Islam and the Transformation of Murabye - Marriage Rites Among The Gbagyi Community of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

In this article an attempt is made to examine Islam and transformation of Murabye marriage rites among the Gbagyi community of Minna area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria. This has been done by first examining the contact and arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi. Then a meaningful discussion on the courtship among the pre-Islamic Gbagyi has also been made. After these an appraisal on Murabye Marriage procedures among the pre-Islamic Gbagyi was considered. This was followed by an exploration of Islam and transformation of Murabye Marriage rites among the Gbagyi Community of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria and finally a conclusion was drawn.

Introduction

The Gbagyi ¹People are one of the political communities in the Northern part of Nigeria. The people are today found predominantly in Kaduna, Nassarawa, Niger State as well as Abuja, the Capital city of modern Nigeria.²The Gbagyi of Minna area of the present day Niger State of Northern Nigeria who are the concern of this paper live in places such as Minna, Kuta, Paigo, Bosso, Maikunkele, Guni, Galadima Kogo, Manta, Kwakuti, Ghasha, Kaffin-Koro, Munya³ etc. The introduction of Islam among the Gbagyi in the study area was an important development that brought about profound changes in the political and as well as socio-cultural practices which includes the Murabye marriage rites. ⁴ The Murabye Marriage rites among the Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria was a cultural rites which predated Islam. ⁵The cultural rites among the Gbagyi in the study area was not only unique, held in high esteem, accorded venerability but had been the practice of the people in the study area for a long time to the extent that Islam affected its practice when it arrived the area.

The Contact and Arrival of Islam Among The Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria

It is difficult to mention precisely the exact date when Islam first had contact with the Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria. For the dearth of reliable history records there is also scarcity of documented history of the contact and arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi of our area of study i.e. Minna Area of Niger State of northern Nigeria. While some suggests and date the contact and arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi in the study area to the second half of the 19th century's Islamic expedition into the region by Malam Muhammad bn. Fate alias Dendo and the conquest of some Gbagyi settlements such as Shatta, Bosso, Maikunkele, Kuta, Paigo etc. by Umaru Nagwamatse and his successors, others asserted and maintained that Islamic influence reached Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria in the last quarter of the 19th century with the arrival of Malam Muazu Sokoto in 1898. ⁶ The appearance of Malam Muazu Sokoto in the study area in the above mentioned date the tradition added that it did not only occasioned the adoption of the beautiful Muslim names by the Gbagyi in the region but the study area witnessed the spread of Islam and its ideals in villages such as Bosso, Paigo, Kuta, Maikunkele, Ghasha, Kwakuti etc.

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But contrary to the above views one oral source denied the role Malam Muhammad Ibn Fate alias Dendo, Umaru Nagwamatse, his successors and Malam Muazu Sokoto in respect of the early contact and arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of northern Nigeria. The author argued that the information in relation to the early contact and arrival of Islam among Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria are not only hinged on the legends but do not collaborate with any other sources. He however, established the contact and arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria to the 17th century with the arrival of Kanuri, Nupe, Fulani and Hausa. The 17th century date of the early contact and arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of northern Nigeria may be true because this view has an reinforcement in another tradition which make it vivid that this date, apart from being the most acceptable version of the majority of the Muslims in the study area, it remains the period in which the study area i.e Minna area of Niger state of northern Nigeria began to witnessed not only the growth of Muslim commercial settlements in towns and villages such as Kwakuti, Maikunkele, Bosso, Paigo, Kuta etc.

And the adoption of Muslim form of worship but the emergence of Muslim institutions such as Mosques i.e Tawal-Kuta mosque which was built in 1682 andfiltration of Islamic centres of learning in places like Erana, Gumi, Kaffin Koro, Kuyi etc Northwest and Southwest of Minna area of Niger state. It is worthy of note that when Islam arrived Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria in the 17th century, it met Gbagyi people in the area with their unique cultural rites. One of the cultural rites of the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of northern Nigeria which predated Islam was the Murabye - marriage rites. The Murabye is a kind of marriage rites among the Gbagyi people. It was one of the cultural rites which occupy not only a unique position but was held in high esteem among the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria. Because of the regard Gbagyi in the study area has for this rites, a special respect was reserved for Ayeri -in-laws. A Gbagyi in the study area could greet his Dada - father or Nnammother with only a slight bow but would go down right on his knees with his Bwobia - shoes removed while greeting his Ayeri - in-law and will remained in that position until he was asked by his Ayeri-in-laws to get up.

Nyigoido-Courtship Among The Pre-Islamic Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria

According to one tradition, the search for a future partner among the pre-Islamic Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria starts from ordinary Nyigido - friendship between the boy and girl. It is during Elwida - festival that Nyigido - friendship starts. Communication to Birgi - girl may be through intermediaries like Amuiko - friends. While in some cases intermediaries are not required. Also A Zamaigo - parents often engaged male and females cousins at the age of ten. This practice is common in areas such as Paigo, Kwakuti, Minna, Bosso, South West of Minna Area. The courtship according to one oral tradition could last for a minimum of two years and maximum of ten years. It is during the period that the boy will be introduced to the Birgi - girl's family. If the Birgi - girl accepts the proposal, the boy subsequently informs his A Zamaigo - parents. A representative of the A Zamaigo - parents of the boy called Wuya - is sent with gifts a symbolic gesture of seeking the hands of the Birgi - girl in marriage. The gift items include Wkajiri - one cowry shell and traditional wine called Ejo - in Gbagyi. This is accompanied by Bwebe - festivity needed to be done and form part of Murabye - marriage rites. The relevance of the above practices was to show appreciation and to thank the forebears for giving their daughter a suitor and as well as to prevent other boys from approaching or seeking the Birgiya - girl’s hand in marriage. On receiving the good tidings that his suitor has been accepted, the would be Murabi - groom would arranged for Yedea - community co-operative farming to his Ayeni-in-laws farm with eight abled - bodied men of would be Murabi - groom age at least four times in a year and the whole exercise i.e Yedea - group farming to Ayeni-in-law farm lasts between four to seven years and the practice was expected to terminate completely after two or three years after Murabi - marriage.

The Murabye - Marriage Rites Procedures Among the Pre-Islamic Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria

The year proceeding to the Murabye - marriage ceremony will witness series of Bwebe - festivity. This according to one oral account involved bathing the would be Murabi - bride on Ghiri - motar in this process she would be required to wear ceremonial piece of native woven cloth called Epa pant. As she sat on the Ghiri-motor Ebo - calabash with some fish and straw are brought. It was at this stage that she would be washed in a big
Ebo - calabash by an elderly woman and after the bath as elucidated in one tradition, the water was thrown by using small Ebo - calabash in four direction staring with the East, North, West and South22.

The above practice, the tradition added was prayers from A’nyigbango - elders that the Murango - bride be protected from her enemies from all directions23. After this Eza - onitment which was red in colour would be rubbed on the body of the Murango - bride to be and there after she would be given a new set of native woven cloth to wear. The Muraba - groom to be was expected to undergo the same rites. It is however worthy of note that these rites are not applicable to a man or woman marrying after divorce24.

In the same vein, after all of the above procedures or process, the Muraba - groom to be would be asked to pay the Ghsha - dowry, the Ghsha - dowry among the Gbagyi people in the study area was an essential ingredient before marriage can take place. Though, very important the Ghsha - dowry according to one accounts among the people in the study area differ, for instance, while the Gbagyi of Pago, Minna, Bosso, Malkunkele, Gbasha, Kwakuti and Gbago, Muraba - groom to be give the A’Zamigo - parents of the Murango - bride to be and not the Murango - bride to be herself Ejeshaku - pot of traditional wine, Awi - corn and Pisenga - cock as Ghsha - dowry25.

The Gbagyi who live at Kuta, Fuka, Dangunu, Guni, GaladimaKogo and Kurmin Gurmana on the other hand, give the Murango - bride to be Wkawashisutuasha - 1,200 cowrie shells, her A’zamigo - parents Wkawashisturah - 800 cowrie shells and a pile of fire woods for virgin girls as Ghsha - dowry26. Whatever, may be the causes of the variations and differences in the payment of Ghsha - dowry the Gbagyi people in the study area give and accepts Wkawashistuasha - 2,000 cowrie shells, Wija - bundle of guinea corn, Shwikangpara - 10 baskets of hungry rice, Ajeniku - pots of traditional wine, Amikokpanba - bottle of shear butter, A’ejeto - gourds of traditional wine, and Pisenga - cock as Ghsha - dowry27.

Indeed after the payment of the Ghsha - dowry, a day would be fixed to escort the Murango - bride to her Murabapi - groom’s house which according to one tradition was in two stages, firstly, through proper arrangement in which a day was fixed whereby aged women and men and some young girls and boys from Murabapi - groom’s house will come and collect their Nyipo - wife while the second arrangement for the escort of Nyipo - wife to her Murabapi - groom’s house was the one that entails the use of force28. In this arrangement some strong youth who were mostly Murabapi - groom’s friends caught her by force at Elxoa - festival or at her residence. In some places like Gini, Egwa, Erana, Shakwatuetc some Gbagyi girls co-operates and walked to Murabapi - groom’s house without any form of force29. Similarly, before the advent of Islam among the people i.e Gbagyi in the study area i.e Minna area of Niger State, there was the practice of elopement. This was the practice where a young man would elope with a girl who was under courtship or eloped with a woman already married to someone else. In this case, according one account, a young girl would just agree to walk away with a different man she loves and moved in to his house unannounced. The man would on the other hand without hesitation announced his marriage30. Rituals are not observed in this type of marriage, partly, because in most cases, some of the women do not stay long in this type of marriage particularly young girls.31

From the above analysis, it is evident that Murabi - marriage rites among the Gbagyi people in the study area before the arrival of Islam was not a civil contract that was regulated or governed by defined rules and regulations and that a Gbagyi woman was at liberty to give herself in marriage without the consent of her guardian. However, prior to the escort of the Murango - bride to her Murabapi - groom’s house on the following morning the Murangoda - bride’s father in company of all males member of the family and carrying along with them the Ghsha - dowry would head for his Zhibata - Shrine. Prayers will be offered to his ancestors and the Pisenga - Cock will be killed and its blood would be sprinkled on stones, sticks and mud which is the Zhibata - shrine, Eje - traditional wine and food would be offered to Zhibata - Shrine. The meat of the Pisenga - cock killed are cooked parcelled and each member of the family will receive a fragment and bit will be reserved for Muraba - groom which the Murango - will carry it back to him32.

The washing of Murangive - bride’s hand marked the beginning of the initiation of the girl into marital life. After the washing of Murangive - bride’s hand the ritual bath of the whole body of the Murango - bride would be undertaken which was done according to one oral source to do away with any kinds of dirt on her hand or evil things33. At this point, the Murango - bride would be escorted to her matrimonial home. The celebration for the arrival of the Nyigowowoi - new wife among the Gbagyi people in the study area lasts for seven days which there was dancing and drinking of Eje - traditional wine34.
On the seventh day before the departure of those who escorted the Muramp- bride to her matrimonial home, food will be prepared and take back and a small girl of twelve years will be left with Muramp- bride for four days to assist her in her domestic work. After the Mur- marriage at the end of every year the Mur- groom was to give Nyigaghan - two bundles of guinea corn to his Yezi - in-law. In addition to the above Eysah - grass was given to enable Ayi- in-laws roof their hut.

It is worthy of note that Gbagyi man in the study area before advent of Islam could support as many wives as he could for two principal reasons, firstly, to earn respect and recognition among his peers and secondly to procreate children who will assist him in his farm work. This gives the idea of the existence of unlimited polygamy among the Gbagyi people in the study area before Islam. In the case of Nyigoyabe- divorce, an integral part or aspect of Murabye - marriage rites among the Gbagyi people, as expostulated by an informant, before Islam there was no ceremony at divorce. What existed the author added was Gbagyi woman in the study area might leave her Ebahpi - husband’s house for another man without any penalty. This gives also an idea that right to divorce resides in the women and not man among the Gbagyi in the study area before Islam. The death of Ebah - husband is another important aspect in the analysis of Murabye marriage rites among the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria. Immediately, it was confirmed among the people that Nyigzah - woman’s husband was dead, the Nyig - wife would be made to leave or vacate her deceased Ebah - husband’s house and she would not return to that house until after the entire interment exercise of her deceased Ebah - husband. This was so, because of the aged long belief current among the Gbagyi before Islam that if the Nyig - wife by accident or mistakenly sees the corpse of her deceased Ebah - husband she would follow suit i.e die.

However, in the same vein, after the completion of the interment rites of her deceased Ebah - husband, the Nyig - wife would return to her deceased Ebahpi - husband’s house and enter another interesting aspect or stage in GbagyiMura - marriage rites called or known as Nyidha - widowhood. The Nyidha - widowhood was a period set aside for a Gbagyi woman in the study area for mourning and lasts for three months. In the state of Nyidha - widowhood, the Nyidha - widow was expected to wear GdidZidhi - black hand woven cloth and would be confined to a particular room inside her deceased Ebahpi - husband’s house. During the period, Nyidha - widow’s movement would be restricted and domestic works such as cooking, sweeping, washing etc would be forbidden for her. Equally, her hair would be shaved and she would be forbidden from answering any greetings and she would not take any food from anybody outside the room she was being confined to except the person greeting or given her the food entered inside the room she was being confined. On the very day the Nyidha - widowhood expired, Pisngja - Cock, Bukuzidhi - black he goat and Eje - traditional wine would be used for sacrifice. The purpose of the rites was to thank the forebears for protecting her throughout the period of Nyidha - widowhood and in addition ward off to divorce her from the excessive thinking of her deceased Ebah - husband. It was on this very day according to one tradition that her hair will be plaited, different kinds of food would be prepared for her and her parents, relatives and well wishers would present her with gifts both in cash and kind.

Unlike what was obtained in some African societies whereby a woman after the death of her Ebah - husband become the property of the family that was to be inherited along side with other properties left behind by her deceased Ebah - husband and forced to marry any member of the deceased Ebahpi - husband’s family. However, among the Gbagyi in the study area, the situation was completely different. After the expiration of Nyidha - widowhood, she seized to be a member of her deceased Ebahpi - husband’s family. She was consulted whether she wants to remain with her deceased Ebahpi - husband’s family. If she answered in affirmative she would be asked to choose among the younger brother’s of her deceased Ebah - husband. She was on the other hand not to choose among the elder brothers of her deceased Ebah - husband to remarry for it contradict the customs and traditions of the Gbagyi in the study area for an elder brother to remarry the Nyidha - widow of his deceased younger brother. It was however, lawful for the younger brother to remarry the Nyidha - widow. On the other hand Nyidha - widow was at liberty to decline not to marry anybody from her deceased Ebahpi - husband’s family.

Perhaps, if the choice was made, the marriage would be consummated, between the Nyidha - widow and the younger brother of her deceased Ebah - husband. It is instructive to note that on a serious note or ground the younger brother who is now the Ebah - husband to his deceased brother’s Nyidha - widow be allowed to either touched or make use of the left behind properties such as clothing materials and...
farm implements belonging to his deceased elder brother, particularly, if the deceased elder brother has left behind a child/children.

This become necessary according to one oral account it was meant to protect the child/children of the deceased elder brother from bad or evil omen that might befall him/her them if the younger brother should make use of the left behind properties of his deceased elder brother45.

In the case of the treatment and status of Gbagyi woman in the study area before Islam, the Gbagyi women were not accorded any respect and recognition but relegated to the background. They were treated little better than slaves, forced to work on their Eebba - husband’s farm, parades the streets, markets, public places with transparent dress, no Hijab - covering their person and were famous for brewing and selling of Eje - traditional wine46. Indeed, this was the state of affairs as regards to the Murabye - marriage rites among the Gbagyi of Minna area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria before Islam. But with the advent of Islam among the people i.e the Gbagyi Murabye - marriage rites become Islamized.

**The Islamization of Murabye - Marriage Rites Among The Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria**

Though, Islam is said to have reached the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State in the 17th Century, the period of the twentieth century however, will remained mainspring and remarkable in the history of Islam among the Gbagyi. The period witnessed the conversion campaigns47 led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto48 among the Gbagyi in the study area from 1963. This conversion campaigns among the Gbagyi people in the study area led to the Islamization of their socio-cultural ceremonies including the Murabye. The Murabye - marriage rites, an important social institution among Gbagyi in the study area were transformed to conform to the tenets of Islam. Certain cultural practices that were considered repugnant to Islamic teachings or un-Islamic were stopped. For instance, during courtship, presentation of Eje - a traditional wine is replaced with dates, kolanuts, sweets and any other things approved by Islam. This explains that Muslim should give lawful thing as gift to precede marriage contract and abstain from presenting anything unlawful that are not only forbidden in Islam but cannot be owned, sold and bought by a Muslim. Addressing the Muslims on this issue

Allah (SWT) says:

Whatever the messenger brought to you take hold of it and whatever he forbids you abstain from it. 49In the case of Mahr - dowry, the Gbagyi in the study area now gives Mahr dowry in both cash and kind and in any other valuable things sanctioned by Islam. This has replaced the former practice of giving Agejnu - gourds of traditional wine,A’ejegbabo - pots of traditional wine and a pile of firewood to the girl’s family50 the old practice is not only repugnant and unacceptable that contradict the principle of Islam but it remained an action/deeds that cannot meet the vital condition of Allah (SWT), the most High acceptance and reward for all good deed. This corroborates the saying of the Prophet(SAW) that: Verily Allah is good and He does not accept but what is good 51

In addition, un-Islamic practices like a young man eloping with married or unmarried woman, woman walking away with a man she loves and move into his house unannounced in the name of marriage and woman giving herself in marriage without the consent of her parents among the Gbagyi gave way for lawful marriage of Islam and Gbagyi realized that there is no valid marriage without the consent of a guardian.52 On this issue, Allah (SWT) declared thus: Wed them with the leave of their owners.53

**The Prophet (SAW) also says:**

Any woman who got married without the permission of her guardian would be considered null and void.54Similarly, on the weeding day Muslim scholars are invited to preside over the consummation of marriage which replaced the old practice of conducting marriages in Zhibata - shrines. In the past, the MurangiDah - bride’s father invites people mostly his relatives and carried along with them Eje - traditional wine, Psirin - cock, Tokazu - a black male goat etc to his Zhibata - shrine and offered sacrifices to inanimate objects, such as stones, heap of sand, sticks etc. This gives an idea of secret marriage consummation among the people in the study area before Islam. Islam is totally against consummation of secret marriages but enjoins it adherents on the other hand to expressly, publicly conduct their marriages and with at least two adult witnesses. In relation to this, the Prophet (SAW) says: And there is no marriage except with permission of guardian, payment of dower and two reasonable witnesses. 55
On the practice of polygamy, Gbagyi in the study area have adopt the Islamic practice of keeping up to four wives only as against the old tradition which places no limitation to the number of wives a Gbagyi man could marry or support. In the new order, the Gbagyi in the study area now keep or marry up to four wives concurrently as allowed by the Islam and maintain not only justice among them but equality as well. This practice corroborates the saying of Allah (SWT) that: Then marry women of your choice two, three or four. But if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them then only one. The Prophet (SAW) in a Hadith says: Choose four out of them and give up all others. As regard to divorce, the Gbagyi in the study area have adopted the Islamic system of divorce which impetus reconciliation, arbitration and compromise whenever possible before pronouncement of divorce. In this regard Allah (SWT) says: If you fear a break between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers; if they seek to set things aright, Allah will cause their reconciliation: for Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.

In addition, in the new system of divorce i.e Islamic, husbands initiate divorce proceeding, Gbagyi woman also in the new system may seek for divorce if she has a case but needs to be approved by elders or court after thorough scrutiny. This practice agrees with the statement of Allah (SWT) that: If a wife fears cruelty of desertion on her husband’s part there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men’s souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good practice self restraint, Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do. The Islamic divorce system as a whole has replaced the unceremonial system of divorce among the Gbagyi. On Iddah - mandatory waiting period before re-marry in Islam, though, completely absent among the Gbagyi but with the introduction and intrenchment of Islam among the people the Iddah Islamic system of waiting period is now adopted by the Gbagyi. In the study area the Gbagyi women are seen after dissolution of their marriages observing the prescribed three months mandatory periods before remarry and under the custody and proper care of their former husband as enjoined by Islam. This is in accordance with the statement of Allah (SWT) that: The divorce women shall wait concerning themselves for three monthly periods. Similarly, the Prophet (SAW) says:

Complete your Iddah periods in the house of Maktum. In relation to widowhood, the Gbagyi widows observed the period of four months ten days prescribed by Islamic law. This is in line with what Allah (SWT) says: If any one of you die and leave widow behind; they shall wait concerning themselves four month ten days whenthey have fulfilled their term, there is no blame on you if they dispose of themselves in a just and reasonable manner. And Allah is well-acquainted with what ye do. This new practice on the other hand has replaced the old practice of one hundred and twenty days which was accompanied with the observation of certain traditional rites and rituals. In the case of seclusion Hijab - purdah called Nyigogudnabwe in Gbagyi, seclusion was completely absent among the Gbagyi in the study area and therefore was not practiced. But with the arrival of Islam among the Gbagyi in the study area, the Islamic Hijab and Purdah seclusion one of the integral part of muslim marriage was introduced.

The Islamic Hijab and Purdah seclusion has now been adopted and institutionalized among the Gbagyi women in the study area. The held negative notion by the Gbagyi women in the study area that their husbands adopted Hijab and Purdah seclusion to harm, keep them within the four walls of their rooms, restrict their movements and denied them certain rights did not only changed but died down. In addition, the Gbagyi women in the study area are now zealous about Islamic Hijab and Purdah seclusion and discovered that the philosophy behind the adoption of the Islamic Hijab and Purdah seclusion by their men is solely to protect their chastity, and to bring or put an end to their parading the streets, markets and public places in transparent dress without Hijab covering their persons. To this end Allah (SWT) says:

And stay quietly in your houses, and make not dazzling display like that of former times of ignorance; and establish regular prayer, and give Zakat and obey Allah and his Messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you; ye members of the Family and make you pure and spotless. The prophet (SWA) also says: Oh! A smaw when a girl reached puberty it not proper that anything on her should remain exposed except her face and hands. Consequently, on the treatment and status of Gbagyi woman after marriage, the Islamic manner of treating their wives has been adopted by the Gbagyi. Instead of the Gbagyi to treat their wives like slaves and forced them to do heavy work on their farms, they now treat them in accordance with the dictates of Islam.
This concords with the statement of Allah (SWT) that: Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which Allah bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter and with what they may spend out of their possession. And the righteous women are devoutly obedient ones who guard the intimacy Allah has ordained (to be) guarded.

Similarly, the Prophet (SAW) says: The most excellent of you is he who is best in treating his wife.

The Gbagyi wives now have gained recognition for Islam have give them equality with men and conferred on them rights which were exclusively enjoined by males. The Gbagyi women at present are not only in garment of dignity, honour and responsibility but the brewing and selling of Eje—traditional wine, on other hand, has seized to rule supreme among them.

Conclusion

The spread and entrenchment of Islam among the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria especially through the conversion campaigns led by the premier of the defunct Northern Nigeria in the 60s has transformed the aspect of socio-cultural practices, such as marriage rites, the elements of cultural practices in Gbagyi marriages such as courtship, dowry, polygamy, divorce, widowhood and the treatment and status of Gbagyi women in line with Islamic principles. To this end, the organization and conduct of religious ceremonies such as marriage rites in line with the customs and traditions of the Gbagyi had collapsed and Muslim marriage procedures, its rules and regulations including observances have been institutionalized and accepted holistically as supreme and life among the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State of Northern Nigeria.

Endnotes

6. Malam Muhammad bn. Fate alias Dendo was a flag bearer of Shaykh Uthman bn. Foduye who was said have established Bida Emirate in the 19th century.
8. Malam Muazu Sokoto, was an itinerant Islamic Scholar who arrived Gbagyi land of Paigo in 1898. He was appointed as a judge at Bosso and later served as mediator between laborers in the construction of railway lines in the colonial Minna.
11. Ibid.
16. Byanyiko, Topics on Gbagyi History, op.cit., P.15
17. Malam Musa Bazhe, Paigo, Minna, Niger State, 12th April, 2004
18. Shekwo (Dr.), ‘Traditions of Gwari’, op.cit., P.48
20. Malam Wubwa D naje, Paigo, Minna, Niger State, 5th February, 2004
21. B. Galadima, Gbagyi As A Native, Famous Publishers, Minna, 2000, P.9
22. Malam Maku Kafa, Kuta, Minna, Niger State 15th April, 2005
23. Shekwo (Dr.), ‘Traditions of Gwari’ op.cit., P.47.
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Malam Wumenze Shabwa, Sayako, Minna, Niger State, 18th June, 2003
27. Malam Shaba Kwatu, Gbaiganu, Minna, Niger State, 25th July, 2004
28. Malam Mindayi Shagabe, Maikunkele, Minna, Niger State, 10th May, 2005
29. Galadima, Gbagyi as a Native, op.cit., P.22
33. Malam Maku Baje Shagabe, Paigo, Minna, Niger State, 10th October, 2003
34. Ibid
35. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. Malam Kuregbe Shazhi, Kuta, Minna, Niger State, 5th May, 2003
38. Malam Lani Ghani, Dangunu, Minna, Niger State, 6th October, 2003
39. Ibid
41. Ibid
42. Malam Najenu Shemu, Gurmana, Minna, Niger State, 5th February, 2004
43. Sada, Gbagyiza: History and Culture of the Gbagyi Speaking People, op.cit., P.22
44. Malam Maku Shaba Butu, Paigo, Minna, Niger State, 17th August, 2003
45. Ibid
46. Gada and Zakari, op.cit., p.20
47. The conversion campaigns was launched in the Northern region of Nigeria including Gbagyi land by Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto in the early 60’s. For more on Sardauna’s Conversion Campaigns among the Gbagyi of Minna Area of Niger State, See I.A. Zakari, ‘SirAhmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto’s Conversion campaigns and spread of Islam among Gbagyi people in Minna Chieftdom’, M.A. Dissertation, Department of Islamic Stidies, Usmanu Danfodiyo, University, Sokoto, 2006. PP. 53 - 60
48. Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto was the premier of Northern Region of Nigeria October, 1954 - 15th January, 1966. He was assassinated during the first military coup of 1966. For more on Sardauna’s biography, see J.N. Paden, Ahmadu Bello: The Sardauna of Sokoto Values and Leadership in Nigeria, Alhuda Huda Press, Zaria, 1986, PP. 67 - 100 and also see ‘The Life and Time of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto’, Nigeria vanguard Lagos, 3rd July 1986, P. 8.
49. Qur'an 69:7
50. Malam Sadiq Musa, ChanChaga, Minna, Niger State 5th, March, 2003
52. Mallama Aisha Musa, Gwada, Minna, Niger State, 6th January, 2004
53. Qur’an 4:25
56. Alhaji Musa Sulaiman, Erana, Minna, Niger State, 5th May, 2003
57. Qur'an 4:3.
58. M.F. Abd al-Baqi (ed.), Al-Muwatta Imam Malik, Kitab Al-Sha'b, Cairo, 1951, p.25.
59. Qur'an 4:35.
60. Mallama Aisha Musa, Gwada, Minna, Niger State, 6th January, 2004
62. Malam Abubakar Shehu, Gbasha, Minna, Niger State. 16th February, 2005
63. Qur'an 2:228.
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