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## DECLINING CULTURAL IDENTITIES OF THE GAA FULANI PEOPLE OF THE ILORIN EMIRATE, KWARA STATE

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Many societies of the world experience changes in their cultural attributes as a result of cultural assimilation over time. This is also the case with the Fulani settlements within the Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State known as Gaa. The Gaa settlements are occupied by the Fulani ethnic groups that migrated with their kiths and kin over three hundred years ago and have settled permanently as agro-pastoralist communities within the country sides. However, the Ilorin Emirate being an area of various ethnic groups predominated by the Yoruba ethnic group have significantly influenced the cultural attributes of the Fulanis and has resulted in changes in their lifestyle. The Fulanis have many of their traditions preserved in memories that are passed down from one generation to another. However, many of their traditions are gradually becoming extinct as the younger ones are

fast embracing modernization, education, intermarriage among others thereby leading to gradual loss of their cultural identities including language, diet, dressing, architecture as well as their settlement history. Therefore, this paper focuses on some of the material culture of the people that have declined and/or declining over time such as food, dress, architecture, and examines some of the measures taken by the people to ameliorate the problem. The paper concludes that if adequate measures are not put in place to check the cultural decay, total erosion of the Gaa Fulanis' culture in diet, dressing, architecture among others within the Ilorin Emirate may result into a disconnect between their future generations and their past.

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