



## BRIEF CITATION ON SULTAN MUHAMMADU TAMBARI (1924-1931): THE LATEST SULTAN FROM ATIKAWA HOUSE

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### Abstract

**M**uhammadu Tambari was born to the family of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare Marafa, and he obtained his foundational Islamic education. Later he became Sarkingobir Gwadabawa in 1915 which he held to 1924 when he became Sarkin Musulmi amidst oppositions from many sides. Maiturare tried to deal with all the forces opposing him. He also tried to wave the hands

of British off the Islamic affairs of the Sultanate. At the end he was removed and exiled to Wukari, where he contributed to the

### KEYWORDS:

Sokoto, Sultanate,  
Maiturare,  
Gwadabawa,  
council,  
Muhammadu  
Maiturare,  
Tambari

developments of the region. He later died in 1935. He did he did his efforts during his reign as prince, Sarkingobir, Sarkin Musulmi and thereafter.

### INTRODUCTION

**T**he establishment of Sokoto Caliphate and subsequent consolidation had recorded a number of individuals who had been on the Sarkin Musulmi throne. Many of them were either from Bello or Atikawa house. Parable, from the Atikawa there was the last Sarkin Musulmi who ruled in 1924-1931. He is no one than Muhammadu Tambari, the son of Sarkin Musulmi Maiturare. Tambari was the one of the famous Sarakuna that succeeded their fathers without any breach. And he was the first to migrate due to his un-friendship with the British as a result of turmoils orchestrated against him by his foes. Thus, it is very

significant to delve into his brief biography during his hegemony and resolve some controversies (Tibenderana, 1997; Shareef, 2005; Abba *et al.*, 2017; Sarkingobir, 2020ab). The objective of this paper was to discuss the life of Sultan Tambari before and after descending on the Sultanate throne.

### **Early beginning of Muhammadu Tambari**

Muhammadu Tambari was born to the family of Sarkin Musulmi Atiku in the house of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare Marafa. He got 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 given to a commandant and great warrior, and leader. Usually, the Tambari is a name of a Leader who behave 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 stated that the names of Tambari were given to him to tap 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 might not be unusual, considering the mutual and cooperative relationship that existed between Maiturare and Azbinawa (Johsnton, 1967; Sayudi and Boyd, 1974; Tibenderana, 1997; Ummaru, 1999; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

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 (Ummaru, 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 (Ummaru, 1999).

### **Turbaning of Muhammadu Tambari as Sarkin Musulmi in 1924**

In 1924, after the death of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare, the father of Tambari, Tambari was turbaned as Sarkin Musulmi despite strong opposition from some Gidadawa (Wazirin) and Gidan Bello elements that had thrown their weights behind Sarkin Bauran Dange Hassan (Louahala, 2016). The appointment of Tambari to succeed his direct father was an act of God Almighty. Ingredients behind his success were many. Some believed that the Turawa had an agreement with Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare that the Sultanate would be confined to the Atikawa circle, due to their certain properties or at least it shall be within the dynasty of Maiturare. Despite all odds Muhammadu Tambari became Sultan, and the last one from the Atikawa to date 2021. All the successive residents of Sokoto had been nominating Tambari as the potential heir of Muhammadu Maiturare on the Sultanate throne because he proved to be a worthy successor. In the other hand, the appointment of Tambari was unusual to the tradition of alternating the stool between Bello and Atikawa houses. This appointment was a recipe which later brewed the forces that synergistically acted to oust Tambari. It had set the Sultanate Council in altercation with the Sultan in his days (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

From the side of the talakawa/peasants, they became indifferent or in support of Tambari, because they refer to his father, Maiturare as very just, kindful, compassionate. Thus, they see Tambari as one who will trace the footsteps of his father (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Presently, the first Sarkin Musulmi from Atikawa house was the Sarkin Musulmi Abubakar Atiku (1837-1842), then Sarkin Musulmi Amadu Atiku (1859-1866), then Sarkin Musulmi Abdurrahman Atiku (1891-1902). Sarkin Musulmi Attahiru Ahmad (1902-1903) was from Atikawa, then Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare (1915-1924). The last one was Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Tambari (1924-1931), since his deposition no one had been to the throne of Sarkin Musulmi, albeit some of the Atikawa had been contending the throne since then, but none had successfully mounted the throne. Sarkingobir Abdurrahman had contended and he was consequently persecuted for doing that; Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Muhammadu Zayyanu had also contended during the death of Abubakar 111, removal of DASUKI, and at the end of

the time of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maccido (Ummaru, 1999; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

### **Contributions of Sarkin Musulmi Tambari during his reign of seven years**

The 15th Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, Muhammadu Tambari had occupied his office when diverse economic, social, and political developments occurred. Despite the indirect rule, the Sarakuna had the rights to many bids, and had a considerable influence and power over their domains. Tambari succeeded in repositioning the Sokoto Native Authority and laying the foundation of rapid development of the region (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017). During his time, a railway line was linked to Gusau from Zaria to Kaura Namoda. Implements 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 roll out judges was established and headed by Malam Abubakar Ubandoma. His time was known for the first landing of the Aircraft in Sokoto and reorganizing of police service (Tibenderana, 1997; 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 (Ummaru, 1999; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

### **The migration of Tambari and abdication of the Sultanate throne**

Tambari ascended the throne and met an already charged polity. Varied elements from some of the Bello house ( who were then eyeing the throne) were determined to go to any length to remove his father Maiturare as Sarkin Musulmi, but they failed woefully. Therein, Tambari inherited the foes of his father, and he also added his own version of enemies because he defeated them at the battle to mount the throne. He got more oppositions from the council and Sarkin Bauran Hassan allies. These forces connived and planted a polity which ousted Tambari

from the Sarkin Musulmi throne by the bid of God (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Tambari on his own, delved in strategic reorganization of the polity. He sacked many of the officials that are/were against him. And he dismissed some of the heads from the Atikawa dynasty and installed his children. Parable, he removed Amadu Sarkingobir (his brother), Aliyu from Tangaza and transferred to Bungudu as Sarkin Rafin BUNGUDU (which was later removed). This move had further rekindled his woes rather than halting them. One other thing that had caused a breach between him and the Turawa was he had once failed to shake the hands of the wife of Governor General of Nigeria.

Certainly, there are many issues that surrounded the reign of Tambari which gathered and ousted him. The British are no longer in his side, they are determined to get rid of him for reasons known to them. Haply, because they were intimidated (by his enemies) that he had been plotting against them as. Thus, plots to remove Tambari continued unabated. His enemies peddled distorted information that he had been making relationship with the spirits. Further, claims were thrown to the Tambari in order to oust him. For the Sultan to clear his hands, he had to swear by the Holy Quran, but the British are had made their mind to remove him at all cost; thus, his oath availed nothing. They denied him the right to fair hearing, because they wanted to remove him (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Further, when Tambari was deposed in January he migrated to Niger Republic, along with some of his sons such as Muhammadu Adiya (ex-Sarkingobir Gwadabawa) and Bunu Hassan (ex-District head of Tangaza), Bunu Aliyu (ex-District head of KADASSAKA) and more than 200 persons. In his short sitting at Niger Republic, he had generated frightening political influence. Many Emirs from Niger Republic had sent their allegiance such as Sarkin Tawa Muhammadu Dan Salifou, Sarkin Katsina Tasawa, Barmu Dan Kulodo, Sarkin Damagaram, Abdullahin Dan Amadu and Sarkin KATSINA Maradi. This generation of momentum forced the Turawa to relocate him to Wukari Taraba State (Tukur, 1975; Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Tibenderana (1997), goes to the length and echoed that, the British claims on the allegations against Tambari were fallacious. They are only

out to feed their interest not justice, truth, or the public. Therein, Ulama became hesitant to divulge their consternation on the British for what they did to pooh-pooh the most revered traditional leader of the Muslims and the region; because they are still recounting on what met the Satiru Rebels, and their voices are merely considered by the British. Other hindrance was the nature of the Waziri who is not an ally of Tambari and was part of the Ulama. Tambari was a religious person to engage in fetish acts levelled against him by the British is not likely. Major traditions believed that the majority of the Ulama had cautioned the British officers against the removal of Tambari or any Sarkin Musulmi. That is why, the British resorted to threats, which in turn forced Tambari to migrate. They did that to douse the political repercussions that might encroach, if the Sultan was openly deposed (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, the British claimed that Tambari was removed because, the neighboring Emirates had collectively sought for his removal because he had brought shame to the coveted throne. This claim is equally far from the truth, because even most of the Sakkwatawa were unaware of the reasons for his removal. And on Tambari's way to Niger, he had been followed by a large following anywhere he had passed. Thus, the British and the new Sultan feared and caused them to settle him at Wukari contrary to their earlier pledge of settling him at KADUNA. To douse him, they built a house for him at Wukari, and paid him a living pension, and persuaded him not to raise any political move. They also kept an eagle eye on him and his followers. These happenings logically contradict their earlier claims. From the foregoing, it is clear and certain that there is no good justification for removal of Tambari. He was only removed because of his notion to clear the hands of the British from interference with the Islam affairs of the Caliphate. He had been generous, and I've by majority of the residents. Another sin of the Tambari to the British was his open assault and battery with the Backwell which was reported by Nigerian Daily Times (Tibenderana, 1997; Louahala, 2016; Abba *et al.*, 2017). It is also worthy to note that Tambari's brothers (relatives) were not in anyway involved in the mischievous ploys to remove him, contrary to fallacious claims of some historical literatures, because some of his brothers and their sons had joined him to Wukari. Parable, his brother DANGALADIMA and son of Sarkin Rafi Aliyu (which Tambari deposed his

father from BUNGUDU district) had joined Tambari at Wukari. This circumvent the false claims that Tambari's brothers had not forgiven him (Tukur, 1975).

### **The life of Muhammadu Tambari after leaving the throne**

The deposed Sultan Tambari assumed new life and situation at Wukari, his new abode. At Wukari three of his sons accompanied him including Adiya, Bunu Muhammadu and many other people. Sultan Tambari lived there till his death in 1935 (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

He contributed to development in the area he dwelled by digging a well at the place to solve the water scarcity problems of the area. The well is still serving the people. He also made immense contribution in the spread of Islam in that region. His entourage embarked on extensive missionary activities in the region leading to conversion of many non Muslims to Islam (Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017). He also established many Islamic schools to boost Islamic scholarship in the region. His stay for three years and three months had brought so many meaningful developments to the area, more especially Islamically. Islam sire peace. Peace and harmony were restored among many of the warring tribes of the region during Tambari's stay. Many Islamic schools were created by followers of Tambari, many areas, and villages were created by entourage of Tambari, to say the few. It facilitated the formation of Fulani settlements in the area and invited intermarriages and interrelationships among his entourage/fulani and the local tribes. Thus, the sitting of Tambari at Wukari had greatly helped him and Islam at large. It also helped the local communities (Tukur, 1975; Tibenderana, 1997; Abba *et al.*, 2017). Muhammadu Tambari died in January 1935 after finishing his prayer at Wukari, Taraba state, probably due to heart attack, may Allah erase his shortcomings and make jannah his abode, Amin.

### **Conclusion**

This paper discussed the life of Sultan Muhammadu Tambari before, and after the ascension of Sultanate, his deposition due to charged polity created against him by enemies of Maiturare, and enemies of Tambari himself. Enemies of Tambari had successfully plotted his ouster by brainwashing the British to view him as their enemy and British removed

him without fair hearing. His deposition to Wukari had greatly opened new dawn in his life and gave him opportunity to propagate Islam and render social internunciary services. Many developments were recorded due to his abode at Wukari.

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