

## **Political Direction in the Poetry of Abubakar Bube: Analytical Study**

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**Abstract:** This research was conducted by realizing that the Sokoto Arabic poetry has rich sources of political importance portraying happenings within and outside the Sokoto Caliphate which influenced past and present researchers and political figures in and around Sokoto caliph territories. The research has highlighted the qualities of leadership and what is expected of a leader to follow in his policy. The research also tried to pursue the poetry of the twentieth century poet of Sokoto Caliphate known as Ustaz Abubakar Bube and conducted an analytical study in one of his poems with the hope to unveil some hidden Arabic heritage in Sokoto area and its environs.

**Keywords:** Sokoto Caliphate, leadership, poetry, twentieth century poet, analytical study

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Abubakar Abdulkadir known as Bube was an erudite, educated and lexicographer. Born in the year 1288 AH in "Masama" a village in the east of Gwandu [1]. He raised up under the care of his father and started the learning of holy Qur'an in Madarasah. He learnt from Mal. Hamza, an Islamic scholar, then proceeded to shaykh Ahmad bin Sa'id one of the famous scholars and the student of Ustaz Abdllahi bin Fodiyo [2].

He continued leaning from excellent scholars of his time and acquired a large quantity of Islamic knowledge and Arabic language. He learned the following subjects: syntax, etymology, Rhetoric, prosody, and Rhymes. He also read many books from these subjects such as Ajarumiyah, Mulhat Al- i'irab, Qatru Al- nadah, as wel as Al- fiyat ibn Malik. He however learnt Lamiyatu Al- af'ali, Hisn Al- rasin, Jauhar Al- maknun, Uqud Al- juman Talkhisu Al- mifta'h, Al- mukhtarat min dawawini Al- shi'iri Al- ja'hili and Muqamati Al- Hariri [3]. He also acquainted, benefited and influenced the literacy productions of Sokoto jihadists. Malam Abubakar Bube lived in two successive periods; pre colonial and colonial periods. He was also described as pioneer of literary revolution in Sokoto who resisted the alien thoughts which contravened the teachings of Shaykh Usmanu Danfodiyo and his companions which the colonial masters and their allies propagated. He violently criticized the policy of colonial masters in his poem using attractive and impressive method. Perhaps his following poems will be the best example. Malam Bube was also regarded as the chief of twentieth century poets. He died in 1351A.H. at the age of 66. This was

during the era of Sultan Hassan Dan Muazu [4]. He spent his entire life teaching and preaching Islamic religion and left behind the literary impacts which are regarded as the best in the area of Arabic literature [5].

### **ABUBAKAR BUBE'S POLITICAL POETRY**

The political system in colonial era which was against Islamic political system had played a major role in proliferation of political poetry in the twentieth century. There were poets' companions and their poem was about the internal and external conduct of the government. They also write about the political system that the leader supposed to follow, giving examples about the life history of their predecessors who rule in accordance with the Islamic way of life and the right-guided caliphs " khulafa'u al- rashidun".

Shaykh Abubakar Bube was among those poets who used to utilize their poem for political thought. He wrote a lot of poems in which he praised the emirs and their ministers whom their policy impressed him such as "el- Qasidatu el-Ra'iyyah" in which he praised Wazir Muhammad Buhari and Qasidat Annuniyya.

The topic of this discussion is a poem in which he praised Muhammad Dikko, the emir of Katsina. The main objective of Malam Bube's poem is extolment and praising that is attributed with the political sentiment. His praise and eulogy was not meant for profit earning but as political and religious drive where he touched the relationship between the extolment and Islamic policy that he strongly believed as the only way of life for every Muslim.

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In addition, he merged in his poem the Islamic political system which concentrated in justice and fairness to the citizenry as well as protection to the less privilege.

#### ANALYTICAL PRESENTATION

This is the "Nuniya poem" made up of "Bahr Al- mutawassit" medium metre or measurement consisting of 38 verses. The poet composed this poem in Arabic classical method. It can be classified into three sections. First with the regard of classical introduction, where he stayed at the houses and celebrated in love poem as it is commonly in pre-Islamic poets. The poem consists of nine verses. It reads:

*Qif bi el- diari was al amman biha za'ana  
An ayyuma jihatun sa'ru biha qatana  
Kam fihimu min unasin qad alaftuhumu  
Qawmun hudatun thiqtatun sadatun umanah  
Ala basiti mina el- aridi el- am=niqati la  
Khadkhadatsan ramluha mutajiddun khazana  
Bal fi rawabin tatama'inna biha  
Hauba'a sa'kinuha lama laha sakanah  
Aqanqalan wa jama'hiru dafat  
Wa l'ishawshabat arduha wa l'izawzabat Wa  
tana  
Fiha el ama'lilu la tanfaku an namirin  
Tas'dadu ma qad ra'at lima atah, kana*

The poet stopped at the deserted houses, inquired about those he used to know among his beloved ones, in the sake of Allah, who lived comfortable in those houses, (this is to say adherents to Islamic religion). They migrated from their houses, and departed.

He went on describing the beloved ones who are guides, confidants, trustworthy and very fortunate people.

He also connected his stay at deserted hoses describing their land as a headland with plenty of water, trees and that it was very comfortable. He furthermore described the deserts of the land with plenty of sand, plants and fierce wild animals.

The poet proceeded to describe a young lady who lived in those houses saying:

*Kam fihim min fatati in fatatin in  
badat khajalat  
Shamsun wa sa'rat bi zaka el- badru  
mumtahinah  
Takhtalu baina el gawany  
sha'anuhunna biha  
Raf'u el- again bi sautin ra'qin wa  
ettazana*

*Ya'atina miysan suka'rah fauqa  
aukalatin  
Ba'adi el- qawa'ili qad ya'atinahu  
arinah*

The poet might intend to connect his presentation referring to his strong yearning towards the brothers who migrated, fleeing for the sake of their religion from Sokoto heading to the holy land. The poet in this regard, must yearn for hijrah due to the imposition of the political system by the colonial masters that out rightly contrasted the Islamic shari'a he believed in. He intended to migrate but was eventually stopped by Amirul al- muminina Hassan dan M'azu.

In section two the poet made an example of his departure from the main idea that is the political praising and showed his admiration to his hero who was endowed with generosity such as open- handedness, theorising and firmness on the truth where he said:

*Da'a anka zikri una'sin qad khalau  
wa madaw  
Fa laisa misluka fi amsalihi hasanah  
A'id maqalan ila zikra'ka fi malikin  
Muba'rakin wajhuhu qad kana fi  
kasinah  
Samaida'un salafa'un dara'katun  
zaribun  
Mustaudi'un kulu amrin ba'na au  
batanah  
Lillahi darru amirin za'nahu karamun  
Likulli da'nin wa man an da'rahi  
shatana*

The most exceptional exemplary that the poet describe to his hero in this passage was kindness to his envious who were attending him instead of taking vengeance from them by fulfilling the saying of Allah (Subuhanahu wa ta a'lah) in the holy Qur'an:

*Idfa'a billati hiya ahsan fa iza el- lazi  
bainaka  
wa bainahu ada'watun ka annahu  
waliyunhami'mun. (Fussilat: 34)*

“Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal repel (evil) with what is better then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate Repel (evil) with what is better then will he between whom and thee hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate” [6] (fussilat, 34)

*Wazaka el- lazi indakat ada'watu  
Min hasidihi fa saru ba'adahu  
dumanah*

And that the extolled person was exercising patience from envy of envious, pardoning the wrong

doing of wrong doers, for that the enmity of some of his subjects towards him was faded away and they eventually became his supporters and of good habit due to his good policy. The leadership in Islamic perspective is meant for bringing benefits to Muslim ummah and preventing the immorality from them and that the ruler requires some trustful, scholars around him.

The poet went on and positively challenged the emir where he gave him some precious advice and directed him to firmly hold on the Islamic political system. He further advice him to fear Allah in his administration, to be just to his subject and not to be eager to pass judgement to any of his subject until he finds the concrete evidences he says:

*Wa ba'ada fal qasdu minni ba'ada el-  
tahiyyati an  
Takhasha el- ilaha dauman tashkuru  
el- munanh  
Fa inna ismaka qad sha'at  
maha'sinuhu  
La nasma'anan minka illa mandiqan  
hasana  
Qd sha'a khairuka fi el- buldani  
qa'dibatat  
Qad andaqa Allahu fi khairatuka el  
lusunah  
Waqin el tadabira fi ma anta  
taf'aluha  
La taj'alana ala el- muqdhayi haisu  
ana*

The poet went on advising the emir not to oppress any of his subjects so that his administration will not collapse.

He further advised him to punish any wrongful regardless of his status until his subjects realise the security of their lives and properties. Consequently, peace and security would prevail so that the system would retain:-

*Iyaka wa el- zulma inna zulma  
sayyi'atan  
Fa el- zulmu la yanjali an ahlihi bi  
muna  
Wa in ata'ka zalumun fa an taqimna  
bihi  
Huwa el- lazi kunta fi ta'azibihi  
qaminah*

It seems that in the last line the poet motivated the emir to imitate the Right-Guided Caliphs' way of life such as Abubakar Sadik who strongly promised to take vengeance from every oppressor regardless of his dignity, saying:-

' The weak among you is strong in my side until I return his property back to him and the strong among you is weak in my side until I take the property from him and return to the owner by the grace of God.'

The poet then indirectly referred the manner that every ruler should take in running his administration. This is a caution for him not to interact the seducers and wicked people and also not to trust them whenever they approach him with their evil acts.

*La yastafizka aqwamun za'anifatun  
Ka'na el arajifa fi afwahihim sunanah  
Wa jafi irdhaka an ashabi ajrafatin  
Qad dha'a a'ama'rihim fi gayyihim  
zamanah*

As the empire is temporary, the poet linked his main idea towards political system mentioning the death and preparation for it. Mentioning of death requires adherence to the truth and opposing the caprice and fancy. He urged the emir to prepare for the death with two conducts: Fairness to the citizens and keeping away from oppression and tyranny, as the justice makes a ruler to be popular while injustice renders a ruler unpopular. He said:

*Fa el- mauti aqrabu shai'in tataqihi  
fa la  
Tagafalan an el- mauti kun fi zikirihi  
qaminah  
Bizaka taqwa ala el da'a'ti taf'aluha  
Wa tataruku el- amala el- manhiyi  
haisu anah*

Then he cited the successful administration urging the emir to be caring of his citizens by keeping up corruption, protecting the public interest and giving alms to the needy and destitute, saying:-

*Wa kin umuran li wajhi Allah  
sa'lihatan  
Wa na'hiyan li aba'dila wa kullu  
hanah  
Wa kun rahiman li aitami wa  
ar'milatin  
Wa maq'adatin qad gadah fi el- baiti  
qad sakanah*

You will be surely impressed in the past two lines of the poem with the admiration of the poet towards the leader who was endowed with an exceptional bravery, helping the poor in his land and being kind to weak people.

Here, the researcher has no doubt to recapture some noble Muslims in Nigeria who were in political doctrine aimed at protecting the public interest as well as keeping off the corruption among the citizens.

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In addition, the poet was among the affected people who suffered from the colonialism which contrasted the Shari'ah doctrine.

The idea that emanated from the poet in this section suggested a good example in the leadership. The leaders should be guided by this example in managing their political system.

How nice will it be if our contemporary political leaders should apply this precious advice in their administration? Perhaps this could be a solution for our complex problems and crises that we are suffering nowadays.

It should be noted that the tangible political philosophy of the poet in this part is inspired by the following verse:

“O David! We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth: So neither judge thou between men in truth (and justice) nor follow thou lusts (of thy heart) for they will mislead thee from the path of Allah: for those who wander astray from the path of Allah, is a penalty grievous, for that they forget the day of account.” (“Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal repel (evil) with what is better then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate” (Surah 38: 26) [8].

But the second and the last part of the poem is all about the supplications to the praise person where the poet prayed Allah (S.W.T.) to pull him up and help him in managing the affairs of his emirate, shield him from the evil of the enemies and gloating moles and finally prayed Allah to extend his lifetime to the service of Muslim Ummah. He said:-

*A'anaka Allahu fi ma anta taf'aluhu  
Aunan wa yadfa'u anka el- shara wa el-  
fijanah  
Ta'ishu umran dawiyilan tastafidu bihi  
Izan wa taqdi bihi dakan li naili munah*

He concluded the poem as the Nigerian poets usually do by praising to God and prayer on the prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the best of messengers of God, saying:-

*Alhamdu li el- lahi rabi el- alamina faqad  
Tamma nazmun bi auni minhu wattazana  
Sallah el- illahu ala el- Mukhtari sayyidina  
Muhammadin wa ala ashabihi el- umanah*

After a rapid analytical presentation of the poem, we realised that the poet had followed the method used by proficient poets in dealing with the art of political praising as the purpose of this praise refers

to the political manner whether internal or external. But here, we have not touched foreign political form as that of Abu Tammam when he recorded the victory over the Roman Empire. It reads [9]:

*Assaifu asdaqun inba'an mina el- kutubi  
Fi haddihi el- haddu baina el- jiddi wa el-  
la'ibi*

In addition to all of the above, the reader will realize in this poem, the absence of a widespread phenomenon in political poem which is establishment of power and extension of its influence as recorded by Abdullahi bin Fodio, saying [10]:

*Fa abyadda wajhu el- dini ba'ada maha'qih  
Wa iswadda wajhu el-kufri ba'ada el- taballuji  
Wa el- dinu fi izzi wa nahjin manhaji  
Wa el- kufru fi zillin wa nahjin munhaji  
Wa el- sunnatu el- garra'u subhun yanjali  
Wa el- bid'atu el- sauda'u lailu yaddaji*

The researcher believed that poet was not subjected to this phenomenon because it is obvious that the Jihad and the application of Shari'ah were almost impossible during his lifetime. As at then, the power of Muslims had weakened while the power and influence were in the hands of the colonial masters.

## CONCLUSION

The article dealt with an analysis of a poem with political nature to an eminent poet of twentieth century. The researchers began with biography of the poet then talked about his political poetry as well as poem analysis.

It is clear that the poet had stood beside and supported the doctrine applied by Sheikh Usman bin Fodiyo. The poet can be measured with the political aim though he did address the political theories and their meanings.

Conclusively, we can figure out three types of policies in the poem which the poet believed in them:- The first policy represents the ideal leadership policy which shows fear of Allah in the management of the state affairs.

The second policy is the role of a leader in keeping away from injustice and exhibit justice and fairness in his leadership.

The third policy represents the people that the leader should select righteous people as his ministers and advisers in executing of judgement.

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