

## GOOD GOVERNANCE UNDER SOKOTO CALIPHATE: A SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT SECURITY CHALLENGES

BY

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### Abstract

*The Paper aims at going through the works of the Jihad scholars that concentrate on the security system and peaceful co-existence among the Muslim Ummah with a view to bring about sanity and social order in out contemporary time. The jihad leaders wrote many books on politics and good governance and if our present leaders are to study and put these write ups into practice fruitful results will be achieved, and peace would be maintained in our society. In the paper I have selected some books written by the leader of Jihad, Sheikh Usman Bn Fodiyo, his brother Sheikh Abdullahi Fodiyo and his son Muhammad Bello.*

**Keywords:** *Governance, Caliphate, Security and challenges*

### Introduction

*An Islamic system of governance, known as the caliphate was established in the early nineteenth century West African sub-continent under the tutelage of the triumvirate of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo, Shehu Abd Allah bn Fodiyo, and Sultan Muhammad Bello, which is popularly known today as “The Sokoto Caliphate” these triumvirs and luminaries have not only established the caliphate but also consolidated its growth and development by illuminating the four concerns of the caliphal boundaries. These well celebrated triarchies of scholars were of high reputation, intellectuals of the highest order and well established prolific writers. Within the time frame give to me to write this paper, I am only able to come across the following books that they wrote on political issues, such as leadership and good governance out of the many in the field and area of political science. The following are some of them.*

*Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo on political issues wrote*

- i. *Usul al-Adl Li-wulat al—Fadl*
- ii. *Al-Amr bi Muwalat al-Muminin wa al-Nahyu on Muwalat al- kafirin,*
- iii. *Nasihah ahli-al-zaman*
- iv. *Najm al-Ikhwan,*
- v. *Kitab al-Farq baina Wilayat al-Muslimin wa Wilayat al-Kafirin.*
- vi. *Boyan Wujub al-Hijra,*
- vii. *Tanbih ol-lkhwan 'a I a oh wo I ordi ol-Sudon.*

Perhaps, Shehu Abdullah! bn Fodiyo wrote many works dealing with politics, leadership and governance more than any of the scholars of Sokoto Caliphate. These include, but not limited to the followings:

1. *Diya'ul I mom fi Sol oh ol-Anom,*
2. *Diyo'ul al-Siyasat,*
3. *Diyo'ul Hukkam,*
4. *Diya'ul Khulafa'i,*
5. *Diyo'ul Ulil Amri wol-Mujohidin,*
6. *Diyo'ul al-Sultan,*
7. *Diyo'ul Umoro'fima Lohum wa Alohim Minal-Azaya'i*
8. *Diyo'ul Wilaya,*
9. *Sabil al-Solamoh fi al-Imamah.*

Sultan Muhammad Ballo on politics wrote

1. *Usui al-Siyasat*,
2. *Jala'u al-Sudur*,
3. *Kaffu al-lkhwān*,
4. *Al-Insaffi Dhikr mosa'il al-Khilafah*,

This paper consists of four sections with this section being its introduction. Section two will give a detail analysis of the four of the many books written by the triumvirate of the Sokoto caliphate, one book for each one of them, except for Sheikh Abd Allah bn Fodiyo whom I have chosen four because his write ups on politics appears to be more than any one of the luminaries of the caliphate. Section three will highlights the relevance of these books to our contemporary society and how it will be of help in solving the current security challenges in this country. Lastly, section four will concludes the study.

### **Good Governance (Leadership) From the Literature of the Sokoto Caliphate**

There are four (4) books chosen for this write up, these are the *Usui al-Adl // -Wulat al-Amir wa Ahl ol-Fodl of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo*, *Diya'ul Wilaya* and *Diya'ul Umara'i fima Lohum wa Alaihim Minal-Azaya'i* of Sheikh Abd Allah bn Fodiyo and *Usui al-Siyasat* of Sultan Muhammad Ballo. Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo in *Usui al-Adl li-Wulat al-Amir wa Ahl al-Fadl*, listed and explain ten (10) Principles of Justice that are mentioned by al-Ghazalli in one of his books. These are:

1. The leader must know the value and importance of leadership that it is a favor to whoever performs the task very well and, it is also dangerous. if the leadership is done without justice and fairness.
2. The leader must show his love to the righteous religious scholars and be anxious in listening to their advice. The leader should as well be cautious of the bad scholars who struggle for worldly gains.
3. The leader should not be contented with himself that he is just, but he must expurgate his servants, friends, employees and all his representatives. He should likewise not agree with them pertaining anything that is injustice.
4. A leader should not become arrogant, because arrogance leaders to indignation, which instigates vengeance. He should also take the side of forgiveness and be familiar with generosity.
5. The leader should know that if any matter is brought before him, he should assume that he is one of the subjects and that there is a leader other than him who is another person.
6. The leader is to give more consideration to the complaints of his subjects, especially those who come to him and stand before his doors. This is similar to what is popularly known today as "open-door-policy".
7. A leader should not be accustomed to desires of wearing magnificent clothes and eating delicious food. He should apply contentment in all his affairs. This because there is no justice without contentment.
8. The leader should always treat the affairs of his people kindly and gently, and should not substitute them with severity and harshness.
9. The leader should be aware with the alarms of *Barzokh*, its grades, the alarms of the Day of Judgment and its grades. This means if he does well he will see good and if bad, he will pay for it.
10. He should be conscious of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the wisdom behind sending the Messengers of Allah to humanity (Shehu 23)

Sheikh Abd Allah bn Fodiyo in in *Diya'ul Umara'i fima Lahum wa Alaihim Minal-Azaya'i* started with the subjects themselves, where he inform them that it is compulsory upon them to be obedient to their leaders in both hidden and manifest circumstances and in all what they instruct them which is not disobedient to Allah SWT. This is then followed by informing the leaders certain obligations that are binding upon him with regards to the leadership bestowed upon him.

These include the followings:-

1. He should be of good intention for the leadership bestowed upon him. He should assured himself that he is leading people for the sake of Allah alone and hoping for his reward from Allah SWT only.

The intention of a leader should not be governed by any ulterior motive, such as accumulation of wealth, worldly fun and influence.

2. He should order the pious Muslim scholars to propagate Islam throughout his territory.
3. He should appoint just and fair judges for the establishment and maintenance of justice in all its ramifications in all societies that are within his jurisdictions.
4. He should guide his subjects for the fulfillment of good in their mundane and spiritual matters.
5. He should have a specified and specific time and place so as to attend to everyone, whether weak or strong, and listen to their complaints. He should bring back to the cheated their rights from whoever the person may be.
6. He should not appoint anyone on any position out of his sheer personal or selfish interest. Those to be appointed should
7. He should appoint honest *Zakkat* and other tax collectors and should make sure that they have collected it with all fairness and make its disbursement according to the specified rules and regulations of the *Shari'a*. (*Abdullahi 51*)

Sultan Muhammad Ballo in his *Usui al-Siyasah* has also mentioned seven (7) principles of politics. These are as follows

1. The leader should be pious and should be a follower of the practice of the *Sunnah* of the messenger of Allah SWT. The leader should concern himself with the matters connected to the hereafter, and must not go beyond the limits set by Allah. He must be free from worldly desires, far from liking leadership and should not get himself interested in being a ruler..
2. The leader should be a man of kindness, more inclined to forgiveness than to anger. He should be generous and forbearing.
3. The leader should always be in the company of pious religious scholars and be intent on listening to their advice. He must be aware of the evil men of religion who are greedy for worldly things.
4. He should impose conditions on his officials, first and foremost to be just (*'adl*). He must select them from the best of his men and should look into their activities at all times.
5. The leader should order his subjects to observe justice (*'adl*) and goodness and avoid doing injustice to each other, and to love good deeds and hate evil deeds.
6. The leader should provide public utilities (amenities) for the people of his state for their temporal and religious benefits.
7. The leader should treat his people gently and make the leaders among them act in accordance to what is most honorable, each one of, them in accordance with his situation. (M. Bello 16)

Sheikh Abdullahi bn Fodiyo in *Diya'ul Umara'i fima Lahum wa Alaihim Minal-Azaya'i* stated that it is compulsory upon a leader to purify his intention in his leadership role. His intention should be based purely in seeking the pleasure of Allah alone and in such a way that he is doing it to improve the welfare of his subjects and make them good citizens and guide them towards the attainment of their rewards in the hereafter. His intention should be purely for the sake of Allah and he should strive for it to be accepted by Allah as part of his devotion to Him. The leaders should have good intention in taking the post, not to be for any ulterior motive, but for the sake of Allah to ensure the betterment of the citizens' spiritual and mundane affairs as was done by the Prophet (SAW) and his *Khulafa'a*.

Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo in *Usui ol- Adl li-Wulat al-Amir wa Ahl al-Fadl* opines that the leader should also consign all his affairs to Allah and ask Him for help in all his endeavors. In doing this, the leader should take into consideration that Allah does not designate him on his subjects for the purpose of merely being their master or ruler, but that Allah appointed him in order to see to the improvement of their religious and temporal affairs. And, that the leader should not lose hope in Allah's mercy for many a times, Allah dispels afflictions. It was in *Diya al-Wilaya* that Sheikh Abd Allah bn Fodiyo explain clearly on the seven things regarding the subjects' establishing, improvement and development of their spiritual affairs. These among others include the followings:-

1. Teaching them their religious affairs (both basic and non basic aspects) by the ruler or his representatives all over his territories.
2. To ensure the observance of the daily prayers.
3. To ensure giving out *zakat* with all what is necessary in it.
4. To ensure fasting and all what is related to it.
5. To take care of *Jihad* and all that is related to it.
6. To device proper methods of dispensation of justice,
7. To ensure establishment and maintenance of the commandment of doing good and avoidance of bad in the society.

Other seven things related to the mundane affairs of the subjects that must also be given serious attention according to Sheikh Abd Allah? in *Diya al-Wilaya* include the followings:-

1. Marriage and all the mundane issues related to it,
2. Business transactions and the like, and all that will facilitate it,
3. Markets and all their provisions,
4. Streets (transport) with all its necessary facilities and observance of their regulations,
5. Provisions for water,
6. Graves and all that are required of it,
7. Treasury and all that is necessary to facilitate and maintain it.

Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo in *Usui al-Adl li-Wulat al-Amir wa Ahl al-Fadl* and Sheikh Abd Allah in *Diya al-Wilaya* and Sultan Muhammad Ballb in his *Use// al-Siyasah* show the seven sources of revenue of an Islamic state, which according to them must be taken care of by the Muslim leader and or his representative. These are:-

1. *Khums*- this is one fifth (1/5) of the war booty,
2. *Fay* or (*Fa'i*) - this is the booty of land taken over by the Muslims without actual war,
3. *Kharaj* - land tax. This is the tax paid for utilizing the land that belongs to an Islamic state.
4. *Jizyah* - this is a poll (head) tax taken from non-Muslims who refuse to accept Islam, but agreed to be under the territory of Islam and on good term with Muslims,
5. Property of deceased persons that have no heirs,
6. The wealth of unknown people,
7. Wealth of Non-Muslim who are necessarily under the protection of the Islamic state.

However, it was both Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo in *Usui al-Adl li-Wulat al-Amir wa Ahl al-Fadl* and Sheikh Abdullahi bn Fodiyo in *Diya'ul Umara'i fima Lahum wa Alaihim Minal-Azaya'i* who has shown the six types of wealth that is forbidden for a leader to take from his subjects. These include the followings:-

1. Wealth in whatever form, material or immaterial that is collected whenever an appointment is to be given to someone.
2. Bribe, in whatever form and means.
3. Any type of gifts that are given to the leader due to his leadership position.
4. Any type of punishment that is in form of material or immaterial wealth. For instance when a thief is caught, then what he has stolen is to be taken by the leader himself, instead of returning I to the owner.
5. *Ushra*, - this is any type of ill-gotten gains
6. Any money or material that is taken from somebody in order to make him feel at ease or to do some official work for his benefit, such as money taken before the distribution of inheritance.

After the mobilization of the above mentioned revenue by the government, it is expected that what has been mobilized should be disbursed accordingly. Both Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo in *Usui al-Adl li-Wulat al-Amir wa Ahl al-Fadl* and Sheikh Abd Allah in *Diya al-Wilaya* continued to guide us on how to disburse the collected revenue. He thus, opined that government should allocate these revenues to the following seven (7) categories of people:-

1. Rightly guided scholars - *Ulama'*,
2. Just Judges,
3. Very Intelligent students,
4. Imam of central mosque,
5. *Mu'adhdhin* (Prayer Callers),
6. *Al-Mujahidun* (the Jihadists), and
7. Needy, poor and wayfarer.

Other responsibilities of a ruler, which he should take care up or appoint, his representative to do it on his behalf according to Sheikh Abd Allah in *Diya al-Wilaya* include the followings:-

1. Dispense judgments after establishing the case beyond any reasonable doubt without fear or favour,
2. Take from the recalcitrant the right due for the rightful owners after due confirmation through confession or proof.
3. Take care of the orphans, lunatics and the weak minded people, and give them proxies, if they do not have any, and if they have, the judges should watch the manner in which the proxies do their job.
4. Investigate the endowment funds with a view to preserving its sources,
5. Implement the deceased wills according to the conditions laid down by him, but within the framework of the *Shari'ah*,
6. Marry the orphans who have no guardians to the right men, and
7. Execute all penalties and prevent all the wrongs in the streets.

All the above mentioned policies and strategies were among the genuine guides that are fully practiced and implemented by the Jihad leaders, which led them to ensure proper security set up, its maintenance and flourishing for about a decade of the caliphate's existence. This assertion has been duly recognized and testified by one of the colonial masters, Clapperton during his last visit to Sakkwato. He described the town as a city-state which strictly enforced the laws of the *Qur'an* and, the entire Caliphate when not in a war was so controlled and regulated to the extent that it had become a common saying that a lady could travel with a load of gold and silver on her head from one end to the other end of the Caliphate without any fear of being attacked or molested. This indicates the absence of insecurity or certain level of crime due to the strict enforcement of the *Shari'a* throughout the Caliphate.

### **Relevance of the Literature of Sokoto Caliphate to Contemporary Society**

From the discussion so far, we can understand that good governance (leadership) in the historical Sokoto Caliphate was to take charge of the subjects' welfare in both their mundane and spiritual matters. Leaders should as well be aware of the importance and value of leadership and its dangers and consequences when not carried out properly. To achieve this, the leadership must ensure good, proper and conducive atmosphere for the attainment of the said objective. Conducive atmosphere can only be established when leaders have love for their subjects and show it clearly to the citizens and pious *Vlama* in particular and the society in general. This can be done when leaders become humble, kind, generous, forgiving, forbearing and gentle. A leader should not be arrogant, evil, stingy, unforgiving and harsh to his subjects. All these are creating wide gap between the leader and his subjects and thus, the needed open door as a policy, is closed as a result of any of the above mentioned habits of the leader. This open door policy is needed order to make the leaders available to their subjects so as to listen to their complaints. In the modern era of digitalization what we need here is the means upon which the leaders can be reached by their subjects.

A leader should be fair and just in his appointments. All appointments should be on merit and without taking any bribe for giving any appointment. He should make sure that he appoints only those people that merit the positions, who are credible and are among the best of men. This can lead to the establishment and maintenance of justice and fairness in all dealings. A leader should avoid giving and receiving bribes, and he should guide his appointees not to be corrupt and to be good and avoid any evil deed. Doing all the above can lead to the establishment of security of life and properties in all its ramifications. More especially when the leader directs pious scholars to preach and order all the citizens to go for all the acts

of goodness arid to avoid all evil deeds. Security of life and properties is only a first step in establishing the subjects' welfare. Other measures have to deal with the provision of sound/vibrant and functional education that includes technical and vocational skills as well as other various professional occupations that will be useful to the citizens and the society.

### Suggestions

1. Provision of various job opportunities to all the citizens is another means of welfare provision. The dignity of labour must be uplifted by showing the importance of self-reliance and the disadvantages of idleness, begging and depending on others.
2. Availability and accessibility of social infrastructures and other social amenities to the teeming populace is likewise another step in the provision of welfare to the citizens. This helps in making life to be very easy and it leads to the smooth running of the society in general.
3. Accountability should be among the strongest pillars in the leadership responsibility. This is what the Sokoto *Jihad* scholars refer to the leadership for the sake of Allah alone, as well as knowing the importance, value and dangers of leadership.
4. It is also mandated upon a leader to place himself in the position of his subjects or in the same shoe with his subjects. This will no doubt make him to have feelings of his subjects as they are truly feeling, and will greatly encourage him to seek for a candid advice from his lieutenants so as to make sure that they see to the establishment of justice and fairness in the society without any fear or favour.

### Conclusion

The foresight of the Jihad leaders of the Sokoto Caliphate has made them to write extensively for the enlightenment of their future generation so as to lead a good and successful life in this world and the hereafter if they are able to follow the guidance left for them. For the good governance of their left heritage, the Jihad leaders opine that fear of Allah should be the backbone of any leadership. This is to be followed by the establishment and maintenance of justice and fairness in all its ramifications without any fair or favour, which can be done only if the leaders bring pious scholars very close to them and seeking for their advice, as well as instilling into their hearts the love for their subjects. Elimination or reducing the level of corruption in whatever form to the barest minimum at all government, business and other social relations should also be pursued vigorously. Provision of social, economic infrastructures, jobs and other skills and occupations.

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