



## The Contribution of Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman Bn Sultan Maiturare in the Creation of Illela Town

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**Abstract:** Sokoto Caliphate was a famous formation established by the Fulani Jihadists and their Hausa supporters in the Hausaland and environs, which led to the revival of the Hausaland traditional hegemony system and polity of Islam. Later, the British invaded the region and colonized it. Still, the system laid by Usman Danfodio is unavoidable. The actors in this Danfodio system contributed hugely in the development using their traditional powers. One of the famous grand-scions of Usman Danfodio was the Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman MFR (who lived circa in 1903-1968 A.D.). Abdurrahman was from the Atikawa branch, popularly known for education and leadership shrewdness. He obtained Islamic and Western education accordingly. He started representing Gwadabawa in the aspects of hegemony as early as 1916. Later in 1927-1931, Abdurrahman was turbaned as the Sardauna of Sokoto. In 1931, Abdurrahman was crowned as the Sarkingobir Gwadabawa, District Head of Gwadabawa, and a more important post than the Sardauna of Sokoto. During the reign of Abdurrahman as Sarkingobir Gwadabawa he recorded many achievements. He ensured the transmogrification of Illela bush to a town. He ensured many contributions in the development of Gwadabawa District and Illela. Many years after the demise of Abdurrahman, in 1989, Illela city became local government to be continually headed by Muhammadu Zayyana (Sarkingobir) as part of his Gwadabawa domain. In 1997, Muhammadu Tukur, son of Sarkingobir Abdurrahman was appointed as substantive district head of the whole Illela region disorged from Gwadabawa. In 2020, Muhammadu Tukur was succeeded by his son, Buhari Tukur as district head of Illela region.

**Keywords:** Gwadabawa, District Head, Caliphate, Education, rural roads, peace, Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman, Illela district.

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### 1. The Family of Sarkingobir Abdurrahman: the man who established Illela

Sarkingobir Abdurrahman Gwadabawa MFR popularly known as AbduJatau is from the Atiku branch of Sokoto royal dynasties who are heirs to the Sarkin Musulmi (Sultanate) throne. Atikawa are from the Abubakar Atiku 1 bn Shehu Usmanu (may Allah be pleased with him) who was the second Sarkin Musulmi after Muhammadu Bello. Atiku branch of the sultan's family have a very close lien over the northern parts of the Sokoto Caliphate. It was started early when Atiku was assigned by Shehu to guard that region. When Atiku became Sarkin Musulmi, his son Ahmadu Zaruku (the grandfather

of AbduJatau) took that mantle at Chimmola. In 1859, when Ahmadu Zaruku succeeded as Caliph and his son Muhammadu Maiturare followed in his footsteps living first at Chimmola and subsequently founded Gwadabawa. During the time of Maiturare, the migration of Adarawa/Azbinawa peopled the Gwadabawa region (Johnston, 1967; Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979; Sarkingobir, 2021ab).

AbduJatau is Sarkingobir Abdurrahman Gwadabawa MFR, son of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare Gwadabawa, son of Sarkin Musulmi Ahmadu Zaruku, son of Sheikh Shehu Usmanu bn Fodio (May Allah pleased with him).

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Available record echoed that Abdurrahman Gwadabawa was born in 1903 and he passed away in 1968 (may Allah pleased with him) (Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979; Chafe, 1998; Sarkingobir, 2021a).

## 2. Education of Abdurrahman and Prior Appointment before Ascending the Throne as Sarkingobir.

As norm and tradition of every Muslim family, Abdurrahman was quickly enrolled into Islamic school. Therein, he obtained deepest education in Islamic sciences. He usually quotes quranic, hadith, and literatures when talking during his days. Probably, his Islamic knowledge earned him respect and reverence and popularity from the followers and elites during his life. He utilized one medical book written by Sultan Muhammadu Bello in treatment of people suffering from diverse medical conditions including the issues of spirit (jinn) and *mayu*. Because he was somebody born during the time when *Turawa* were at the height of Sokoto invasion, he was enrolled to acquire the western knowledge through elementary school and self-taught ways (Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979).

Abdurrahman has been representing Gwadabawa in the affairs of *Sarauta* up to 1927. In 1927-1931 he was *Sardaunan* Sokoto, after he succeeded his brother Abdun Mamma. During his reign as *Sardaunan* Sokoto, he was a Sultanate councilor in-charge of works, in-charge of *Yandoka* (police), *dogarai*, *gidanyari* (prison), and security. He toured Zamfara land for the sake of his office of *Sardauna* of Sokoto. Among others, it was then that he ensured the construction of motorable Sokoto-Gusau road. In 1931, he succeeded as Sarkingobir of Gwadabawa (the district head of Maiturare's house and leader of Atikawa), after Sarkingobir Adiya (may Allah be pleased with them) (Majalisar ra'ayin jama'a ta Sakkwato, n.d.; Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979).

Other works and appointments of Abdurrahman include:

- He helped Sarkin Musulmi Tambari (his senior) during the reign of Tambari as Sarkingobir Gwadabawa, before Tambari ascended the Sarkin Musulmi throne.
- AbduJatau has been in good terms with Sarkin Musulmi Hassan till the time of his death. When Hassan died in 1938, he contested for the Sultanate throne but lost to Abubakar III. This contest led to some consequences upon him around 1937-1939 (in 1989 a new district was carved out from Gwadabawa to reduce his influence. That district was allotted to somebody who show low respect to AbduJatau); later he

became on good term with Sarkin Musulmi Abubakar III up to the time he passed away in 1968 (Sifawa, 2020).

- Sarkingobir Abdurrahman was a member of the Sultanate council in 1950 (Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979).
- Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman had a good chance of becoming Sultan during his life, but that was not written in his destiny. It was openly spoken in his District that he was only waiting for higher favours to come on his way (Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979).

## 3. Citing Some Developments That Were Established By Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman (1931-1968 A.D) At Gwadabawa and Illela

During the stay of Abdurrahman as Sarkingobir Gwadabawa several achievements were recorded through the power bestowed on him by his creator. During that time the indirect rule was in utilization, there was district council fund which AbduJatau utilized to make various developmental projects in the District that was the best (among 44 districts of then Sokoto Emirate), the most vast in terms of land and the most populated after (Gusau zone, which included Gusau, Tsafe, Bungudu and Kwatar-kwashi) (Ministry of Information Cultural and Internal Affairs Sokoto, 1979; Sarkingobir, 2021ab).

When Abdurrahman came on board, he left the office of District head Gwadabawa after basically, establishing two things which were: Peace and Justice throughout his District. He utilized his endowed skills, intellects and abilities; and maintained his largest District, which was assumed to be very overwhelming on one man. Abdurrahman utilized district council funds to make the following among others in his districts:

- a. Construction of motorable road connecting all his territories round the villages of his 17 village heads.
- b. Construction of *Kwakwara* wells in all his wards.
- c. Spread of western education (*Ilimin boko*) throughout his District.
- d. Construction of bridges (*Gada*) joining Gwadabawa town and *Tudun Zabarmawa*, *Attakwanyo* and *Tangaza* region. He ensured that whoever visited Gwadabawa had to throw a stone in that river before passing.
- e. Construction of Sarkin Musulmi Maiturare mosque, Gwadabawa (the Gwadabawa Central mosque from mud to modern one. Since then the mosque is still intact only minor renovations and extensions of the outside fence are carried out from time to time.
- f. Formation of Illela city. Gwadabawa District was the vastest, and most populated, and best during

his reign. During his time, he ensured the formation of Illela city (border town) in 1935, which later became District (in 1997) headed by his son and subsequently his grandson. Initially, the two important towns were Damba and Kalmalo. To solve resettlement issues, to solve food problem issues, to solve security issues, to have proper control of his District, to take government to the grassroots and to ease the suffering on his extreme Districts ends Illela Town was formed from a scrap bush. He carved farms and house (where he settled part of his family) at Illela Bush. He divided his week into 2, he always slept for 3 days at Illela and 4 days at Gwadabawa town. He also ensured the construction of all social amenities (such as hospitals, schools, court, etc.) equal to the Gwadabawa town. He recovered villages from Amarawa, Kalmalo, and others and accorded to Illela village head. All he did was a preparatory to the birth of new District, later to be headed by his descendants after his life (News Monthly Magazine (October, 2020).

- g. He constructed Sokoto to Illela road from scrap. Before this achievement, many people believed that the work was impossible but he shamed the naysayers by completing it in the shortest time possible and with efficiency (Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979).

#### **4. Role Played By Gwadabawa District Head (Sarkingobir Abdurrahman, Reign 1931-1968 A.D.) In Provision of Roads**

Absence of roads or poor roads is one of the constraints to development, agriculture, economic development, poverty reduction, education and modernization (Ministry of Information Cultural and Internal Affairs Sokoto, 1979; Kariga, 2000). Transport is interwoven with communication, development, and agriculture. People living in rural areas with good roads have the capacity to exchange ideas, information; and have the accessibility to schools, markets and other developments. Thus, good roads are invaluable. During the time of Sarkingobir Abdurrahman (1931-1968), he made sure that all village head domains were connected with motorable roads in the vast Gwadabawa District (Namadina, 2020). Therefore, he positively impacted on many aspects of development such as: Agricultural production and marketing, local markets development, wages, employments, poverty alleviation, transport (speeds, costs and patterns), access to health and education, and gender aspects (Escobal, and Porice, 2002).

Abdurrahman also ensured the construction of Sokoto to Illela road within the shortest possible time, and with few resources. This was a great achievement, which opened many villages, and

metropolitan districts around. It connects the Niger Republic and Nigeria (Sokoto Native Administration, n.d.; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

#### **5. Contribution of Sarkingobir Abdurrahman in Maintenance of Peace in His Domain**

Traditional hegemony leaders are pivotal in settling community disputes. They are regarded as custodians of traditional laws and receive the bulk cases of dealing with social issues in their various domains (Chafe, 1998; Rukuni *et al.*, 2015). Certainly, Abdurrahman Sarkingobir realized the importance of peace in his District, that is why he left no stone unturned and ensured that Gwadabawa had been one of the most peaceful Districts throughout the Sokoto Emirate. He achieved this feat through various policies, some of which were:

- Ensuring justice was meted on all his subjects irrespective of affiliations or statuses. He once sacked his biological son from village headship and imprisoned him. This instilled fear on all who wanted to be wanting or cause any harm or mayhem or unrest.
- Construction of wells and roads had greatly improved economy and maintenance of peace. Many of these wells are still being utilized by residents. Parable, at Gwadabawa, at Darna, at Tudun Muwaila etc
- Social inclusive governance. He invented District council meeting, which was attended monthly. All village heads (*hakimai*) gather to discuss issues, make policies, laws, and disgorge budgets to solve developmental issues.
- He regularly undertook tour (*Rangadi*) to meet and supervise his domain (village heads) and to meet with the peasantry to hear their voice and grievances.
- He divided his District into 2 as Gwadabawa (headquarter) and Illela Court (*Fada*) offices for easy administration of Justice and government.
- Whoever was found wanting among his aides, wards, and relatives is promptly punished or removed. He gave his children no room to wrong peasantry. All people, rich or poor, are equally treated under the eyes of the law (Sokoto Native Administration, n.d.; Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979).

#### **6. Contribution of Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman in enhancing Agricultural Activities**

One of the cardinal economic policies of the Sokoto Caliphate is the boosting of agricultural activities. During and after the jihad, policies were implemented to boost agriculture for sustenance and economic development. These good principles are passed from generations to generation's overtime (Sokoto State History Bureau, 1979; Chafe, 1998; Sarkingobir, 2020). In tandem with this,

Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman cannot deviate from the status quo of his forefathers. He did excellently well to trace their footsteps more especially in agriculture. He demonstrated that by leading by examples. Parable, he converted Illela into a settlement and farmlands were allocated to his subjects. He also own farmlands at Sonane, Garu, and relations. In Gwadabawa too, he had vast farmlands (*Gandayen noma*) which he cultivated for his personal use and to disgorge to his subjects using his earned income. He had vast farmlands at Asara and relations. Gwadabawa District obtained morethan 300 farmlands that are allocated to peasants to cultivate and benefit withouts paying a dime. Additionally, he had made much interest in rearing of cattle (Sokoto Native Administration,n.d., State History Bureau, 1979; Chafe, 1998; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

### 7. General Physical Features of Kasar Illela

Illela consists of two geological aspects of bushes and River (part of *Rima* River) which passed along Kalmalo and Amarawa in the olden days. The Illela is well occupied with sedimentary rocks. Generally, the region is flat and gently rolling area. The climate in the area is tropical continental, an essentially semi-desert with generally high temperatures throughout the year, and marked seasonal rainfall. The seasons in the region are wet and dry seasons characterized with little variation. The rainy/wet season starts in the late May or early June (or delayed sometimes). The season might end on October or circa. The wettest months are July and August. The dry season is seen between the months of November to April. The peak temperature is observed in April, while the trough temperature in December-January. The vegetation is of Savanna type, particularly, the Sahel Savanna (Chafe, 1998).

The region is drier, large Fadama Soil is found in the area which is very versatile for dry season and pastoral farming activities. On moving from Damba village, to the preceding villages up to Illela Town there is vast Fadama soil amenable to both dry and wet farming purposes. The fertile Fadama land is also seen if you follow the Gwadabawa-Illela road starting from Asara of Gwadabawa of to Illela town. Sandy Soil is also available for cultivation of important crops such as millet, guinea corn and beans. There is also clay soil (*Laka*) which is good for cotton cultivation by the inhabitants (Sarkingobir, 2020ab; Sarkingobir, 2021ab).

Sources of drinking water at Illela include: tap water, hand-dug wells and River Kalmalo water often. Because the region has sedimentary rocks, which store ground water, the pasture in the region

is extensive and free of tsetse fly thus suitable for animal husbandry.

The animals found in the region include: cattle, sheep, goats, camel, horse, donkeys etc. In some parts, such as *Tsauna* forest exists. From the forest, various materials are obtained such as fuels, fibres, fruits, grasses, fodder, gums and resins and medicines. The area is bestowed with minerals resources example iron-ore and salt, more especially along the region of Gada. The annual rainfall distribution is around 740mm or 658mm sometimes. Days without rainfall are common in the area, there is run off in some places (Chafe, 1998).

### 8. Agriculture at Illela Region

The Illela region is characterized with large population, which is a needed labour force for the boosting of agricultural production. There exists also huge amount of home-made manure to enrich sandy soils of the region. Land is easily regenerated by application of compound sweepings, old Latrines and animal dung, albeit the modern fertilizer is also being used extensively. There is also availability of dry grazing field for nomads. Nomads move about to graze on crop residues, grasses during the dry seasons. On the other hands, the nomads provide manuring, milk and other important materials to the people in the area. Farmlands in Illela are either *tudu* (upland) or *Fadama* (lowlands). *Tudu* is cultivated during the rainy season; *Fadama* is cultivated during rainy and dry seasons. The main food crops from *Tudu* (upland) are gero (millet), Dawa Janjari, Fara, Kaura (guinea Corn), Wake (beans), Gyada (Groundnuts). Others are Alkama (Wheat), Guro (Okra), Kabewa (pumpkin), Dankali (potato), Masara (maize), Ridi (beniseed), Rogo (cassava), Yakuwa (Sorrel), and Takanda (Sorgumic Sugar Cane). Some grown cash crops in the Illela area include: Baba (indigo), Duma (Bottle Gourd), Korai (calabashes), Taba (tobacco), Kada (cotton), Lalle (henna), Rama (hemp) and others (USAID Bureau of Food Security, 2016; Famine Early Warning Systems Network, 2018;Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

There are various cropping techniques in the area. The inhabitants practices inter-planting, mixed cropping, crop rotation ridging, harrowing and weeding. Many people used human labour with *kwasa* (hoe), *Sungumi* (long hoe), *Galma* etc. Some mechanized farming implements more especially the tractors are utilized. In the *Fadama* areas such as in Kalmalo, Amarawa and relations, there is also wide Agricultural practices. The *Fadama* regions are very essential because they are accessible throughout the year and produces both cash and food crops. More importantly rice, carrot, tobacco, potato, pepper, tomatoes, sugar cane, and cassava are produced. Other food crops are kadanya, (shea butter), Goriba

(dum palm), Kurna (Christ thorn), Aduwa (desert date) etc. Shrubs include; Sabara, Gwandar daji (custard apple) (Chafe, 1998).

### 9. Animal Rearing and Relations at Illela Region

There are various activities of animal management in the Illela area, one of them is the transhumance, involving rearing of animals through irrigation from place to place. The practice is well adopted even along the Kwanni or other border towns/villages regions of the Illela area. Some animals are kept at home in a fashion of animal husbandry, cattle, have several breeds such as Gudali, Rahaji, and others (Chafe, 1998). They provide meat, milk, skin and other valuable materials to the populace. Camel is also available in the region which is used for transportation, farming, medicine and meat. Sheep and goats are the common domesticated animals in the area. Poultry farming is also practiced, where chicken, Zabbi, ducks, etc. are raised. Horses and donkeys are also kept by the people in the area crafts and economy of the region (Chafe, 1998). Some of the crafts at Illela are *makera* – blacksmiths, *Saka* (weaving), tailoring-*dinki* (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

The Sokoto Caliphate has a number of policies aimed at improving the economy using various strategies. The policies led to formation of many commercial hubs in the caliphate domains. That is why, farming activities were promoted through Gandaje, rearing was encouraged through burtali and relations, and several ribats were created. In this vein, Muhammad Maiturare the Marafa of Gwadabawa, created Gwadabawa as *ribat*. The Gwadabawa constituted a vast and wide region from Gudu, through Tangaza, Gwadabawa, through Illela and to the northern edge of the Sokoto caliphate at Gada. Maiturare, and his son Sakingobir Abduljatau, and their descendants (Sarkin Gobir Bello, Sarkin Gobir Zayyana) had paid much attention to the Illela area, as it connects with the distant subjects at Gada and relations. It also, connects with the neighbouring border towns and villages, which were once together before the colonial invasion. The people of the region share many aspects together, such as religion, language, tribe, colour etc. Thus, the Illela area serves as very important hub to the region or the Sokoto caliphate at large (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

### 10. The widely known slogan of Illela ta Amarawa Daji

Near Konni there is one area called Araba, which is presently in Illela region. That Araba was once inhabited by one prince from Konni who was an heir to a *Sarautar* Konni and *hakimci* title called *Yanmata*. *Yanmata* is answerable to Sarkin Konni. Over the years one prince who was heir to *Yanmata*

run away from Konni and settled at Araba because of chieftaincy issues at their home. He sat there, and Sarkingobir Abdurrahman bn Sultan Muhammadu Maiturare gave him *Hakimi* of Araba because the Gwadabawa is the owner of the vast land from Gudu, to Tangaza, Illela and Gada as the *Ribat* centre created by Maiturare Marafa when he was a prince. During the last phase of Governor Bafarawa, Araba was given district head as Sarkin Yamman Araba (Ayama, 2018).

Sarkingobir Abdujatau as heir to Sultan Maiturare (the owner of Gwadabawa protectorate) created Illela from Illela bush by initially constructing a house and carving out farms at Illela around 1935. He sat there at every week to spend his 3 days of the week. He used that strategy to boost the economy and build the village and take administration (leadership) to the grassroots. The people from Gada and other northern edge of his domain easily reach him for complaints and Sarauta related matters. During his development the village where people reside was Kalmalo, they have *Hakimi MaiTakarda* (a paid chief or village head). As time goes on, the Illela continued to be inhabited by people from the various regions of the Caliphate and from neighbouring Niger (Ummaru, 1999; International Organisation for Migration, 2019).

Noteworthy, one *Zagi* belonging to the village head of Kalmalo (Matankarin Kalmalo) called ubandawaki resides in Illela. Ubandawaki is the head of Horse-related matters of Matankarin Kalmalo, or the chief horse-drawer of Matankarin Kalmalo. During that time Ubandawaki had displayed loyalty to the Sarkingobir Abdurrahman Jatau (the son of Maiturare) during his administrative activities at Illela. Thus, Sarkingobir Abdujatau decided to requit him with a promotion. He promoted him to *Hakimi Maitakarda* (from the scratch). And Ubandawaki asked that, his title be change from Ubandawaki to Sabongarin Illela. This illustrated how old the Illela town is, and how nascent it was then. And changing of the title invariably cleared a kind of scoffing as a former aide to Matankari. Then some villages were carved from Kalmalo, Garu, and accorded to (Sabon Garin) *Hakimin* Illela. Later after the death of the pioneer Sabongari the descendants requested back their old title of Ubandawaki with the consent of Sarkingobir.

There is a popular motto of Illela echoed as "*Illela ta Amarawa Daji*" what is the origin of the title? .The old origins for this title were as follows:

- 1 The olden days the place called Illela was just a bush. When someone comes from Gwadabawa, the head of the protectorate district, he moves to the northern edge called Illela. Thus, he is moving from *Birnin* (town or city) to *Daji* (Bush,

a place that is less civilized than the *Birni*). Then, Illela was a bush, but presently it shall be regarded as town or city, because of successive developments over the years. In these olden days, Kalmalo and Amarawa are more civilized than Illela.

- 2 Another token to reveal that Illela was once *Daji* is, the Sultan had a usual tour across the region, but due to the nature of Illela (it had extensive *Birgo* plant and too much mud), the Sultan had to park his vehicles at Amarawa, whenever he visited Illela and trek or lifted to reach the region settlements.
- 3 Another reason is then Illela was answerable to Kalmalo, thus it was regarded as *Daji*, before it was promoted by Sarkingobir Abdujatau
- 4 Another reason is, Illela served as border connecting the Sokoto with Niger Republic due to colonial demarcation.
- 5 Illela was initially a bush, which was transmogrified to City by Sarkingobir Abdurrahman Gwadabawa MFR (Johnston, 1967; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

### 11. On the Creation of Illela Local Government in 1989

Illela is located between latitudes 13 40' North and 5 20' East. The local government is one of the 23 local governments of Sokoto state. It shares border to the North with Konni town of Tahoua region of Niger Republic. To the South, it is bounded to Gwadabawa local government area. It also has border with Gada local government area to the east and Tangaza local government area to the west. It was created out of Gwadabawa local government area in 1989. The Local Government has an area of 1, 049 kilometres. The population of Illela is estimated at 150, 498 based on 2006 census. Out of this 43.3 per cent are males while 56.6 of the population are females (Munir and Olojo, 2015; Muhammad *et al.*, 2019; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

### 12. Cross Border Trade in Illela Market

Illela developed into a large market patronized on daily basis by people from Niger Republic, Nigeria and neighbouring states. They come to sell or buy goods and services. Beasts, cars, motorcycles, and trucks are utilized to convey goods either from Illela to other parts of the country or to the Niger Republic or other foreign countries via the Konni border. Therein, are agricultural products from various parts of the country that are conveyed to Illela. Agricultural activities and products are enhanced in the area because of lowland and Fadamas in the Illela region (such as in Damba, kalmalo, Amarawa etc). Onion, millet, *Dawa*, vegetables, tobacco, and cooking vegetables, are all available. Plastics products, furniture, motorcycles, electrical appliances, textiles, grains, spare parts,

fertilizer, and others are conveyed from Sokoto Caliphate and other Rima Basin areas to Illela International Border Market. Products such as parboiled rice, vegetable cooking oil, macaroni, seasonings, matches, cars, batteries, used clothes, spare parts, cigarettes, etc. are provided through Konni (from other countries) to Illela Market (Hashim and Meagher, 1999; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

Noteworthy, most of the goods coming from Konni are passed from other countries like Ghana, Benin, etc. Therefore, Illela Market is regarded as an international market in the northwest region of the country. People living there are doing better, albeit non-reverine in most of the places (Kware, 2019). The highest working day of the market is Sunday, which is an old historic day since the time of Sarkin Gobir Abdurrahman Gwadabawa (Abdujatau). Abdujatau, used to sleep at his Illela House on Sunday, and leave on Monday. This attracted people from various places of the country and foreign immigrants, and culminated to a large international market called the Illela Market. Thus, the parcel agenda of the Sokoto Caliphate and its rulers was fulfilled, since they created *Ribats* (Which Gwadabawa was one, the mother of Illela) to create security posts, bring administration closer to remote areas, solve resettlement issues, and largely to boost economic activities. Some of the factors that facilitate boosting of Illela market are:

- Unity of religion, culture, race, and other social aspects among the inhabitants of the region and the neighbours. We can vividly recall that Konni was part of the Caliphate before the invasion of the Colonial Masters. The people in the region are mostly Muslims, Hausa/Fulani.
- There is difference in currency and preference between Nigeria and Niger Republic (Mallam, 2019).
- There exists easy passage because of all-pervasive border and ECOWAS Protocols. There is security in the region (Tsamiya, 2014).
- There is vast land for agricultural activities to provide supply of farms products and animals (USAID Bureau of Food Security, 2016)
- There is good road system linking the Konni and major parts of Niger Republic. There is also good roads system linking Illela and Konni and other parts of the region (Muhammad *et al.*, 2019).
- There is high demand and supply of goods and services in the region. The manpower needed for various services in the region or market is well provided. Once good reaches the Market they are easily distributed to wholesalers and retailers (Odozi, 2015; Hashim and Meagher, 1999; Samaila, 2019).

### **13. Establishment of Illela District of Sokoto Caliphate by Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman**

Initially, the Illela land is part of the entire region encapsulated by Gwadabawa District which was formed by Muhammadu Maiturare Marafa before he became Sarkin Musulmi. Later, when Abdurrahman became Sarkingobir of Gwadabawa, he created the Illela ward in 1935. Before the pioneer creation of Illela ward the place was naught but a vast fertile land, water and mud. That is why it once served as hub for livestock rearers and served as demarcation between Niger Republic and Sokoto. The quest for maintaining of security, the sought for creation of farmlands, the quest for taking government to the grassroots and other reasons spurred Sarkingobir Abdurrahman to create this ward. Sarkingobir removed some villages from other wards such as Garu, Kalmalo, Parable, Sonane, Amarawa, and Tudun Gudale were added to Illela ward. This ward was vivified and reinvigorated to later became the next centre of commerce in Sokoto State and very pivotal in the whole country and crucial in international trade (Ummaru, 1999; Jabo, 2008; Ayama, 2018).

People across the states like Lagos, Kano, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Niger and Niger Republic always trooped to Illela to perform their businesses in Illela. During the time of Yakubu Muazu as Governor of Sokoto Illela Market was officially inaugurated as International Market. This had happened also during the time of Governor Wamakko of Sokoto State. The person who was intially turbaned as *Hakimin* Illela by Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman was the old Ubandawakin Matankarin Kalmalo because he had served Abdurrahman diligently he settled at Illea. In a move to requit Ubandawaki, that was what Abdurrahman did to him by elevating him from servant to Hakimi (village head). Onwards, cordial relationship has continued to exist between the descendants of Sarkingobir Abdurrahman and the Ubandawaki scions. During the turbaning the village head title was Sabongarin Illela, until in the later years the descendants sought for change of the title to Ubandawaki. Thus, as of today, some of the descendants are bearing with Sabongari and Ubandawaki titles respectively (Ummaru, 1999; Jabo, 2008; Ayama, 2018).

In 1997, Illela District was created from Gwadabawa District and handed over to Muhammadu Tukur Abdulrahman (grandson of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare through the strive of Sarkingobir Zayyana and Muhammadu Namadina. After his death the leadership stool was given to his son Muhammadu Buhari Tukur in 2020. From the onset Illela District consisted of Araba, Kalmalo, Sabongarin Darna, Gidan Hamma, Darnar Tsolawo, Damba, Garu, Lakoda, Gatti, Bakin Dutsi, Lafani, Tudun Aya, Gidan ciwake, Sonani, Jagai, Danboka, Karingo, Masawa, Gidan Kira, Inwala, Jagai, Gidan Tudu, Illela. All of them were initially established by Muhammadu Maiturare Marafa. Some wards that were in the original Illela district under the leadership of Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur include: Illela, Araba, Damba, Gidan Hamma, Kalamalo, Garu, Sabongarin Darna, Darnar Tsolawo, and Damba (Ummaru, 1999; Ayama, 2018). Some of the hakimai of Illela include: Sarkin Magorin Garu, Galadiman Sabon Garin Darna, Matankarin Kalmalo, Magajin Gidan Hamma, Sabon Garin Illela, DanGaladiman Darna Tsolawo, and Yammatan Araba. They are senior village heads (wards) belonging and loyal to Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur on the onset (Ummaru, 1999).

### **14. On the title of SARKIN RAFIN Illela**

It is a normal tradition that whosoever holds the Sarautar Sarkingobir Gwadabawa (the creator of Illela town) has control of Illela region. This tradition persisted to the descendants. Sarkingobir Abdujatau, and his scions (Sarkingobir Bello and Sarkingobir Zayyanu) had lived there. Sarkingobir Zayyana had been spending his weekend throughout his reign till a new district of Illela was created in 1997. Sarkingobir Zayyana left no stone unturned and by the will of God his brother Muhammadu Tukur got that new district. There are specific traditional/leadership hegemony titles of Atikawa or Maiturare house. These titles are always been allowed to the new *Sarauta* in the land of Maiturare. The titles include: Marafa, Sarkingobir, Sarkin Rafi, and Bunu (Tibenderana, 1977; Ayama, 2018; Sarkingobir, 2021a). Thus, the Sarkin Rafi title was turbaned to that new district of Illela as a land belonging to the region initially created by Maiturare.

**Table-1: Past and present Illela District regions**

Old Illela District	Present Illela District	Name
	<b>Sarauta</b>	
New Illela District	Ubandawakin Illela	Alh. Abubakar
Araba District	Matankarin kalmalo	Alh. Isah
Ambarura District	Marafan Gaidau	
	Marafan tarke	Alh. Umar
	Danba	Alh. Umar
	Galadiman Sabongarin Darna	Alh. Ahmed
	Magajin Darna Kiliya	Alh. Yusuf

### 15. Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur: The First District Head of Illela Region

Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur was born in Gwadabawa on 1947 in the family of Sarkingobir AbduJatau Gwadabawa. His Mother is a Fulani from Ola (a village from Attakwanyo ward in Gwadabawa District). Two women raised him after his mother, the first one was called Yardaka, and the second one was Hajiya Tabaraya. He was quickly enrolled into Makarantar Natsaye in Gwadabawa, just near the present house of Aminu Planner. Some of his contemporaries at the Makarantar Mallam Natsaye were: Liman Isah Gwadabawa, Late Sarkin Fawa Shehu, and Baba Namadina Abdurrahman (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

After his secondary education, he was appointed as Mallamin Gandun Daji, later he returned to work in the Sokoto Native Authority (their office was then located in the present Fire Office, near Marina Market). He then became clerk (Treasurer, in that time they called it checker) of Gwadabawa local government and later he attended courses at Zaria and Kaduna. In Zaria he attended Northern Clerical College (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

Muhammadu Tukur proceeded to acquire higher diploma in local government studies in 1979. With the aid of his brother Muhammad Namadina Abdurrahman (who was a commissioner then) Muhammadu Tukur was posted to Gummi as secretary to Gummi local government, where he spent a year. Tukur was then transferred to Kebbi when the headquarter was in Gwandu. He was at Gwandu till 1984. It was on 1984, that the present Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Buhari was born. He was very truthful and frank. He stuck to his gun on every truth. During his living in Kebbi, Wazirin Gwandu laid a complaint about Muhammadu Tukur that, he Muhammadu Tukur said “ No person would go to Hajj unless if he can state some aspects of Islam correctly, like pillars of Islam”. On the arrival of Muhammadu Tukur at Sokoto he was asked by the then governor that a complaint about you was laid. And the governor said I will do nothing to you, because I know you are truthful person. When Muhammadu Tukur returned to Gwandu, he called

Wazirin Gwandu and reaffirmed to him that he is still on his gun(Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

Later, Muhammadu Tukur was transferred to Tangaza local government, where he served for two years until 1989. Later, after Bashir Ahmad Gigane became chairman Gwadabawa local government, Muhammadu Tukur was nominated to become his secretary for the whole time of the tenure. After the tenure, he was transferred to Gusau as Director Personnel Management (DPM, which he was in-charge of the local government then).Then, his service was transferred to Kware local government, Sokoto, from where he retired from civil service in 1989. In 1997 he was nominated and contested against Attahiru Tungar Kwangi. Attahiru Tungar Kwangi won, but Muhammadu Tukur went to court and at the halt he won at the court, albeit he was announced as the winner, but he could not be chairman till the issue of *Sarauta* came up(Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

Noteworthy, Tukur was the first secretary of Illela local government in 1989, and spent about 4 years serving. In 1997, his brother Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Muhammadu Zayyanu (who by tradition is the heir to the overall stool of Muhammadu Maiturare of Gwadabawa district) strived and supported him till he was finally appointed as the first Sarkin Rafi Illela by the will of God. Muhammadu Tukur served as Sarkin Rafi, the only traditional leader of Illela till Governor Bafarawa created one district (in 2001) and later Governor Wamakko created another one (in 2017). He served as such till his death on Thursday (the night of Jumaah) and buried on Friday at Hubbaren Shehu Sokoto on 14th June, 2019(Ayama, 2018).

During his time as Sarkin Rafi he also served as Secretary Sokoto Education Trust Fund (SEDTF), which was headed by President Shagari. His scions are fourteen. From the room of Hajiya Tallu there are: Muktar Tukur, Hajiya Aishatu, Hajiya Safarau, Nafiu (Margayi), Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari, Hindatu, and Hajiya Safiya. From the room of Hajiya Aishatu there are: Hajiya Balkisu, Zainabu, Hawwau, Hajiya Maryam, Asiya, Hafiz, and Muhammadu (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).



## 16. Sarkin Rafin Illela Muhammadu Buhari Tukur: The Second District Head of Illela Region

Firstly, Muhammad Buhari is the son of Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur, the son of Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman Jatau, the son of Sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Maiturare Gwadabawa, the son of Sultan Ahmadu Atiku (Ahmadu Zaruku), the son of Shehu Usmanu (Rahimahumullahu Amin). This portrayed that Muhammadu Buhari come from the family or dynasty of the great Islamic Scholar of the Bilad Sudan, popularly called Sheikh Usman Bn Fodio. All his fathers are good and great people known for greatness and pious demeanour, that is why they are revered by all and sundry. It implies, we expect to see the translation of colourful traits and behaviours in Muhammadu Buhari (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

Muhammadu Buhari was born into the aforementioned great family of Shehu Usmanu. His mother is Hajiya Tallu, his father is Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur (the pioneer Sarkin Rafin Illela). He was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1984 at Gwadabawa town, Gwadabawa local government, Sokoto state (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

In Islam, education, more especially the religious one is as important as life. Thus, as normal tradition in the family of devoted Muslims, Muhammadu Buhari was quickly enrolled into Islamiyya School at his home, at the home of Sarkingobir Zayyanu, where he sought for Islamic knowledge along with his peers like Muhamamd Moyi Zayyanu, Shehu Sarkin Gobir etc. He read Quran, Ibada, Sirah, Fiqhu and other related sciences needed as foundations in the Muslim faith. He stayed at that school till he reached the peak class (class six) (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

In the year 1991 Muhammadu Buhari was enrolled at Maiturare Nizzamiyya Primary school Gwadabawa, where he bagged his primary education and finished in the year 1996. Immediately, he joined the Sokoto Teachers College (STC), Sokoto to acquire post-primary education. He attended that College in 1996-2002 and finished with Senior Secondary School Certificate. Some of his mates at STC were Shehu Sarkingobir, Majahidu Bala E.O. and Maniru Abdullahi Salame. His stay at STC properly positioned his life and intellect of becoming a teacher. During that time, whosoever attained STC is a qualified teacher made for teaching services. Thus, when Muhammadu Buhari graduated from STC he is a teacher per excellence (Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

The attitude of seeking for knowledge is inherent and instinctive in Muhammadu Buhari as a direct scion of Shehu Danfodio, therefore he further

reinvigorated his teaching profession by attending Shehu Shagari College of education, Sokoto (SSCOE). He obtained National Certificate of Education from SSCOE in the year 2006. After Muhammadu Buhari had obtained post-secondary education, he exercised the famous hadith of Prophet Muhammad saw, which echoed "There is no education without work". Meaning it is pertinent to work with the knowledge obtained. This stimulated Muhammadu Buhari to work in various posts and capacities. His initial experience was as a teacher at Sultan Tambari Model Primary School Gwadabawa. He later taught at Muahajiruna Wal Ansar Sokoto. He also traversed the wall of classroom to practice his acquired knowledge by working as legislative aide to Right Honourable Haliru Garba Gidan Hamma. This culminated to making Muhammadu Buhari as a person with knowledge and experiences and graduated him to succeed his father, 1<sup>st</sup> Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Tukur (who joined his ancestors on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019, may Allah grant him Jannatul Firdaus, amin). In life, *tarbiyya*, and mentorship are vital. The mentors of Muhammadu Buhari are many, more importantly: HRH Muhammadu Namadina Abdurrahman, His Excelency, Muhammad Lawal Zayyana (Sarkingobir Gwadabawa), HRH, Kabiru Kyari (Marafan Gada), and HRH Ahmad Mansur (Sarkin Gabas Chimmola). They contributed a lot in shaping the upbringing of Sarkin Rafi Muhammadu Buhari. On 6<sup>th</sup> September the Sultanate Council announced the appointment of Muhammadu Buhari as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sarkin Rafi Illela to succeed his late father Muhammadu Tukur. His turbaning ceremony had taken place on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 by the wish of God Almighty. We wish him long life and prosperity during his reign, Amin (News Monthly Magazine, 2020; Sarkingobir, 2020ab).

## 17. CONCLUSION

This paper discussed about the person who created Illela city and emancipated it to its peak from the scrap, he is Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Abdurrahman. The features and course of Illela were discussed and principal actors therein, from *Daji*, to City, to district. Illela is vast and great, blessed with diversity of natural endowments and manpower. The famous features of Illela are farming, and transborder trade.

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