



ABUBAKAR MAHMUD GUMI (1924-1992): HIS
THOUGHT AND CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC
REFORMISM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Islamic reformism has been the prime concern of Muslim scholars and intellectuals since the 18th century C.E. and as a means to arrest the mushrooming and all around decay in their societies. In northern Nigeria, Muslims are plunged into backwardness because of the colonial legacy and the rising of un-Islamic practices (*bida'* or innovations) that have been instrumental in instigating serious problems in the region as well as the entire country. Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi was a great reformer who stood firm to salvage the society from further religious decline during his time. He believed that the cause for the Muslims' decline in the area was their departure from practising the pristine Islam as laid down in the Qur'an and the authentic *Sunnah*. In his quest for a solution, Sheikh Gumi articulated a reformatory drive, which contravened the long-aged traditions of northern Nigeria. Thus, this study examines the reformist ideas of Sheikh Gumi and the degree of their influence on the society. The study employs an analytical research method and is based on a collection of primary sources, particularly Sheikh Gumi's masterpiece *al-'Aqīdah al-Ṣaḥīḥah bi Muwāfaqat al-Sharī'ah* (The Correct Belief in Line with the *Sharī'ah*) and some of his other major writings. The roots or main features of Gumi's thought, as well as his contributions to Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria, particularly in the educational, judicial and political fields, are highlighted.

ملخص البحث

كان الإصلاح والتجديد هو الشاغل الأول للعلماء والمفكرين المسلمين منذ القرن الثامن عشر، كأداة فعالة لمواجهة الانحطاط الذي انتشر انتشاراً واسعاً وشمل كافة جوانب الحياة الاجتماعية. وفي شمال نيجيريا ظلَّ المسلمون يعانون من التخلف الناتج من بقايا الاستعمار وانتشار البدع وكل هذا قد لعب دوراً محورياً في إثارة مشاكل خطيرة في هذه المنطقة والأقطار المجاورة لها. وموضوع هذه الرسالة يتعلق بالشيخ أبو بكر محمود جومي الذي واجه ذلك المدَّ الواسع للبدع بشتى طاقاته، لينقذ المجتمع من الانحطاط الديني في تلك الفترة. وقد تيقن الشيخ جومي بأن السبب في تدهور المسلمين في المنطقة، هو بعدهم عن ممارسة الإسلام كما جاء في القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية الصحيحة، ففي سعيه لمواجهة هذا الانحطاط، قدم حركة إصلاحية جديدة؛ تتعارض مع الفكر الصوفي السائد منذ عهد بعيد في شمال نيجيريا. فالهدف من هذه الأطروحة هو دراسة أفكار الشيخ جومي وحركته الإصلاحية، وفحص مدى تأثيرها في المجتمع. وقد استخدم الباحث المنهج التحليلي، اعتماداً على المصادر الأولية وهي مؤلفات الشيخ جومي وخاصة كتابه القيم؛ العقيدة الصحيحة بموافقة الشريعة، إضافة إلى المؤلفات التي كتبت عن حياة الشيخ وأفكاره. توصلت الدراسة إلى نتائج هامة، منها أن الشيخ استطاع أن ينشأ جماعة إزالة البدعة وإقامة السنة، التي نجحت في نشر الوعي الإسلامي، كما أثرت حركته في تربية جيل من العلماء والمفكرين الذين تأثروا بأفكاره الدعوية والإصلاحية. وللشيخ نفوذ بارز في شمال نيجيريا في مجال وحدة المسلمين، والقضاء، والشؤون السياسية.

APPROVAL PAGE

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*This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents,
Dr. Aliyu Sani Jangebe and Hajiya Amīnah Muhammad.
(May Almighty Allah lavish them with his Mercy)*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Islam found its way to West Africa as early as the eight century C.E.¹ With the spread of Islam, many Muslims mixed the Islamic practice with those of their traditional beliefs, which they inherited from their ancestors, and which contradict the teaching of Islam.² As a result, Islamic reform movements emerged in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with a mission to purify the Islamic principles from what they had identified as *bid'ah*, loosely translated as (innovation), on the basis of the saying of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) "Every *bid'ah* is a sin and a sin leads to Hell".³ Among the Islamic movements that initiated reformism in Africa were the *Mahdiyya* in Sudan and *al-Sanūsiyya* in Libya.

Northern Nigeria was no exception to what was happening in the continent. In spite of the Islamic awareness that has spread throughout the society, the proper application of the Islamic teachings was still lacking. Worst still, the rulers often compelled their Muslim subjects to patronize the un-Islamic traditional cults. The region had been plunged into a state of degeneration and the government was utterly corrupt. In order to optimize their ill-gotten gains, the rulers burdened their people with heavy taxation, and confiscation of property if they withheld.⁴ This socio-

¹ 'Abdurrahman, Doi, *Islam and Multi-religious Society: Nigeria, a Case study*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.S Noordeen, 1992), 8.

² 'Uthmān Sayyid Aḥmad al-Bīlī, *Some Aspects of Islam in Africa*, (U.K: Ithaca press, 1st edn., 2008), 49-50.

³ Muhammad Ishāq bin Khuzaimah, *Saḥīḥ ibn Khuzaimah*, vol, 3, (ed, by) Muṣṭafa al-A'zamī, (Beirut: al-Makhtab al-Islāmī, 1980), 143.

⁴ Balogun, Isma'īl A. B, *The Life and Works of 'Uthman Dan Fodio: The Muslim Reformer of West Africa*, (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau), 1975, 15.

political fiasco necessitated the emergence of the confrontational *jihād* that culminated in the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate known as Sokoto Caliphate (1810) that continued until the turn of the twentieth century (1903).

Sheikh ‘Usman Dan Fodio⁵ (1754-1817), masterminded his reform movement to counteract such un-Islamic practices, which had become rampant in the society. He challenged the then rulers’ injustice towards their subjects and the laxity (*takhlīf* in his word), in their religious practices. Eventually, he established the greatest Caliphate in Africa during the nineteenth century, known as Sokoto Caliphate, whose political, religious and ideological legacy had provided the basis for the reform movements in the twentieth century northern Nigeria, and probably other parts of the continent.

The development of Islamic reform movement in the twentieth century northern Nigeria was characterized by the emergence of two major movements: Sufism as represented by the *Qādiriyya* and *Tijjāniyya* Sufi orders⁶ and anti-Sufism as represented by Yan Izala.⁷

⁵ Sheikh Shehu ‘Usman Dan Fodio is a famous scholar, reformist and political leader, whose influence spread to many parts of the western African cities during the 19th century. He was born in *Maratta* in the then kingdom of Gobir (now in Sokoto state, Nigeria), in 1754 CE, and had been influenced by his great teacher, Jibrīl Bin ‘Umar. He opposed the rulers of his time because of their injustice, paganism and mixture of Islam with aspects of traditional religions. He announced a Jihad (holy war) between 1804 and 1810, and established a new Muslim state, known as the Sokoto Caliphate. He died in April, 1817.

⁶ *Sufism* played an important role in the expansion of Islam in northern Nigeria. In fact, Islam and Sufism had penetrated the continent at the same time, and their spread was simultaneous. The two Sufi orders which have greatly influenced northern Nigeria are the *Qādiriyya* and the *Tijjāniyya*. The *Qādiriyya* order was the first to enter West Africa and northern Nigeria in particular. Eventually, it spread far and wide in the society and, later, influenced the great Sheikh (‘Usman Dan Fodio), who launched his reform movement in the 19th century. The *Tijjāniyya* order, founded by Sheikh al-Tijjāni (1737-1815), became widely accepted later and soon its *Zāwiyas* were established in Kano and Borno. Gradually, the *Tijjāniyya* was preferred by the educated youth in northern Nigeria, and it had more followers than the *Qādiriyya* order. For more details See: ‘Abdurrahman Doi., *Islam and Multi-Religious*, 216-220.

⁷ Under the name *Jamā‘ah Izālah al-Bid‘ah wa iqāmah al-Sunnah*, (Izālah), this organization was launched in Jos, Plateau State, on 12 March 1978, to counteract the activities of the *Sufi* brotherhood. It regarded itself as a follower of *Sunnah*. See Muhammad Sani Umar, “Changing Islamic identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s: From Sūfism to anti-Sufism” in *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Louis Brenner (London: c. Hurst & co, 1993), 167.

Salafiyyah, or ahl al-Sunnah,⁸ was known in West Africa long before the twentieth century.⁹ It had been said that the jihad of the greatest West African reformists, like Sheikh ‘Usman Dan Fodio, was more or less related to that of Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in Arabia. Similarly, a *Salafi* trend in Morocco, which emerged at about the same time as that of Sheikh ‘Usman, was also linked to the *Wahhabi* ideology, perhaps because they all stressed the necessity of a return to the pristine Islam. However, some argued that the *Salafiyyah* in West Africa could best be placed within the general socio-political reaction against the colonial system in the region. Though Sheikh ‘Usman Dan Fodio was somehow influenced by the *Salafi* trend through his teacher Jibrīl bin ‘Umar who had studied in Egypt;¹⁰ the *Salafiyyah* trend was not specifically known in northern Nigeria before the time of Sheikh Gumi.

These two dominant trends have exerted considerable socio-political and religious influence on the society in the twentieth century. During this period, the colonial ideologies have swept throughout the region, taking the people away from the purest teachings of Islam. Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi (1924-1992), stood out as the most prominent among the reformers of the twentieth century. Against this situation, Gumi deemed it necessary to salvage the society from any further social and religious erosion in the light of the pristine teachings of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), and the early generation of Islam. He argued that the backwardness of the Muslims in northern Nigeria is a repercussion of their departure from the true Islamic teachings. According

⁸ The word “*Salafiyya*” is preferable to “*Wahhabiyya*,” since the latter term came to be known and used by the British colonial authorities, who took it from the Ottomans. Moreover, the followers of such movements in Africa never called themselves Wahhabis, rather, they called (and still call) themselves *Salafis* or *Ahl-al-Sunnah*, and are recognized as such. For further details see, Ousmane Murkiz Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity in Twentieth-Century West African Islamic Reform*, (Boston: Brill, 2012), 3-5.

⁹ Lansine Kaba, *Evolution of Islam in West Africa: The Wahhabi Movement and Its Contribution to Political Development 1945-1958*, (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University, 1972), 2.

¹⁰ John Voll Obsert, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, (London: Longman group, 1982), 140.

to Umar, “Gumi believes that colonialism has destroyed Islam in a subtle way”.¹¹ Furthermore, the primary objectives of Gumi’s proposed reform were to rid the Muslims’ mind from blind imitation, and to restore Islam to its immaculate form in order to facilitate the reform of the moral, cultural, educational and political condition of the Muslims in northern Nigeria. His ideas and thought, as incorporated in some of his books, the most celebrated among which is *al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṣaḥīḥah bi Muwāfaqat al-Sharī‘ah*, (The Correct Belief in Line with the Shari‘ah), had eventually led to the emergence of a reform movement referred to as *Jama‘at Izālah al-bid‘ah wa Iqāmah al-Sunnah* (The Association for the Eradication of the Innovation and the Establishment of the *Sunnah*). The impact of these ideas has traversed the frontiers of the northern part of Nigeria to other neighboring countries. This thesis thus attempts to study and analyze the thought and contribution of Sheikh Abubakar Gumi to Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Islamic reform had become the prime concern of the ‘ulamā throughout the Islamic world during the twentieth century. It was a continuation of the reforms initiated by those great ‘ulamā of the past, who grieved over the backwardness and the plight of the Muslim society since the eighteenth century. This was among the factors that had triggered them strive to revive their stagnant societies. In the twentieth century northern Nigeria the colonial legacy and blind imitation had penetrated deeply in the society. In this atmosphere, Gumi came up with his own reform programme. He is considered as one of the ‘ulamā in northern Nigeria who aspired to reform the Islamic practice and restore it back to its pristine state as it was during the early period

¹¹ Muhammad S. Umar, *Changing Islamic Identity*, 158.

of Islam. Indeed, Sheikh Gumi is one of the most significant Muslim reformists in the twentieth century in West Africa generally but more particularly in northern Nigeria. Being probably the first reformist to challenge many eighteenth and nineteenth century reformers, who were themselves trained as Sufis in northern Nigeria. His reform ideas are worthy of study, in order to identify how his thought developed and influenced the people. By virtue of his God-given ability, Gumi has left immense impacts on the society, especially through the (Izala) movement. Unfortunately, these reform ideas were misinterpreted as a betrayal of his predecessors.

Surprisingly, there is no much scholarly work conducted on his thought and contribution to Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria. Therefore, it is the aim of this work to inquire into the life of Sheikh Gumi, his ideas and his vital role in promoting the cause of Islamic reform in the region. It is necessary, also, to investigate how Gumi was influenced by the anti-Sufist drive, and what aspects of their reformist ideas that he internalized, and later applied in his reform movement. For the sake of having a clear picture of Gumi's thought, the following questions will be addressed throughout the chapters of this study.

- Who is Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi?
- How did he establish his reformist career?
- What are the primary features of his reformist activities?
- How did he contribute to the spread of the reform ideas in northern Nigeria?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this research is to analyze critically the thought and contribution of Sheikh Gumi to Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify who Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi was.
- To investigate the emergence of his reformist career.
- To clarify the main characteristics of his reformist activities.
- To examine his contribution in promoting the trend of *Iṣlāh & Tajdīd* in northern Nigeria.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Sheikh Abubakar Gumi is held in high esteem by many people in northern Nigeria. Admittedly, numerous works were written about him, but they are on the whole rather flat and amateur as they hardly give attention to his reform thought. This research will be undertaken in order to fill this gap. Moreover, it will bring into light his reform ideas for the benefit of both scholars and the public in northern Nigeria; which, if applied, may provide a solution to many of the challenges that are currently facing the Muslims in the region.

Since the study also seeks to understand how Gumi had formulated his ideas, it is necessary to extensively study his *magnum opus* entitled *al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṣaḥīḥah bi Muwāfaqat al-Sharia‘ah*, which, however controversial it may have been, played a crucial role in the establishment of the Izala. It is also essential to study Gumi’s thought in order to be acquainted with the factors and incentives that formed and developed it. It is often assumed that Gumi was the vehicle through which anti-Sufism or *Salafism* was transmitted into the northern Nigeria, thus it is interesting to explore

this hypothesis to know how much does it hold water, and how far did it condition Gumi's reformist movement? Studying this theme is presumably of paramount importance.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous books and articles have been written on Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria in general, and on Abubakar Gumi in particular. These literatures, however, do not take into consideration his reform thought and contribution. Only few of them attempt to discuss Gumi's *da'awah* and personality in the society, but even those do not scholarly address his thought on Islamic reform. This is the gap that the present research attempts to fill.

One of the earliest studies that discussed Gumi's role on the Islamic reform was *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, authored by Roman Loimeier.¹² The book focuses on the periods from the 1930s to the early 1990s, covering the former northern region of Nigeria. It contributes to the understanding of religion and politics in northern Nigeria. In tracing the modern history of this part of the world, Loimeier revisits many issues, including the emergence of anti-Sufist movement in northern Nigeria, namely, *Jamā'ah izālah al-Bid'ah wa-iqāmah al-Sunnah* (The Association for the Eradication of the Innovation and the Establishment of the Sunnah), which had probably led him to consider Gumi as "first religious reformer to turn explicitly against the *Sufi* and *turuq* in northern Nigeria".¹³ Loimeier sheds lights on Gumi's major works, but without any considerable attention to his thought on *Islāh* and *Tajdīd*.

¹² Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, (U.S: Northwestern University Press, 1997).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

Matthew Hassan Kukah,¹⁴ in his *Religious Militancy and Self Assertion: Islam and Politics in Nigeria*, tried to portray Islamic politics and militancy in the Nigerian context. In his book, he discussed political conflict between Muslims in some important states, like Kaduna, and the role played by the ‘ulamā in politics under the umbrella of Islam. The chapter, “*The Shari‘a in politics*” attempts to elaborate on the role played by Abubakar Gumi in Nigerian politics, as well as his relationship with (Ahmadu Bello), the then premier of northern Nigeria. However, the writer does not depict the thought and contribution of Gumi on Islamic reform, which this study is going to address.

Muhammad Sani Umar,¹⁵ in his article *Changing Islamic Identity in Nigeria From the 1960s to the 1980s: From Sufism to Anti-Sufism*, also highlights some aspects of Gumi’s ideas in the Nigerian politics as a whole and in northern part of the country in particular. According to him, the emergence of anti-Sufism in northern Nigeria was not known before the time of Gumi. Though Sheikh ‘Usman Dan Fodio, a great *Sufi* of the *Qādiriyya* brotherhood, had reportedly criticized certain aspects of Sufi beliefs and principles that he perceived to be corrupt and misleading, this does not in any way imply total and indiscriminate condemnation of Sufism.¹⁶ In fact, there seems to be no trace of aggressive opposition to Sufism throughout the nineteenth century, though there were apparently a handful of scholars, who were described as “persons with anti-Sufism attitudes”¹⁷ in Kano in 1870 C.E. The article seems to present a historical analysis on the rise of anti-Sufism in northern Nigeria rather than

¹⁴ Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religious Militancy and Self-assertion: Islam and Politics in Nigeria*, (Aldershot, Eng: Aveburg, 1996).

¹⁵ Muhammad S. Umar, *Changing Islamic Identity...*, 154- 178.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 155- 161.

articulating the thought and contribution of Gumi to Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria.

Along the same line, an article entitled, *Islamic Reform and Political Change: The Example of Abubakar Gumi and Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria*, written by Loimeier,¹⁸ discussed Gumi's religio-political career in Nigeria, more precisely his position as Grand *Qāḍī*¹⁹ in 1962 of the then northern Nigeria. Moreover, the author analyzed the reaction of the Sufi brotherhood toward the emergence of the movement (Izala).

Similarly, Loimeier,²⁰ in his article, *Is There Something Like "Protestant in Islam?"* does not directly deal with the topic but it shed some light on it. The author examined critically Sheikh Gumi's view on the concept of *imān* (faith) and Sainthood (*al-Wilāyah*) and other dogmatic issues. The author, tried to emphasize that Gumi's thought on faith was similar to that of "Protestant" in character. Thus, the article paid less attention to analyzes Gumi's thought from Islamic perspective, which is the main objective of the present research.

¹⁸ Roman Loimeier, "Islamic Reform and Political Change: The Example of Abubakar Gumi and the Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria" in *African Islam and Islam in Africa*, edited by David Wasteland and Eva Evers Rosandor, (Ohio University press, 1997).

¹⁹ The Grand *Qāḍī* or (*Qāḍī al-Quḍāh*) was first established by the Ottoman. Historically, in Africa the post was introduced firstly in Sudan by the British Colonial Authorities, as a religious and judicial position to supervise the local *Qāḍīs* and to administer Sharī'ah law on appeal to the court from the provincial and district courts. According to Besah, the aim behind it, as well as other positions like *Mufīī*, was to promote Sunni (or orthodox) Islam at the expense of Sufi Islam, which British viewed dangerous to their rule. At the time, Northern Nigeria was under British colonial rule, and it had culturally much in common with the Sudan than any other Arab nation. In fact, the Northern Province's Law School in Nigeria was a carbon copy of its counterpart in Sudan, namely the Gordon College, (now University of Khartoum). Further, the teachers were recruited mainly from Sudan and were set to train area court judges in Islamic law. Thus, the post of Grand *Qāḍī* probably, came into Northern Nigeria through those teachers. For more details see, Besah bt. Abdul hamid, "A Study of British Religious Policy in the Sudan with Special Reference to the Position of the Grand *Qāḍī* 1898-1956," (M.A thesis, IIUM, 2005), 2 and 49-51, see also, Gumi & Tsiga, 29-31.

²⁰ Roman Loimeier, "Is There Something like "Protestant Islam?" in *Die Welt des Islams, International Journal of the Study of Modern Islam*, New Series, vol.45, Issue 2, (Brill, 2005), 216- 254.

Another article, penned by Roman Loimeir²¹ entitled, *Translating the Qur`an in Sub-Saharan Africa: Dynamics and Disputes*, provided historical background over the translation and interpretation of the holy Qur`an into African Languages. At the same time, the author, discussed the dispute triggered among Muslim scholars in Sub-Saharan Africa over the translation of the holy Qur`an into African vernacular. Loimeier, expounds on this topic from different angles. He highlighted some historical information of interpretation of the holy Qur`an into Sub-Saharan African languages. This article gave vital information on Gumi and his translation of the holy Qur`an into the lingua franca of the northern Nigerian people.

Roman Loimeier,²² in his article, *Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa*, dealt directly with the topic and devoted some pages to highlight Gumi`s reform ideas. The article mentioned only a glimpse of Gumi`s thought without talking about it in detail. It also failed to scrutinize the impact of his reform in northern Nigeria. The author also confined himself to historical narration of Sheikh Gumi and his movement (*izala*). Hence, the major concern of this article is to compare and contrast between three Muslim reformists of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Additionally, Don Ohadike,²³ in his article *Muslim-Christian Conflict and Political Instability in Nigeria*, examines the crisis between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria and its underlying factors. Under the chapter “*The Resurgence of Islamic Fundamentalism*,” the author sheds light on Abubakar Gumi`s view on Nigerian politics as an Islamic scholar. He believes that Izala movement was fundamentalist

²¹ Roman Loimeier, “Translating the Qur`an in Sub-Saharan Africa: Dynamics and Disputes” in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 35, Fasc. 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, Nov., 2005), 403- 423.

²² Roman Lomeir, “Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa” in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol.33, Fasc. 3, *Islamic thought in 20th century Africa*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill), 237-262.

²³ Don Ohadike, “Muslim-Christian Conflict and Political Instability in Nigeria” in *Religion and National Integration in Africa: Islam, Christianity, and Politics in the Sudan and Nigeria*, edited by John O. Hunwick, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University press, 1992).

and intolerant of other religions, though he quoted Gumi as saying “The Izala is not an Islamic sect but simply a group of people who wish to educate others, purify Islam, and fight ignorance among Muslims.”²⁴ Nevertheless, what this article focuses on is the crisis between the Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

John O. Hunwick,²⁵ in his article *An African Case Study of Political Islam: Nigeria*, discusses the Sharī‘ah laws within the political arena, and the role of major Islamic movements from 1960 to 1980. He underlines the support received by Gumi from the then premier of northern Nigeria 1954- 1966, (Sir Ahmadu Bello 1910-1966), and the Arab world as among the factors that triggered competition between the ‘ulamā in Nigeria. The author therefore tends to restrict his focus on the role of Islamic movements in Nigeria, and the growing faction of the Nigerian ‘ulamā that received financial aid from within and outside Nigeria.

Peter Clarke,²⁶ in his article *Islamic Reform in Contemporary Nigeria: Methods and Aims*, tried to trace back the vital political role of the ‘ulamā during the reign of the former head of state Ibrahim Babangida, (1985- 1993). The author dedicated the title “*Islamic Reform and the Future Politics*”, to illustrate Gumi’s position on the formation of two political parties in Nigerian politics. However, Clarke’s major research objective was to evaluate the methods and aims of Islamic reformism in Nigeria at large. Thus, the researcher would not expect Clarke’s article to deal with individuals ideas like that of Gumi which is the major objective of this research.

²⁴ Ibid., 102.

²⁵ John Hunwick, “An African Case Study of Political Islam: Nigeria” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, vol. 524, (November, 1992).

²⁶ Peter Clerke, “Islamic Reform in Contemporary Nigeria: Methods and Aims” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 10 Issues 2, (Taylor & Francis Ltd, Apr, 1988), 519-538.

John Paden,²⁷ in *Muslim Civic Culture and Conflict Resolution: The Challenge of Democratic Federalism in Nigeria*, discusses extensively the ways in which Muslim civic culture, from the north to the far southeast, deals with matters of leadership and conflict resolution in Nigeria. The author also sheds light on many issues under the Shari‘ah law. Moreover, under the chapter entitled “*Variation and Muslim Identities and Value*,” Paden explores how the *Qādiriyya* and *Tijjāniyya* brotherhood experienced some sort of reforms in northern Nigeria. Within this context, the writer explains how another trend inspired by *Salaḥī* ideology emerged as a countercurrent to the *Suḥī* ideology. He further discusses how openly Gumi dismissed the *ṭuruq al-Suḥiyyah* (Sufi Brotherhoods) as innovators. Also he highlights the aims of Gumi’s missions as taking Muslims back to the basic teachings of the Qur`ān and the Sunnah. However, this book is based on the dynamism of Muslim civic culture and conflict resolution, rather than on the thought and contribution of Gumi to Islamic reformism in northern Nigeria.

Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria, written by John Paden,²⁸ helps to understand the religious features of Gumi and his ties with the then premier of the northern region- now northern Nigeria- Ahmad Bello Sardauna of Sokoto. As further explained in this book, Gumi was delegated as the northern region ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He also gave detailed information about the role of Gumi in the formation and the reform of the Nigerian Hajj mission to the holy land. According to this book, it is not erroneous to conclude that Sheikh Gumi was the most influential Nigerian scholar on the Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmad

²⁷ John Paden, *Muslim Civic Culture and Conflict Resolution: The Challenge of Democratic Federalism in Nigeria*, (Washington: Brookings institution press, 2005).

²⁸ John Paden, *Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*, (Zaria: Hudahuda publishing company, 1986).

Bello. The book primarily deals with the charismatic leadership of Sardauna and his policies against the opposition, as well as Islamic affairs and foreign relations.

Finally, these literary works show that much had been written about Abubakar Gumi, but the majority of this material is primarily concerned with Gumi's role and views in politics, it hardly discusses his thought and contribution as an Islamic reformist. The gaps created in these literatures will be covered by the present research.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As recorded, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi was a great *‘Ālim* and an active advocate of anti-Sufism in northern Nigeria. He launched his reform programme in a Muslim society where the traditional beliefs are rampant. Although Gumi has been generally considered as *Sunni*, a controversy often arises around an attempt to label his thoughts as belonging to a certain *Sunni* trend, which is considered to be extremist. Don Ohadike referred to Gumi and his *jamā‘ah* as hyper Salafi,²⁹ while Roman Loimeir, viewed him as moderate.³⁰ However, since launching his reform, Gumi did not seemingly only intend to spread the *Sunnah*, but also aimed at purifying the society from the deviated acts in Islamic practice, and to warn the Muslims against blind imitation. Gumi's reform ideas, incorporated in his great work, *al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṣaḥīḥah bi Muwāfaqat al-Sharī‘ah*, can be considered to have been the channel through which he spread his ideas across the northern Nigerian society. These concepts would serve as the framework around which the present research will revolve.

²⁹ Don Ohadike, 23.

³⁰ See Loimeir, *The Example of Abubakar Gumi*.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the dissertation employed analytical research methodology. It browsed through various materials relevant to the subject matter, both primary and secondary sources. Moreover, since the main target of this study is Gumi's thought and contribution to Islamic reformism, the study analyzed his ideas as an individual's opinions, rather than approaching it as a school of thought, even though he has founded a movement which may be referred to as a school of thought,³¹ which, anyhow, still exists in northern Nigeria.

The Primary sources for the present research are the works of Sheikh Gumi, and other related materials that are located in places like Arewa House Centre for Research and Historical Documentation, Ahmad Bello University, Kaduna, and Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto.

The most relevant works of Gumi that this research rested upon are, *al-ʿAqīdah al-Ṣaḥīḥah bi Muwāfaqat al-Sharīʿah*,³² (The Correct Belief in Line with the Sharīʿa), *Musulunci da Abinda ke Rushe shi*,³³ (Islam and what invalidates it), *Ḥal al-Nizāʿ fī Masʿalat Nuzūl ʿIsa ʿAlaih al-Ṣalāh wa al-Salām*³⁴, (Resolving the conflict on the issue of the Descend of ʿIsa (a.s) and Gumi's autobiographical novel *Where I Stand*.³⁵ The first two works could be considered as major and significant works of Gumi, and as such are much related to the field of *Iṣlāh* and *Tajdīd*. They are very important to this study because they deal with the issues that Sheikh Gumi viewed as *bidʿa* during his time, and which he attempted to reform. The third book is a controversial work, as

³¹ The movement is *Jamaʿah Izālah al-Bidʿah wa Iqāmah al-Sunnah* (Izala).

³² Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, *Al-ʿAqīdah as-Ṣaḥīḥah bi-Muwāfaqat al-Sharīʿah*, (Beirūt: Dār al-ʿArabiyyah, 1982).

³³ Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, *Musulunci da Abinda ke Rushe Shi* [Islam and what Invalidates it] (Zaria, 1981).

³⁴ Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, *Ḥal al-Nizāʿa fī Masʿalat Nuzūl ʿIsa Alaih as-Ṣalāt wa as-Salam*, (Ibadan: Oluseyi press Ltd, n.d).

³⁵ Abubakar Mahmud Gumi & Ismaʿil A. Tsiga, *Where I Stand*, (Ibadan: Spectrum books, 1992).