



Sultan Muhammadu Tambari bn Sultan Muhammadu Maiturare;1924-1931: A Review of Happenings Spurring his Unjust Removal

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ABSTRACT

Sultan Muhammadu Tambari bn Muhammadu Maiturare was raised in good manners by his great father and Islamic scholars. Thus, he was man, energetic, powerful, audacious, and upholder of his views. He ascended the Sultanate throne of Sokoto after his father Muhammadu Maiturare Gwadabawa amidst vehement opposition from princes and some council members in 1924. On ascending the throne he tried to keep his ideas counted and ensured the removal of many officials who he considered unloyal and could negate his administration. The sequel of his ascension and his love to regain full control of the Sultanate administration, his insistence of following true Shariah in Islamic courts, his altercations with British officer, intrigues plotted by "bad men"; had incurred the chagrin of British leading him to his removal. Some false allegations were labelled against him to remove him. Therewith, right to fair hearing was denied to him, and the investigative panel led by Woodhouse carried an investigation marred with gross irregularities to justify his removal. Previous studies had revealed that, removal of Tambari was unjustifiable and carried out with ulterior motives. Allegations levelled against him were fables, which even if found guilty could not be called for removal.

I. INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE EARLY BACKGROUND OF SULTAN MUHAMMADU TAMBARI BN MUHAMMADU MAITURARE GWADABAWA

The main objective of this paper was to broach pertaining the circumstances surrounding the removal of Sultan Muhammadu Tambari bn Muhammadu Maiturare, and to critically nullify the conjectures said by British as justifications for his removal. Review of related literatures and key informants interviews were carried out.

Muhammadu Tambari was born to the family of Sarkin Musulmi Atiku in the house of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare Marafa. His two names from the famous name of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and the Tambari name was originated from Adar/ tuareq.

Tambari was a Hausa word meaning a drum that is used in war crying. Originally, in Azben the name is accorded to a commandant and great warrior, and leader. Usually, the Tambari is a name of a Leader who doubled as a leader of community and war. It is well known that the leader of Azbinawa Sarkin Adar Tambari Agumbu had the name. Thus, it can be echoed that the name of Tambari were given to him to yield the blessings of the pioneer owners. Therein, he tapped it and succeeded in becoming the first Sultan to reign after his father. As said, he had probably been born in Gwadabawa, of Sokoto in 1880 or circa. He was the most senior of the children of Maiturare. His mother, belongs to Azbinawa clan from Niger Republic, this in order, considering the mutual and cooperative relationship that existed between Maiturare and Azbinawa (Johnston, 1967; Sayudi and Boyd, 1974; Tibenderana,

1977; Umbaru,1999; Jabo, 2008; Abba *et al.*, 2017;Ayama, 2018; Sarkingobir, 2021).

Tambari obtained his early education from Sarkin Musulmi Attahiru Ahmad, at Chimmola being it an Islamic centre (like a University) in the Sokoto Caliphate during that time. After, his father ascended on the Sultanate throne he appointed Muhammadu Tambari as Sarkingobir Gwadabawa to guard the most strategic stool leading the Atikawa heirs of the Sultanate. At that time, which he hold in between 1915-1924 for nine years. During his reign in Gwadabawa he preoccupied himself with farming as a tradition of his father, Maiturare, and to earn rightful food (Umbaru,1999). Before, Tambari became Sarkingobir he was a gigantic large scale farmer who had left home and settled at a village called Meli at the farm of his father Muhammadu Maiturare (Umbaru, 1999).

II. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SULTAN TAMBARI

Tambari was believed to be kind, like his father who was just, kind, and considerate to the poor (Abba *et al.*, 2017). He was very intelligent, an ardent opposer to false-mahdism, a large-scale famer and an islamically educated folk who was taught under the care of Caliph Attahiru Ahmad (his uncle) (Tibenderana, 1977;Louahala, 2016; Abba *et al.*, 2017; Sarkingobir, 2021).

III. ACHIEVEMENTS OF SULTAN TAMBARI DURING HIS REIGN ON THE SOKOTO THRONE

The 15th Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Tambari had occupied the throne wherewith diverse economic, social, and political developments occurred. Despite the indirect rule, the *Sarakuna* had unavoidable rights to many bids, and had a considerable influence and power over their domains. Tambari succeeded in revitalization of the Sokoto Native Authority and laying the foundation of rapid development of the region (Tukur, 1975; Tibenderana, 1977; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

During the time of Tambari, a railway line was linked to Gusau from Zaria to Kaura Namoda. Equipments for processing of groundnut was installed at Mayanchi of Maru. He made tremendous contribution to the spread of Western education especially through leading by example,by enrolling his children in school. Noteworthy, he also did his best in the spread of Western education in the region. In his time, the first School to disgorge judges was established and led by Malam Abubakar Ubandoma. His time was known for the first landing of the Aircraft in

Sokoto and repositioning of police service (Tibenderana, 1977; Bello and Marafa, 2016; Abba *et al.*, 2017). To overhaul the management issues of the vast Sokoto region he built and installed a Wakili(representative) at Kaura Namoda and Gusau to supervise the affairs of Zamfara region. Tambari gave life to mosques, Islamic schools, and supported the Ulama and their developments (Umbaru, 1999; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Tambari's accession brought about new changes. He established himself and became an effective tool in the discharge of Sokoto affairs. He tried to discipline chiefs that are notoyal to him or are postering questionable loyalty. Therein, some officials of the council or native authority were relieved during his time including: Waziri, Magajin Gari, Magajin Rafi, Galadima, Alkali, and Majidadi. On their removal Backwell said" Magajin Rafi was removed for being an opposer of Atikawa, while Galadima was removed for been into many intrigues against the Sultan Tambari". This shows that Tambari had an audacity to challenge the appointment or dismissal of Native Authority staff(Umbaru, 1999; Louahala, 2016).

In 1928, Tambari reorganized the Sultanate Council, each councillor was assigned a potpolio. The overall council was closely monitored by the Sultan. In 1929, due to his achievements, the then Resident hymned him as " good judge of men " " he had run an efficient administration". Tambari continued on that tempo till his removal in 1931. Tambari was equal to the task, strong, worthy of character, energetic, doughty, obdurate, and audacious. He fought precariously to ensure that his views the British considered his views in the discharge of Sokoto Sultanate (Umbaru, 1999; Louahala, 2016).

IV. FORCES SPURRING THE REMOVAL OF TAMBARI

Islamically, everything is ordained and implemented by the will of Almighty God. Islam also agreed with ingredients in exerting things and bids. Therein, are reasons believed to be ingredients for removal of Sultan Muhammadu Tambari from Sultanate of Sokoto. Tambari ascended the throne after his father Muhammadu MAITURARE Gwadabawa as the only person in the antecedents and history of Sokoto who directly succeeded his father. The main reason behind his succession to his father was the trust his father earned from Talakawa, elites and British. He was loved due to his shrewdnesses (such as his role in creating Gwadabawa from nothing,his role in extirpation of Satiru rebellion and current wave of false mahdism vaccilating in various places of Africa or Nigeria. They need a giant who could easily mould the uprisings). That is why the British promised him that his son will

succeed him and Tambari succeeded him (Tibenderana, 1977). Even during the reign of MAITURARE in 1921, some "bad people" envisaging the princes from Rabah, Isa; some aides to British such as Majudadi had ployed to unearthed MAITURARE but failed woefully. Instead the plot culminated in earning more prestige to MAITURARE and the British promised him that his successor will be his son (Tibenderana, 1977). Thus, the aforementioned, have charged the polity and instigate multifold enemies to work against Tambari to ensure his extirpation (which is usual for some princes to work as intrigants to behest intrigues to Sultan)(Tibenderana, 1977; Louahala, 2016).

Firstly, one of the reasons for Tambari was inheritance of his father's foes.

Secondly, during the appointment of Tambari it was believed that initially, the kingmakers were mostly for Sarkin Bauran Dange (who by traditions of alternation of Sultanate between the house of Bello and Atiku have more chance of becoming the next Sultan as it was their turn and Hassan was older than Tambari), but later they might have changed their mind or were manipulated. Therein, Tambari emerged the successive Sultan amidst the chagrin of important houses of the contenders (such as Isa, Rabah, Dange) and some powerful kingmakers. Consequently, the fields of those sullen to Tambari ascension worked tirelessly to laid ploys which in turn spurred his uoster in 1931. One of the instruments utilized was the intermediaries between the Sultan and British officers, such as Majidadi and Zakari. Slanders were used to make British that Tambari is working against them (Tibenderana, 1977).

Thirdly, Some of the electors treated Tambari as the Sultan of the British not a native one. They thought they have a duty to refine the tradition by ensuring his downfall. Therefore, one of the bid they used was showing disrespect to the Sultan, till when he was fed up and expelled Waziri Maccido and Magajin Gari to state major ones. He did so consolidate his grip and clear all threats to his administration (Tibenderana, 1977). Also, the electors are moving to ensure that the their major influence is regain in the further selection of new sultans, which they believed was neglected in Tambari's selection.

Fourthly, the princes have the fear that British might confine the Sultanate to MAITURARE/Tambari's scions, then they have to work against that with full forces, atleast stealthily.

By July 1930, the wave of support by the British against the Muhammadu Tambari had gained momentum. The fear of Mahdism has helft the polity of Sokoto, hence the British can change their policies at wil. Allegations were raised against Tambari, which the British begin to disclose

overtly. Some of the complaints were (buying) miscarriage of Justice against Sarkin Rafi Aliyu of Bungudu (a brother to Tambari), and the trial of Sarkin Yakin and his allies who were said to be ploying against the Sultan Tambari by mingling with the ex-Waziri Macchido. The trials were done by Alkali. Then, the Backwell (British Resident) denounced these two allegations. This unwinding of these trials had to revealed that Backwell has acrimony agaisnt Tambari, because all these rulings were done according to "Native Courts Ordinance 1914" and approved by a Barrister Prankerd (the predecessor Resident of Backwell). Moreover, this open up a ground for others to tender malicious campaigns against the Tambari. This shows there is a personal hatred from Backwell to Tambari haply brewed by Waziri (Abbas), Magajina Gari, Majidadi, Chief Alkali, Zakari (servant of Backwell), and other people sacked by Tambari. Because Backwell has disgorged the door for those agaisnt Tambari, he reported that he received complaints agaisnt Tambari from "unknown men", and Tambari was happy with Mr Clement's death (albeit earlier investigation panel had absolved him). Tambari decided to take oath by Quran to absolve himself but they refused him. It was reported that one-time an altercation ensued between Tambari and Backwell. This might increased the strain of the relationship. In December 1930 at KADUNA Backwell continued to persuade lieutenant Governor of Northern Province to remove Tambari based on the past ruling of the trials, albeit they have been already revisited. He said there was claim by Sokoto and Gwandu people urging for removal of Sultan because he stopped the revered name of traditional institution to disrepute (Louahala, 2016; Abba et al., 2017).

Later, Woodhouse (the Resident of Niger Province) was assigned to investigate the allegations agaisnt Tambari and if they warrant his deposition. Woodhouse was not in goodterm with Tambari because he is a friend to Waziri Maccido and Abbas (the new Waziri); therein, there is tendency for him to treat Tambari wrongly (Tibenderana, 1977; Louahala, 2016).

Instead of Woodhouse to conduct a public enquiry about the allegations agaisnt Tambari, he relied on the tables made by Backwell, who is the one clamouring for Tambari's removal for long. He also consulted Waziri who wasade into that office without the favour of Tambari and was a brother to the deposed Waziri Maccido. Thus, at the end Woodhouse concluded the reports that Tambari shall be removed because of oppression, miscarriage of Justice, and entanglement in fetish practices. On 12th January 1931, Tambari was asked to abdicate the throne or be imprisoned or exiled to Sierra Leone. Certainly, all the allegations agaisnt Tambari might be untrue, because he was not treated in the spirit of Justice and fairness, and the

judge are his eminent foes. His offenses are personal to some personal not real ones that shall warrant the removal of Sultan (the supreme leader of Muslims)(Tibenderana, 1977; Louahala, 2016). Acclaimed crimes of Tambari, if they are really crimes include:

- His insistence that Islamic Shariah shall be followed in the discharge of trials even at the expense of British ordinance
- There was reported assault and battery between Tambari and Backwell
- There was rumours of irregularities concerning tax collection in Sokoto
- To douse the tension and possible repercussions from the public, Tambari was asked to tacitly leave the throne

The public widely took Tambari as very generous, considerate to the poor, and very religious similar to his father Muhammadu MAITURARE. Thus, the claims of the British officers justifying Tambari's removal were naught, void, and sheer fables. This was delineated by the critical analysis of their situation as reported by authors and oral traditions (Tibenderana, 1977; Louahala, 2016; Sarkingobir, 2021).

V. ACHIEVEMENTS OF EX-SULTAN TAMBARI AT WUKARI

Sequel to developments which occurred after the abdication of throne by Sultan Tambari, he was exiled to Wukari (now Taraba state, Nigeria) where he lived till his death on 1935. Some of the Selected contributions of Tambari at his satay at Wukari include:

- On the arrival to the place, Tambari broke the jinx and constructed a well to serve the residents. Untill his arrival, there had been persisted water problems in the area(Abba *et al.*, 2017).
- He engineered extensive and massive missionary activities. Wherein, in his entourage there was famous scholars such as his son Muhammadu Bunu and other clerics who indulged in massive preaching, teaching, and conversation of the inhabitants in the region. This development further sired the evolution of many Islamic schools
- He fostered inter-ethnic marriages between his entourage and local residents. Parable, his son Muhammadu Bunu married the daughter of Aku-uku Aqbumanu III Ahmadu

- His stay led to the establishment of area belonging to Hausa/Fulani in the region called Unguwar Sarki/Sokoto; which served as an Islamic center fostering Islamic scholarship
- Many schools and scholarship hubs were created by followers of Sultan Tambari, which are still existing
- Tambari's stay led to the evolution of several bushes and hamlets belonging to Fulani. Parable, Ruga Jibir, Dankun, Labbare are some of the places which evolved due to stay of Tambari (Abba *et al.*, 2017; Sarkingobir, 2021).

6. Is removal of Sultan Tambari justifiable?

Based on the critical analysis surrounding the removal of Tambari, there are delineations clearly showing that his forceful deposition was uncalled for. These tokens showing that removal of Tambari was wrong include:

- Past Studies revealed that claims against him which were adjudged as basus of his removal were false (Tibenderana, 1977; Louahala, 2016).
- There was calling from the Ulama that he shall not be removed
- If the British believed they are right in what they did they shouldn't have paid him pension, and built him houses for himself and his sons at Wukari
- The move of the British officers by making his removal covert to douse tension shows that their actions were illegal
- Tambari was loved by his subjects, including Ulama, considering the crowd of more than 600 which followed him to Niger Republic, and some Nigeria, and Islamic scholars regarding him as Sultan. This instilled fear on both British and French, which led them to persuade him to return to Nigeria and ended up exiled to Wukari
- The British persuaded him not to ignite any uprisal or tension or move to reclaim the throne (Tibenderana, 1977; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

VI. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, from the review of this paper it can be said that Tambari was removed with ulterior motive rather than the truth. He had been a giant who impacted positively during his reign like his father.



The Tomb of Muhammadu Tambari in Wukari

Fig.1: The tomb of Sultan Muhammadu Tambari at Wukari Taraba state



Fig.2: First District Head of Asara created in circa December 2020



Fig.3: Aminu Balarabe Adiya, District Head of Wauru

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