity, the Muslim agents moved to other regions which had been formerly isolated. In the process, Islam was spread to such areas.
3. The French also used chartered companies and commercial companies like the French traders to colonise parts of West Africa. The Arab Muslim traders for fear of competing and antagonizing with the French penetrated the region which had formerly been closed out of trade activities. Hence in the process, Islam also spread in those areas.
4. With European colonialism and colonization of West Africa, peaceful and friendly relationships between tribes that had conflicted for some time were established. For instance, the French harmonized the relationship between the Muslim Mandinka and the pagan Sikasso. The Mandinka started interacting with the Sikasso, whom they influenced to Islam.
5. To get assimilated fully, it needed Muslims and other people where the policy reached to become Christians. To the Muslims, this was impossible and People were not ready to surrender to it ; thus, opposed the policy.

6. Most people in West Africa were either Muslims or traditionalists and therefore could not yield to the demands of the Assimilation Policy. For instance, the French were monogamous while Muslims and Africans were polygamous and the Qur'an was not so strict on polygamy. So Africans chose to oppose the French who wanted to erase their culture.

### **NEGATIVE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN OCCUPATION OF WEST AFRICA ON THE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN THE REGION.**

1. European colonialists were stimulated by the desire to stop the spread of Islam in West Africa. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, following the success of the Sokoto, Maccina and Tokolor Jihads, Islam was spreading very fast. The Europeans came out to put a halt on the further spread of Islam in West Africa.
2. Before colonization, some West African states had achieved a measure of political interactions. They were united under one entity led by their spiritual leader. Such political unity, which was Islamic in nature, however, collapsed in the hands of the colonialists, and hence there was a slow down in the spread of Islam.
3. Colonial intrusion in West Africa led to the destruction of Many Muslim states. For instance, the French destroyed Muslims Kingdoms and chieftainances like the Tokolor State of Al-Hajj Umar and the Mandinka State of Samori Toure. These states had fostered the progress of Islam, but their being conquered by Europeans was a set back for Islam and Muslims.
4. The policy of divide and rule which the Europeans applied in West Africa undermined the progress of Islam. For instance, they would ally with one state against another. This could be illustrated when the French allied and support chief Tieba of Sikasso against Samori Toure.
5. European imperialism came with a new ideology which stressed secular and material values. As a result, Islamic ideals and principles which West African religious leaders had inculcated in the people could no longer be strictly upheld by the people of West Africa.

6. There was a general decline in the Islamic culture which had been adopted by the people of West Africa. The Europeans introduced a moral code of conduct that contradicted that of Islam; for instance, the dressing style. So since religion and culture are closely linked, Western cultural changes led to a break in Islamic norms in West Africa.
7. European occupation of West African led to a breakdown in the long time contacts between the then people of West Africa and the Muslim of the North. For long, Islam had spread in the region through such contacts which were mainly maintained through trade relations.
8. As a result of trade, a number of Muslim scholars and traders had been attached to West Africa; who in turn had preached Islam. When trade activities shifted to the southern coast of West Africa and were dominated by Europeans, the Arab Muslim influence in West Africa was greatly affected.
9. The European introduced and supported Christianity which competed with Islam for converts. Christianity became a stronger rival to Islam than paganism. The rivalry created unnecessary tension that at times resulted into wars. Such a tension could not favour the propagation of Islam.
10. The Colonial powers were instrumental in establishing ethnic and geographic boundaries which distorted the unity and brotherhood that Islam had come up with. With the establishment of these boundaries; Muslims states were separated and political theocracy which the Islamic revolutionary movements had inspired to achieve, collapsed and Muslims were divided.
11. The European occupation of West Africa made some societies and people to become lax towards Islam. Some people had joined Islam to avoid confrontation with the Jihadists. Thus, when the Europeans colonized the land, those African who were weak in faith, readily went back to their traditional beliefs.
12. The colonialists waged outright attack on Muslim institutions which led to a lot of valuable property to be destroyed while others were looted. They destroyed mosques and Muslims Arab settlements. They



also looted high value Afro-Arab works of Art which they scattered in various Museums in Europe.

13. The Europeans established secular schools that contributed to the decline in importance of the Qur'an school systems through which Islam had greatly spread. The Europeans made sure that the Qur'anic schools and their types of education died away and theirs that fostered secularism were favoured.
14. The Europeans introduced French and English languages in West Africa which were adopted in place of Arabic previously brought by the Arabs. Arabic had been widely used in West Africa as the language of learning and education and had promoted the spread of Islam. The frequent use of French and English in West Africa suffocated Arabic and with it Islamic progress was also undermined.
15. The Europeans introduced Western culture in Muslim dominated areas which resulted into the emergence of neo-Muslim (secularists). These were Muslims who mixed Islam with Western style of life. They happened to be more on the sides of protecting Western civilization in their ways of life and mannerism. This created a set back for Islam
16. The European introduced ideas and practices regarding administration, democracy, political system, leadership and ruling systems contrary to what Islam stood for. The Islamic system that was guided by the Sharia laws was dropped and post colonial states in West Africa started following European styles of governance.
17. The Colonialists brought Western education that was rejected and opposed by the Muslims northerners like the Hausa and Fulani, while the southerners accepted it. So, the recruits in the civil services and political posts by the Europeans went to southerners who were predominantly non-Muslims. This affected the social life of the Muslim and Islam.
18. The colonization and subsequent European occupation of West Africa was accompanied by disappointing, confronting and elimination of Muslim leaders through death or deportation. For instance, they exiled

Samori Toure to Gabon in 1900, where he met his death. This brought Islam to a temporary halt.

19. The European imperialists used Muslim chiefs of West Africa states to hunt for slaves. The Christian Missionaries, later exploited this as a weakness to tarnish the name of Islam to the effect that the promoters of Islam were suspected to be slave traders. The local populace started looking at Christian Missionaries as saviours to deliver them from Muslim slave traders.
20. The French colonialists did not favour the use of African chiefs in areas of their operation; they insisted on using French nationals. The few Africans and other people who were not French and were appointed, had less powers and they were appointed either because they were able to speak French or were loyal to the French government. Therefore the role of chiefs in the spread of Islam was undermined.
21. The French assimilation policy was run on conditions that were difficult to and did not favour Islam. For instance, for one to be assimilated they had to be fluent in French possess a good means of livelihood, be a catholic and monogamous. All these were undermining the existence of Islam because they promoted Catholicism at the expense of Islam.
22. The Western education the Europeans introduced, by its secular nature, produced literates who were too liberal and in many instances indifferent towards the demands of Islam. Many of them just practiced Islam for personal convenience and they were not in any way religious.
23. The Europeans, in establishing colonial rule in West Africa, brought about a brand of people called collaborators, who undermined Islam. The Europeans exploited the traditional enmity between West African states to get willing collaborators undermined Islam was chief Tieba of Sikasso, who allied with the French against Samori Toure and his Muslim Mandinka state.

## **MUSLIMS' RESISTANCE TO COLONIAL RULE – A CASE STUDY OF SAMORI TOURE**

### **THE CAREER OF SAMORI TOURE OF THE MANDINKA EMPIRE**

**Question: Examine the career of Samori Toure.**

Samori Toure was born in 1830 at Manyambaladugu in Duila, which is now in the present day Guinea. His father was called Lafiya of the Soninke family among the Mandinka. His family lived in Sanankoro, a village south-east of Kankan and were strong believers of Traditional African Religion.

Samori Toure was not born a Muslim; rather, he only converted to the faith during one of his trade journeys. At his mature age he became a long distance trader, dealing in gold and cattle from Futa -Jalon.

In his trade journeys, he visited many areas of West Africa, where he came into contact with Muslim scholars. He was introduced and initiated to the teaching of Al-Hajj Umar; and therefore, he was influenced to become a member of the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood.

During one of his trade journeys, he learnt that his mother had been taken captive by the neighbouring chief Sori Birama of Sise. So, because of the love he had for his mother, Samori Toure offered himself to the Sise chief to be a replacement for his mother. The mother was set free and Samori Toure kept as a slave and captive.

In his captivity, Samori Toure joined Sori Birama's army and because of his courage and brilliance, the chief of Sise shortly appointed him as the commander of one of the units of the army. Samori distinguished himself as an able and intelligent soldier and commander; he was therefore promoted from one rank to another.

In 1857, Samori broke away from the army of Sise and declared himself independent and went with the whole unit he was commanding. He went to Diula, his home area, where he pulled a big support and began the struggle of Empire building.

Samori had dreamed of building an Empire from any small hostile chieftainships in upper Guinea. Therefore by breaking away from the Sise army with a band soldiers, he became an independent warlord. He won support of his traditionalists, tribesmen and fellow Muslim traders.

Samori was not a Muslim priest, teacher nor a moral and spiritual reformer, but was interested in bringing together the originally conflicting small states and form them into a big state. However, using Islam as a weapon, he started uniting the small disunited Mandinka chieftainships.

In 1866, Samori Toure invaded a neighbouring state of Kamadugu, defeated its chief and annexed it. He also tried as much as he could to win people there to Islam. However, unlike other West African Jihadists, Samori Toure did not use utter force in winning people to Islam.

By 1870, with surprising speed, Samori had brought the various Mandinka states under his authority. He established his capital at Bisandugu and took the title of Al-Imaam. He succeeded in achieving political unification and revival of the Mandinka greatness based on Islam; though the traditionalists were never rejected.

However, his expansionist policy led him to conflict with the neighbouring rulers, like Chief Tieba of Sikasso, who then allied with the French to fight Samori. Samori had opposed the French penetration into the Mandinka hinterland. This alliance, therefore, strengthened the French advance in the region.

1886, after realizing that the French were determined to take over his empire, Samori decided to enter into an alliance with other Africa resisters like Ahmadu of Tokolor and Prempe of Asante, though the alliance failed.

When Samori Toure saw that he could not resist the French any longer in his capital Bisangudu he decided to transfer his capital to Dabakala in 1891, where he founded and ruled the second Mandinka Empire.

From his new capital, Samori furthered the teaching of Al-Hajj Umar based on Tijaniyyah Brotherhood, putting emphasis on human equality and many people among the Mandinka were attracted to it.

Being a common man and born poor, Samori managed to get support of the masses, whom the majority were also commoners. Samori heavily attacked and destroyed the worldly positions of the chiefly classes which had oppressed people.

In order to enforce the Islamic principles, Samori put special emphasis on education and at times applied force to effect his requirement. His type of education comprised of Islamic disciplines which promoted the spread of Islam and creation of a uniform culture.

In a move to protect Islam and strengthen it, Samori destroyed animism to some degree. He was supported in his actions by a cross-section of Muslims although the believers in animism left angered. They sought assistance from the French who rose with determination to conquer Samori's land.

Nevertheless, Samori Toure's ideals, ambitions and thoughts could not agree with those of the French. Thus, the French opened war against Samori between 1891 and 1898. His new location with Dabakara as his capital also worked to his disadvantage. He failed to get support to the local people and the supply of guns from the coast was also not possible. He thus, lost his gold fields and wealth.

It was on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1898 that Samori Toure was captured when he fell in an ambush of the French. He was deported to the French territory of Gabon on the Island of Ugowe where he died in 1900 at the age of 70.

Thus, the death of Samori Toure robbed Islam of a great fighter and promoter of the Faith. However, his name will remain in the books of great African nationalists. He had succeeded in creating the Mandinka Empire, which was actually the third largest empire in the region following the Sokoto Empire of Uthman Dan Fodio and the Tokolor Empire of Al-Hajj Umar.

#### **METHODS USED BY SAMORI TOURE TO RESIST THE FRENCH**

**Question: Discuss the methods used by Samori Toure to resist the French penetration into his empire.**

1. Samori Toure used the method of mobilizing his people against the French. Samori Toure mobilized the Mandinka, who vowed to fight up to the last man rather than accept to be ruled by the French they considered to be infidels.
2. Samori Toure used the method of entering into alliance. 1886, after realizing that the French were determined to take over his empire, Samori decided to enter into an alliance with other Africa resistors like Ahmadu of Tokolor and Prempe of Asante, though the alliance failed.
3. When Samori Toure saw that he could not resist the French any longer in his capital Bisangudu he decided to transfer his capital to Dabakala in 1891, where he founded and ruled the second Mandinka Empire.
4. Samori Toure used Islam as a weapon to unite the small disunited Mandinka chieftainships. He was not a Muslim priest, teacher nor a moral and spiritual reformer, but was interested in bringing together the originally conflicting small states and form them into a big state.
5. During the French occupation of West Africa, Samori Toure resisted their rule using the banner of Islam. Thus, the French who were majority Catholics could not have any good feelings for Islam, a religion which had been the engine of the Mandinka's resistance.
6. Samori Toure succeeded in keeping the people of his empire solidly behind him throughout his long struggle with the French. This was a tribute to his genius character in statesmanship.
7. Samori Toure used a tactic of retreating. This time of retreat would give him time to organize and reconsolidate himself, train more force and try to acquire more weapons. His subjects would use the time of peace to grow crops that would sustain their defence forces.
8. Samori Toure copied tactics from other greatest West Africa leaders. He was so greatly moved by the way the great leaders like Uthuman Dan Fodio and Al-Hajj Umar that he stood for political unification,

revival of Islam. He used these tactics which helped him fight a prolonged war against the French.

9. Samori Toure based his resistance on the teachings of Al-Hajj Umar of the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood, which emphasizes Islamic reformation, equality and dignity of all people. This policy earned him the support of the Muslim community to keep his rule moving on..
10. His belonging to Tijaniyyah Tariqa, which emphasized equality of all people, helped Samori Toure to prepare for the struggle against the French invasion. Thus, the struggle represented the role of Islam against any foreign oppression.
11. Samori Toure is credited for having resisted the French colonization of West Africa using Islam as a tool to fight the colonialists. He used Islam to unite the Mandinka and as a tool of mobilizing the population against the French who were Christians. The Mandinka decided to fight up to the last man rather than accept to be ruled by the French who they considered infidels.
12. Samori Toure set up a powerful, disciplined, professional army which he trained in modern day warfare. The army composed of the infantry with about 35,000 men and the calvary of 3,000 men; both equipped with modern weapons of the time. Using this army, Samori Toure defeated the French several times between 1885 and 1889.
13. Samori Toure also concluded and signed a treaty with the British in Sierra Leone from whom he obtained modern weapons. Using the weapons and tactics he got from the British, he was able to resist the French for some time.
14. Samori Toure led the famous scorched earth policy, which involved burning and destroying every piece of land he evacuated. Although this tactic cut him from his source of ammunition supply, it still managed to delay the French.
15. Samori Toure employed the "Hit and run" policy which helped him to avoid direct confotation with the French. Using this method, he

engaged the French in about thirteen battles and he managed to defeat them.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF SAMORI TOURE'S RESISTANCE**

**Question: Discuss the effect / significance of Samori Toure's resistance of the French imperialism in Western Sudan**

Samori Toure was born in 1830 in Diula in the Soninke family of the Mandinka Tribe. He succeeded in creating a big empire that was located in an area which is today known as Guinea.

It was unfortunate for Samori Toure that the time of his empire building coincided with the time of European infiltration and colonization of West Africa. The confrontation that Samori had was with the French imperialists around 1882.

The French were set and determined to take over Mandinka Empire and Samori Toure was ready to defend his founded empire against the French; thus the resistance. This state of affair brought about clash of interests in which wars were fought; which resistance and the subsequent wars had a number of significances to Islam and the people of West Africa.

1. Samori Toure was a Muslim and Jihadists. He knew that the French were infidels. Like any other strong Muslim of the time, he could not have allowed the French Christians to take control of the area that was predominantly Muslim. So, Samori's cause of conflict was religious differences.
2. During the French occupation of West Africa, Samori Toure resisted their rule using the banner of Islam. Thus, the French who were majority Catholics could not have any good feelings for Islam, a religion which had been the engine of the Mandinka's resistance.
3. There was loss of lives; as during the time Samori's resistance, he lost many fighters because his arms were no match to those of the French. Besides, the French had cut off his arms supply from the coast; thus affecting his capacity to resist.



4. His resistance was responsible for the depopulation of West Africa. During his resistance, many people lost their lives, as thousands of people died, especially the Muslims who constituted the majority of those in resistance.
5. There was also destruction of property in his famous scorched earth policy. For instance, whenever Samori Toure would retreat, he would burn up shambas and food granaries. This obviously affected the social well-being of the Mandinka as his subjects and warriors died of starvation, thirst and lack of shelter because they had been destroyed by retreating Samori's forces.
6. Samori Toure started the so-called scorched earth policy where he used to fight the French and his African neighbours were affected. This made him lose support of his own people and neighbours. For instance, in 1898, Chief Kong became desperate and abandoned his Islamic support to Samori Toure and joined the French to fight Samori Toure.
7. With the resistance, economic activities of the Mandinka were disrupted. Trade was no longer possible because of the instability; and trade routes were cut off. Yet Islamic activities were financed from the proceedings of this trade. Thus the spread of Islam was also affected.
8. Samori's resistance also led to betrayal by African collaborators and opportunists, like Tieba of Sikasso, who allied with the French to fight Samori. The king of Tokolor also preferred having an alliance with the French rather than an African Muslims warlord. With this betrayal, the spread of Islam was retarded; yet at the same time Samori was defeated.
9. The scorched earth policy employed by Samori Toure against the French worked to the detriment of his force, subjects and to Islam in general, in other hands it did not make the French to give up. The crops burnt affected his people and warriors who died of starvation and lack of shelter. The French who had been tipped to suffer the consequence of the policy were, meanwhile, getting supplies from other areas they controlled and from France.

## **POSITIVE EFFECTS.**

10. However, on the positive side, Samori's resistance of the French made him to have led to the banner of the Africans towards protecting their sovereignty. It opened up a series of resistances, which Africans staged against the colonialists.
11. Samori's resistance makes him the greatest warrior in modern African history. He was the first African ruler to fight a modern war with modern military equipment and tactics against European imperialists.
12. Samori's use of Islam in his struggle, made him look more nationalistic as his performances transcended tribal lines. Thus, he was a fine example of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century African Nationalists.
13. As a great administrator, Samori Toure's empire was perhaps the most effectively governed of all the larger empires of 19<sup>th</sup> century Western Sudan.
14. Samori Toure succeeded in keeping the people of his empire solidly behind him throughout the long struggle with the French. This was a tribute to his genius character in statesmanship.
15. Samori's resistance made him look a skilled diplomat and charismatic leader. This helped him increase his popularity among his people.
16. The resistance gave Samori Toure time to reconsolidate himself, train more force and try to acquire more weapons. His subjects would use the time of peace to grow crops that would sustain their defence forces. During this time also, Islam was spread.
17. Samori's Toure's resistance helped him to make friendship with the British in Sierra Leone, which enabled him to fight a prolonged war against the French.

### **SAMORI TOURE AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA.**

**Question: Examine the role played by Samori Toure to the spread and development of Islam in West Africa.**

Samori Ibn Lafiyah Toure was born between 1830 and 1835 in Diula. He belonged to the Soninke family of the Mandinka tribe. He was not born a Muslim but only converted to Islam during one of his trade expeditions, when he was introduced to the teaching of Al-Hajj Umar; and therefore, he joined the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood. His contribution to the spread and development of Islam can be looked at as follows:-

1. Samori Toure came to limelight about 1870 when he fought and brought the various Mandinka states under his authority; as such he established the Islamic inclined Mandinka Empire, whose capital was Bisandugu before he transferred it to Dabakala following the invasion of the French colonialists.
2. Samori Toure and his actions greatly improved the general picture of Islam in West Africa. He was more than ready to spread and develop Islam, which had gone down scale following the collapse of the Tokolor Empire. Indeed, he did it after taking the title "Almami (Al-Imaam).
3. Samori Toure promised to do what some of the greatest West Africa leaders did. He was so greatly moved by the contribution of great leaders like Mansa Musa, Askia Muhammad, and Uthuman Dan Fodio and to a far less extent Al-Hajj Umar that he stood for political unification, revival of Islam and the greatness of the Mandinka which he did and Islam benefited.
4. Samori Toure used the Islamic religion to establish the Mandinka state. He knew that behind Islam, stood the majority, and hence he had the desire to create a state run on Islamic principles. This earned him the support of the Muslim community.
5. Samori Toure also used Islam to destroy traditionalism; thereby creating a uniform culture based on Islamic principles. Muslim teachers were sent to different areas to replace traditional diviners. Then, in the places of traditional shrines, he built mosques to facilitate the spread of Islam.

6. Samori Toure was both a civil and religious chief of the entire state and as such he came to be referred to as the “Amir al-Mu’miniin” or the “Imaam” of the believers.
7. He centralized the Mandinka Empire headed by the king with the title of Al-Imaam, who was the supreme political, judicial, religious and military head of the empire. The Imaam was assisted by a state council composed of provincial heads; the majority of whom were Muslims.
8. Samori Toure divided the empire into ten provinces, each headed by a provincial governor. Governors were normally former fellow Muslim traders, Muslim military generals or his close relatives and friends. In every province, there was a military attaché and an Islamic religious leader.
9. Samori Toure governed his empire on three lines of authority. These were the traditional, military and religious leaders. All these were responsible to his state council and him as the top most religious leader, Almami, in addition to being the top most political and military leader.
10. Samori Toure was not only interested in the political unification of the Mandinka but also their social well being. He encouraged the spread of Islam and used it as a bond for uniting the Mandinka or as a “Cement” of a social order.
11. Samori Toure took personal interest in education in the newly conquered villages; his first concern being a mosque, a Qur’anic school and a teacher. He made education compulsory for the children to all state officials. In the army, faith of Islam and basic literacy was also taught.
12. The real authority below Samori Toure lay with the professional military officers, administrators and Muslim judges (Qadhis) at all levels. These officers used their positions of status to spread Islam.
13. In the administration of Justice, Samori Toure established Islamic courts of law to govern relations among the Mandinka. He appointed a

Qadhi (judge) in each province to make sure that cases were fairly tried basing on the Qur'an and Hadith.

14. Samori Toure promoted harmony, peace, law and order among the Mandinka. He destroyed tribalism and promoted national unity based on Tijaniyyah brotherhood. He also abolished distinctions between privileged and non-privileged classes, since Islam does not allow social stratification.
15. Samori Toure ran his state based on the teachings of Al-Hajj Umar of the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood, which emphasized Islamic reformation, equality and dignity of all people. This policy earned him the support needed in the creation of a very strong Muslim state.
16. His belonging to Tijaniyyah Tariqa, which emphasized equality of all people, helped Samori Toure to prepare for the struggle against the foreign invasion. Thus, the struggle represented the role of Islam against any oppression.
17. Samori Toure overthrew the existing religious and political structures in conquered territories by destroying pagan shrines, grooves, symbols and priestries. He would then erect mosques and appoint an Imam for each village. He did this with the aim of promoting Islam and used it as a bond of unity in the empire in general and specifically the political unification of the Mandinka people.
18. Samori Toure used Islam as a tool to instill unity, courage and order among his people. He convinced his people that the infidel French wanted to destroy Islam. So he turned his wars against the French into a Jihad movement and he got the overwhelming support of the Muslim community as people regarded him as a saviour from God and sent to the remove evil and establish moral order.
19. Samori Toure fought against tribalism by emphasizing national interests, discipline and education. He also encouraged intermarriages and national loyalty.
20. Samori Toure boosted trade by destroying several custom charges and duties imposed by the small states. The removal of custom duties

persuaded many Muslims to come and trade in Mandinka area. Many Muslims became very rich and in turn helped to finance Muslim activities.

21. Samori Toure is credited for having resisted the French colonization of West Africa using Islam as a tool to fight the colonialists. He used Islam to unite the Mandinka and as a tool of mobilizing the population against the French who were Christians. The Mandinka decided to fight up to the last man rather than accept to be ruled by the French who they considered infidels.
22. Samori Toure's expansionist policy while fronting Islam helped in the spread of Islam among the traditionalists. Thus, the area he conquered, remained mainly Muslim dominated. Even in the second empire which existed for only five years, about 40% of the people accepted Islam as a result of Samori's rule.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **IMPACT OF ISLAM ON THE LIVES OF PEOPLE OF WEST AFRICA.**

**Question:** Examine the impact of Islam on the lives of people in West Africa.

Islam is said to have been introduced in West Africa in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century around 738AD. Since its introduction in West Africa, Islam has influenced and in fact transformed the lives of people of West Africa.

#### **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

1. Islam exposed the West Africa region to the outside world especially Arabia, Persia, Baghdad and Egypt. This was because most foreign traders were Muslims and came from those countries. Therefore, trade provided useful connections between the people of West Africa and the rest of the Islamic World.
2. Islam led to the development of many Muslim towns along the northern borders where the Savannah meets the desert. In these towns, caravans would rest and unload after crossing the Sahara Desert. Such important trading Muslim cities were Gao, Audaghost, Kumbi-Saleh, and Timbuktu, which became a great center for Islamic teaching.
3. As a result of trade relations between the North African traders, who were mainly Arabs and Muslims Berbers, Muslim economic ethics were introduced in West Africa. Thus, Islamic principles of market organization, inspection of goods weights and measures and fair means of buying and selling were introduced.
4. Islam helped to make trade relationships in West Africa harmonious and beneficial to both the buyer and seller by prohibiting interest, hoarding of goods, and exploiting the buyers. Islam also emphasized keeping of promises during trade dealings.
5. Islam brought in by Muslim traders from North Africa, came into West Africa with trade commodities such as salt, silk, metal ware, and Muslim adornments. These commodities helped to facilitate trade as they were exchanged with local West African commodities like gold.

6. The coming of Islam in West Africa stimulated the coming of many more Muslim traders which increased the intensity and competitiveness of trade in West Africa. In fact at one time, the whole of northern part of West Africa sub-continent became a trade route network.
7. Islam came with many Muslim settlers in West Africa and there was competition for land. This was evidenced when the king of Ancient Ghana gave the Muslim Berbers and Arab traders a section about six miles from his capital Kumbi-Saleh where they built a town of their own
8. Islam led to the removal of harsh taxes and custom barriers and were replaced with charges of zakat or other fair taxes prescribed by Islam. The trade tariffs and customs duties that had barred prosperity of trade were also removed or at least reduced.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT**

1. Before the spread of Islam in West Africa, there were several ethnic groups. When Islam was introduced urban centers were created and Muslims lived side by side the pagan population. Therefore, the spread of Islam did not divide the West African people along religious lines.
2. Islam influenced the social life and custom of the people of West Africa. The culture of the people changed to adopt the Islamic ways; for instance, many people of West Africa adopted the loose and dignified Islamic styles of dressing in place of semi-nude dress common in pagan societies.
3. Because of the close relationship with Islam as a religion, many people of West Africa adopted greater cleanliness of clothing and body and encouraged the use of soap and perfumes. This impact was all embracing to the society in that even those who are not Muslims subscribed to it up to this date.
4. People's moral standards greatly improved with the spread of Islam. This was because of the high level of discipline emphasized by the Islamic code of conduct. For example, Islam abolished the use of



alcohol on public ceremonies where libation of alcohol had been a common feature of the traditional social activities.

5. There were intermarriages between the local people of West Africa and the Muslim Arabs and Berbers from the North, leading to the birth of a new group of people of a mixed race of Negroid and Hermitic people in West Africa. These shared the Islamic ways of life with the Berbers and Arabs; thus the increase in Muslim population in the area.
6. Islam fostered unity among the Muslims in particular and the people of West Africa in general; because people started looking at one another as brothers. This brotherly attitude was facilitated by the emergence of Sufi Muslim Brotherhoods like Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyyah. This level of togetherness had never existed in West Africa before. This in turn created peace and tranquility.
7. Islam became a unifying factor of many ethnic groups in the region because it put Muslims in West Africa in a kind of Islamic universalism which included the rest of the people in the Muslim world. The Muslims in West Africa became part of the rest of the Muslim wherever they were.
8. Islam also enlarged and broadened the idea of community relations based on family and clan to a much wider concept through the sharing of common rituals likes Juma prayers, which brought people under one roof. Besides, people as Muslims, whenever they were looked at each other as members of the same community.
9. The frequency of religious rituals and practices changed with the introduction of Islam in West Africa. African used to worship on family or clan basis in their homes or certain places and circumstantially. Islam brought in, community and societal congregational religious practices like "Juma," "Iddi" and "Jama" prayers; and circumstantial African traditional worship was replaced with regular prayers to Allah, like the five daily prayers.
10. Islam brought security and peace in many areas by largely reducing intertribal conflicts in many areas. Traveling by people became easy,

and that explains why the people in West Africa easily linked up with North African areas.

### **INTELLECTUAL IMPACT**

1. There was introduction of Islamic education. Qur'anic schools were set up for children and Ilim schools for grown ups. This reduced the level of illiteracy – in fact Timbuktu and Sankore reached the status of the university.
2. The spread of Islam brought with it Arabic language which later became the official language to be used in administration, legal and religious circles. Arabic books were also availed to the people of West Africa to read.
3. The coming of Islam also brought with it many Arab loan words particularly those related to religion and education which were incorporated into the local languages of West Africa. The Hausa Languages for instance, are particularly rich in such Arabic loan words; like Sehu, Caliph, almaami and many others.
4. Islam brought with it arabisation in some areas of West Africa, where the Arabs transmitted their Arab heritage, language, social patterns and ethics to the people of West Africa. In fact Arabic substituted itself easily for some local languages.
5. Some people in Western Sudan region started to speak Arabic languages, as many of them took the language to be holy. In the end, Arabic stimulated Africans to begin writing their own languages in Arabic characters. In addition, some people adopted Arab-Muslim names.
6. The spread of Islam in many parts of West Africa in itself, affected African traditional cults. Islam stressed the belief in one God and this went a long way in reducing and weakening the power of traditional African cults that people professed.
7. Islam introduced Africans to the idea of the time. This is because acts of worships like prayers always followed fixed times of the day; and

by getting adapted to prayer, many people started respecting the idea of time.

8. In the field of architecture, the West African people adopted Arabic style of building and art. Art developed from the former making of idol, statues, carvings, masks and human representation art forms to abstract and stylized designs like flat-topped houses out of stones with arches and domes similar to those in Arabia and now seen in mosques.
9. During the period between 300 and 1900 AD, many West African people converted to Islam. It is no wonder that today West Africa is predominantly a Muslim region.

## **POLITICAL IMPACT**

1. Sharia Law courts were established in West Africa and the Islamic judges were held with high respect. Leaders like Askia Muhammad of Songhai, Mansa Musa of Mali, Uthman Dan Fodio of Sokoto and Samori Toure of Mandinka made comprehensive attempts to islamise their administration.
2. Islam, and for that matter, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihads, brought about more far reaching attempts to reform the political and legal systems in line with the Qur'an and Hadith. Thus, evil practices in the political system like corruption, mistreatment of people and the like were eradicated or somehow minimized.
3. Islam influenced leaders like Uthman Dan Fodio, Sehu Ahmadu, Al-Hajj Umar and others to introduce consultative councils which would advise the Caliph on matters concerning the state. However, members of the consultative councils were basically Muslims who replaced traditional elders in advising the chiefs and kings.
4. Islam helped in eradicating the warring tribes and ethnics groups, especially in the Hausa land. Hence the political system that Islam brought about in West Africa helped to bring all ethnic groups together.

5. West Africa states acquired better weapons from Arabs in the north, and hence states started expanding from tribes to principalities. In fact, the army became composed of mainly Muslims basically with the aim of clearing the way for the spread of Islam.
6. The impact of Islam in West African political system prepared the West African people to resist the spread of colonialism in the region. These resistances were championed by people like Samori Toure of Mandinka, who managed to win the majority of the population in West Africa to Islam. It is no wonder that today West Africa is predominantly a Muslim region.
7. Islam led to emergence of theocratic states in West Africa which overhauled the traditional African principles for Islam. The leaders of these states used Islam to reinforce their authority. The Muslim theocratic states that were established in West Africa included Songhai Empire under Askia Muhammad, Mali under Mansa Musa, Sokoto caliphate under Uthman Dan Fodio, Mandinka Empire of Samori Toure and many others.
8. The introduction of Islam into West Africa led to the creation of strong Islamic nationalism which was used to fight European colonialism, like among the Mandinka people against the French. Islam gave the African fighters courage, unity and a sense of direction and nationalism during their struggles.