

# A Historical Appraisal of *Ramadan* Festival among Ilorin People

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## Abstract

Religion and culture are two different phenomena, although both of them intertwined to sustain each other. A religion that is indigenous to people who practice it is usually integrated with their cultural life. Some practical aspects of Islam are sustained by indigenous people through native instincts, which are imbrued in their culture. This work assessed a historical analysis of how Ilorin people socio-culturally sustained *Ramadan* fast, till date. The work also appraised a distinguished feature of *Ramadan* fast among Ilorin people. The method adopted are participant observation, interview and text content analysis.

## Introduction

The establishment of Ilorin Emirate premised on politico-religious motive, which encompasses social and cultural issues of ethnic relations. Some socio-cultural practices of Ilorin are incorporated into Islamic religious activities to foster relations and co-existence among the ethnic groups of Ilorin and her neighbours. Obviously, about ninety-eight percent of Ilorin population are Muslims, and they adorned the observation of *Ramadan* fast with some values, which are cultural to them. *Ramadan* fast as an integral portion of ordinances of Islam is one of tedious tasks, because the adherents go empty stomach from sun rise till sun set within the twenty-nine or thirty days of *Ramadan*. Perhaps, this aspect of the religion might have been circumvented, or relegated by majority, if some indigenous cultural practices are not incorporated with it. No gainsaying in that there are factions of Islam that debunked any indigenous cultural affiliation with Islam. By and large, history has shown that such factions had not been able to accomplish success for their postulations, rather, they are parading the existing boundary of culturally integrated *Ramadan* in Ilorin. This work goes beyond assessing *Ramadan* as a religious practice, but also appraises how *Ramadan* is used within Ilorin socio-cultural ambit to entrench cordial relations and co-existence among the Ilorin, non-Ilorin, and non-Muslims in the Emirate.

### **Definition of term**

Native instinct. This is an inborn pattern of behaviour, which is indigenous to people of a particular culture. Therefore, Ilorin people applied their native instincts within the ordinances of the *Ramadan* fast.

### **Origin of Ramadan fast in Ilorin**

No specific time is ascribed to the origin of *Ramadan* in Ilorin. Meanwhile, since Islam has been in Ilorin before the arrival of Solagberu, Bako, Olufadi, Afonja and Sheikh Alimi, it is reasonable to posit that *Ramadan* fast is as old as the existence of Islam in Ilorin. Nonetheless, the convergence of different linguistic groups from across the 'Niger Area' and the establishment of Emirate government introduced some cultural indices, which diffused into the formal practices of *Ramadan* fast.

### **Preliminary Period of Observation of Ramadan fast among Ilorin People**

As in the month of *Ramadan*, in which the obligatory fast takes place, two Islamic/ lunar months are also regarded as sacred. They are known as *Rajab* and *Sha'ban*. Muslims are encouraged to fast in these months. In other words, fast are not compulsory in the months. Also, Muslims are prohibited to fight in these months and *Ramadan*. It is imperative to mention that no Ilorin wars of conquest and expansion, was slated in any of the three months that was mentioned above, although she fought some defensive wars in either of the months. For instance, the Woruka war of defense was fought in 1830 in the month of *Ramadan*. However, as a symbol for the month, Ilorin pleaded with the Yoruba for a truce, which resulted to a break, so that the *Ramadan 'Id al-fitr*i was observed.<sup>1</sup> That year, *'Id al-fitr*i coincided with Friday. It was reported that the allied force of Yoruba reneged, and attacked the congregation of private Ilorin people who went for Jumat prayer.<sup>2</sup> Ilorin was therefore forced to fight on the *Ramadan 'Id al-fitr*i day.

Another way by which Ilorin people prepare for *Ramadan* fast is that they fast in the whole month of *Rajab* and *Sha'ban*, break a day to *Ramadan*, and start the *Ramadan* next day until its completion. In addition, some people entered seclusion for prayer from the first day of *Rajab* till the last day of *Ramadan*. Thus, making ninety days seclusion. Prominent among the clerics who used to observe the consecutive ninety days fast was Alfa E)le)ha among others.<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that several devoted nominal Muslims of Ilorin also observe the ninety days fast, but a distinguished factor between ordinary devoted nominal Muslims and that of Alfas' ninety days fast is that people (including some ordinary devoted nominal Muslims that observed the ninety days fast) usually gather at Alfas places a day to *Ramadan*, with hope to receive *Albarka* (bounty blessing of Allah) from them. Most Ilorin families fixed their children weddings in the months of *Rajab* and *Sha'ban*. Culturally, they absorbed the choice of the months so as to encourage or/and enable the ready and waiting spinsters and bachelors to get wedded prior to that year's *Ramadan*. Ilorin sees it as worst bad omen against any adult who does not live with his/her legal spouse in the month of *Ramadan*.

Starting of *Ramadan* fast among Ilorin people is subject to formal announcement from the Emir. The announcement is characterised with drumming and blowing *kaikalkii* (trumpet) across Ilorin metropolis. Whenever the announcement is made in the night, people instantly embarked on the observation of *Aasamu*, *Tarawihi* (a voluntary night prayer).<sup>4</sup> Virtually every compound has its own *Aasamu* prayer observed individually. Among the most important factors about observing the *Aasamu* separately is that each family engaged its children in more relevant education about Islam. A day to the sighting of moon crescent that will mark the commencement of *Ramadan* is utilised as a charity given day. On that day, food stuff, meat, money and provisions are usually distributed by well-to-do Ilorin people. It is important to note that this charity giving is categorised into 'ordinary charity' and 'special charity'.<sup>5</sup> Ordinary charity are those that were given to member of the community, irrespective of their status, class and political parties they belonged to. This type of charity is usually channeled through the Imams of each quarters. Part of Ilorin cultural practices that was attached to this is that all the items that were meant to be disbursed will be gathered in an opened place. And if a life animal (mostly cow) is involved, it will be slaughtered publicly and distributed (in line with other items) according to the number of houses that observe prayers in a particular mosque, which is within the recognition of the Emir.<sup>6</sup> However, it has been observed that the above sharing formula for the disbursement of the animal may not be even. This is because house hold members of a giving mosque are tenfold larger than some. For instance, the Zarumi family of Adangba is usually shortchanged because of her enormous size. Notwithstanding, history has never recorded that people excoriated the *Ramadan* gift no matter how small it was.

In the process of slaughtering the cow that will be distributed, virtually all representatives of every family that made up of the congregation of their mosque will present. Young boys and girls were usually also be in attendance. Prior to the slaughtering of the cow, the Imam will lead the member of the congregation in open prayer. In many times, the prayer is mixed with jokes such as follows:

May Allah continues to increase the wealth of the donor, in person of .... May we be able to consume more charity of this feature whenever it is presented."<sup>7</sup> The Imam will then pause, intentionally to entertain jokes from the audience, from which anyone will say "may the consumers be able to donate next time so that everybody will consume." Then the cow will be slaughtered by a specialist, a professional butcher to whom the slaughtering and sharing responsibility was assigned. During the division of the meat, several jokes were cracked. Spiritual and medicinal value of parts of the carcass will be said jokingly. Stories and history will be told, while some will also exhibit their knowledge of Quran and Hadith. Some will engage in citation of *Madiu-Nabiyy* (praise of Prophet Muhammed). At this juncture, the rosaries of individuals advance from its spiritual functions to culturally numeric counting of division of the meat against the available number of the houses. Young boys and girls at the scene are also recognised. Little meat are shared to them, but more often than not, they cash fun in rushing over the remnants. At the closure of the sharing activities, the young ones will be implored to recite the peculiar Ilorin *Fathia*, that is, *Fathia Alalubarika* (*Fathia* of bounty blessings),

which goes thus:

	<i>Fathia</i>	<i>Alubarika</i>	<i>Alhamudu</i>	<i>Lilahi....</i>
Gloss	Fathia	Bounty blessings	All praise	to Allah.... <sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, special charity also goes from the haves to the have-not. Dr. Olushola Abubakar Saraki was the first politician who gave out charity across all Ilorin quarters. Meanwhile, Laaro) Balogun of Gambari quarter, Saadu Alanamu of Alanamu quarter and ...of Ko)di of the Emir Market area gave out charity which was similar to special charity before Saraki became popular in Ilorin. They distributed money and food stuff in large quantity on every day that precede the commencement of *Ramadan*. Then, the usual means of obtaining the charity was that, those who were in need went to compounds of the charity givers for collections of money and food stuff. When Saraki became prominent in Ilorin, he ensure that his charity was delivered to Ilorin people in their respective homes. Virtually all homes in Ilorin usually receive Saraki's charity on every day to the commencement of *Ramadan*. It is imperative to mention that Saraki was not directly involved in distribution of the charity money and items, rather, some of his political loyalists were responsible for distribution. Although families that were not in the same political party with Saraki were shared, but his protagonists received sumptuousness at the expense of those who were not in loyalty with Saraki.

#### ***Ramadan Post Aasamu (night prayer) Prayers Activities***

Post *Aasamu Ramadan Weirei* activities took place between the end of *Aasamu* prayer and 11:00 pm of every *Ramadan* nights. Interested teenagers, youth and adults involved in series of *Ramadan* socio-religious activities after the observation of *Ramadan* daily *Aasamu* prayer. They engaged in *weirei* (a preliminary stage of Fuji music) initiations, rehearsals, and practices. Some Ilorin natives that rose from *Ramadan weirei* band groups to become Fuji musicians in the twentieth century included Late Baba Miliki, Late Baba Olobi, and Late Easy Kabaka among the deceased. Others include Saka Danfo, Professional Adisa, and Alade Owo among others.

After the *Aasamu* prayer, the *Ramadan weirei* bands moved around the streets and branched at individual house hold residence to sing to the listening pleasure of people and receive praises and token some of money. Assorted foods sell fast during post *Aasamu Ramadan weirei* time. The *Ramadan weirei* bands strictly made use of few musical instruments such as *Sakara*, *(She)Ike)IreI*, *Aigoigoi* (gong), and *Omeilei*. That is, at the *Ramadan weirei* level, the bands hardly made use of other musical instruments such as *Dundun*, *Gangan*, *BaItai*, *Gbe)dui*, *Iya Ilu*. Perhaps, the materials and the technicality involved in production of the instruments were relatively scarce among Ilorin people, unlike the availability of materials and technicality involved in production of *Sakara*, which was made and used by the Hausa people of northern Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> *Ilorin* people might have adopted the use of *Sakara*, if it had been introduced to them by Muslim Hausas. In consonance to this suggestion, it was reported that, initially, Ilorin decried the use of musical instruments in any of Islamic religious rites, because a portion of the

Holy Quran condemns it, and only gong was used by Ilorin in their *Ramadan weirei* activities, but since about 1960s the use of *Sakara* crept in.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the post *Aasamu Ramadan weirei* activities and the use of *Sakara*, *Omeilei* and *She)Ikre)I* are going into extinction among teenagers, youth and adult. Meanwhile, the teenagers has improvised the use of cut-off of thins/unused metal pans frames and piece of empty sac to produce their own *Sakara* drum. The change started occuring since about 1999.

It is imperative to mention that Ile Alawo) Adabata, Ile Alawo) Pataki and Ile Alawo) Okelele specialised in production of different animal skins that were used in production of *Sakara* and *Omeilei*.<sup>11</sup> Ilorin porters who are located in Ondoko Daada area, Kare)bu Kankatu area, and at several other corners of Ilorin community, involved in productions of different sizes of clay shells on which the animal skins are fixed. Teenagers, youth, and adults that were interested in post *Aasamu weirei* and *SaariI jiljii* activities bought *Sakara* components from the porters and assemble it. Some members of several Ile Onilus (Onilu's compounds) of Ilorin bought *Sakara* components, assembled it and sold it as already made item to those who could not afford *Sakara* components assemblage. The sales of *Sakara* components increase in *Ramadan* periods than in ordinary days.<sup>12</sup> In *Ramadan* periods some of unused pots around the house hold arenas were subjected to adjustments for *Sakara* frames by teenagers. Simple *She)Ike)Ire)I* musical instrument was available for sales at various Ile Asile)ke) of Ilorin, while the *Agoigoi* (gong) was also available at different Ile Alagbe)de) workshops of the Emirate.



The face of improvised unused metal pan frame *Saikairai* made by Ilorin teenagers. The picture was taking by the researcher in the month of *Ramadan* on 16/5/21.



The inner side of improvised unused metal pan frame *Saikairai* made by Ilorin teenagers. The picture was taking by the researcher in the month of *Ramadan* on 16/5/21.

### Ilorin Ramadan Days and Nights Activities

The observation of *Asaimui/Trawihi*<sup>13</sup> (long prayer of the night) is followed by *weirei* activities. In the same night, next to *weirei* activities is *waisii-ale* (night sermon). *Waisii-ale* starts around 10:00 pm and usually last till 12:00 am. Virtually, all the categories of people attend *waisii-ale* of Ramadan period. *Waisii-ale* is led by well versed scholars of the Emirate at different locations. The pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Ilorin *waisii-ale* varied in number of scholars that presented the sermon as well as the population that attended it. Before the advent of Sheikh Alimi, *waisii-ale* was prominently organised in Gambari, Oke Suna and Agbaji areas of Ilorin.<sup>14</sup> Alhaji Amidu added that at Oke Suna *waisii-ale* was rotated among the ancestors of Ojibara, Mekabara and Onagun families among other.

Between the arriving periods of Sheikh Alimi and establishment of Alimi dynasty, that is, within the pre-colonial periods, several *waisii-ale* sprang from several quarters of Ilorin metropolis. At Isale Koto area, *waisii-ale* was tutored by Sheikh Muhammed.<sup>15</sup> In addition, *waisii-ale* also conducted by the ancestor of Ala'aya family at Pakata area. At Agbaji quarters, the *Ramadan waisii-ale* was carried out by ancestor of Sheikh Sherif Musa. Sheikh Muhammed at-Takuti and Sheikh Abubakar Bube were prominent preachers of *waisii-ale* in Gambari quarters during the life time of Sheikh Alimi. Other places where *waisii-ale* took place with the scholars involved in the colonial periods included: Okelele, by Sheikh Musa Atere; Adangba, by Sheikh Alfanla; Koro Gurumo, by Sheikh Muhammed Belgore; Agbaji, by Sheikh Musa; Abata Sunkere, by Alfa Saidu; Isale Gambari, by Sheikh Muhammed Sadiu Kokewu kobeere; Ita-Ajia, by Alfa AbdulSalam; Balogun Gambari compound, by Sheikh Girigisu;<sup>16</sup> Omoda, by Alfa Asukuti; Oja Oba, by Alhaji AbdulRaheem Oniwa'asi Agbaye;<sup>17</sup> in front of Emir's palace, by Sheikh Folorusho Fa'agba; Pakata, by Alhaji Ahmed Alaye and Oke Agodi, by Alhaji Yahaya Muritala among others. It is important to mention that *waisii-ale* are still sustained in all places mentioned above till date. Meanwhile at the beginning of year 2000, numerous *Ramadan waisii-ale* now appears in Ilorin in hundreds. At various arenas of *waisii-ale* several socio-economic activities took place. These involved selling of assorted foods, books, perfume, and chewing sticks among other items. The arenas were also used to disseminate important information about the Emirate. For instance, Late Ibrahim Dan Boyee of Emir's palace used to carry his information board across the arenas of *waisii-ale*.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the corridors of arenas were used as meeting places among the teenagers who intend to establish courtship. Spinsters and bachelors that were searching for the suitors also made use of *waisii-ale* opportunity to search.

At the close of every *waisii-ale* night, boys and adults who were interested in *saarli jiiiji* (in-house waking of people) embarked on it immediately after they left the *waisii-ale*. Between 1970s and 1990s, boys that rode bicycles to *waisii-ale* tied waste metal/ iron materials to their bicycles and rode it on tired roads so as to produce noise that wake people for mid-night prayers and eating. The *ajjisaalrii* (wake keeping people) who were on pedestrians produced *waka*,<sup>19</sup> which consisted of hymn, and music genre to wake up people in the mid-night after *waisii-ale*.

Two of the *wakas* that were remembered include:

i.E) *dil̩dei* *Tori Olohun sal̩ri̩* *ti̩* *toi̩* *dai̩* *e)di̩l̩dei*

Gloss: all wake up for the sake of God night-eating is ripped cook  
you all wake up

Translation: You all wake up for the sake of God, it is high time you cooked night-eating meal.

ii.Sal̩ri̩ *toi̩ e)dide̩nle*) *bi* *iyān* *lei̩)jei*) *bi* *o)ka* *le)j)e*)

Gloss: night-eating ripped all wake up if pounded you or yam  
you eat from grand yam eat powder

*Ko)da* *be)imui̩* *gari*  
Even you will drink *gari*<sup>20</sup>

Translation: Night-eating meal is due shall you all wake up from ground, whether pounded yam or yam powder you will eat or it is *gari* that you can afford, just wake up.

It is imperative to mention that some members of *sal̩ri̩ jii̩ji̩* groups used *sal̩ri̩ jii̩ji̩* avenue to pass affectionate messages to their girlfriends, boyfriends and intimates who were in home when the *sal̩ri̩ jii̩ji̩* activity was in progress.

### Greetings and Jokes in the Month of Ramadan

Ilorin inculcate several social ways of greetings in Ramadan period. The greetings include: *e)ku ipaile)Imān* (well done on the Ramadan preparation); *e)ku ongbe* (well done for being thirsty); *e)ku aji̩je)̩* (well done on your routing waking up for mid-night prayers, mid-night meal preparations and eating); *e)ku atillo)̩* (well done for being persevering towards ending the Ramadan) among others.<sup>21</sup> The above greeting slogans could be handed humorously or casually among the users. Most greetings and responses from individuals in the months of Ramadan were handed with joke, as a relief comic of the Ramadan task and perseverance. Conversely, squabbles (which seems to deteriorate into fight) between two or more people who are fasting could be jokingly or logically checkmated by the use of *Ramadan* slogan:

*e)manje)kii̩* *aawe)̩* *te)̩wo)̩* *gba'a*  
do not let fasting open hand take

Translation: Decry all sorts of acclaimed *Ramadan* stress against your aggression to fight.

### Tafsir (Explanation on Critical Interpretations of Quran Words)

Explanations on Quran words in the months of *Ramadan* took place across the nooks and crannies of the Emirate. Apart from Imam Gambari family that do her *Tafsir* in morning periods, traditionally, all scholars in Ilorin Emirate organised their *Tafsir* in the evening periods of *Ramadan*. The spirit of co-existence is traditionally exhibited by virtue of *Ramadan Tafsir*. Congregational members of Ilorin Emirate mosques crisscrossed across Ilorin mosques in the month of *Ramadan*. It is imperative to mention that attendance of *Tafsir* is traditionally centralised. That is, irrespective of the age of Imam of a *Tafsir* ancestral mosque, the Imam of subordinate mosques attended the *Tafsir* of their ancestral mosque. For instance, the Imam Oju

Ekun Oke, Imam Asileke, Imam Omoda and the head of Mejidadi family of Oke Agbede in Ajikobi quarters attended Imam Adangba *Tafsir* mosque. Imam Gambari *Tafsir* mosque is attended by the subordinate mosque Imams in his area of jurisdictions. It is significance for the Emir of Ilorin to attend Imam Gambar *Tafsir* mosque on 25th day of every *Ramadan*. The Emir will be given an ovate recognition and reception with the presentation of souvenirs, as symbol of historical co-existence between Sheikh Alimi, Sheikh AbdulMumeen (the ancestor of Imam Gambari) and Bako, the ancestor of Seriki Gambari.<sup>22</sup>



Brass working stick presented to the Emir of Ilorin by *Tafsir* committee of the congregation of Imam Gambari mosque on 25th of *Ramadan* in year 2021.<sup>23</sup>

In Ramadan *Tafsir* sessions, teenagers engaged in *Tafsir* extra activities, and the common one is playing *e)pakuta* (Bambara nut) game. *E)pakuta* game involved two contestants (which may be of any sex). The contestants had supporters among the spectators who were as well teenagers. By the rule of the game, the winner acquired the *e)pakuta* of the opponent at the end of every round. The tendency of a player to win the game depends on his/her intelligence, aptness, as well as presence and applausive contributions of his/her supporters. In some cases, a defeated player may wield mighty supporters that will hijack the Bambara nuts from the winner, and stood to claim authority or ran away. More often than not, some teenagers roamed about, not as challengers, but looking for an opportunity to mad rush players with Bambara nuts and castaway their nuts. Or in some cases, they stood affirm to see anyone who can challenge them. It is important to stress that the Bambara nut sellers sold highly in the months of *Ramadan* and made reasonable profits. It is logical to reason what the teenagers used the Bambara nuts for after amassing it. Most of teenagers, especially from Okemale quarters eventually used the nuts for rhythmic adventurous play, which goes thus:



<i>Gidan</i>	<i>gidan</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>soi</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>imo</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>lo</i>	<i>imo</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>nte</i>	<i>Ikute</i>	<i>Î</i>
house	house	no	amateur	child	of	whose	Parents	march	any	how						
Gloss	<i>Tobai</i>		<i>dai</i>		<i>laipai</i>		<i>kosii</i>									
<i>teminbe</i> )																
If he/she		broke		hand(s)		no	it									my own <sup>24</sup>

Meaning: From various households you converged (to struggle for bambara nuts). Each of you (teenagers) is subject to merciless marching. Therefore, if you sustained hand(s) fractures I am less concerned. However, upon the recitation of the rhythm, the Bambara nuts will be thrown to air and the generality of the teenagers that were equal to the task will be struggling for the nuts. Few teenagers resold it at lesser prices to the initial Bambara sellers while some of them dashed it out during *Loiïlo* [*Lahillaha* (No deity of worship save Allha)].<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, some teenagers (especially from Aafin quarters of Ilorin) hardly wasted the amassed nuts, rather, they gave it to their parents who convert it to *sagidi*, which is a dessert of Bambara nut production.<sup>26</sup> Suleiman, A. A., A History of Nupe.... p.97

The *Tafsir* Ramadan *e)pakuta* game usually place at the base of any mosque in which the *Tafsir* was in progress. It is however important to mention that *e)pakuta* game has totally gone into extinction from the Emirate teenagers.



A picture showing two teenagers that were engaged in e)pakute game.  
Source: The picture was improvised by the researcher on 9/9/21

### Tale end of Ramadan

Ilorin Emirate people were more curious in deliverance of socio-religious activities in the last nights and days of Ramadan. Firstly, *Leilatulkadri* (Ramadan majestic night) is now ceremonially observed by the people under Ilorin Alfas (Scholars) who had either engaged in *wa'asi ale* or *Tafsir*. Unlike in the years between 1960s and 1980s, between 1990s and year 2021 *Leilatulkadri* has been observed in congregation and celebrated magnanimously by Ilorin people. Baba Lawal added that in the periods prior to the 1960s *Leilatulkadri* was said covertly by respective individuals so as to target the spiritual benefits of the night.<sup>27</sup> Between 1990S and this year (2021), Ilorin people (especially women) cooked, generally selected dress code, chose cloth pattern to be bought and wore on the night slated

as *Leilatulkadri*. In addition, unlike in the pre-1990s, some Alfas are now given to profess and entertained testimonies from their subjects in *Leilatulkadri* proceedings. In this twenty first century some Alfas also observed offering session in their *Leilatulkadri*

### Visiting of Monumental Places

Kuwo)<sup>28</sup> mosque and old Ilorin central mosque at Idi-Ape are two places that Ilorin people visited in the latter part of *Ramadan* days and nights. People assembled at Kuwo) in groups and engaged in quasi Islamic activities. Numerous sellers of prayer materials (rosary, perfume, and citadel among others) and assorted food were always present. In addition, people gathered at Idi-Ape mosque between twentieth and twenty ninth day of Ramadan to observe *I'tikaf*.<sup>29</sup> Since year 2000, a social class order emerged among the people who are regular observant of *I'tikaf* and the new comers or irregular ones. The regular ones usually claim ownership right of the part of the mosque, which they have been used over times. Meanwhile, the new comer/irregular attendance were sometimes in argument with the regular ones whenever the latter inclined to secure a place in the mosque.<sup>30</sup>

### *Loiillo*<sup>31</sup>

*Loiillo* was one of Ilorin *Ramadan* traditional activities, which was usually exhibited at the last day of Ramadan. In most cases, whenever *Loiillo* was carried out, observation of *I'd* prayer follows it in the next day. Usually, teenagers and youth involved in the activities of *Loiillo*. They held containers of different sizes, visited several markets and thrust the containers to market sellers while chanting the word *Loiillo*. The market sellers were expected to put a bit of what (grains and some domestic items) he/she sells into the container. It is important to mention that the *Loiillo* activity was not counted as begging, but a social cordial reception among the entire people that were involved. However, since about early 1990s *Loiillo* activity has gone into extinction.

### *Weirei*

*Weirei* is a word that is used to represent Ilorin traditional/Islamic music. It was initiated (and slated to come up at the last night of *Ramadan*) by Ilorin Descendants Progressive Union (IDPU) of Kaduna branch in 1956.<sup>32</sup> All the linguistic groups in Ilorin were significantly well represented in end of *Ramadan Weirei* activities. Alhaji Zubair, a descendant of Afonja and the present Magaji Aare of Ilorin is said to have significantly contributed to the organization and success of the end of *Ramadan Weirei* activities in Ilorin in 1967.<sup>33</sup>

*Weirei* was a concert that involved the assemblage of Ilorin indigenous musicians and other musicians from across the Yoruba communities of western Nigeria. Usually, the musicians gathered in front of the Emir's palace to display their musical talents and compete with one another in order to gain audience and honour. Singers and musicians that emerged as first, second and third among the others were awarded trophy, which was to be presented by the Emir. The gathering was usually graced virtually by all dignitaries of the Emirate.

It is imperative to emphasize that IDPU played a prominent role in utilization of fund that were realized in *Weirei* activities for community services and to assist the National Executive Committee on some of financial obligations. For instance, it was recorded that the IDPU used the fund raised in 1973 *Weirei* activities to rehabilitate the Isale Oja-Pakata-Okelele-Omoda-Ita Ogunbo road., which was then in deplorable condition.<sup>34</sup> The record added that it was in that year's grand occasion that Late Dr. Olusola Saraki donated the sum of ₦ 10,000.00.

In 1982, there was a lingering crisis between the supporters of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in the community. The Emirate council envisage a possibility that the politicians could manipulate the occasion of *weirei* activities to disrupt the peaceful co-existence of the community, therefore, the council proposed to stop the *weirei* activities. In addition, the *Suni* and the *Tabliq* sects of the community decried *weirei* activities on the ground that it was against the etiquette of Islam to mark the end of *Ramadan* with *weirei*, rather, they demanded for Quran competition and sermon from different scholars across the community. For these reasons, the IDPU intervened and stop the *Weirei* festivities in 1982.<sup>35</sup> End of *Ramadan weirei* activities has totally gone into extinction from 1983 till this year *Ramadan* of April-May, 2021. During the *weirei* session, several socio-economic activities (such as meeting new friends, spending to musicians, buying and selling of assorted foods, relations among the youth of opposite sex, and sales of almanac among others) flourished.

**Tiirai** (Arabic text written on paper)

Literarily, to an average Ilorin man *Tiirai* means Arabic text that is recorded on paper. So many homes in Ilorin Emirate imbibed the tradition of rolling *Tiirai* in their first morsel of food to be consumed in the early morning that is next to the end of *Ramadan*, that is, in the early morning of *Ramadan I'd* day. Content of the *Tiirai* is Arabic phrase, which is extracted from one of Al-Quran verses. The text is:

ĪYiYÇ ĪāāÇ ĪāāÉ ÊÛÔÇāÇ ÝāāÇ

Gloss light a burden she carries he covers her And when<sup>36</sup>

The English version is red from right to left.

Translation: "When they are united, she bears a light Burden and carries about..."<sup>37</sup>

### Teenagers' Mosque

Group of children between 5 to 10 years of age from their respectful compounds usually build *mansailaisi jilji* (flat mud mosques) which are proto to some standard ones in the community. The children emulate all the activities that the adults exhibited in their respective mosques. The mosques are honoured, just, as the standard ones among the adults and children. Building and aesthetic decoration of the mosque has become a sort of competition among the children. *Jilji* mosques are not usually durable because jealousy ones among the children, can cross to other children's mosque to destroy the mosque. Usually, *jilji* mosques are destroyed by the children themselves, before the end of *Ramadan*.

### Greetings among the Children

Exchange of greetings and happiness in end of *Ramadan* festival is pertinent among the Emirate people. Significantly, children exhibit more cordial relations through greetings. They moved across the family (nucleolus and extended ones) houses for greetings, while those that were visited shared food and money to the children. The visiting/greetings provide an avenue for the relatives of the children to recognise children that visited as a member of the family or friend.

### Findings

The findings of the study were that:

- i. the people of Ilorin Emirate incorporated some socio-traditional activities into *Ramadan* to sustain peaceful co-existence;
- ii. unlike the sermon activities, the defunct Ilorin *Ramadan Weirei* activities was usually used to raise fund for community services in the township;
- iii. some *Ramadan* social activities, such as *e)pakuta* game, *loiiIloì* and *weirei* had gone into extinction; and
- iv. politicians who are members of the community take the advantage of *Ramadan* to propagate their political interests.

### Conclusion

Ilorin Emirate heterogeneous community involved in observation of *Ramadan* fast beyond religious, rather, some socio-traditional activities such as meat sharing socio-political gesture, *saariI jiiIii*, *weirei* music activities, *e)pakuta* game, Emir's *Tafsir* visiting, *loiiIloì* rejoicing interactions, every night *waasi ale*, last *Ramadan waasi ale* and greetings among the children were integrated into *Ramadan* to sustain their peaceful co-existence.

### Footnotes

1. Jimoh, L.A.K., Ilorin The Journey So Far, Atoto Press, Ilorin, 1994, p.100.
2. Ibid.
3. Interview with Olawale AbdulRaheem, Ile O)lo)gba'o)ro), Agbaji area, Ilorin, Occupation: Civil Servant, Age: 49, 27/1/21.
4. The *Ramadan* night prayer is known as *Tarawihi* in Arabic language. Ilorin people call it *Aasamu*, which is a loan word from Hausa language. Ilorin has no indigenous name for the prayer save *Aasamu*.
5. The writer categorised Ilorin *Ramadan* charity into ordinary and special just to have a better description. The people did not really categorise it as such.
6. An observation by the researcher between 1987 and 1997 over charity presented by Alhaji Suleiman and AlhajiAbdullahi Adangba, Umar *Saro*, Adangba area, Ilorin.
7. This was one of the open prayers stated by Imam Suleiman of Adangba mosque in the 1990s. It was one of *Ramadan* preparation events that was attended by the writer.

8. *Fathia Alalubarika* involved the recitation of the opening chapter of Quran with pure Ilorin accent. Some called it *Fathia O)lo)be)yo* (a typical draw soup *Fathia*). As revealed to Prophet Muhammed in the Holy Quran the chapter did not commence with *Fathia Alalubarika*, as Ilorin has integrated it. Rather, the *Sura* (the chapter starts with *Alhamdu Lilahi Rabi-l-alaimin....* (All praise is due to Allah, the overseer of the universe...))
9. *Sakara* Drums, Voices of Africa. Archived from the original on 30/3/10. Retrieved 30/1/10, in en.m.wikipedia.org
10. Interview with Alhaja Aminat Suleiman, Ile Kijan, Oke-Apomu, Ilorin, Occupation: Trading (Retired); Age: 87 29/3/21.
11. The *Omeilei* that was made by Ilorin was not an original form of those that was made in Yorubaland, instead, a Hollow skin tightened clay frame was improvised so as to produce a similar percussive sound of Yoruba *Omeilei*.
12. Interview with Adam Abdullahi, Ile Alawonla, Okelele, Ilorin; Occupation: Lecturing; Age: 43; 29/4/21.
13. *Asaimui* is a loan word from Hausa language. Originally, the word is an Arabic of which the root is *as-Saomu*, which means a fast.
14. Interview with Alhaji Amidu, Ile Koto, Adangba, Ilorin, Occupation: Trading (Retired); Age: 90, 20/5/21.
15. Interview with Aremu Yusuf, Ile Agbabiaka, Emir's Road, Ilorin, Occupation: Trading; Age: 90, 15/5/99
16. Jimoh, L.A.K., Ilorin the Journey So Far, Atoto Press LTD., Ilorin, 1994.
17. Alhaji AbdulRaheem Oniwa'asi Agbaye, Open air Friday evening Sermon at Ansarul Islam Primary School, Okemale Ilorin, Allahu Lateef Recording Studio, Oke-Apomu, Ilorin, 25/5/15. The sermon was authorised by Sheikh Kamaldeen in 1955.
18. Ibrahim Dan Boyee was a philanthropist who engaged in non-profit making information for the Emirate throughout his life times.
19. A loan word adopted by Ilorin. *Waka* is a Hausa word, which means song.
20. Participant observation
21. Since 1980s and up till year 2021 *Ramadan*, strictly in *Ramadan* periods individuals and groups of people usually make use of the greeting slogans to sponsor programs on Medias.
22. Suliman, A.A., A History of Nupe People of Ilorin Emirate, Unpublished Thesis, Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. p.234.
23. Suliman, A.A., A History of Nupe People of Ilorin Emirate... p.228.
24. The adventurous rhythm is a combination of Hausa and Yoruba languages- *Gidan* (Hausa); *basoiusolu* (Hausa); *o)imo)i* (Yoruba); *o)lo)imo)i* (Yoruba); and *te)nte)Ikute)I* (Yoruba)-which suggests an index of relations between Hausa and the Yoruba people of Ilorin. The second line of the rhythm is purely a combination of Yoruba words.
25. *Lahillaha* is corrupted for *Loiillo* by the teenagers. And *Loiillo* session took places in the last days of Ramadan.
26. Suleiman, A.A., A History of Nupe.... p.97

27. Interview with Baba Lawal, Ile Kijan, Oke-Apomu, Ilorin, Occupation: Civil Servant (Retired); Age: 90, 6/6/21.
28. Kuwo mosque is located in Asa L.G.A. of Kwara State. It was stated that Sheikh Alimi sojourned at the place, when he was migrating from Oyo to Ilorin in the late nineteenth century. Where he resided then, is regarded as his mosque till date.
29. *I'tikaf* is an Islamic practice, which involved people keeping themselves in seclusion in a mosque over a period of time, in order to worship. See en.m.wikipedia.org.
30. Participant Observation, Suleiman Adebayo, 20, Ile Kijan, Oke-Apomu, Ilorin, Occupation: Lecturing; Age: 42, 3/12/00.
31. *Loiillo* is a corrupted word of *Laiillallah*, which is an Arabic word that means "There is no god...."
32. Jimoh, L.A.K., Ilorin The Journey So Far... 1992, p.535.
33. Interview with Jimoh L.A.K., Ile Ariwoka, Masankore, Awodi quarters, Gambari Area, Ilorin, Occupation: A retired civil Servant; Age: 87, 26/6/21.
34. Jimoh, L.A.K., Ilorin The Journey So Far....p.536.
35. Jimoh, L.A.K., Ilorin The Journey So Far....p.536.
36. English Quran, Version 2.6.96, *Sura* (Quran)7 (Al ar'raf), *A'ayat* (verse) 189. Note: the English words are red from right to left.
37. Yusuf Ali, Contemporary Quran translation, *Sura* (Quran) 7(Al ar'af): *A'ayat* (verse )189, p.399. Perhaps, Ilorin makes use of the phrase because of the word *ÈÛÔÇâÇ* (united/covers her) so as to use it as a spiritual means to strengthen unity among the people.