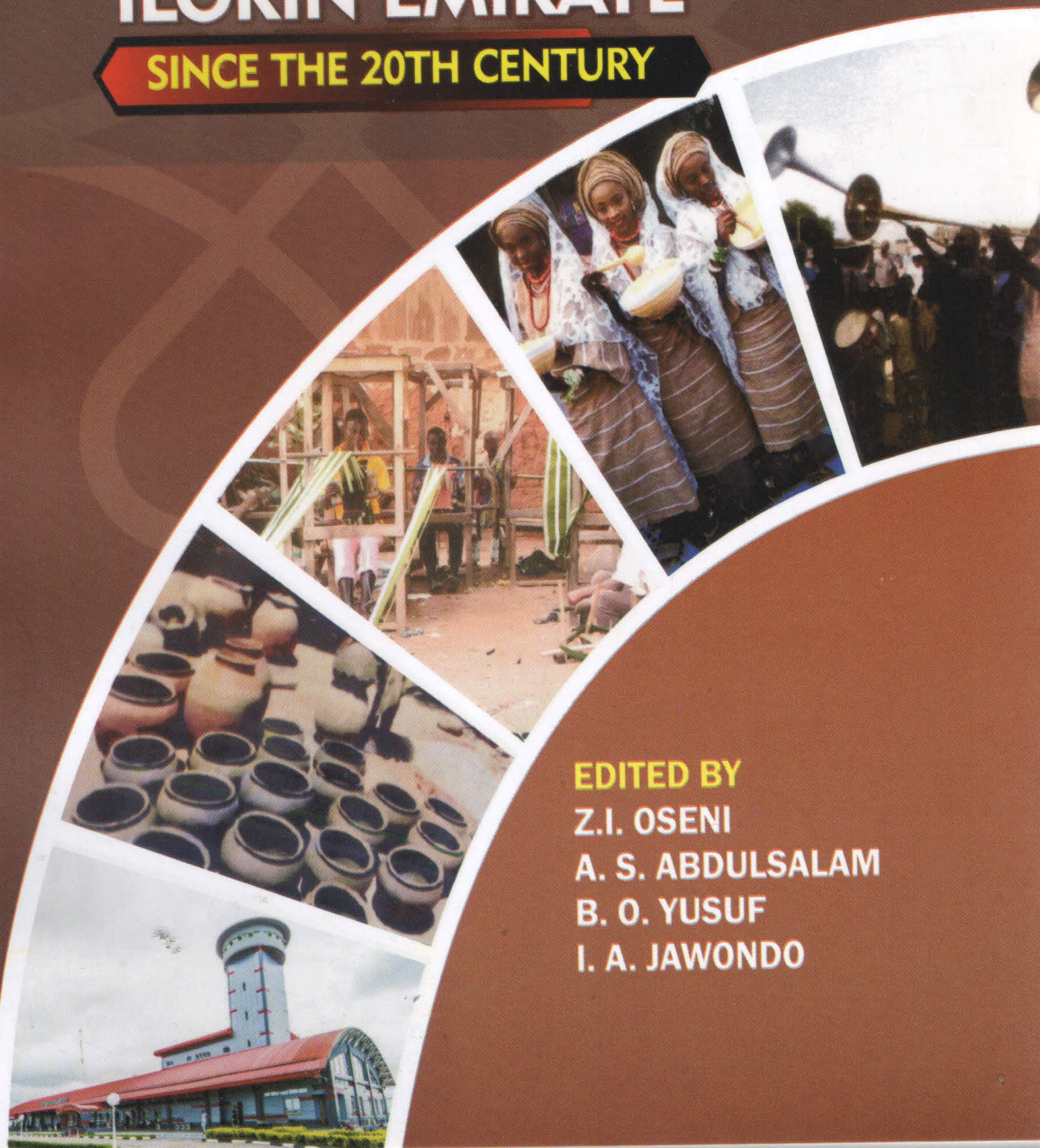


THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ILORIN EMIRATE

SINCE THE 20TH CENTURY



EDITED BY
Z.I. OSENI
A. S. ABDULSALAM
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التّمية الاجتماعية الاقتصادية في إمارة الورن منذ القرن العشرين

تحرير وتحقيق

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CHAPTER 7

TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS WEAVING TECHNOLOGY IN ILORIN

Alabi, Oladimeji Mohammed

INTRODUCTION

Finch and Putman (1977, p. 3) maintains that a history of textiles is virtually a history of civilization, for man has made textiles from the earliest times through different Ages in various categories. There are cave pictures suggesting that by 5,000 BC, man was already wearing textiles. According to Afigbo, (1998, p. 11), textile expresses phenomenal changes in the social and natural environment, and like any other material artifact, it shows societal activities, past, present and future. Man is believed to be faced with three primary needs; namely food, shelter and clothing.

Weaving is a process of interlacing threads that are warped and weft to make cloth. The craft was practised by the ancient Egyptians; the Greeks also attributed its introduction to Athens plain weave; the weft was first woven under and then over the longitudinal yarn, the warp, (Caxton Encyclopedia, 1969, p. 5939). Weaving as an age-long craft is common to many communities in different parts of the world. Negri, (1966, p. 95) believes the introduction of Islam into Nigeria, first in the northern province (part) in about the 10th Century A.D, spreading slowly to the south towards the close of the 18th century, must have played a big role in the level of interest taken in the growing of cotton and the production of cotton cloth in Nigeria. Weaving and dyeing may have been brought into Nigeria by ancient immigrants from the decaying empires of the desert such as Mali, where a large cotton industry existed in the 14th century. By the 16th century, many parts of the country were growing cotton in abundance and had become famous for their excellent country cloth, (Negri, 1966, p. 96). It is in line with this that Ilorin, as a community,

is among weaving societies in Nigeria, renowned for the production of indigenous hand woven textiles popularly known as *Aso-Oke*.

Meanwhile, quite a lot of studies have been conducted on different themes on Ilorin. Few of these are R. A. Olaoye (1993) *"The Ilorin Textile Industries 1850-1960: A Case Study in the History of Technology"*; H.O. Danmole (1980) *"The Frontier Emirate: A History of Islam in Ilorin"*; S.Y Omoiya(2009) *"The Origin and British Colonial Impact on the Cosmopolitan Community of Ilorin in the 20th Century"* and A. L. Olumoh (2015) *"Managing Ethno-Political Relations in Nigeria: the Ilorin Example, 1823-2003"*. Of these studies, only R. A. Olaoye's work focuses on indigenous textile in Ilorin. However, his study terminates in 1960, after which quite a number of changes have occurred in the industry, thus justifying this study.

The study adopts a historical research method, which involves the use of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprised extensive oral interview and the use of relevant archival materials while books, journal articles and other published items constitute the secondary sources.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The term indigenous weaving technology is used to refer to knowledge and technique developed, used and transmitted by weavers in Ilorin over time for the production of handmade textiles. The knowledge is generated, maintained and transferred through a systematic process of participating in the production process, observing the challenges, experimenting with solution(s), and re-adapting previously identified solutions to the process. Olaoye, (1992, p. 176) submits that indigenous technology is developed by or with active participation of the indigenous people through the harnessing and utilization of local materials and natural resources. It makes the heaviest use of abundant indigenous resources, locally produced tools and equipment. Indeed, it is a self-reliant technology that is capital-saving, rather than capital-using, labour using rather than labour saving, and one that could be operated, controlled, repaired and maintained locally.

It represents all man's efforts to influence and control natural materials to aid his survival as a social being, and all his attempts to solve essential, but specific problems in his life, (Audah, 1992, p.1). For instance, early man lived in the midst of ferocious carnivorous neighbours; and his quest to survive in this hostile environment prompted him to device certain objects for protection, which later became the first set of hunting instruments. In this regard, indigenous technology refers to many ways of applying scientific knowledge to specific practical uses, so that man can live more comfortably and securely today than he did yesterday. The concept also encompasses man's efforts at transforming his knowledge of specific scientific laws, with the help of his personal skill, into concrete objects or thoughts that are called artifacts.

The views expressed in these descriptions of indigenous technology above, have certain elements in common, which give them some measure of agreement. The knowledge or skill naturally evolves from the people; it makes use of locally available materials and most importantly, as the society is dynamic, so the indigenous technology must progress to keep pace with new trends.

The characteristics above have been inherent in Ilorin indigenous weaving technology. Weavers make use of locally sourced raw materials and fabricated implements; their skills respond, however slowly, to new trends in fashion demands and above all, it is a low-cost technology. For instance, the weaving structure is made up of simple devices obtained at relatively low cost, which include, beater, known locally as *Asa*, heddles (*Omu*), pulley (*Okeke*), treadles (*Itese*), cloth-bar (*Agbonrin*), cloth-winder (*Ayinso*) and few other items sourced at no cost, like sticks, rope, waste paper cards and so on. This low-cost nature of the industry allows for large number of people to participate.

Meanwhile, evidences abound that nations, which attained technological breakthrough, have largely been aided by their local endowments in indigenous know-how. Britain for instance, had a well laid and progressing indigenous technology, exemplified by her cottage industries in the pre-industrial revolution period. This was greatly supported by inventions and

innovations in the later period, which eventually produced the Industrial Revolution.

ILORIN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Ilorin the capital of Kwara State is located between latitude 8:30 and longitude 4:35. It is situated in the transitional zone between the forest of the south and the savannah to the north. Thus the city is fondly described as the gateway between northern and southern Nigeria. Its middle belt position and relative ease of access are its definite assets, making it a cultural melting point because of the conglomeration of ethnic groups in the area. The town shares boundary with the present Oyo state to the south, Kogi state in the East and Niger state to the north. It is about 300 kilometers from Lagos, Nigeria and the coastline, and about 160 kilometers from Ibadan, Africa's largest city. (Kwara State LGA Series Ilorin undated, p.2)

In the opinion of Garvin, (1976, p. 3), the city of Ilorin in the 19th century, depended largely but not totally on the proceeds from its war and plunder, which came from its military enterprise. More specifically, the roles played by trade and commercial activities were fundamental in the later years of the 19th century because the city became a place where commercial transactions were effected. Ilorin's merchants were almost as wealthy as her soldiers and landowners, some of them had houses nearly as large and imposing as those of the city's rulers, who in turn drew part of their earnings from the city's trade.

As elsewhere in Africa, the fringe of the Savannah was a favourable area for the development of states based on exchange of goods between different ecological zones. In 1857, an American observer, impressed by the enormous extent of the city and the cosmopolitan roar of its markets, described Ilorin as "one of the greatest entre-pots of Central Africa. On a local level, the surplus livestock, poultry, corn, melon seeds (*egusi*), beans and sheabutter from the north, were exchanged for the palm oil, palm wine, and kolanuts from the south. On a wider level, Ilorin was the clearing house for the exchange of higher value goods between a number of powerful economic systems. To Ilorin's north lay the vast economic

zone, whose unification under the political patronage of the Sokoto Caliphate, coincided with the town's emergence as the southernmost emirate. (Vandeleur, 1898, p.289). Of course one of the results of the Sokoto Jihad, which leapt like bruise fire from city to city, trading post to trading post, was to extend and secure the long-distance trading network of Hausaland southward and eastward.

However, Ilorin's commercial roles in the 19th century cannot be divorced from her indigenous industries of the period because local productive capacity contributed to the trade and commercial exchange described above. The cosmopolitan nature of the city favoured its emergence as a centre, where craftsmen and artisans of varied origins and skills, converged to practise their vocations. One of the earliest industries was the beads manufacturing, which, according to Garvin, (1977, p. 16), sold its products in the south, the most profitable markets being in Warri and Delta area, where lantana necklaces had for centuries marked out men of power. Particularly in the Delta, the beads could be bought for a price equivalent of a man's annual income in slaves, brass work or other goods.

Other important industries, which emerged in Ilorin in the 19th Century or probably earlier, were blacksmithing and pottery industries. The prevalence of wars between Ilorin and other communities in this period stimulated the growth of blacksmithing. Weapons of war such as spears, swords, lances, dagger and other related items made of iron, were produced, (Safi, 1990, p. 28). Similarly, pottery technology is popular, particularly in Dada area of Okelele quarters in Ilorin. Even though, these industries survived colonialism in the town, their volume of production have reduced drastically.

INDIGENOUS WEAVING IN ILORIN UP TO 1995

The tradition of indigenous weaving in Ilorin is an old one, which is quite difficult to trace with precision. However, the introduction of Islam, first into the north (Borno and Hausaland), as noted by Negri, (1966, p. 95) must have influenced the emergence of weaving among people of the areas. Kano, Kastina and Borno, who participated in the Trans-Saharan Trade and were influenced by

cultural exchange, possibly copied weaving techniques from Arab traders. This in turn may have found its way into Ilorin, the town being a strong participant in the north-south trade. For instance, Eicher (1976, p. 40) reports that records from the 1850s indicate that dyed and woven cotton was found in increasing volumes in places like Oyo, Iseyin, and Ibadan. According to him, an English man, who visited Western Nigeria in the 1890s, gave this view of the cotton industry:

With regard to the present quality of the cotton, which is grown.....it is declared by those who are most capable of judging, that although the supply is intermittent, and the sample not over clean, it is very well thought of in Liverpool market and commands a paying price equal to that of Louisiana and superior to that of India.

(Eicher, 1976, p. 40)

The availability of cotton in abundance in these locations and their proximity to Ilorin, strongly support the claim that weaving technology may have come to Ilorin from them, especially since the town was, earlier, a part of Old Oyo Empire. The Yoruba origin of the craft in Ilorin is further buttressed by the evidence of migration of groups into the area following the collapse of Old Oyo. R.J. Garvin has also indicated indigenous weaving in Ilorin as one of the local efforts, which supported the commercial role of the town's entrepot trade. Textile production was a matter of holding down the costs of raw material supply from the cotton fields at no great distance from the town, and having plenty of cheap labour to do the spinning. Indeed, Ilorin cloth was celebrated throughout the 19th century Yorubaland, and in high demand in the Kano market. It had a gloss and softness to it that priced it beyond the means of all but chiefs and notables. These qualities were imparted by the silk that was mixed with cotton in its production, and in 1858, immense quantities of raw silk were crossing the Niger southward to supply Ilorin looms. (Mac Donald, 1922, par. 86)

During this early period, instruments used were unsophisticated and mainly manual, which was generally time-consuming and limited the volume of production. According to Adelodun, a local weaver, the thread was spun manually, thus was irregular in shape, weak and susceptible to

breaking and cutting during weaving process. The finished cloth was also very heavy on the body. These shortcomings continued until the 1960s when industrial cotton threads emerged in place like Kano, Kaduna and later, Ilorin. This marked a turning point in weaving industry in Ilorin because it led to renewed interest in the vocation.

A significant development at this period was the tremendous increase in the use of manufactured thread. For instance, when manually spun threads were used, narrow loom was common but with the emergence of manufactured threads, wider loom cloth became popular. With this steady increase in production, cloth marketing also witnessed a gradual transformation. Before 1960, cloth marketing was mainly restricted to the Emir's market. From 1960s dealers began to travel outside the town and converge at designated cloth markets. Such markets are located in Oyo, Ibadan and Iseyin. Through such external markets, Ilorin weavers and cloth dealers became exposed to new designs and methods in cloth production. Such markets also afforded them the opportunity to buy raw materials at cheaper rates.

By the 1970s, weaving occupation had become highly concentrated in the former central and southern part of Ilorin, later subdivided under Ilorin West and Ilorin East Local Governments. It is observed that people residing in *Balogun Ajikobi* and *Alanamu* areas of the town, practiced the craft most. This is because it is among them that the real weavers are concentrated. It is also believed that weaving is popular among them, probably, because they have many migrants from Oyo, Iseyin and other weaving locations in Yorubaland.

One important factor which stimulated the growth of the industry from the 1980s was the introduction of apprenticeship scheme into the technology. Kamaldeen, a weaving contractor, maintains that the craft remained a family business throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but got transformed into an all-comers-job from the 1980s, with youth involvement especially students and school-leavers. These new-comers improved on the existing practices and brought new ideas, innovation, patterns and designs into the cloth.

Generally, there are two broad categories of traditional textiles in Ilorin. These are the plain weave, known locally as *Kure*, and the patterned weave, known as *Aso-Olona*. Between 1880 and 1970, traditional cloth in the town was largely of plain type. They were mainly differentiated by their colours and names. Examples of popular clothes around this period were *Sanyan*, *Etu*, *Petuje*, and *Alaari*. With time most of these ancient fabrics disappeared due to lack of raw materials and new fashion trends.

Furthermore, before the 1970s, weavers in specific localities specialized in a particular type but from the 1970s, weavers from different areas in Ilorin and its environs could interchange apprentices to learn different designs. This step had made it possible for majority of weavers in Ilorin to have knowledge of both plain and designed cloth, which enhanced their productivity.

Meanwhile, patterns were perfected in indigenous weaving to illustrate certain objects on the fabric to convey messages. Even though these designs were different from one area to the other, they all add to the beauty of the fabric. For instance, in pre-colonial Oyo, Oshun, Iseyin and Ogun, designs and patterns on *Kijipa*, a form of cloth commonly used by women, were governed by traditional beliefs. This is because patterns sometimes symbolise Yoruba belief in the spiritual power of the items represented on the fabric. However, in Ilorin, due to the prevalence of Islam, such spiritual interpretations were not given to designs on local fabrics, even though certain designs originated from Yorubaland.

The period between 1980 and 1990 marked the golden age in pattern-making in Ilorin. By this time, objects, events and personalities were associated with designs and pattern making indigenous cloth in the town. For instance, designs were perfected to illustrate events like War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Better life for Rural Women, and so on while particular fabrics were named after Nigeria's past presidents like Obasanjo, Shagari and Babangida. The innovation in design was largely dependent on the ability of the weaver to manipulate the *Isah*, a number of selected threads from the warp yarns, used in pattern-making. Such designs played a significant role in Ilorin weaving industry; using the intrinsic talent and skills, the weavers were able to pass messages to people in the society.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN ILORIN WEAVING FROM THE YEAR 2000.

The dynamic nature of the contemporary society has placed a corresponding challenge on indigenous technology to continually find ways to remain relevant. This takes the form of finding better tools, raw-materials and quality of the finished products. Innovation in Ilorin indigenous weaving relates most specifically to three basic aspects, namely raw materials, tools and size of the fabrics. These aspects have witnessed some changes.

In the 19th Century, thread was manually spun, which slowed down the weaving process. A locally designed spindle, *Keke Ilowu*, was in use, which was time-consuming and labour intensive. Spinning was done by women, who took the job full-time. The first process involved removing the seeds from cotton pods, known as carding and ginning. This was done by placing a heavy metal rod or stick on the cotton pod. Pressure was exerted on the metal instrument, which forced the cotton seeds out of the cotton fibres. Then cotton fibres would be aligned after the seeds have been removed. The spinner then pulls and twists the fibres to attach it to spindle called *Keke-Ilowu*. This instrument was locally fabricated with clay and had been in use in Ilorin since the pre-colonial period. It was in use up till the 2nd half of the 20th Century.

However, the exigency of finding a faster spinning machine prompted the fabrication of iron-spindle, which allows for greater speed and efficiency in the weaving process. This innovation simply called *Enjini* (engine), which was made from pieces of iron rod by welder, with a revolving reel at the centre and some vertical iron frame to support its erection, makes spinning easier, faster and convenient. This instrument facilitated the conversion of threads into skeins for the preparation of warp yarn, and it also made it easier to transfer the threads of the skein into weft yarn.

Dyeing is another aspect of the industry, which had witnessed some transformations. From the pre-colonial period up to the late 1950s, dyeing of cotton was done manually. The common colours were indigo, blue, purple, grey, dark blue and sky blue. However, from the 1960s, when

industrial thread companies emerged in Nigeria, better, stronger and more colourful threads emerged. Due to increase demand for manufactured thread imported from Britain, especially after independence, and the indigenization policy of the Nigerian government, thread companies were established in places like Kano, Kaduna and later, Ilorin. Initially the industries' production concentrated exclusively on fabrics like lace, Saflet, *Ankara* and other clothes, but due to increasing demand for yarn for the production of hand woven cloth in Ilorin, the company began to produce yarn for weavers, and Ilorin became a popular yarn supplier since the 1970s. With this development, colourful, trendy and better quality yarns emerged. Unlike the handspun thread, which cuts and breaks easily, the industrial threads were strong and could withstand the rigour of processing. However, in spite of the emergence of these industrial threads, some users still preferred the manually dyed thread because of its traditional values.

Furthermore, the finished products became lighter on the body than the initial handspun thread materials, which was heavy and could not be worn for a long time. Gradually even better quantity industrial yarn came into the weaving process such that by the year 2000, stronger threads had emerged. Since then, a visible aspect of the indigenous industry in Ilorin has been the blend of local expertise with foreign materials.

Another significant aspect of innovation in the indigenous weaving is in the tools. The weaving structure is a mass of simple, low-cost and locally available artifact. Two types of weaving done on two different looms, with heddles and treadles to weave cloth of definite yardage, were common in Ilorin. The vertical broadloom was used by women and girls. This is much less complex in structure and operation. The men of Ilorin use horizontal loom, which is removable after everyday's work. Interviews with local weavers including Owodimeji and Oba indicate the preponderance of one type of weaving over another depended on locality and tradition. In Ilorin, men are more apt to be full-time weavers, while women, part-time.

Women's vertical loom was popular in the 1980s and early 1990s but gradually disappeared afterwards. From the year 2000, women participated more in the preparation of yarn such as spinning and preparation of warp and weft yarns. Men's horizontal loom has also

recorded steady changes since the late 1990s and early year 2000. For example, the vertical narrow loom has given way to wider loom, with the heddles and treadles becoming wider and broader, allowing for greater number of warp yarn. Thus, unlike in the period before the late 1990s, when forty pieces of completed yard made up a set, just ten pieces of wider loom fabric make the set, beginning from the year 2000. A complete set of local fabric refers to the standard garment, comprising of the blouse (*buba*), the wrapper (*iro*) and the head-wear (*gele*).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INDIGENOUS WEAVING ON ILORIN

With the transformation recorded in the industry in the 1980s and 1990s, weavers became prosperous in the town with a few of them becoming quite outstanding. These include Alhaji Hanafi Aberi of Itakudimo area, Alhaji Oladaride of Okelele area, Alhaji Alfa Abdullahi and Alhaji Amuda Oganija of Oke-Apomu area. There were yet others, too numerous to maintain in this study, who also became successful in the enterprise. Proceeds from the craft were used to sponsor the youths in school and for other needs of the dealers.

Two categories of weaving business were prevalent in the period, the first was called *Oya*, which involved the weaver being employed or engaged to weave already prepared warp yarn with all other materials including the weft yarn, supplied by the dealer, who in that case, was the owner of the finished cloth. The second category was a form of contractual practice in which the dealer would give a weaver the total sum (money) that would cover the whole expense of the completed fabric. These two practices ensured the continuity of the craft in the town.

The first category was common among students and young school leavers, who took the job as ad-hoc vocation during holidays to gather money for their studies. Others engaged in weaving pending the availability of a better job in the civil service. Contractual weaving was common among older people, who took the job as permanent occupation and had customers among dealers within and outside the town, in places like Lagos, Ibadan, Akure, Ondo, Osun and other Yoruba communities. These

dealers in turn package the fabrics for onward resale to other countries abroad such as Ghana, Benin Republic and Togo while some even found their way to Europe and America, to be used by Africans in diaspora.

Another significant economic impact of the industry on Ilorin in the 1980s and 1990s was the increase in thread dealing in the town following the emergency of industrial manufactured threads. Thread dealers became distributors for thread companies as they bought threads and other cloth materials in large quantities for further distribution to weavers in small volumes. They thus represented an important segment in the chain of production of the Ilorin local fabrics. A number of people became successful in the thread business in Ilorin the 1980s and 1990s. These include Alhaji Oba Atagisoro, whose store was at Oja Oba market, Alhaji Olowookere in Alore area, Alhaja Atinuke Olowo, Oke Apomu area, Mallam Suleiman Oba of Adangba area and several others.

There has been a renewed interest in weaving in Ilorin in recent times, particularly the involvement of more youths. It is now common to find weaving contractors putting up sheds at different locations to employ the services of weavers, who are paid on daily basis. This practice has increased the economic impact of the industry across the town. Another economic impact of indigenous weaving on Ilorin is the engagement of women and children in various aspects of the preliminary stages of the production such as warping, spinning and preparation of weft yarn, all at payment of specified amount.

Socially, *Aso-Oke* is used for various ceremonies because of its uniqueness and trendy look on people. Ilorin people used it for wedding and chieftaincy ceremonies while users from other parts of Yorubaland found greater use for the cloth by mixing it with other fashion materials. Another social impact is weavers and weaving contractors have been able to interact with people from other regions through trade and this has increased the level of their socialization and exposure.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF INDIGENOUS WEAVING IN ILORIN

The first major challenge to indigenous weaving in Ilorin has been inadequate innovation in its technology. The industry has largely been isolated from research programmes for the small and medium scale enterprises through which its technology would have been transformed. However, lack of mechanization, it is often argued, is normal, to keep the indigenous value and feature of the industry and retain the uniqueness of its finished products as an African traditional fashion heritage. Weavers also argue that keeping the tools simple also enhances the maintenance and sustenance of the process as well as making the product affordable. Meanwhile, even though innovation has been recorded in few aspects, the rate of change of the tool has been quite slow to stimulate a radical transformation of the industry. For instance as early as the era of colonialism, hand-woven textiles had to compete with imported fabrics.

Colonization brought an unequal competition between machines and handloom weaving. Therefore, from the middle of the 20th century, it had become too clear that the European imported cloth had started seriously to undermine the local textile industry. Agaba, (1996, p. 89) has emphasized this colonial impact on Nigeria's indigenous economy in his study on colonialism and the introduction of cash economy on Idomaland. Even though local cloth was of better quality, and more durable, there was intense competition due to the cheapness of the foreign fabrics. For instance in the 1890s, it was discovered at an Oyo market that local hand woven cloth was slightly more expensive than the imported one, but lasted ten times longer. (Isichie, 1983, p. 60)

Marketing presents another major challenge to the weavers. They attend periodic markets, held at specific locations, outside Ilorin, in Oyo, Iseyin and Ede. This amounts to extra burden on the dealers in the form of transportation. Because the markets are periodic, not all weavers are able to attend because their fabrics may sometimes not have been ready before the market day. Such weavers therefore would lose their market (sale) for that day. To this end weavers/dealers have made several unsuccessful appeals to the local council in the metropolis, particularly

Ilorin West and East Local Governments, to establish a fabrics market in Ilorin. Another important aspect of marketing which presents a challenge is the branding of the finished products in line with modern trends. This challenge is however, gradually been tackled due to increasing youth involvement in the production and marketing of Aso-Oke.

Related to this is the problem of inadequate capital for expansion. Most weavers do the job as hired-labourers, without being the owners of the finished clothes. Others lack the financial capacity to expand in terms of packaging and branding like their counterparts in Lagos, Ekiti, Ondo and other parts of Yorubaland, who display their wares in show glasses in big shops, for customers. Indeed, Ilorin weavers are often exploited by buyers, who come from other places as middlemen to purchase their fabrics. Middlemen from places like Lagos, Ibadan, Osogbo and other Yoruba communities, capitalize on the cheap prices of Ilorin cloth, and afterwards package the fabrics and sell at higher prices to the end-users, some are even exported abroad.

In spite of these challenges, indigenous weaving has contributed greatly to the Ilorin economy since the 19th century period, as record indicates. Indeed, it was an important pillar of Ilorin local economy, employing quite large number of the city's population, comprising men, women and youths. With the present emphasis on self-employment, weaving serves as a viable craft, which young school leavers can embrace, instead of the mad rush for government job. This was the case in the 1990s, when the craft engaged a great number of Ilorin youths, although this trend was lost towards the later part of the decade. The craft is gradually regaining its glory in the town as youth involvement is increasing every day. Indigenous weaving can also serve as the basis for sustainable textile industrialization as witnessed in Britain, India, Japan and so on. Because the technology is sustainable, schools should be mandated to carry out research on it so that its tools can be improved for mechanized production.

Lastly, the fabrics can be a formidable alternative to expensive imported cloth, if the raw materials are diversified through the incorporation of modern textiles material like satin, brocade, lace, silk and others into its production to improve its fashion trend. Apart from its ceremonial values,

the fabrics can be used for hand bags, tennis shoes, canvas as well as school uniform, because it is quite cheap, durable and fashionable.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been an attempt to explore the origin, growth and challenges in indigenous weaving industry in Ilorin. Since the pre-colonial period, indigenous cloth weaving has remained a vibrant technology contributing to the socio-economic development of Ilorin. The industry has witnessed few innovations particularly in aspects of raw materials and size of loom used. With a significant engagement of youths (largely males, and few females), adults and old, indigenous weaving represents one of many local technologies that can be used to transform Nigeria's economy, particularly in this globalized society of the contemporary world. The prospects of Ilorin indigenous weaving technology are enormous, if intensive efforts are made to sustain its present gains and improve on its weaknesses.

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Interviews

- Interview with Alhaji Yahaya Adelodun a local weaver in Oke-Apomu, Age 78 years, 5th August, 2015.
- Interview with Alhaji Owodimeji and Oba Suleimanin Abayawo Area, Ilorin a local weaver, age, 72 years, 10th August, 2015.
- Interview with Mallam Kamaldeen, a weaver in Itakudimo Area, Ilorin, Age-40 years. 15th August, 2015.

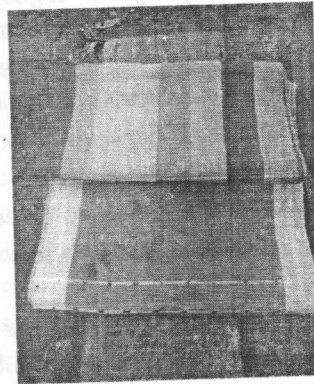
Interview with Alhaji Raheem, a teacher and one retired weaver, Age-65,
4th April, 2015.

Interview with Mallam Oseni Alaso, Oloje Area, Ilorin. A dealer in weaving
materials. Age 55 years, 22nd March, 2015.

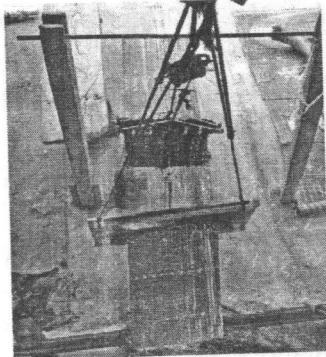
APPENDIX



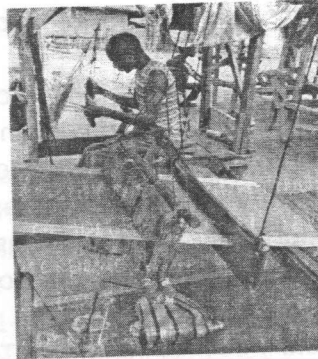
Skeins of Thread



Wide Loom Hand Textiles



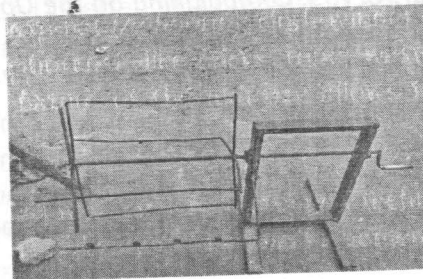
Narrow Loom Weaving Structure



Wide Loom Weaving Structure



Spinning with a Fabricated
Mechanical Device



A Fabricated Device for winding thread
into skeins

SOME INDIGENOUS WEAVING TOOLS IN ILORIN

Keke-ilowu - Spindle
Ajo-Spinning Revolving Reel
Omu-Aso - Heddles
Iye/Agba - Robbin/Spool/Reel
Okeke - Pulley
Odada - Creel or Warping Stick
Asa - Loom or Beater
Itese - Treadles
Oko - Shuttle
Agbonrin - Cloth bar
Ayinso - Cloth Winder
Sherin Itaso
Sherin Itaso - Iron Pegs
Owu Akawo - Weft Yarn
Owu-Ita Aso - Warp Yarn
Ofi - Weaving Shed