

The Contribution of Gbagyi Women and Culture on the Economic Development of Bwari Area Council, Abuja. (1999 – 2010)

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Abstract

The paper assesses the Contribution of Gbagyi Women to the Economic growth of the Bwari area Council, Abuja. (1919 – 2010). Gender roles and responsibilities have long been an integral part of Gbagyi culture. Traditionally, women have been assigned domestic duties, such as household management, childcare, and food preparation. By extension have traditionally been engaged in activities such as farming and trade as an important economic activity. These gender roles reflect the patriarchal nature of Gbagyi society and have shaped the experiences and opportunities available to women within their communities. The Paper also examines evolving dynamics of gender roles, women's agency, and the impact of changing societal contexts on Gbagyi traditional practices. Secondary sources were used during the course of the research, and the information gotten was collected and analyzed qualitatively. The research finds out that the Gbagyi people traditionally practice subsistence agriculture craftsmanship, this study has the potential to inform policy interventions and community initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering Gbagyi women in Bwari. Overall, the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the intersection between traditional practices, gender dynamics, and women's empowerment within the Gbagyi society of Bwari. The paper concludes that Gbagyi people have also engaged in trade and commerce, with some members of the community running small businesses like shops and restaurants. Recently, the number of Gbagyi people working in government and other formal employment sectors, as well as in the development of small-scale industries in the area.

Keywords: Gender roles, Cultural heritage, Economic Empowerment, Sustainable development.

Introduction

Bwari is a local government area located in the northern part of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria. It is situated on the southern end of the Jos Plateau with an area of 3,760sq. km. The terrain of Bwari is characterized by hills, valleys, and plains, and it is located at an altitude of 477 meters above sea level¹ The climate of the area is tropical with two seasons: rainy and dry respectively characterized by heavy rainfall from April to October and dry season from November to March. The dry season is marked by dusty and harmattan winds that blow across the region. Bwari has a tropical savannah climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. During the rainy season, Bwari

¹A. I. Ibrahim, "A climatological analysis of Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria" Journal of Environmental Science, Toxicology and Food Technology, (2015) 1-7.



receives an average of 1,100 mm of rainfall, while the dry season is characterized by dry and dusty harmattan winds. Temperatures in Bwari generally range from 24 to 34 degrees Celsius throughout the year. Among other attributes, Bwari is notable with mountains and hills around. Over time, these sites have become popular for both tourist attractions and relaxation. They include the following attractions;

- i. Ushafa Hills: This is a popular tourist attraction; these hills are located in the northeastern part of Bwari and are home to the Ushafa Pottery Village.
- ii. Zuma Rock: With about 725 meters in height, is located on the outskirts of Bwari and is a popular landmark in the region.
- iii. Aso Hill: located on the northern edge of Bwari and is one of the highest points in the Federal Capital Territory.
- iv. Kwali Hills: These hills are located in the southeastern part of Bwari and are known for their scenic beauty and hiking trails.

Over time, with her attributes, there have been notable historical events that have shaped the traditional practices in Bwari. In 1999, the establishment of Bwari Area Council was created as part of the Nigerian government's efforts to decentralize power and improve local governance.² With further efforts in 2000, the federal government of Nigeria established the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) to oversee the development of Abuja and its surrounding areas, including Bwari. This marked a significant shift in the management and governance of the area.³ The Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) launched a campaign to clean up the city, including Bwari was introduced in 2003. The campaign involved enforcing environmental regulations and removing illegal structures and waste dumps.⁴

On a sad note, in 2007, Bwari was hit by severe flooding that caused widespread damage to homes and infrastructure. The flooding was caused by heavy rains that overwhelmed the drainage systems in the area.⁵ In 2009, Bwari was the site of a major inter-ethnic clash between the Gbagyi and Fulani communities. The clash resulted in several deaths and the displacement of people from both communities.⁵ Bwari Area Council is home to diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. The indigenous people of the area are the Gbagyi people, who make up the majority of the population. Although the Gbagyi people are predominant in Bwari. Overtime, migration has poised the diversity of accommodating other ethnic groups in the area including the Hausa, Fulani, and Igbo people which have constituted the general population of the people in Bwari.

²"Bwari Area Council Inaugurated," The Guardian, July 1, 1999, sec. News, <https://guardian.ng/news/bwari-area-council-inaugurated/>.

³A. Ikelegbe, "Federalism, local government and rural development in Nigeria: A case study of Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory", University Press PLC (2011), 213-238.

⁴N. Onyekpe, "Environmental sanitation in Abuja: The challenges and prospects of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB)", Nigerian Journal of Environmental Sciences and Technology, (2006), 49-59.

⁵E. O. Ezeani, "Inter-ethnic conflict and state response in Nigeria: A study of the Gbagyi-Fulani conflict in Bwari, Abuja", Journal of Asian and African Studies, (2011), 659-676.

There have been different reforms for religious tolerance amongst her people owing to the current diversity she accommodates, but there had to be a sad occurrence. In 2010, Bwari experienced a religious crisis that resulted in the death of several people and the displacement of many more. The crisis started when a group of Muslim worshipers alleged that a Christian man had desecrated the Quran, which led to a violent clash between the two religious groups.⁶ With her richness, the scope of this study is, Women and Gbagyi traditional practice in Bwari whilst holding into cognizance the geography, weather conditions, and historical events between 1999 and 2010.

Gender roles and responsibilities have long been an integral part of Gbagyi culture. Traditionally, women have been assigned domestic duties, such as household management, Childcare, and food preparation. Men, on the other hand, have traditionally been engaged in Activities such as farming, hunting, and community leadership. These gender roles reflect the Patriarchal nature of Gbagyi society and have shaped the experiences and opportunities available to women within their communities. Traditions are cultural practices, beliefs, and values passed down from generation to generation within a community⁷, and are typically protected and enforced through prohibitions, fines, taboos, and superstitions. While traditions may serve as a deterrent for violations, they may also be resistant to change and can perpetuate harmful practices that result in physical, psychological, Social, and mental harm.⁸ The experiences of women within Gbagyi society and how traditional practices influence their lives. They have a rich cultural heritage that encompasses various traditional practices, including social customs, religious beliefs, and gender roles. The Gbagyi people of Bwari-Abuja have a rich cultural heritage that includes traditional Practices and beliefs related to gender roles and norms.

Challenges and opportunities arise within the context of Gbagyi traditional practices. Limited access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare services have been identified as significant challenges faced by Gbagyi women. The patriarchal nature of society and traditional gender roles may restrict women's autonomy and limit their participation in decision-making processes. However, it is important to note that the experiences of Gbagyi women may vary within different communities and over time. Efforts have been made to empower Gbagyi women and challenge traditional gender norms. Organizations and activists, such as the Gbagyi Women Development Association, have emerged to advocate for women's rights and promote gender equality within Gbagyi communities. Education and skill-building programs, as well as microfinance initiatives, have been implemented to enhance women's economic independence and promote their social empowerment.

⁶ A. Ogunbodede. "The Bwari Religious Crisis of 2010: An Appraisal", *Journal of Social Sciences* 30, no. 2 (2012), 129-137.

⁷ C. Longman & T. Bradley (eds.), *Interrogating Harmful Practices: Gender, Culture and Coercion*, (Routledge, 2015), 11-30.

⁸T. O.Omoniyi "Appraisal of Harmful Traditional Practices in Nigeria: Magnitude, Justifications and Interventions." *Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education (JSHE)* 1, no. 1 (2020), 67-78.

Given the significance of traditional practices and their impact on women's lives, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of Gbagyi women within the context of these practices. By exploring the roles, challenges, and changes experienced by Gbagyi women about traditional practices.

Socio-Cultural practices among the Gbagyi in Bwari area council Abuja

The Gbagyi people are an indigenous ethnic group found in Nigeria, specifically in the Bwari area council. The Gbagyi people have unique socio-cultural practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. Some of the socio-cultural practices of the Gbagyi people, including their religion, marriage customs, and traditional festivals will be looked at.

- i. Religion: The Gbagyi people are primarily Christians, but they also practice traditional religions. Their traditional religion involves the worship of ancestral spirits and gods, they sometimes have control over some aspects of the life of the people. The Gbagyi people hold regular rituals and ceremonies to appease these spirits and gods⁹.
- ii. Marriage Customs: The Gbagyi people have a unique way of conducting marriages. If the woman agrees, a dowry is paid to the woman's family. After the dowry is paid, the couple can then proceed with the wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony is usually a big celebration, involving the whole community¹⁰.
- iii. Traditional Festivals: The Gbagyi people have several traditional festivals that they celebrate throughout the year. One of the most significant festivals is the Kafere festival, which is celebrated annually in August. During this festival, the community comes together to offer sacrifices to the ancestral spirits and gods, and to celebrate their cultural heritage¹³¹¹.
- iv. Economic Activities: The economic activities of the Gbagyi people are closely tied to their agrarian lifestyle. Agriculture is the primary occupation, with farming being the mainstay of their economy. The Gbagyi cultivate crops such as yam, millet, maize, and cassava, utilizing both traditional and modern farming techniques. Additionally, livestock rearing, including cattle, goats, and poultry, is an important aspect of their economic activities. These agricultural pursuits not only provide sustenance but also serve as sources of income and social cohesion within the community.
- v. Community Organization and Governance: The Gbagyi people have a well-organized social structure that includes traditional leadership and governance systems. The traditional ruler, known as the "Esu," serves as the custodian of Gbagyi customs and traditions and acts as a mediator in community affairs. The council of elders, comprising

⁹M.Jibrin "The Role of Ancestral Spirits in Gbagyi Traditional Religion", International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research, 4(1), 1-8, (2016).

¹⁰A.Musa, "The Role of the Amanyanabo in Gbagyi Political System. Journal of African Political Studies", 387-400, (2018).

¹¹A.Gani, "The Significance of Kafere Festival in Gbagyi Culture. Journal of Nigerian Studies and Development", 45-55, (2020).

respected individuals within the community, assists in decision-making and conflict resolution. This hierarchical structure ensures social order, promotes unity and upholds the cultural heritage of the Gbagyi people.

- vi. Gender Roles and Relationships: Gender roles and relationships among the Gbagyi reflect a patriarchal society where men traditionally assume leadership positions and engage in activities such as farming and hunting. Women primarily undertake domestic responsibilities, including childcare, food preparation, and household management. However, it is important to note that changes in societal dynamics have influenced the roles and empowerment of women within Gbagyi communities, with increasing recognition of women's contributions and efforts towards gender equality.
- vii. Education and Cultural Preservation: Education plays a vital role in preserving Gbagyi culture and traditions. While access to formal education has improved over the years, efforts are being made to incorporate Gbagyi cultural knowledge into the curriculum and promote the teaching of indigenous languages. Cultural preservation initiatives, such as folklore storytelling, traditional music, and dance performances, help pass on ancestral wisdom, values, and practices to younger generations.

The socio-cultural practices among the Gbagyi people in the Bwari Area Council of Abuja showcase a vibrant cultural heritage deeply rooted in communal living, traditional beliefs, and agricultural livelihoods. By understanding and appreciating these practices, we gain insights into the Gbagyi society's social fabric, its cultural identity, and the values that shape their collective experiences. As Gbagyi communities continue to navigate social changes and modernization, efforts towards preserving their cultural heritage, promoting inclusivity, and empowering all members of the community remain crucial for maintaining a harmonious and prosperous society.

Economic Activities among the Gbagyi people of the Bwari area council Abuja

Bwari Area Council is a local government area located in Abuja. It is home to a diverse population engaged in various economic activities that sustain their livelihoods. The economic activities among the people of Bwari Area Council, including agriculture, trade, and services will be analyzed including, the challenges and opportunities faced by these economic actors and their impact on the local and national economy.

- i. Agriculture: Agriculture has remained one of the main economic activities in the Bwari Area Council. The area has fertile land and favorable climatic conditions that support the cultivation of crops such as yam, cassava, maize, and vegetables¹². According to a survey conducted by the Bwari Area Council Agricultural Development Program, over 70% of the population is engaged in farming activities.

¹², A. Adegboyega, "Agricultural potential of Bwari Area Council", Nigerian Tribune, (2018).

However, the farmers face several challenges, including inadequate access to credit, lack of modern tools and equipment, and poor infrastructure.¹³

Despite these challenges, agriculture remains a critical source of livelihood for many households in the Bwari Area Council.

- ii. Trade: Trade is another significant economic activity in Bwari Area Council. The area is strategically located along the Abuja-Kaduna expressway, making it a hub for transportation and commerce. Traders engage in the buying and selling of various goods, including foodstuffs, textiles, and electronics¹⁴. Some of the popular markets in Bwari Area Council include the Bwari Main Market and the SabonGari Market. However, traders face challenges such as high taxes, insecurity, and competition from neighboring markets.¹⁵ Despite these challenges, trade continues to contribute significantly to the local economy.
- iii. Services: Services are also an essential economic activity in Bwari Area Council. The area has a growing population that demands various services, including healthcare, education, and hospitality. Healthcare services are provided by public and private hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies¹⁶. Education services are provided by primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Hospitality services are provided by hotels, restaurants, and event centers. However, the provision of services in the Bwari Area Council is hindered by inadequate infrastructure and skilled personnel¹⁷. Despite these challenges, the services sector remains a vital contributor to the local economy.

Ultimately, the people of Bwari Area Council engage in various economic activities that sustain their livelihoods and contribute to the local and national economy. Agriculture, trade, and services are the main economic activities in the area, with each facing its unique challenges and opportunities. While there is room for improvement in the infrastructure, financing, and regulatory environment, the resilience and creativity of the economic actors in the Bwari Area Council offer hope for a better future.

Economic and Cultural Preservation among the Gbagyi Women in Bwari, Abuja.

- i. Economic Contributions: In the economic sphere, Gbagyi women make significant contributions to the community's livelihood. They are actively involved in agricultural activities, cultivating

¹³M. Aliyu, (2019) *"Constraints to agricultural development in Bwari Area Council"*, Unpublished thesis, University (2019).

¹⁴F. Ojo, *"Economic Assessment of Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja"*, Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People, 54-65, (2021).

¹⁵U. M. Gwarzo., *"Challenges and Opportunities of Market Women in Bwari Area Council of Abuja, Nigeria"*, International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 240-251, (2018).

¹⁶J. O. Odo, *"Healthcare Service Delivery in Bwari Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria. International"*, Journal of Health Sciences and Research, 23-33, (2017).

¹⁷M. A. Sani, *"Infrastructural Challenges and Economic Development in Bwari Area Council, FCT, Abuja"*, International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology, 90-98, (2021).

crops, tending to livestock, and participating in food processing and preservation. Gbagyi women's expertise in farming techniques, plant knowledge, and food production plays a vital role in sustaining the community's economic well-being. Additionally, women engage in small-scale trading and craft-making, contributing to the local economy. Agriculture and Food Processing: Gbagyi women actively participate in agricultural activities, including planting, harvesting, and processing crops. They cultivate various food crops such as millet, yam, maize, and groundnut. Gbagyi women are also involved in food processing activities like pounding grains, grinding flour, and preparing traditional meals¹⁸Gbagyi women actively participate in agricultural activities, which form a significant part of their livelihood. Women contribute to land preparation, sowing seeds, weeding, harvesting, and food processing. Their knowledge of traditional farming techniques, plant cultivation, and seasonal patterns is vital for ensuring successful agricultural production.

- ii. Cultural Preservation: Gbagyi women are custodians of cultural heritage and are responsible for preserving and transmitting traditional knowledge, skills, and practices. They play a central role in the passing down of oral traditions, folklore, storytelling, and traditional songs. Gbagyi women's craftsmanship in pottery, weaving, and beadwork serves as a means of preserving cultural aesthetics and craftsmanship, while also providing a source of income and cultural identity. Gbagyi women are skilled in various traditional crafts such as pottery, weaving, basketry, and beadwork. They create intricate designs and functional items using natural materials, showcasing their artistic abilities and preserving cultural heritage. Gbagyi women create intricate pottery designs, weave baskets, mats, and fabrics, and produce beautiful beadwork. These crafts serve as both utilitarian and artistic expressions, reflecting the cultural aesthetics of the Gbagyi people. Gbagyi women's craftsmanship is highly valued and contributes to cultural preservation and economic empowerment.

¹⁸N. B. Abdullahi, "Cultural Women and Gbagyi National Development", Journal of Developing Country Studies, 5(6), 114-122, (2015).

Figure 1: A group of Gbagyi Women of the Bwari area council of Abuja.



Source: <https://www.theechoesofhope.com/2023/07/22/the-gbagyi-people-of-north-central-nigeria/gbagyi-women/>

Economic Impacts of Women on the Development of Bwari Area Council.

The economic impacts of women's traditional practices on the Gbagyi people in Bwari Area Council, Abuja, can be observed in several ways. These practices often involve various economic activities that contribute to the livelihoods of individuals and the overall economic development of the community. Here are some key economic impacts:

- i. **Farming and Food Processing.** They engage in farming activities, such as the cultivation of crops, vegetable gardening, and livestock rearing. These activities provide food for the household, generate income through the sale of surplus produce, and contribute to the local food supply.
- ii. **Small-Scale Enterprises:** Gbagyi women are involved in various small-scale enterprises, such as handicraft production, weaving, pottery making, and traditional textile production. These activities generate income for the women and their families, contribute to local trade and markets, and preserve traditional craftsmanship.
- iii. **Trading and Market Participation:** Women are active participants in local markets, both as traders and consumers. They engage in the buying and selling of agricultural produce, crafts, and other goods. Their involvement in trade stimulates economic activity, fosters entrepreneurship, and contributes to the local economy.

Economic Cooperation and Social Networks: Women's traditional practices often involve collective activities and cooperation among community members. Women form cooperative groups and associations, pooling their resources and

skills for economic endeavors. These networks enable them to access credit, share knowledge, and support each other's economic activities¹⁹. This Economic cooperation among the Gbagyi is inherent that were closely related to their social impact. The social impacts of women's traditional practices on the Gbagyi people in Bwari Area Council, Abuja, are significant and contribute to the social fabric and well-being of the community. These practices encompass various aspects of daily life, community interactions, and cultural preservation. Here are some key social impacts:

- i. **Cultural Preservation:** Women's traditional practices play a vital role in preserving and passing down the cultural heritage of the Gbagyi people to younger generations. Through the transmission of oral history, storytelling, traditional dances, and rituals, women ensure the continuity of cultural values, norms, and practices.
- ii. **Social Cohesion and Community Bonding:** Women's traditional practices often involve collective activities and communal participation. Women come together for ceremonies, celebrations, and community events, fostering social cohesion, unity, and a sense of belonging among community members. These activities strengthen social ties and create a supportive network within the community.
- iii. **Gender Roles and Identity:** Traditional practices shape and reinforce gender roles within the Gbagyi society. Women's roles in areas such as care giving, household management, food preparation, and craft production are highly valued and respected. These practices contribute to the formation of individual and group identities, reinforcing the cultural significance of women in the community.
- iv. **Education and Knowledge Transmission:** Women play a critical role in the education and socialization of children. Through traditional practices, women impart knowledge, skills, and cultural values to younger generations. They teach traditional crafts, farming techniques, and cultural norms, ensuring the preservation of Gbagyi knowledge and traditions.
- v. **Empowerment and Decision-making:** Women's involvement in traditional practices provides them with a platform to voice their opinions, contribute to community decision-making processes, and participate in leadership roles within traditional institutions. This empowerment enhances their social status and recognition within the community.
- vi. **Social Support and Well-being:** Traditional practices provide a framework for social support and community care. Women provide emotional support, counseling, and assistance to each other during times of joy, grief, or hardship. These practices create a sense of solidarity and contribute to the overall well-being of community members¹.

¹⁹A. T.Ibrahim, "The Economic Role of Women in Sustainable Development: A Case Study of the Gwari Traditional Economy", *Journal of Agriculture and Social Research*, 12(1), 39-50, (2012).

While women's traditional practices have positive social impacts, it is important to recognize and address any challenges they may face, such as gender inequalities, limited access to resources, and the need for recognition and support for their contributions.

- iv. Cultural Tourism and Heritage: Gbagyi women's traditional practices, such as arts and crafts production, traditional dances, and cultural ceremonies, contribute to cultural tourism. Visitors and tourists are interested in experiencing the rich Gbagyi culture and purchasing traditional crafts that contribute to the local economy through spending on accommodations, transportation, and the purchase of cultural products.

It is important to note that while women's traditional practices have significant economic impacts, there may also be challenges and limitations in terms of access to resources, market opportunities, and recognition of their contributions. Efforts to empower and support women in economic activities can further enhance their economic impact and promote sustainable development within the Gbagyi community.

They contribute to the spiritual and religious beliefs of the community. Here are some key religious impacts:

- i. Custodians of Cultural and Religious Practices: Women play a crucial role as custodians of cultural and religious practices within the Gbagyi community. They are responsible for passing down religious rituals, traditions, and knowledge to future generations. Women's involvement in traditional practices helps preserve and transmit religious beliefs, values, and customs.
- ii. Rituals and Ceremonies: Women actively participate in various religious rituals and ceremonies. They lead prayers, perform sacred dances, and play important roles in religious ceremonies and festivals. Women's involvement in these practices enhances the spiritual experiences of the community and contributes to the overall religious life of the Gbagyi people.
- iii. Moral Guidance and Ethics: Women's traditional practices often emphasize moral values, ethics, and spiritual guidance. They provide moral teachings, storytelling, and guidance to community members, emphasizing virtues such as honesty, compassion, and respect for others. Women's religious practices promote a sense of spirituality and moral consciousness within the community.
- iv. Healing and Spiritual Well-being: Women's traditional practices encompass healing rituals and spiritual well-being. They may engage in traditional healing practices, herbal medicine, and spiritual guidance for the sick or troubled. These practices provide comfort, spiritual support, and a sense of hope to individuals in need.
- v. Community Unity and Solidarity: Women's participation in religious practices fosters community unity and solidarity. Religious gatherings and ceremonies bring community members together, providing opportunities for shared experiences, bonding, and the strengthening of social connections. Women's involvement in these practices

contributes to a sense of belonging and cohesion within the community.

- vi. Inter-generational Transmission: Women's traditional practices facilitate the inter-generational transmission of religious beliefs and practices. They pass down knowledge, rituals, and values to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of religious traditions and the preservation of spiritual heritage².

It is important to respect and appreciate the roles and contributions of women in religious practices while also acknowledging the need for gender equality and the empowerment of women within religious institutions.

Figure 2: Agricultural produce in Bwari



Source:<https://www.theechoesofhope.com/2023/07/22/the-gbagyi-people-of-north-central-nigeria/>

Conclusion

Women's traditional practices have economic implications among the people in the Bwari area Council, Abuja. They engage in income-generating activities related to crafts, farming, and food processing. These practices contribute to household income and economic sustainability within the community. The relationship between the Economic and Cultural livelihood of the Gbagyi people goes hand in hand, the Gbagyi people have a rich cultural heritage and have been residing in the area for generations. They have their unique language, customs, and traditional practices that shape their way of life.

Investigating the extent to which women have agency and decision-making power within the Gbagyi traditional framework. Of which, it has been noted Gbagyi women occupy significant roles within Gbagyi traditional practices, contributing to the social, religious, economic, and cultural fabric of the

community. They provided valuable insights into the roles, contributions, and impacts of women in the community. Here is a summary of the key findings:

- i. **Cultural Preservation:** Women play a vital role in preserving and transmitting Gbagyi cultural heritage through their active participation in traditional practices. They are custodians of cultural knowledge, rituals, and traditions, ensuring their continuity across generations.
- ii. **Social Cohesion and Identity:** Women's engagement in traditional practices fosters social cohesion and strengthens the community's sense of identity. Their participation in ceremonies, festivals, and community events creates a shared cultural experience and reinforces the bonds within the Gbagyi society.
- iii. **Community Development:** Women's traditional practices contribute to community development by addressing social issues and promoting collective action. They mobilized resources, organize communal projects, and advocate for community needs, leading to improvements in areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.
- iv. **Gender Roles and Empowerment:** Traditional practices often assign specific gender roles, and women's involvement in these practices provided them with a platform for empowerment and recognition. They have opportunities to assume leadership positions, voice their opinions, and challenge gender norms within the community.
- v. **Economic Livelihoods:** Women's traditional practices also have economic implications, as they engage in income-generating activities related to crafts, farming, and food processing. These practices contribute to household income and economic sustainability within the community.

Apart from the Gbagyi people, Bwari Area Council is also home to various other ethnic groups from different parts of Nigeria. The council serves as a residential area for many civil servants, as well as a hub for commercial activities. This diverse population contributes to the cultural, social, and economic vibrancy of the area.

Further studies explored the gender and power dynamics within the Gbagyi community. It explores the traditional roles assigned to men and women and how power is distributed and exercised. Investigating the extent to which women have agency and decision-making power within the Gbagyi traditional framework. Of which, it has been noted Gbagyi women occupy significant roles within Gbagyi traditional practices, contributing to the social, religious, economic, and cultural fabric of the community. Their active participation in various aspects of Gbagyi traditions ensures the preservation and continuity of cultural heritage. As efforts continue to empower and support Gbagyi women's inclusion and representation, their invaluable contributions will further enrich the Gbagyi society, foster gender equality, and promote the vibrant legacy of Gbagyi traditional practices for future generations. Gbagyi women also play significant roles in decision-making processes within their families and communities. They provide guidance, wisdom, and support in community affairs, conflict resolution, and governance. Although traditionally Gbagyi

society is patriarchal, women's voices and perspectives are valued and taken into consideration

In completely deciding the role of Women and Gbagyi Traditional Practice in Bwari and Rituals delving into the specific rituals and ceremonies that are central to the Gbagyi culture helped explore the participation of women in these rituals, their roles, and the significance of these practices in shaping gender roles and identities. The study reveals that women's traditional practices significantly influence the lives of Gbagyi women and their communities. These practices play a crucial role in shaping social norms, gender roles, and power dynamics. They often reinforce patriarchal structures and limit women's access to education, employment opportunities, and economic empowerment. This perpetuates gender inequalities within the community. Additionally, the research uncovers both positive and negative impacts on health and well-being. While some traditional practices contribute to community cohesion, spiritual beliefs, and emotional support, others may pose health risks or create psychological distress for women and their families. It is crucial to balance cultural preservation with the well-being and agency of individuals, particularly women.

The findings of this research call for a nuanced understanding of women's traditional practices and their impacts. They emphasize the need for community-led initiatives that promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Such initiatives should aim to challenge harmful gender norms, improve access to education and economic opportunities for women, and create a supportive environment for their physical and mental well-being.

Summarily, the implications and significance of research on the Economic contribution of Gbagyi Women and Cultural practices in Bwari Area Council, Abuja, extended beyond academic inquiry. It provided a foundation for promoting cultural preservation, gender equality and responsibility, community development, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems within the Gbagyi community and beyond.
