



Influence of Ilorin Emirate Ulama Participation in Politics and its Implications 1999 Till Date

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Abstract

The return of democratic system in 1999 sought for participation of Ulama who were generally believed to possessed maximum influence among adherents arising from the belief that any anointed candidate of Ulama will be translated into victory in the poll, the reality of which was evident in emergence of late Muhammed Lawal as Governor of Kwara State in 1999 owing to the support he received from Ulama as well as other support from political emissary. Unfortunately, crisis broke out between the Governor and his erstwhile god father late Dr. Olusola Saraki two years into his administration over the former second term bid, subsequently; the hitherto united Ilorin Emirate scholars was divided along political parties and candidates, leading to allegedly spiritual death of some erudite scholars, while some became victims of attack by political hoodlums' others, were stigmatized with negative nicknames. This study therefore inquired into the influence of Ulama's participation in politics since 1999 till date and its implications on Ilorin emirate. The study was exploratory in nature, while it made use of conceptual methods which includes the use of secondary data sources. The finding revealed that conflicts among Ulama were as a result of their political participation. We recommend that security agencies and other stakeholders pay more attention to the Ulama activities with a view to regulate Da'wah activities going into circulation via on social media and open air Da'wah.

Keywords: Da'wah, Ulama, Politics, Ilorin, Islam

1. Introduction

In time memorial, Ilorin city which houses the Kwara State headquarter has not produced a governor for the state since its creation on the 27th of May, 1967 against other districts that produced Alhaji Adamu Attah (1979- 1983) from Okene District when some part of Kogi State was parts of Kwara; Chief C. O. Adebayo (1983- 1983) from Oke- Onigbin in Isin Local Government Area of Kwara South Senatorial District and Alhaji Muhammed Shaabah Lafiagi from Lafiagi in Edu Local Government Area (1992 – 1993) when military junta of General Sanni Abacha took over the government and put an end to Lafiagi's administration. Consequently, the desire to produce a governor in 1999 became heightened among the Ilorin Emirate indigenes where every machinery was put in place to actualize these dreams, one of such strategies deployed by politicians and other stakeholders was to mobilize among other things council of Ulama in the process of electioneering campaign in other to take advantage of their large audience that was born out of respected position they occupied in the society. Accordingly, Jawondo (2012), posited that, indeed Ulama were relevant politically, as they possessed the instrument for mass mobilization, for or against the government policies.

In lieu of this, there were strong beliefs that, any anointed candidate of Ulama will automatically be translated into victory at the poll. Unfortunately, the internal wrangling that broke out between the late governor, Retired Navy Rear Admiral Muhammad Alabi Lawal and his erstwhile political godfather late Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki almost two years into his administration divided the united force of Ilorin Emirate Ulama along political parties and candidate of their choice. As a result of this scenario, verbal confrontation and insult became order of the day through their Da'wah activities in virtually all aspects of



Islamic functionaries such as, naming ceremony, wedding ceremony (Nikkah), funeral (Fid'au), birthday ceremony, launching, Maulud Nabi as well as during the thirty days month of Ramadan in virtually all the nooks and crannies of Ilorin Emirate to display their party loyalty and allegiance. This situation could have a wide-reaching implication on the political, economic and peaceful space and terrain of Ilorin Emirate. Against this backdrop, this paper focuses on political participation of Ilorin Emirate Ulama and its wider implications on the polity.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Unarguably, Ilorin Emirate, the official abode of the Kwara State capital in the North Central geo – political zone of Nigeria has its grip and central of Islamic scholarship and evangelism notably in the southern part of the country. Ilorin Emirate community is today battling with the internal wrangling of the political emancipation among Islamic scholars as a result of the present democratic era in Nigeria. Though the ultimate goal of these scholars is to promote in its entirety the teaching of Islamic education and tenets, promote the spread of Islam and also to guide the adherents to obey and uphold the teachings as contain in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith (the tradition of Holy Prophet Muhammed), it is rather unfortunate and regrettable that these clerics have been hijacked by ambitious politicians who recognize their potentiality as a potent tool of grassroots mobilization to achieve their inordinate political ambition, hence, the sharp division and ugly rivalry among the scholar/ clerics. These rather unfortunate developments in Ilorin Emirate have created a wild gulf among Muslim Ummah, as the scholars not only deviated from their evangelism mission but are rather beclouded by partisanship in the discharge of their duties in canvassing votes by way of demonstrating loyalty and support for candidates of their choices. This has led to the emergence of pro- government and anti- government Ulama, as parties in conflicts employed verbal and spiritual measure that resulted in untimely death of some prominent cleric in the Emirate. Consequently, Mosque (worship places) that are expected to be a sacred place in Islam had turned to conflict zone where politicians mobilize to attack suspected opposition worshipers, this includes some Ulama who became victim of attack by hoodlums loyal to politicians, and others were stigmatized with negative nick name and losing their prestigious position in the society. These among other burning issues and implications, which call for urgent solution, informed the conduct of this study.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this paper will:

- a. Investigate the participation of Ilorin Emirate Ulama in political activities
- b. Analysis reasons why Ulama participate in active politics
- c. Highlight the implications of Ulama participation in politics

1.3 Research Questions

- I. What is the extent to which Ulama participate in political activities in Ilorin Emirate?
- II. What are the reasons Ulama participate in politics?
- III. What are the implications of Ulama participation in politics on intra- faith harmony in Ilorin Emirate?

2. Review of Related Literatures

Conceptual Discourse

A. Ulama

The term "*ulama*" (singular *alim*) refers to the persons who possess the knowledge (*ilm*) of science at large. Traditionally this term has been applied to those scholars who are knowledgeable of Islamic traditions and Islamic law.' On the basis of their knowledge and the qualifications derived from it, the *ulama*



are perceived as being protectors of the Islamic heritage and their work has been the maintenance of Islam, Galindo (2001).

In Ilorin Emirate context, the Ulama or Aafa as they are widely or otherwise called, were categorized into various groups depending on the aspect(s) of Islamic education or religious life on which each scholar devoted the major part of his life, Abdussalam (2012). Hence, we have Islamic scholars who were and are teachers (*'Akomo -ni- kewu*), Preachers (*'Oniwasi*), spiritualists (*'Onijalabi*) or (Agbele be Olohun lowe), ascetic (*'Oniwiridi*) and those devoted to Ibadah or religious worship, leaders of public congregation prayer (*' Lemamu or Imam*); there were and are those who combined two or more of these types/ attributes and excelled in all, Jamiu (2014). Thus, we have scholars who were teachers, preachers, ascetic, spiritualist as well as leaders of public congregation prayers. It should be added that being devoted to one or more of these activities did not preclude many of them from engaging in other mundane occupations or professions in order to earn a living. This position however, explains why over the years Ilorin Ulama were vigorously known to be local and long-distance traders, cloth weavers, embroiders, warriors and scribes among others, Jimba & Otukoko (2015).

In the contemporary world, the role of the *ulama* has evolved in particular ways, but their role as the major providers of the rules that regulate daily life in society has remained unchanged. One has to bear in mind that Islam is not a monolithic system; rather it is subject to the traditions and development of each society and each country, in the same way that the political system is a result of those dynamics. The relationship between the *ulama* and government is therefore different in each country and from one community to another, Galindo (2001).

Overtime, the intellectual discourse and teachings of the Ulama have significantly contributed to debates in the Muslim public sphere, and still do so to the present day. Increasingly, the traditional scholars of Islam are becoming prominent actors in contemporary Muslim societies and politics. In support of this claim, Bamigboye (2018) and Nasir (2014) reiterated that the most distinctive feature that defines the *ulama* is their expertise in, and preoccupation with, religious, educational and legal affairs that constitute the broad ideological parameters of Islamic societies. Historically, being a member of the *ulama* establishment entailed full-time engagement with matters of scholarship and piety (learning, teaching and preaching) that left little or no time for generating an income. The lack of regular income therefore made the *ulama* reliant on the goodwill and support of the Muslim community or an influential patron. Assurance of this support appears to have been a necessary condition for the development of the *ulama* class in communities in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, Ayuba (2011).

Therefore, when a Muslim cleric arrived in an area, a mutually beneficial alliance was naturally struck between him and the ruling elite leading to the gradual integration of the *ulama* into the ruling elite in these areas. In return for the necessary permission, material comforts and assurances of personal safety and protection from their benefactors, the *ulama* deployed their mystic power, literacy skills and religious and judicial knowledge in the service of the state or influential members of the political establishment, Agunbiade (2015). This symbiosis between the *ulama* and the political class gave Islam and Islamic education the necessary footholds in Northern Nigerian cities and towns that subsequently became well-known for Islamic scholarship at different times.

Aliyu, (2015) elaborated further that, the Ulama often had to play the role of conscience of the society. Though they shun partisan politics, political affairs of the town are always within their consciousness. If political affairs began to threaten the peace, identity or legitimacy of the town, their voices would be heard through some of the more vocal members of the class. For example, in the experimental democratization of politics leading up to the independence when the identity and legitimacy of Ilorin became an issue of partisan politics, the Ulama intervened through support of the opposing political



opinions. Some allied with the populist Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) while others supported the pro-establishment Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). Another laudable event to the Ulama role of conscience of the society was when a rift occurred between Late Dr Abubakar Olusola Saraki and former Late Governor Muhammad Lawal that the former brought to power in 1999, at the return to democratic rule, both sides resorted to winning members of the Ulama to their side. Sheikh Kamalud-Deen tried to get the two politicians to agree to a truce but the two were unable to reconcile, Aliyu (2010).

B. Daw'ah

In a similar vein, Da'wah is an Arabic word, which literally epitomizes concepts of issuing a summons, making an invitation, calling on, appealing to, invocation, prayer, propaganda, missionary activity, legal proceedings and claims, Abdulwahab, (2018); Aminu, (2015). This term is often used among Muslims to describe when Muslims share their faith with others in order to teach them more about the religion or to explain to them those issues that are fundamental in Islam. Grammatically, the word represents a gerund of a verb with the triconsonantal root Da'wah meaning "to summon" or "to invite". Additionally, Da'wah has other senses in the Qur'an. In Surah (Chapter) 30:25, for example, it denotes the call to the dead to rise on the Day of Judgment. When used in the Qur'an, it generally refers to Allah's invitation to live according to His will. Thus, when used in the first centuries of Islam, it usually referred to that message and was sometimes used interchangeably with Sharī'a and dīn Kahin, (2015). Da'wah also refers to God's way of bringing believers to faith and the means by which prophets call individuals and communities back to God, Aminu (2015). Militant sub- movements interpret Da'wah as calling Muslims back to the purer form of religion practiced by Muhammad and the early Muslim community.

Hawarey, (2017) posited that Da'wah is about communicating and informing other about the right path, guiding and showing the way to religion (of Islam) and its counsel in accordance with the statement of Allah: Invite (people) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner. Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who are rightly guided (Qur'an 16:125). This Verse emphasizes disseminating Islamic Knowledge to all in accordance with wisdom and beautiful speech. Da'wah is, therefore, the activity of informing one another of the way of Allah, and accordingly, da'wah comprises teaching and educating and all forms of communication as well, Modibbo (2017).

According to Suleiman (2017), the meaning of Da'wah could be identified in two ways: first (teaching the) religion or Islam, its basic elements, facts and values and its legislation. Islam is in, reality, a complete social system, which comprises all facets of human activity and all law regulating this activity including those that involved the rights of the Lord over his servants: The second identification involves spreading, conveying and inducing or communicating and notifying the religion (i.e., inviting the non-Muslims). From the foregoing and as illustrated in the Quran, the word "*da'wah*" indicates three primary meanings: (1 worshipping God,) (2 addressing, asking and calling God, people), (3 inviting people to religion Islam or other). All of these meanings have religious connotations. However, the third one, in addition to reflecting a direct relationship between humans and deities, or among humans, also implies an intermediary agent – an inviter, or *da'i*. This study, therefore, concentrate on this third meaning of "*da'wah*" as an invitation to Islam, which makes it the function of the caliph by extending authority over Muslims outside Islamic lands and promoting Islamic unity.

The Importance of Da'wah in Islam

The Quran instructs believers to:

"Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. For your Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance" (16:125), Adewole, (2018)



In Islam, it is believed that the fate of each person is in Allah's hands, so it is not the responsibility or right of individual Muslims to attempt to "convert" others to the faith. The goal of Da'wah, then, is merely to share information, to invite others towards a better understanding of the faith. It is, of course, up to the listener to make his or her own choice. In modern Islamic theology, Da'wah serves to invite all people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, to understand how the worship of Allah (God) is described in the Quran and practiced in Islam. Some Muslims actively study and engage in Da'wah as an ongoing practice, while others choose not to speak openly about their faith unless asked. Rarely, an over-eager Muslim may argue intensely over religious matters in an attempt to convince others to believe their "Truth." This is a fairly rare occurrence; however, most non-Muslims find that although Muslims are willing to share information about their faith with anyone interested, they do not force the issue. Muslims may also engage other Muslims in da'wah, to give advice and guidance on making good choices and living an Islamic lifestyle.

Variations in How Da'wah Is Practiced

The practice of Da'wah varies considerably from region to region and from group to group. For example, some more militant branches of Islam regard Da'wah as primarily a means of convincing or forcing other Muslims to return to what they regard as a purer, more conservative form of the religion. In some established Islamic nations, Da'wah is inherent in the practice of politics and serves as the basis for state promotion of social, economic, and cultural activities. Da'wah may even be a consideration in how foreign policy decisions are made. Although some Muslim clerics do regard Da'wah as an active missionary activity aimed at explaining the benefits of the Islamic faith to non-Muslims, most modern movements regard Da'wah as a universal invitation within the faith, rather than a practice aimed at conversion of non-Muslims. Among like-minded Muslims, Da'wah serves as a good-natured and healthy discussion over how to interpret the Quran and how to best practice the faith in the best of manner. When practiced with non-Muslims, Da'wah usually involves explaining the meaning of the Quran and demonstrating how Islam works for the believer. Vigorous efforts at convincing and converting non-believers are rare and frowned upon.

C. Politics

Politics is a multifaceted word. It has a set of fairly specific meanings that are descriptive and nonjudgmental such as "the art or science of government" and "the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy" and "the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government", Merriam Webster Dictionary (Online, 2020), but does often colloquially carry a negative connotation. In view of this, Hague and Harrop (2013) described politics as the set of activities associated with the governance of a country, state or an area, and that it involves making decisions that apply to groups of members. Joseph (2014) refers to politics as achieving and exercising positions of governance—organized control over a human community, particularly a state. However, a variety of methods are deployed in politics, which include promoting one's own political views among people, negotiation with other political subjects, making laws, and exercising force, including warfare against adversaries (Brady, 2017; Birkland, 2015; James, R. & Soguk, 2014). Politics is exercised on a wide range of social levels, from clans and tribes of traditional societies, through modern local governments, religious groups/organizations, companies and institutions up to sovereign states, to the international level.

3. Overview of Political Participation of Ilorin Ulama since 1999 till date

The return to democracy in Nigeria in May 29th, 1999 brought hopes of rapid development, emancipation and political participation to Nigerian citizenry. It is pertinent to state here that, this development led to involvement of Ulama in the Emirate in politics, which most if not all the Ulama belong to either one political party or the other in support of candidates of their choice physically and spiritually. Notably, in the 1999 general election, Alhaji Muhammed Lawal of All People's Party (APP) emerged the Governor of Kwara State in a keenly competitive election over his major opposition Dr. Muhammed Alimi



Abdulrazaq of People's Democratic Party (PDP) with the support of majority of Ilorin Ulama, some whom have participated actively in his electioneering campaign through the use of Da'wah, while some supported him spiritually by offered him prayers at their homes, Mosques, Eid praying ground and other special location within and outside the Ilorin, coupled with the overwhelming support he received from his political god father Late Dr. Sola Saraki, Saraki, (2013).

Barely two years into his first term in office crisis broke out between them and instead of allowing him a second term; Late Dr Saraki introduced his son, Dr Bukola Saraki, to run in the governorship race in 2003. Due to respected position the Ulama occupies in Ilorin Emirate, both parties sought and mobilized them for political activities and their spiritual support were highly demanded.

It is however worthy of note that, this period marked the division and disunity among Ulama in Ilorin Emirate as they were sharply divided along political parties and candidates. In the buildup of 2003 governorship election Ulama adopted verbal and spiritual attacked against one and others, as it was generally believed that a prayer war ensued between the camps of both sides, leading to untimely death of some Ulama. Late Dr. Sola Saraki eventually won the election and his son Dr. Bukola Saraki ousted the then incumbent governor Lawal from power in the 2003 gubernatorial election, Aliyu (2005). This development changed the political atmosphere in Kwara State in general and Ilorin Emirate in particular, as the crisis introduced the use of political thugs and violence leading to the loss of lives and destruction of properties worth millions, family relationship and friendship were destroyed and Ulama are most affected, Alabi (2017). Unlike the previous elections in Kwara State and in Ilorin Emirate in particular, 2011 election is probably the most contentious in terms of active participation that cut- across all the segment of Ulama even among the Salafi scholars' majority of whom were not the advocate of western democracy. Their involvement was born out of issue at stake that borders on the position of Islam about woman holding the position of authority as number one citizen of an Islamic dominated Kwara state and Ilorin Emirate was. The contest was between the Distinguished Senator Rukayat Gbemisola Saraki, three terms National Assembly member (1999- 2011) and blood sister of the outgoing Governor Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki against Alhaji Abdulfatah Ahmed, the erstwhile Commissioner for Finance for Seven years. Against this background, Islamic clerics differed on the position of Islam in respect of women becoming the governor of Kwara State.

Consequently, the issue generates lots of intellectual debate among scholars from within and outside the state in which both parties remain resolute to their position, while each of the parties remained resolute and supported their views with Quranic verses and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him).

Prominent scholars who were in support of Senator Gbemisola candidate were among the following; Sheikh Habeeb Adam Abdullahi al- ilory, Sheikh Suleiman Faruq Onikijipa (al- Miskin billah), Sheikh Abdulrasak (Soheeb li- Bayan) and Dr. Abdulhamid Olohunyin. Ulama such as, Sheikh Imam Abdulrazak Aduagba, Sheikh Buhari bin Musa and Sheikh Usman Sanu- Sheu were personate against her probably on the ground of their affiliation and loyalty to Dr. Bukola Saraki, as they were vehemently against her candidate and were vocal, active and radical in mobilizing Muslim Ummah against her their Da'wah activities. Although, some Ualam maintained their neutrality, while, others who were in the majority were majorly concerned with the position of Islam on woman candidates. They all maintained that, woman fold holding such an exotic position does not have a place in Islam, Ali- Agan (2019). Eventually, the anointed candidate of outgoing governor, Alhaji Dr. Abdulfatah Ahmed overwhelmingly won the election with the support he graciously received from Ulama among other things.

Also, the dynamic of 2015 governorship elections and active participation of Ilorin Emirate Ulama was also significant. The election was between His Excellency Dr. Abdulfatah Ahmed of All Progressive



Congress (APC) who is seeking a second term in office against the candidacy of Distinguished Senator Simon Sule Ajibola of People's Democratic Party of (PDP) and Mr. Mike Omotosho of Accord Party (AP), Mr. Oyewumi Ajibola of (AA) and Mr. Alabi Kolawole of (SDP) all of whom from Kwara South Senatorial District. As usual, politicians sought the support of Ulama who were mobilized for campaign in Ilorin Emirate and indeed across State as a whole. The electioneering campaign, this period, took the dimension of Muslim- Christian candidates. Muslim clerics in the Emirate exploit the religion composition of the state and campaign to Muslim adherents to cast their vote en-mass in support of Alhaji Abdulfatah Ahmed. In his stiff campaign response, Senator S.S Ajibola employed the service of a famous Muslim musician Alhaji Ibrahim Labeka who rolls out a jingle where he enjoys Muslims faithful in the state to ignore the religious factors been capitalized on by APC to discredit Senator SS Ajibola of PDP. He further stressed that dividend of democracy depends on good governance which according to him Distinguished Senator SS. Ajibola will provide if voted for as Kwara State Governor. At the end, His Excellency, Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed won the election over the other two major contenders for the second term in office.

At the national level, the election brought the incumbent President Gooluck Jonathan against Presidents Muhammadu Buhari. The electioneering campaign also took the form of Muslim- Christian candidate by Ulama among other factors leading to victory of President Muhammadu Buhari, (The Nation news Paper, 2015). However, the coming of President Muhammadu Buhari as President of Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29th, 2015 ushered in economic recession allegedly as a result of high level of corruption exhibited by the previous administration of Dr. Goodluck Abele Jonathan and members of his cabinet, this resulted in drastic reduction in Federation allocation to the 36 states, coupled with the reduction in oil price at the international market that formed the major source of Nigeria revenue, (Punch newspaper, 2015).

To this end, Kwara State was deeply affected by this new development been a civil servant state that relied solely on the Federation allocation from the central. With this new development in the country, Kwara State Governor, under the leadership of Alhaji (Dr) Abdulfatah Ahmed, the Executive governor Kwara State became incapacitated and was unable to pay salary of civil servant as at when due, with particular reference to the Local Government staff, SUBEB staff and some selected Parastatal, such as, Water Cooperation, The Herald newspaper, Radio Kwara, Kwara Television and state owned Colleges of Education i.e. Oro, Lafiagi, Ilorin, College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies (CAILS) for almost two years Muhammed, (2017).

Prior to the 2015 election, His Excellency, Alhaji (Dr.) Abdulfatah Ahmed the Executive governor of Kwara State with his political godfather, Distinguished Senator Bukola Saraki along other governors of Sokoto State, Alhaji Aminu Tanbuwa and Engr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankaso of Kano State, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (GCFR) together with others political big wings in the country had earlier defeated from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the newly floated All Progressive Congress (APC) party, which according to their spokesperson, Alhaji Kawu Baraje, their action was born out of lack of internal democracy within PDP and to protest their displeasure over high level of corruption under President Goodluck Jonathan watch, Baraje (2014).

Consequently, Dr. Abubakar Bukokal Saraki emerged the President of the Senate on the 9th of June, 2015 in a highly controversial circumstance against the will of All Progressive Congress (APC) big win who claimed to have zoned the position to north east but Senator Abubakar Saraki went out of his way to secure the office by hook and crook, (The Nation, 2015). His emergency was immediately proceeded by allegation of corruption by Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) arises from some irregularities and inconsistent in his properties he had declared during his tenure as Kwara State governor 2003- 2011. Sadly, almost at the same time, the bank armed robbery that took place in Offa that claimed more than thirty five (35) civilian lives including four (4) police officers and a pregnant women in which Saraki name was incriminated by



the group of gang when they confessed to have been Saraki's political thugs during an interview at force headquarters Abuja, (Channel Television news, 2015).

To this end, Ulama who were loyal to the State government tried to calm the situation through the use of the Daw'ah (preaching) activities; one of such is Sheikh Muhammad Awwal (otherwise known) as Soheeb li Qur'an, who spoke extensively to justify inability of the State government in paying the state civil servant salaries, he went ahead to compare Kwara and Osun State where it was reported Governor Rauf Aregbesola is owning more than thirty five (35) month's salary due to same economic recession, (audio recording of Sheikh Muhammad Awwal 2016). Consequently, in the eyes of poverty level and frustration getting worse occasioned by non- payment of salary at the grassroots, Dr. Abubakar AliAgan and Dr. Abdulhamid Aminullahi Olohunyin both of whom were prominent Muslim clerics in the Emirate became vocal in condemning the action of the state government through their weekly Friday radio programme (Marazat Nabiy) at Radio Nigeria, Harmony F.M, Idofian between the hours of 10 and 11: am, (audio recording of Sheikh AliAgan and Dr. Olohun – Oyi 2019). This programme usually attracted thousands of listeners within the state and beyond with significant impact in mobilizing people against the government of the day that finally resulted in the downfall closely forty years of Saraki political dynasty. In addition to this, Sheikh Suleiman Dan Magoro and Ustaz Yahaya Bayero both also air a programme at Sobi radio station on Friday between the hours of 2: pm and 3: pm, similar to that of Sheikh Ali- Agan that focuses in criticizing the activities of government within the Islamic context, (audio recording of Sheikh Dan- Magoro, 2018).

Of equal prominence is the open air Da'wah of Sheikh Umar Faruq (nickname, Sohib li- Bayan) at any given opportunity that always express displeasure about the administration style of Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed and by extension his political god father, Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki in making life became extremely difficult for the people, he particularly made reference to civil servant with minor health challenges who could no longer affords to buy drugs to take care of themselves resulting to sudden death. He further maintained that, nonpayment of civil servant salaries has resulted to high rate of crime in the state as people became desperate for what they will eat, (audio recording of Sheikh Abdulrazak Da'wah 2017). Similar, late Sheikh Yahaya Solaty (Amir- li- jaiz) (d. 2018), also attributed poor administrative style of the governor Abdulfatah Ahmed and nonpayment of civil servant salaries in the state to increase in promiscuous resulting to constant conflicts within the family unite as well as high rate of divorce among couples when most husband can no longer cater for the responsibility of their family as many wives and female children resulted to prostitution as a means of survival, (audio recording of Sheikh Yahaya Solaty 2017).

As a result of the above situation in the state coupled with cross carpeting from ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) to People's Democratic Party as exemplify by the governor and his political godfather Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki the former president of the Senate, after he was discharged and acquitted of all the corruption charges against him by the apex Supreme Court of Appeal, he had already lost his followers and admirers to the opposition party of All Progressive Congress (APC) with O TO GE (enough is enough) slogan rented the air in every nooks and crannies of the state, this coupled with the support APC received from federal government, which include the security agencies, INEC officials, financial supports as well as spiritual support from large numbers of Ulama across the state. The flag bearer of All Progressive Congress (APC) Mallam Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq became victorious over Rt. Hon. Razak Atunwa of People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Dr. Abukabar Bukola Saraki who also double as Waziri of Ilorin lost to Dr. Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe in the senatorial contest from Kwara Central Senatorial district, as well, all (PDP) aspirants to the opposition party. Until recent time when a certain Hon. Agboola of (PDP) from Ilorin South won a seat at Kwara State House Assembly through a court ruling (National Pilot, 2020).



4. Implications of Ulama Participation in Politics

The participation of Ilorin Emirate Ulama in politics since 1999 that formed the focus of this paper has resulted in both positive and negative ways. To start with, majority of Ilorin Emirate Ulama that participated actively through their Da'wah activities and other wise in 1999 electioneering campaign were adequately appreciated and compensated by His Excellency, Governor Muhammed Alabi Lawal. In fact, almost every prominent Ulama in Ilorin Emirate and some selected ones across the state benefited from the car gift in year 2000, ranging from Mazda 626, Opel, Hounda Allah, Mercedes Benz, V- Boot, regular Mercedes Benz and Benz 190 depending on the status of the Ulama, Razak Lawan (2018), when majority of them had never used car before then. In addition, Ulama also enjoys the patronage of Hajj and Umurah (lesser Hajj) gift at regular interval, as well as employment opportunity both within the state and at federal establishment for their associates and family members, this including the Ramadan and Sallah gift. Also, the state Governor and other political office holders usually donated handsomely in the area construction of Mosque and Quranic schools, while some even benefited from political appointment as chairman and members of Kwara State Hajj Commission.

In this regard, Sheikh Abdulhamid Abdullahi, the Imam Imale of Ilorin one of the active scholars that was reported decorated Dr. Olusola Saraki with sword and Qur'an to during one of his campaigns in 2003 at Faagba in Magaji Ndari ward was appointed Chairman Kwara State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board 2003- 2011. Also, Sheikh Imam Abdulrazak Aduagba was appointed as members of same Pilgrims Board 2003- 2019 while Sheikh Abdulsallam Bello Babatunde was appointed in 2014- 2015 and 2017- 2018 as Special Assistance on Islamic Religious Affairs, (Cabinet office, Governor office, 2019). In addition, Sheikh Usman Sanu Sheu was made one of the Mufasiru Tafsir Gambari Mosque by his Royal Highness in recognition of his support during the rift between his Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin, his deposed chiefs and the late Governor Muhammed Lawal, despite the complain of his ill- competency from much more qualified scholars and people of that area, Abdulkadir, (2017). Shortly after the emergence of Distinguished Senator Abubakar Bukola Saraki as President of the Senate in 2015, part of the first set appointment he made, as his Senior Legislative Assistance (SLA) were sons and daughters of renowned Ulama were benefited. Also, Immediately governor Abdulrahman Abdulrakaq assumed office as Kwara State Governor on the 29th of May, 2019, he appointed Dr. Abdulhamid Aminullahi Olohunoyin as part of ad- hoc Committee members of Kwara State Muslim Pilgrims Welfares Board to oversee the activities of 2019 Hajj while Alhaji L. A. K. Jimoh Amir Hajj (leader of Kwara State contingent), (National Pilot, 2019), after he the Governor dissolved the existing board members in recognition of their contributions. More so, Dr. Abubakar AliAgan, through his Ilorin Emirate Stakeholders Forum, a social media platform he co-established with Alhaji Yinka Aluko, has received attention of His Excellency, Mallam Abdulrahman Abdulrakaq who was invited to commission some class rooms erected by the forum in Panpo village area of Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State sometime in November, 2019. His Excellency, while delivering his address at that occasion, seeks the Forum's support to partner with his administration in facilitating developmental project, as he assured them his administration readiness to support their others on-going projects across the Emirate. He instantly announced the donation of borehole in the school, (The Herald news Paper, 2019).

Ulama who specialized in open Da'wah were not left out in the scheme of affairs as many of them usually invited for government programmes to give a lecture especially during the thirty days of Ramadan period, and during celebration to mark the birthday ceremony of His Excellency's and their parents and in others related religious functions that usually come with cash incentive, Abdulganiyu (2017). Dr. Abdulkadir Sambaki another prominent Ulama in Ilorin Emirate was announced a substantive chairman Kwara State Muslim Pilgrims Welfares Board by His Excellency, Mallam Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq on the 5th of March, 2020. The negative consequence however started, when crisis broke out between the governor Muhammed Alabi Lawal and his political godfather Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki over the second term bid



of the former, the hitherto united Ilorin Emirate Ulama were divided long political parties and candidates of their choice, this period marked a turning point in the conflict and disunity among the Ilorin Emirate Ulama till date. Although, Ulama under the leadership of His Eminence, Sheikh Muhammed Kamal- Deen Al- Adaby with his eleven- men committee tried to broker peace between the leading politicians but their efforts were not crown with much expected success, Abdulaheem (2015).

As a result, this open mistrust between the two political figures in the state, Ilorin Central Mosque and Eid praying ground became hot spot for political activities where politicians mobilize to demonstrate their displeasure or otherwise declared their support for government policies in order to take the advantage of Mosque sensitivity in Muslim dominated community Ilorin was, where all well-meaning Muslim faithful converge to worship regardless of party affiliation or discrimination. In fact, starting from year 2000 when the late Governor Muhammed Lawal was stoned at Ilorin Central Mosque by worshipers when he attempted to condemn the involvement of late General Abdulkareem Adisa in the coup de' tat in company of the former Vice President Ladipo Diya and General Olarewaju. This ugly development marked a turning point in using worship place by politicians to settle their political differences, Abubakar (2015). As a result of this rather unfortunate event, governor Lawal resolved to host his own Jum'at Mosque and Eid praying ground, when he converted the edifice, he initially proposed to host world class Islamic and Arabic institution in the memories of his late mother, Hajia Rukayat Alabi Lawal. This Mosque is remarkable in hosting politicians where it served as rally point for party stalwart loyal to Governor Muhammed Lawal till today, Abdulganiyu, (2017).

As a result of recurrent open mistrust in respect to conflict relating to involvement of Muslim clerics in political activities via Da'wah, some Ulama in the Emirate suspected to have lost their lives to the spiritual warfare that was ensued from both sides of political parties. However, the mystery that surrounded the death of Sheikh Yusuf Kolo, who was then the National Missioner and Chief Imam of Ansar- Deen Society of Nigeria Kwara State Branch, Sheikh Ibrahim Eleran of Akalanbi area, Sheikh Isiaka Baba- Sare and Sheikh Nuraini both from Agbaji quarters all of whom were strong supporters of governor Muhammed Lawal were all reportedly died as a result of strange illness on account of their political participation, Manjo (2018). Apart from these, others clerics who declared loyalty for late governor Lawal and were active in one way or the other, were subsequently faced with humiliation and ridicule by victorious supporters of People's Democratic Party (PDP) after Dr. Bukola Saraki must have won the election and swear-in on 29th of May, 2003. As a result of this development, Sheikh Abdullahi Salati one of the most respected leaders of Qadirayyah Sufi order in the Emirate, during one of his open airs Da'wah; gave an account of how he was entertained when he visited Government House to break his fasting (Iftar) on invitation of His Excellency, he particularly makes reference to delicious soup he was served, on account of that, he was nicknaming Alfa Olobe meaning "(scholar that like soup)" (Audio Da'wah of Sheikh Salaty, 2003). He lost his friendship with His Royal Highness, due to rift between the Emir and late Governor Lawal when the former was allegedly threatened to depose the former if he wins the election. To this end, any Muslim clerics in the Emirate that identify with the late governor automatically become the Emir's enemy, Modibo (2010).

In a similar vein, Sheikh Ahmed Folorunsho Faagba (Hammaullah) another leader of Tijaniyyah sufi order during his life time, was also negatively affected for his open support for the late Governor Muhammad Lawal after he was reportedly boasted his name be remove from the list of Wali Allah (saint of God) the prestigious attainment among Sufi order, if Governor Lawal failed in his second term election bid. Unfortunately, after Governor Lawal gallantly lost the election, the opposition supporters and admirers loyal to Baba Saraki derogate him with abusive languages whenever is been sighted in town, one of the factors that influenced his relocation from Faabga his original abode close to the Emir's Palace to Alagbado area in Okelele quarters of Ilorin, Muhammad Bello (2005). Sheikh Muhammad Kamal- Deen, the grand Mufti of Ilorin, during one of his Da'wah session at Okekere Primary School made reference to his boosting, he therefore cautioned Muslims adherent to be mindful of their tongue especially among the Muslim



scholars (radio recording of Sheikh Kamal- Deen, 2003). Also worthy of note was, open air Da'wah credited to both Sheikh Imam Abdulrazak Aduabga and Sheikh Usman Sanu- Sheu during the crisis between the then four Baloguns, Baba Isale and as well as Magaji Aare of Ilorin against the Emir Alhaji Dr. Ibrahim Sulu- Gambari (CFR) arising from the former quest for upgrade to the status of first-class chiefs. The said Da'wah was carried out when the conflict between His Royal Highness and members of his Ilorin Emirate Council was at its peak. These duos used lots of unguarded and provocative adjectives targeted at diminishing the persons of these chiefs who were inter deposed with particular reference to the then Balogun Agba, Alhaji Abdulkareem Laro Buhari whom can best be describe as the most active in their course on account of his social status in the Emirate before his appointment and due to his position as the senior most Balogun (Balogun Agba), Bolaji Balogun (2015).

These scholars were prominent in the Emirate and were allegedly loyal to late Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki and by extension to the Emir of Ilorin. The circumstances that accounted for such Da'wah could be said to be the need to display their support and loyalty. Although, this crisis could say to be politically inclined when the Governor was allegedly a shadow supporter to the course of the Baloguns, particularly with the inclusiveness of his father, Alhaji Alabi Alasa the Magaji Aare whom the governor forcefully enthrone without due process and Dr Olusola Saraki the erstwhile governor's godfather was solidly in support of the Emir. Both scholars became a victim of attack from the children of Balogun Gambari during their open air Da'wah session at Okele and Balogun Fulani area respectively, the attack was reported result Sheikh Aduagba in hospital, Abdulkadir (2018), and they were consequently attacked by political thugs loyal to the late governor, Gani (2005). The Governor eventually conferred the status of first class traditional title on his father Alhaji Alabi Alasa and Alhaji Abdulkareem Laro, the Balogun Gambari respectively, while the remaining three Balogun's and Baba Isale, Alhaji Saka Aleshinloye were all promoted to second class status on 2nd September, 2002 but this attainment was short lifted when all of them were demoted and consequently deposed on 25th October, 2003 by His Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin during the first year in office of Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki on account of lack of due process that brought about their elevation and for their display of disloyalty, Abdulganiyu (2020).

Of equal concern was the Da'wah attributed to Sheikh Muhammad Awal, (also known as Soibu-li- Qur'an) who was stoned by the audience at the Emir's Palace, when he tried to hold a brief for the immediate past government under the leadership of Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed for is inability to pay the state and local Government workers salaries that coincide with the 2016 Ramadan period, (Audio recording of Sheikh Muhammed awwal 2016). In a similar vein, in preparation to 2019 general elections that saw to the defeat of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), Sheikh Suleiman Faruq Onikijipa (nick name Al-miskin billah) one of the Sufi super star scholar in the Emirate, was allegedly embarrassed with pebbles by party supporters of All Progressives Congress (APC) on account of his open air Da'wah where he boasted that no political opposition can be victorious over Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki, the former President of the Senate, (Audio recording of Sheikh Suleiman Faruq Onikijipa 2017). Sheikh Faruq Onikijipa's family House at Omoda Round About became a melting point for jubilation of All Progressive Congress (APC) party stalwart for several days with an attempt to burn down Onikijipa's his family house, only for the timely intervention of the Nigeria Police which arrested the unfortunate situation.

5. Conclusion

Islam did not ignore political matters because the religion is meant to guide humanity on all aspects of life, what Islam did, instead of giving a rigid and comprehensive direction in politics, is to introduce a number of principles to guide the political life of the Muslims. These principles are binding to all Muslims at all times and all places. These principles were best applied during the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs according to the conditions of their time and their environment. Thus, Muslims at different times and places may create their own model of government as long as follow



the basic principles of Islam in politics. In other words, there is no Islamic system of government, but there are many systems of government which become Islamic because they follow the Islamic principles. It was observed that Ulama were actively involved in politics especially since 1999 which has impacted on them negatively more than any other time in the history of Ilorin Emirate where relationship that existed among the Ilorin Ulama United that brought about various victories Ilorin recorded in war front and otherwise, but unfortunately politics has resulted negatively leading to the loss of properties worth millions and more disheartening is the break in friendship and family relation arising from the Ulama divided along political parties and candidates.

6. Recommendations

1. Ulama are expected to be mature in the ways and manner in which they conduct themselves with political activities, since their involvement particularly from 1999 has resulted in undermining some of them both in status and other wise. In the same manner, if at all Ulama will participate in politics, since some scholars were of the opinion that politics and Islam were different side of the same coin, that cannot not be separated, it's not expected of them be identified with a particular political office seeker, but rather remain committed, focused on purposeful through (Da'wah) aiming in shaping the personalities and character of our politicians with references from Holy Quran and Sunnah of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him).
2. Da'wah methodology approach of Ulama needed to be given a priority. In this regard, it's expected that Ilorin Emirate Council of Ulama and other concerns authority periodically organize conference, seminars and workshop bordering on Da'wah approach and counseling on what is expected from every sermon the Muslim clerics, this will go a long way to help shape the direction in which Da'wah will be conducted specially during the period of electioneering campaign. As some of the Da'wah approach adopted by Ulama were capable of plunging the state into disarray. Furthermore, there is urgent need to be in place an effective disciplinary committee saddled with responsibility of monitoring the activities of Da'wah programme by ensuring topics of discussion are sensor and strictly adhered to, violators of these laid down rules should be meted appropriate sanction.
3. Politicians and party stalwarts must desist from using place of worship as a rally point for political activities to display their loyalty by attacking opposition worshippers. In Islam, Mosque is a sacred place where Muslim faithful were expected to be safe from any form of aggression and where no one is expected to be subjected to harm or dehumanize of any form. According to Sheikh Muhammad Awwal Ali Jabata (2016), who gave a Fatwah when former President of the Senate, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki was attacked at 2016 Eid praying ground, which according to him, any Muslim(s) that orchestrate aggression on his fellow Muslim in the Mosque, has committed a great sin in the sight of Allah that, requires him to seek forgiveness from such a person and at the same time, seek repentance from Almighty Allah. It's not however enough for, any individual or group of person(s) to stigmatize or dehumanized any persons especially Ulama for declaring their support for candidate of their choice in an election. Derogating men of God with abusive and insulting languages is not part of the heritage of Ilorin Emirate and must put to an end.

It beholds on IEDPU, NACOMIO, Ilorin Emirate Youth, religious bodies and others socio- cultural organizations in the Emirate that periodically host programmes that bring together sons and daughters of the Emirate, as a matter of urgency, should be mindful of the quality of scholars to be invited for their Da'wah activities, while they should also be sensitive on the kind of topic to be given to their guests lecturers and at the same time take into consideration the season of political activities. These above organizations and groups should devise a means to checkmate and control their activities when an invited guest speaker is suspected to have derailed from the agreed topic of discussion. It's expected these



recommendations if applied will go a long way to arrest the embarrassing recurrent conflicts arising from Da'wah at the Emirs Palace and elsewhere in the Emirate.

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