

**The artistic aspects of indigenous marriage among the GBI of Ghana.**

**BY**

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THE ARTISTIC ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS MARRIAGE AMONG THE GBI OF GHANA.

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the M. Phil (African Art and Culture degree) and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously

published by another person or material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

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The Artistic aspects of indigenous marriage among the Gbi of Ghana is the outcome of strenuous academic studies and research work pursued as a postgraduate student at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

I am fully aware that the field of study of this topic is very wide and my attempt here is limited to a section of the Ewes that is the Gbi. My findings here, however, convinced me that the traditional society of Gbi has a pattern of conduct about the use of art in marriage which is worth studying and developing. This task must be done by the sons of Africa, out of the conviction that Africa has something worthwhile in this area as well as in others to contribute to the universal heritage of mankind.

Most people do not know the important roles, the various Ghanaian arts and culture play in our indigenous Gbi marriage rites. In view of this notion I have been prompted to research into this field in order to create the awareness of the importance of art as we use them in our everyday life aesthetically.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Marriage is considered a basic institution in every human society. It is recognized as a social institution, not only for establishing and maintaining the family, but also for creating and sustaining the ties of kinship. Without the institution of marriage, there would be no family, nuclear or extended and therefore no kinship ties. According to the culture of the Ewes of Ghana, marriage is one of the most important aspects of life and it is observed among the many transitional rites of the people of Gbi. I am fully aware that the field of study of this topic: “Artistic aspects of indigenous marriage among the Ewes of Ghana” is very wide and for that matter, the researchers attempt here is limited to a section of the Ewes that is the Gbi. The findings of this thesis however, indicated that the traditional society of Gbi has a pattern of conduct about the use of art in marriage which is worth studying and developing. For, this is the reason why the researcher has taken up to: (a) Study the marriage customs of the people of Gbi of Ghana, with the view of finding out the use and importance of art in them. (b) Identify the importance of art in the marriage customs of Gbi and document them. The research covers a brief history of the Gbi people from Notsie in Dahomey now (Benin) to their present destination Peki and Hohoe in the Northern Volta of Ghana. Also the institution of marriage in Gbi and the place of art in it. And the various indigenous customary marriages that are allowed in Gbi. The research design used is the qualitative method. It involves the descriptive, recording and analysis. This involves some type of comparison or contrast and attempts to discover relationships between existing non-manipulative variables. From the finding, the researcher has noted that the indigenous visual art forms cannot be ignored at all in the day to day activity of man especially in the life cycle of people in Gbi and Ghana as a whole. Every aspect of life namely conception, birth, naming, puberty, marriage, death, and funeral depend very much on the use of indigenous art forms for the reasons of protection, guidance, and life enhancing support activities. It has been noted also that this study will serve as (a) Body of knowledge which will enhance the understanding of marriage among the people of Gbi. (b) It will also serve as a model or example of the importance of indigenous visual art among other ethnic groups in Ghana. (c) The materials will serve as reference to other researchers and those who want to contract indigenous marriage in Gbi. (d) It will also be very useful to artists, art teachers, art historians, anthropologists and

researchers in Gbi culture. After carefully weighing both the positive and the negative sides of indigenous marriage rites in Gbi, from what was obtained from the following respondents e.g. Traditional rulers (chiefs and queen mothers), priest and priestesses, literate Gbis and married initiates, the following recommendations are made. (a) Cultural secretariat should be opened in Gbi to see to the proper administration and co-ordination of all cultural activities. (b) For the ideals of indigenous marriage to make any profound impact on the lives of the women in Gbi, it is recommended that all the young girls be advised to marry customarily in order for them to go through the informal initiation rites at puberty before proceeding to marry. During puberty rites in Gbi, ideals of life such as vocations e.g. weaving, pottery, beads making, tie and dye etc., cooking and proper home management and family life are taught. As the teaching of these skills would require funding, it is also recommended that District Assemblies in Gbi should assist in this area. (a) It is recommended also that, the elders and Queen mothers of Gbi traditional area should form an association in order to create dialogue with traditionalists and churches to explore systematic ways of using puberty rites to help educate, train and control premarital sex promiscuity and also prevent HIV. In the Gbi society the indigenous visual art forms are used alongside with the contemporary art forms among the Ewes of Gbi in indigenous marriage rites and because of this, the indigenous visual arts are losing their value and roles gradually, so there is the urgent need for Volta Regional Centre for National Culture to preserve the indigenous visual art forms from the contemporary arts and make useful changes for the indigenous arts wherever it is necessary to fit into contemporary arts.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study:

The Gbi people of Volta region are one of the Ewes speaking people of Ghana that are found north of the southern Ewes. Other people who are located in the same group are the people of Ho, Kpando and Buem (Agbodeka 1997). They can be classified into two broad groups based on language and origin. The first group, comprises the majority of the people, and generally called 'Wedometɛwo' by other Ewes who speak Ewe as mother tongue and have a common migration and settlement history. They are descendants of two of three major Ewe groups that migrated from Notsie during the wicked reign of Tɛgbe Agokoli I in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Amenumey (1997, 1986).

The second groups of Northern Ewes speak a variety of Guan and Akan dialects as well as Ewe as a second language, and claim different origins. For easy clarification, the Gbi people fall into this first group and shall be referred to as the Ewe group, while the second group are also called the Guan group Amenumey (1997, 1986). The Gbi are the people of Peki and Hohoe. The people of Hohoe are settled now at the north of Peki and they are known as Gbi Dzigbe and Peki which is also at the south of Hohoe just about 50 kilometers from Hohoe are also known as Gbi Nyigbe. Collectively, the different Northern Ewe groups were influenced by Akan and by German and other European missionary activities and lived under German and British colonial rules and also share similar socio-political and economic experiences since the independence of Ghana. Amenumey (1997, 1986).

Gavua (1980) Konu (1981) noted that by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the different Northern Ewe groups were settled in small autonomous and relatively peaceful communities in their present territory. It was noted also that the departure of the Ewe group from Notsie and the process of migration and relocation was not sudden but took many years.

The Ewe group of Northern Eweland and for that matter the Gbi people left Notsie in small kin groups such as families and clans and travelled in different directions towards the Volta River. They had settled briefly at a number of places before finally arriving at their present homeland. Many of their towns were founded by renowned hunters and farmers who sought and found arable lands. The Gbi people who were hunters and farmers were joined subsequently by members of their immediate and extended families and by members of different clans from the same villages and towns as hunters and farmers. Defenses and availability of water in the form of rivers, streams, arable land and wild game were major considerations of easy settling in terms of the particular location where towns were cited.

Most of the founding fathers were custodians or chiefs (Afetɛfia) of lands they had acquired and were guided and protected by gods through powerful deities (trɛwo) and ancestral spirits (tɛgbuiwo). The custodians offered land to new comer individuals and families that joined them for settlement and farming. However, additional lands were sometimes acquired by individuals and families through warfare. Oral traditions of Ewes along the Volta basin suggest that many of different Ewe families, clans and towns fought each other over land during the early stages of settlement. Many of them encountered war and subsequently interbreed with Guan- speaking Peoples whose descendants are still found in the area.

Since 1930s, several able farmers and their families relocated to Kute, Ahamansu, and Ayoma and other villages in the Jasikan and Buem districts of the Volta Region and acquired land from those chiefs mainly for cocoa and coffee farming. Christian prayer camps and religious sanctuaries have also been established by individuals and families from different Northern Ewe towns. Among these sanctuaries are Jordan (Yordan-nu), near Vakpo, which was founded by the white cross society who vacated their original settlement at Todome on the Bame- Kpedze road. Common ancestry, association during the journey from Notsie and during warfare led to the establishment of alliance networks among different towns with allied town and villages having common names and celebration. For example Hohoe and Peki are known to be Gbi and celebrate the Gbidukɛza, The Matse, Klor, Akorviefe, Wusuta and Aveme are the Dzobi and celebrate Ho/Dzobi teduduza while Saviefe, Akrofu, Sovie, and Alavanyo are the Sasadu and celebrate the Sasaduza.

Many allied communities including the above lived in different parts of Northern Eweland and are administratively autonomous. Other allies, however lived close to one another and constitute single chiefdom with paramount chiefs, although each town is semi-autonomous e.g. Gbi Dzigbe and Gbi Nyigbe

After initially establishing themselves in Gbi, there have been mass relocations of some communities and clans. Members of the Gbi community who had initially settled in the Hohoe area, for example, migrated from Peki. Most towns also relocated to sites that are a few kilometers away from their original ones for commercial, political or religious reasons. Almost

all Northern Ewe towns and villages thus have old sites (Gbɛxome) where only a few families remain.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

One outstanding feature of the communal structure of African society and the ever present consciousness of ties of kinship is the emphasis on the importance of the family. When one speaks of the family in Ghanaian context, one is referring, not only to the nuclear family consisting merely of husband, wife and children, but to the extended family, which comprises a large number of blood relatives who trace their descendant to a common ancestor and who are held together by a sense of obligation to one another. The communal values, such as solidarity, mutual helpfulness, interdependence and concern for the well-being of every individual member of society find their highest and most spontaneous expression in the institution of the family. Indeed, the Gbi family itself is held on a fundamental, social as well as moral value. This is the reason why each individual member of the family is brought up to think of himself or herself always and primarily in relation to the group of his or her blood relative and to seek to bring honour to the group. It is the responsibility of every member of the Gbi family to seek and maintain the cohesion of the family.

Marriage is considered a basic institution in every human society. It is recognized as a social institution, not only for establishing and maintaining the family, but also for creating and sustaining the ties of kinship. Without the institution of marriage there would be no family, nuclear or extended and therefore no kinship ties.

Genesis 2: 18 and the Lord God said: it is not good for a man to be alone. Let us make him a help like unto himself. And the Lord God having formed out of the ground all the beasts of the earth, and all the fowls of the air, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: for whatsoever Adam called any living creature the same is its name. And Adam called all the beasts by their names and all the fowls of the air, and all the cattle of the fields: but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself.

According to the culture of the Ewes of Ghana, marriage is one of the most important aspects of life and it is observed among the many transitional rites of the people of Gbi in the concept of the rites of passage involving the use of several art form or artifacts but unfortunately it seems, the people could not notice the use and the importance of Art in the marriage customary rites, therefore there is the need to research into it in order to bring out the importance of art in the rites.

### **1.3 Objective**

- i. To study the marriage customs of the people of Gbi of Ghana, with the view of finding out the use and importance of Art in them and document them.

### **1.4 Delimitation (Scope)**

This research covers a brief history of the Gbi people from Notsie in Dahomey now the Republic of Benin to their present destination Peki and Hohoe in Northern Volta of Ghana. It covers also the institution of marriage in Gbi and the place of Art in it.

The geographical area of the research covers Peki and Hohoe as they are both towns of Gbi.

### **1.5 Assumption**

All though, the arts play important roles in Gbi traditional rites, the people do not recognize and appreciate their functions.

### **1.6 Importance of the Study**

The findings of this research report would go a long way to let the people of Gbi recognize what art is and what art can do during traditional marriage customs. Secondly, this research finding will serve as a reference document or a body of knowledge on the use and importance of art in indigenous marriage customs for future researchers and all those who are to contract indigenous marriage in Gbi.

The report will also create awareness in the people of Gbi on the roles of art in adornment in indigenous customary marriage ceremonies.

### **1.7 Organization of the chapters**

This research report is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one discussed the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, Justification of the objectives and delimitation. Others include limitation and definition of terms, Assumption and the importance of the study and the study and the organization of the chapters/text. Chapter two treated the review of related literature. The literature covered definition and concept of marriage, rite of passage and transition, socialization, the involvement and importance of art in Gbi indigenous marriage customs and evaluation.



The third chapter discussed the methodology of the study. The chapter treated the research design, population sample, library research, tools of data collection and data collection procedure. The fourth chapter also discussed the result of the research which includes a brief history of the Ewes and the Map of Gbi traditional area, and the art forms used in the Gbi marriage customs.

Finally, chapter five dealt with the summary, conclusions documentation and recommendations.



## **1.8 Definition and Concept of Marriage.**

The purpose of this chapter is to review related literature on the concepts of marriage customs and the artistic aspects of indigenous marriage among the Gbi of Ghana. Marriage according to Longman Dictionary of contemporary English is a union of man and a woman by a ceremony in law. Marriage by a priest is Lawful in England without another ceremony; it is a state of being so united. It is therefore for life i.e. it should last all one's life and is a serious business.

In Ghana, there are three main types of marriages. These are customary marriage, statutory marriage (i.e. marriage under ordinance and other statutes). And church marriage (both Christian and Muslim). Statutory marriage is of a comparatively recent origin and is confined mainly to educated young people in towns and cities. It has been clearly considered that customary marriage is still the most predominant form of marriage in Ghana.

Professor N.K Dzobo (1975:35) in *Traditional School of Marriage*, defined “*marriage as one of the supreme aims of life in the traditional Ewe society and as a union between man and woman to perpetuate the lineage through procreation. Marriage, he noted, has been instituted as the acceptable and respectable mode of ensuring the continuity of the family line. Children, he pointed out emphatically, are therefore expected to be the first fruits of marriage and young men thus always look for young women who come from families that have a high birth rate. He therefore goes on to say, marriage, consequently has become a means whereby a man and a woman fulfill the main aim of their personal lives; i.e. to make possible for the lineage to continue in existence. He again opines that an individual’s life is not therefore considered complete if he remains unmarried. Besides its being a way of self-realization and fulfillment,*

*marriage is contracted for the sake of companionship and mutual service. Marital roles are therefore clearly defined for man and woman in the Ewe communities that traditional customary marriage is encouraged. A man may therefore marry more than one woman if he feels that his life is not brought to consummation by marrying one woman."*

Professor Dzobo went on to opine that marriage has an extra social meaning for woman besides the general aims. Usually, when a woman is not married, all sorts of men, young and old, handsome and ugly. Women consider this as an insult and disrespect for womanhood and so want a settled life of marriage which makes them feel respected and valued. He further held the opinion that a woman's status in marriage is further enhanced when she has children. Women therefore consider it a personal tragedy if they cannot have babies. He again emphasized by considering marriage as a desirable institution among the Ewe for ensuring the perpetuation of the lineage for self-fulfillment and companionship.

Atsu Dzatse (1990:29) "**Gbi de kɛnuwo**" thesis also recounts that marriage to the Ewes of Gbi is considered as a form of an intimate personal relationship between man and woman and it needs a lot of interpersonal adjustment. The Gbi' therefore take marriage as a school of learning and it is called "Srɛ̃ẽẽ" which literary mean "a state of being married to learning i.e. adjustment".

Dzobo also again agrees with the same opinion shared by Atsu Dzatse but described his term for marriage as "amenɛ̃ewo sɛ̃srɛ̃" i.e learning about your partner which is a process of adjustment to your partner. According to Dzobo, marriage is therefore a dynamic relationship in which success largely depends upon satisfactory mutual adjustment. He went on to define the Ewe word for husband as "Srɛ̃nutsu" a male learner and for a wife as "srɛ̃nyɛ̃nu" i.e female learner.

Marriage is thus a dynamic personal relationship freely entered into by a man and a woman for the sake of mutual self-fulfillment and service and for the sake of companionship and social esteem.

Mbiti (1991:108) also describes very clearly, the African concepts of marriage in these words.

*“To Africans, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet the departed, the leaving and those yet to be born. All the dimension of time meets here and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalized.*

*Marriage is a drama in which everybody becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator:*

*Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate and not a spectator. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel and a law-breaker and he is not only abnormal but under-human. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that, the person concerned has rejected society, and society rejects him also in return.”*

Salm et al., (1996: 130) in ***Culture and Customs of Ghana*** also stated that, “unlike marriage in many other parts of the world, marriage in Ghana is seen as a requisite stage in life, rather than an option, and remains the most important social institution. Marriage sanctions, reproduction is still believed by many to be the most important function of the union between a man and woman. Children are signs of status and wealth. They represent a successful marriage, provide valuable domestic help around the house, and can contribute agricultural labour. Marriages between individuals from outside

*their kinship group are most common under customary law. Through this marriage, new social contacts are made and kinship ties are extended”.*

Marriage therefore, serves to establish alliances between families and between communities. Laurenti Magesa also in his article entitled *"The honour of marriage in Africa"*. Published in New People; **a Catholic monthly magazine issue No. 101 pg. 16, March-April 2006 Edition**, shared the understanding and value of marriage in Christianity and African Religion that *“marriage is a permanent, stable, sexually exclusive, unity-seeking and unity-generating commitment of love between a man and a woman, for mutual fulfillment, happiness and meaning, and opens to the generation of offspring. These, he thinks are in both Christianity and African Religion as principal characteristics of the marital union”.*

Opong in *"Marriage among Matrilineal elites"* (1974.59) *“asserts that marriage is an old and respectable social institution the world over”*. She went on to emphasize that *“every society has evolved rules and procedures to govern it towards separating the permissible from the forbidden in the relationship”*. These rules and practices she said, form an essential and integral part of the society's culture; Opong went on to opine that marriage in Ghana is more than a private relationship between a man and a woman. She observed that it is a major transitional point in the lives of young people; and that, their relatives take a keen interest in it. Through it the torch of life is

transferred to another generation, she again went on to say the descendants join the already large group of relatives, bringing additional glory or shame to it. Marriage according to her therefore, unites families and clans. It may even mark the beginning of a new lineage or community. Consequently, the decision to get married is considered too important to be left completely to the

two parties involved, especially when they are young and inexperienced, the elders must guide them and the ancestor's blessings must also be sought. Sarpong in his *"Ghana in Retrospect"*. (1974:77) also re-affirms that *"basically, ideas about marriage are all the same all over the world"*, According to him, *"everywhere in the world, people leave their mothers, sisters and other relatives in order to enter into alliance with some "strange" person. They cannot be said simply to be seeking consolation or soliciting help. One would get better help, and solace from one's own relatives. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the main aim of marriage is to have that sexual access to a person which would not be deemed proper in the case of relation"*.

Sarpong went on to stress that examination of the male and female sex organs shows that those of the one are designed to be used with those of the other sex. Unlike such faculties as the eye or the heart which are employed exclusively for one's own benefit, they have altruistic utility. He again emphasized that in Africa, marriage is hardly a personal affair. It is a matter in which the lineages of the contracting parties are greatly interested.

In a way, every marriage concerns the whole society in which it takes place, for which reason, all societies lay down rules regulating the use of sex in general and of marriage in particular.

It has been noted by the reviewer that the main reasons for customary marriage in Ghana and for that matter in Gbi traditional society are firstly to marry and procreate in order to provide adequate parental care for the children. The second reason is to marry in order to command respect and social standing in the society that one belongs to.

Another reason is to continue with the lineage as an institution or the formation of new families in order to come together for lineages to be preserved. Children who come out from marriages, as fruits of life are also considered as wealth and value, not only to the biological parents, but also to the community in which they are born into, and to Ghana as a whole. Therefore, it is a paramount responsibility of everybody to see to it that the child is brought up in a proper responsible manner for the good of the society at large.

Another essence of traditional customary marriage in Gbi traditional society is to serve as uniting link in the rhythm of life. Generation in Gbi are said to be bound together in the act of marriage-past, present and future generations. The past generations are many but they are represented in one's own parents, the present generation is represented in one's own life, and future generations begin to come on the stage through childbearing. It is also a very tragic thing when no children come out of a marriage. Then people do not consider it to truly a marriage, and other arrangements are made to obtain children in the family.

In Atabu, which is one of the villages of Gbi, marriage and childbearing are considered as a remembrance. Through these, the children are remembered when their parents die.

Anyone who dies without having anyone behind him to pour out libations for him is a very unfortunate person. Therefore, marriage is intimately a confirmation of life beyond death.

Marriage is also regarded in Gbi traditional society as the counter-measure against the lost immortality myths. Through marriage the departed are in effects reborn not in their total being but by having some of their physical treasures and characteristics or personality traits reborn in



the children of the family. If no children were born these traits and features of the departed members of the family would not be seen again. While death takes away individuals one by one, and disperses families, the purpose of marriage in Gbi society is to bring people together, to increase them, to multiply them and to keep them alive.

To the people of Gbi, marriage is one experience in which a person is considered to be complete "perfect" and truly a man or a woman. It makes a person really "somebody" it is part of the definition of who a person is according to Africans' views about man. Without marriage a person is only a human being minus.

## **Pre-marital customary rites.**

### **1.9 Rite of Passage and transition,**

To start with the definitions and concepts of Rites of Passage and transition, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, defines Rites of passage as a "special ceremony or action that is a sign of a new stage in a person's life, especially when a boy starts to become a man". However, ceremonies about rites of passage could be performed for both sexes but in the case of Gbi traditional society, young girls are the only sex that goes through these rites laboriously. The other sex i.e. the boys only go through parental and societal instructions as the custom and observations.

Sarpong in "*Ghana in Retrospect*" (1974:71) said, "all over Africa, and in fact, all over the world, Significant rituals and ceremonies are, with varying degrees of intensity and seriously, performed at the three major turning points of a man's life. In the so called primitive societies, these rites are collectively termed "Rites de Passage" (*Rites of passage from one stage to another*").

The crucial turning points are generally held to be:

- (1) The time a person enters the world through birth.
- (2) When he comes of age and enters the world of adults.
- (3) When through death, he departs from this world and enters the world of his forbears.

Sarpong, believes that every society has a set of rites, be it what it termed traditional or contemporary that deals with the life cycle of the individual. The performance of these rites at the various stages of the person's life is termed rites of passage.

**Amenuke S.K et al, (1991 :29)** also highlighted the fact that, the term "*rite of passage*" comprises various rites, rituals and ceremonies which mark a person's transition from one stage of life to another. The transitional stages according to them enumerated are birth, puberty, marriage and death and that a person passes through them respectively. The stages begin from childhood, adolescence, adulthood and ancestor-ship (death) in that order.

There is another source also that explains the term "passage rite" and it is the New Encyclopedia Britannica. It explains "Passage rites" also called it "rite of passage" and in French language it is written "Rite de Passage". It is said that the worldwide distribution of Passage rites first attracted the attention of a French anthropologist and Folklorist Arnold Van Gennep. He termed it rite de passage in 1909. Gennep considered the "rite de Passage" as numerous ceremonial events, existing in all historically known societies that mark the passage of individual from one stage of (life) social or religious status to another.

Notably, many of the most important and common rites are connected with the biological stages of life. These stages are birth, maturity, reproduction and death. Other rites according to him celebrate changes that are wholly cultural, such as initiation into special societies or groups. **Hugo Huber, (1993:136)** in reviewing the related literature on "passage rites" also sees the term in a widest sense and comes out that "initiation" and separation include all rites that concern the life cycle of the individual and which affect a major change of social status. Thus we speak here of birth, circumcision, initiation to womanhood i.e. marital life, death and finally, the specific ceremonies which introduce a person into functions of priesthood and chieftaincy. In some way also, the marriage rites could have been included as they too involve at least a partial breaking away and separation of the brides from her paternal "house" and reintroduction, if not initiation into her new status as a wife and mother in the husband's house.

Passage and transition rites are predominant among the Gbi's as a pre-marital customary rites and are accorded all the necessary attention. In all such initiation ceremonies, very elaborate rituals are performed as pointed out by Hugo (above) and in which art forms are used by the Gbi in these various passages. According to the customs of Gbi in the Volta region, rites of passage

and transition are not different terms but are also the same in the African traditional societies all over.

Initiation therefore is a traditional ritual ceremony that uses the passage or transition from one stage of change to another. Transition, from one stage to another according to customs of the Gbi's cannot therefore take place without initiation ceremony.

The use of art forms in Gbi traditional marriage started with pre-marital customary rites namely puberty initiation rites and it is usually acceptable traditional customary activity to usher the marriageable girl into the family life.

Puberty rites have been instituted in the Ewe society not so much as the celebration of the capability of a boy or a girl to procreate but as an informal school to prepare young people for marriage. In some cases, they are therefore immediately followed by a wedding ceremony.

The puberty rite for girls among Ewes of Gbi is known as "*Gb̃tɔw̃w̃*" which means "living outside the house". The rite has such a name because when the pubescent has her first menstrual period, it is believed that, she is ritually unclean and so is not allowed to stay in her house but goes out to live in a special hut built in the village for menstruants for the duration of her menstruation.

Besides puberty rite for girls, the Gbi people have a pre-menstrual rite for girls who are at the age of 11 or 12 called *Ñgb̃nuw̃w̃/Ñgb̃nutata*" which means the rite performed by a

mother and the dressing up, by a mother respectively. This dressing up ceremony is not considered just as an ordinary dressing but special rich woven Ewe Kente is specially selected with its marching beads and other ornamental accessories to adorn welcoming girls to womanhood.

The puberty rite for boys in Gbi as I said earlier on that it is not elaborate as that of the girl and it is called "*Tunanavi*" thus literally means "the presentation of a gun to a son". It has this name because it is partly an act of arming a son. The gun is to be used by the son to defend the lineage and to be used to hunt wide animals for game and as a source of income for household. And as a source of income for the family, the gun is however an art form designed by a blacksmith and a carver and the presentation of the gun to the son is a dramatic performance in which the immediate extended families of both paternal and maternal sides are all in attendance.

## **2.0 Preparation for the Rites**

In Gbi traditional area, pubescent therefore become extra careful in their relationships with boys and parents so as not to do anything that will prevent them from going through the rite, for the performance of the rites gives them a feeling of pride in their ability to overcome the temptation of youthfulness. Furthermore, the participation of the whole village, especially the other peer girls in the celebration of the rite gives them a new social status. Failure to go through the rite either because a girl has violated her virginity or has become rude to her parents, become a reproach on her for the rest of her life. The puberty rite has a special social significance for parents. In the opinion of the public, it shows that the girl's parents have given a good moral training to their daughter and this gives them recognition in the society as successful trainers in good moral behaviour.

In addition to this it gives the parents and their relatives an occasion to display their wealth by the way they adorn the pubescent and entertain invited guests. At this stage, adornment goes on with selected special dressing of the rite and the entire invited guest both her friends and relations are also entertained. They sing songs, drum and dramatize love performances.

The puberty rite may follow after the first menstruation and if this is going to be the case the girl's mother informs her relatives who collect pieces of cloth, beads and finery for the occasion. A day is fixed for the ceremony and is usually on the seventh day counting from the first day of menstruation, or on the day when the menstruation stops. This day, must not fall on a market or farming day of the Gbi since the women will be out selling or for farm. As soon as the exact day is fixed the girl's mother informs the rite's girl friends who prepare themselves for their roles as entertainers during the rites.

*Tsilele*: The term means "bathing" and it involves adornment in various forms; body painting, marking and display of artifacts followed by its dramatic customary rites. Without the use of art, puberty rites in Gbi traditional community is meaningless.

Early in the morning of the rite, the girl bathes with special water prepared by her paternal aunt, "*tasi*". The water to be used is poured into an earthen pot and mixed with "*Lifui*" (incense) and "*ama*" a local herb (*amaranthus vividis*). After the girl has bathed, her "*tasi*" is the first to adorn her with special ceremonial beads known to Ewes by such names as *goloboe*, *gbloti*, *soe*, and *sinibia*. Her mother and other relatives adorn the girl with more of such beads on the left hand,

the neck, and on the knees. The beads for the knees are called *wokui*, those for the wrist are called *wɛkpoɔbe* and those for the neck are called *sinibia* which are dark in colour.

In addition to these the mother provides her with two sets of cooking utensils. If the ritee is betrothed, her fiancée provides a bottle of gin, soft drinks, six to eight tubers of yam and an amount of money and her father provide kegs of palm wine for the ceremony.

Before the main ceremony begins the following prayer is said in Ewe with some of the palm wine to wish the girl long life and fertility.

Prayer: Ewe: Nedzi eve, eto, nusɛsɛ ɥuti nafa

English: Let her bear twins, triplets, peace and harmony within the marriage.

The girls *tasi* now takes the "*veɔ*" (Kente which is locally woven) and touches the girl three times after which the girl takes the cloth, wraps it round herself and takes it off again. This act is called "*tsilele*" i.e. "bathing" which is an act of declaring the girl chaste. The girl then sits in state and richly adorned with beads and gold ornaments while other girls wait on her. Friends and relatives come to congratulate her and give gifts of artifacts and other items. All these happen amidst, singing, drumming, dancing and feasting.

The other ritual ceremonies like "*tɛmedede*" go on till the six day when the girl goes back to her house.

## **2.1 Art Forms at Marriage Among the Akans of Ghana**

The use of artifacts in the form of sculpture among the Akans of Ghana has been well elaborated by Herbert M. Cole et al. In "*The Arts of Ghana*". It has been identified in their book entitled

*"The Art of Ghana"* that the Akans of Ghana use art to cure barrenness, Art in form of sculpture is also used to invoke spirits to induce pregnancy. Art is used also as offerings to gods who empowered them at shrines.

It is also used within the Akans of Ghana as advertisement figures for the god's ability to help women to become pregnant. Art figures are specially prepared by traditional priests for already pregnant women to let them have safe delivery and to have an attractive child.

The best known sculptures from Ghana are the small, abstract, disk-headed figures known as Akuaba in Plate 3. This name comes from the legend of a woman named Akua who was distraught at being barren, for Akan women, desire above all to have children. She took her problem to a priest, who instructed her to commission a small wooden child (duaba) from a carver and to carry the surrogate child on her back as if it were real. Akua was instructed to care for the figure as she would for a living baby, even to give it gifts of beads and other trinkets. She did these things, but after a while, was laughed at by her fellow villagers for her foolishness. "Akua is that your child? Oh look at Akua's child". They teased, with time the wooden figure became known as Akuaba, (Akua's Child). Eventually, however, she conceived and gave birth to a beautiful daughter, and her detractors came around to adopting the same measures to cure barrenness. "Akuaba" is now widely used by Akan speaking people not only for the well-known small figures but for all types of sculptures. Properly, though, it should probably be confined to those figures consecrated by priests who invoke the influence" of their deity to induce pregnancy. A vehicle of spiritual power, the figures are carried by women for a stated period of time. In many cases, hopeful women adorn these figures with beads, hairstyles, waist beads, and earrings. They even suckle them and put them to sleep, as they would a real child. Ghanaians are



preoccupied with having children. The most common request made at any shrine was for a child (*See Plate 2*).

Akuaba fertility figure are found in a variety of contexts which frequently transcend the purpose already mentioned. After effecting pregnancy they are often returned to the shrine as offerings to the gods who empowered them in the first place. It also in effect becomes advertisements for the god's ability to help women become pregnant.

The occasional examples of very large Akuaba were made primarily for shrines rather than personal use, though they may have been carried by women for short periods. In some shrines, Akuaba receive their names and are accorded special powers which may or may not have to do with child birth. Others are fitted out as priestess with assorted beaded charms and may become general symbols of tutelary deities (*See Plate 23*).

Some figures according to **Herbert Cole et al** are carried by women wishing to conceive, while others are specially prepared by priests for women already pregnant to ensure safe delivery of an attractive child. They also pointed out an instance where a record was made by an old childless woman who continually carried on Akuaba at her back, wrapped in her skirt, although she was beyond childbearing age.

Not all childless women, however, carry an Akuaba. Sometimes a priest will ask a woman to bring a piece of cloth before the deity or one of his deputies such as a terracotta image in one shrine believed to have extraordinary fertility -inducing abilities. The woman is asked to carry this figure for ten minutes. The pieces of calico are then consecrated to promote conception.

These Akuaba with fine patination come less often from shrines than from the compounds of women who commonly keep them as memorials to a child or children, either as minor household shrines or as dolls. Many show evidence of long usage and sometimes indication of having been clothed. As representative of powerful local deities, the figures were treated with special care and reverence and some clearly became family heirlooms, not necessarily from any spiritual association, but because they were appreciated as beautiful and they called to mind well-loved members of the family. **Ameyaw (1966 b)** *Asante informants* disagree in the role of Akuaba as children's dolls. *"We have heard priests insist that they were never so used and other equally vehement that they were often playthings"*. Evidently, there was variation in this practice from community to community and sometimes the figures were given to girls to help teach them child care (Meyerowitz 1958 b: 53)

## **2.2 The use of Art Forms in Gbi Traditional Marriage**

Several art forms are used and combined in Gbi traditional marriage for a purpose. For example sculptures, music, pottery, textiles and singing and dance, body painting are used simultaneously to enhance the beauty of the whole social gathering. And to the people of Gbi, arts are used at specific occasions during the course of gathering. In the following passages, **Akator William**, an opinion leader and one time, spokesman for Gbi Bla Chief pointed out *"ayawagba"* as one of most important traditionally designed iron bowl usually used to contain bride wealth during bride presentations to the bride's parents. During the olden days those who own such customary *"ayawagba"* were very influential and wealthy members of the community of Gbi.

"**ve□o**": This is one of the art specially designed and woven Ewe cloth used to adorn the bride during the customary rites. Beads and other ornaments are used or worn together to march with the "ve□o". There are different types of beads which are used for customary occasions. The woman's stool is not left out since it is considered one of the requirements within the bride wealth for the bride during customary presentation. According to the Ewes of Gbi, the seat of the stool is a symbol of women's worth and hospitality in the community in which she leaves. It is also a symbol of deep rooted standing into her new marital home. She needs to sit to carry out all household chores. (*See Plate 3 and plate 4*).

Ceramic pot and bowls are not left out in this occasion. The pot is used to store palm wine and water and the bowl is also used when sharing the drink is done when the elders and the family lineage meet to accept the dowry. According to the customs of Gbi, the two sides that is the paternal and maternal families all assemble to enjoy the drinks. All those who take part in the drink especially the youth are considered as watch dogs on the bride. They are said to have committed themselves since they took part and witnessed this occasions. No other member dares call or propose love to the bride with their concern.

Married couples in Gbi traditional area use all types of artifacts ranging from jewels, rings, beads, necklaces, pottery items; bowls, vases, silver wares, footwear, at different customary marriage rites occasions.

Drama, dance and poetry are performed during the Gbi customary marriage ceremonies. These are done during the occasions at which the two families meet to accept the dowry and make merry (*See Plate 20*).

After nubility rites the next major ceremonial event in a girl's life is marriage. Every parent looks forward to such an accession. As a preliminary to marriage, it is considered the duty of parents to usher the young woman to society. . In Gbi, this ushering is aimed at heightening the young girls' physical qualities. It has therefore an aesthetic motive. A woman in Gbi must appear beautiful to attract a suitor. Because of this motive, the young girl is adorned with rich "Kente" and wears silver or golden ornaments usually depending on the wealth of her family. She wears an elaborate traditional headdress made of either artificial hair or horse hair. Usually, these adornments are done at the time when the parents of the girl are enjoying her dowry drinks presented to her parents for her hand in marriage (*Refer Plate 5*).

This is one of the most significant areas art is used prominently during Gbi marriage rites.

"*Bξtsre*" is another art form used at Gbi marriage customary rites. This is a symbol of accepting a new member into another family. Beads are prepared on a string of cotton thread and worn onto the wrist of the welcoming bride into the groom's new family in Gbi. "*Bξtsre*" is not only used to welcome new members but it is used to recognize new height in one's life position or transition. Body arts in Gbi traditional marriage customs are for the young people to prepare themselves for the most responsible phase of their lives. During marriage rites, the marriage couples paint their bodies with one or more colours to enhance their transition into a new phase symbolically. Dyes, earth colours and cosmetics are used for the occasion.

*"Libation"* this is an art of communication with the ancestors and the gods and the living elders of the land to ask for their assistance and blessing in the customary marriage rites for the couples.

Usually, in Gbi traditional marriage customs, it is the *"Asihamanagbe"* that a whole drama is performed. This day is the day when the two parties both from the paternal family and the maternal family meet to enjoy the acceptance drinks and make merry.

On that day, everybody becomes happy and the whole function is transformed into drama. A type of ritual and a form of entertainment usually seen at social gatherings are observed on that day. The audience often joins in every pronouncement by the *"kyeame"* the spokesperson of the elder or the chief officiating the ceremony. This type of drama is part of indigenous life and it has its social functions in the society of Gbi. Everybody becomes charmed by the mood and the drink at that moment.

- *"Atsɛribo"* is one of the verbal art- forms called appellation used during *"asihanagbe"*. It is used to support or second the *"Okyeme"* when he is delivering a speech or pouring libations especially during Gbi customary marriage occasion.
- *"Drums "*, *"kretsiwoe"* *"akaye"* *"Ɔondo"* are also identified as visual art forms used to provide music for entertainment during Gbi traditional marriage customs.
- *"Dehakupakpa"* this is an art activity in which matured palm trees are fallen and palm-wine is tapped. In the Gbi traditional marriage, palm-wine is one of the most important



The art forms used in Gbi traditional marriage rites are necessities and an integral force and a part of living.

In the next chapter, the writer will bring out the importance of these art forms as they are used in Gbi marriage customary rites.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.3 The research design**

In this research, the design used is the qualitative research method. It involves the descriptive, recording, analysis and interpretation of conditions that exist. It involves a comparison or contrast and attempts to discover relationships between existing non-manipulative variables.

Best, J.W. (1981: 156) enumerated some characteristics that distinguish descriptive research from the other research methods.

- They are non-experimental, because they deal with the relationships between non-manipulative variables in the natural instead of an artificial setting. Since the events or conditions have already occurred or existed, the researcher selects the relevant variables for analysis of their relationships.
- They involve the formulation and testing of hypothesis.
- They use the logical methods of inductive-deductive reasoning to arrive at generalizations.
- They often employ methods of randomization so that error may be estimated when inferring population characteristics from observations of samples.
- The variables and procedures are described as possible so that often researchers can replicate the study.

Document or content analysis method was one of the methods of description used. Documents are vital sources of data in many areas of investigation, and the method of analysis is similar to those used by historians. Here, the analysis is more concerned with the explanation of the status of a phenomenon, and the problem was identified.

Generalizations and conclusions were drawn. The rational or reason for choosing the descriptive survey method was that it deals with process, result and prevailing practices or conditions.



It also helps to discover the relative magnitude of importance or interest in the "Artistic aspect of indigenous marriage rite of the Gbi of Ghana" Document or content analysis serves a useful purpose in yielding information that is helpful in evaluating or explaining historical, social and educational practices.

## **2.4 Research tools**

- Library research constitutes the bulk of the study. Intensive effort was made to collect secondary data, though scanty from documentary sources. Libraries visited by the researcher include the main KNUST library, Department of Art Education library of KNUST. Kumasi College of Art library, others were Balme Library, and African Studies Library, all of Legon University, Gbi traditional council Library Hohoe, Volta Regional Library and Centre for National Culture Library at Ho. The rest were the main Library of the University of Education Winneba, The George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, Accra. Another important source of data collection was the internet.
- The researcher also extended his visits to the National Museum and Centre for National Culture, Accra to collect secondary data.
- The researcher also used his personal computer and its software in this study. It was used to type and edit the text of the thesis as well as to arrange the photographs. The digital camera was used to take photographs of some selected activities during some marital rites.

## **2.5 Population and sampling**

The study areas of the research were the Gbi traditional area.

- A population refers to a set of individuals with similar or more characteristics that interest the researcher (Best 1981:8) Adu-Agyem (1990) another researcher also says the concept of population is fundamental to descriptive research and cited Busha and Hater (1987:92) to have defined population as "any set of persons or objects that possessed at least one common characteristic" with regards to this thesis; custodians of the culture of Gbi this consisted of the Paramount chief, divisional and sub-chiefs, the Queen Mothers, (the traditional rulers) the Priests of religious bodies, Educationists, rites, students/pupils, marriage initiates, parents of marriage couples, etc. in fact all of the Gbi traditional area. This was precisely the population that was studied in this research.

## **2.6 Accessible Population**

The population that was studied was divided into four categories consisting of the following:

- (A) Traditional Rulers (chiefs and Queen mothers).
- (8) Traditional priest and priestesses.
- (C) The literate Gbi people (those who can read and write only).
- (D) Married initiate/Married couples.

The accessible population for this research was therefore 860 out of which two hundred and twenty (220) respondents were sampled.

These comprised of chiefs and queen mothers, traditional priests and priestesses all aged between 35 and 75 years. In the case of the literate Gbi, the age range was between 15 and 60 years while the initiates or ritees aged between 20 and 45.

All the accessible population was Gbis of Hohoe also known as Gbi Dzigbe and Peki known as Gbi Nyigbe.

The accessible population was selected on the following criteria:

- (i) Only gazette chiefs who are members of the Traditional Council were selected
- (ii) Traditional priests and priestesses who are connected with the performance of The Gbi traditional marriage customs were selected.
- (iii) Complete illiterate or semi illiterates and their ages range from 15 years to 60 years.
- (iv) The Marriage Initiates, their ages range from 20 years to 45 years.

## 2.7 Population level

Category A	25 traditional Rulers (Elders, Chiefs and Queen mothers)
Category B	15 traditional priest and priestesses and opinion leaders (for customary rites)

Category C	100 the literate Gbi (those who can read and write)
Category D	80 Married initiates

Table 1. Schematic overview of stratified Random Sampling Designs. Randomization %

Randomization from stratum 1 = 25.

Randomization from stratum 2 = 15.

Randomization from stratum 3 = 100.

Randomization from stratum 4 = 80.

Sample: Total from stratum 1, 2, 3, and 4.

$$25 + 15 + 100 + 80 = 220$$

## 2.8 Justification of Sample Selected

The researcher randomly selected and sampled 220 (%) to be representation of the total population based on the above information. The 220 then become the target and accessible population for this research, although this sample constitutes a homogenous population. Each of the categories differs in one way or the other. For instance, the elders, chiefs and queen mothers are the custodians of the culture and tradition of the people; only traditional rulers have the authority to effect changes in the performance of Gbi marriage customary rites. The priests and priestesses and opinion leaders are those who are directly in charge of the performance of the

Gbi traditional marriage rites. They inspect and accept dowry gifts from the brides on behalf of the families of the bridegrooms.

During the puberty rites, there are instructors who dress up the “neophytes” and take them through the puberty rites. The literate Gbi are those who can read and write. Majority had read more about the Gbi Marriage Customs and can give documented information to people who do not know much about it. They gave also useful information and suggestions on traditional marriage customs.

The married rites/marriage initiates provided information about the rites they went through. Their true ages and educational background were ascertained which is very important to this research. The importance of the categorization above helped to determine the availability and adequacy of information on the subject for the respondents the opportunity to offer the opinion about the use and importance of art in Gbi traditional marriage.

They also suggested how best it could be effectively and efficiently used to socialize the married coupled.

The researcher used the stratified Random sampling technique in accessing the population.

It is the sub-division of the population in smaller homogenous groups into more and accurate representation.

This was regarded unique in this study because it is unbiased and allows the researcher to draw generalizations on the entire population. This technique was used to select the sample of 220 which is % of the total population.

The respondents were picked as the population of interest.

Logical presentation of the task was that the percentage of respondents in each population stratum was determined, the number of subjects needed in the sample computed according to calculated percentages (table 2).

## 2.9 Selection of Sample

STATUS	No. IN SAMPLE	%OFTOTAL
Category A (Stratum 1)	25	11.4 %
Category B (Stratum 2)	15	7.0%
Category C (Stratum 3)	100	45.5 %
Category 0 (Stratum 4)	80	36.4 %
TOTAL	220	100%

Table 2. Selected Samples.

Category A (Stratum 1)  $25 \times 100/220 = 11.4 \%$

Category B (Stratum 2)  $15 \times 100/220 = 7.0 \%$

Category C (Stratum 3)  $100 \times 100/220 = 45.5 \%$

Category 0 (Stratum 4)  $80 \times 100/220 = 36.4 \%$

### **3.0 Data collecting Instruments**

The data collecting instruments used by the researcher in this study were designed questionnaire, interview and observation to solicit the knowledge (data) of respondents with reference to the subject (Artistic aspects of Indigenous marriage of Gbi of Ghana)

#### **3.1 Questionnaires**

Two separate questionnaires were designed for men and women. Each questionnaire contains twelve items, ten of which are close-ended while two are open-ended (sample in Appendix A). The questionnaires were designed to seek relevant information from the research population. Strata 3 consists of the literate, students, teachers, artists, cultural officers, opinion leaders, elders etc. The questionnaire sought to solicit respondents' knowledge, views, comments and suggestions about the place of art in indigenous marriage customs of Gbi. Respondents had the freedom to write any comments or suggestions.

#### **3.2 Validation of instruments.**

The researcher gave sample of the questionnaires to a number of people i.e. lecturers, colleagues to vet the questionnaires to test the accuracy before pre-testing them to the sample of respondents of the targeted area to seek their views before the actual questionnaires to assess their validity, clarity of language used and reliability before administering them to the actual respondents. Testing of questionnaires helped the researcher to be aware of issues that would surface.

#### **3.3 Interviews**

The researcher considers interview as more relevant to the study in data collection. This is so because most of the respondents who had vital information are either complete illiterates or semi-illiterates and are in a better position to talk than to write moreover, the respondents want the information they give to be documented for posterity. The humble character and good rapport with the entire community called for good dialogue. Formal interviews were conducted at palaces, homes of elders, queen mothers and opinion leaders. Audio tape recorder was used to record the voices of respondents. The tape had to be replayed many times by the researcher to analyze the information and put it into writing. No interpreter was involved because the researcher is a native and speaker of the local language, Ewe. The interviews were successfully conducted with the aid of interview guides and interview schedules prepared in advance for their detailed.

### **3.4 Observation**

The researcher spent time in (four separated indigenous marriage customary rites two at Gbi Dzigbe and the other two at Obi Nyigbe respectively) to vividly observe the performance of the rites. Other marriage customary rites were also visited in Gbi Villages. The researcher did this to enable him to have clarifications, see the initiates and appreciate the rites. Photographs were taken at various stages of the rites.

Certain pertinent questions were asked and discussed with respondents where necessary.



### **3.5 Administration of Questionnaires**

One hundred and twenty (120) copies of the questionnaires were administered to respondents personally. Respondents were given two weeks, to complete the questionnaires appropriately. Respondents readily took great interests in the topic. A number of the respondents completed the questionnaires instantly and handed them to researcher.

However, the researcher went back to respondents after two weeks to collect the questionnaires. Although the completed questionnaire was smooth, the researcher had to visit the homes and work places of respondents several times in order to collect most of the questionnaires. Some of the respondents misplaced the questionnaires and new ones had to be issued out again to them. In all, 110 out of the 120 questionnaires given out were retrieved from respondents.

Data are important components of this study. Data are usually classified into two main categories, Primary and Secondary sources. In this research, primary data were collected from 28 elders and traditional rulers, others involved in the data collected were some conductors of traditional marriage rites as well as the marriage initiates.

The secondary data were collected mainly from documentary sources, the internet, thesis books, and other publications.

Finally, the data collected from the various sources were assembled, synthesized, analyzed critically, interpreted and conclusions drawn from them. The data was thus presented in a descriptive form with aid of table, figures, plates and photographs in this thesis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ORIGIN OF EWES OF GBI TRADITIONAL AREA

#### 3.6 Ewes in pre-colonial times,

- (1) According to D.E.K Amenumey in *Ewes in the pre-colonial times*, the “colonial” phase of Ewe history can be dated from 1850 when Britain “acquired” jurisdiction over Anlo, one of the Ewe states. It is thus possible to say precisely when the pre-colonial period ended, but one cannot tell exactly how far back it extended. From the information presently available one may date the early history of the Ewe as a distinct people from some time in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

During the pre-colonial period of nearly three centuries Ewe history passed through a number of phases. These were the period of

- (a) Migration and settlement,
- (b) The period of the evolution of the present-day states, the phase of intra-Ewe conflicts and competition for economic and political that is territorial predominance and finally
- (c) The era of foreign intervention.

Broadly speaking, historical writing and research on the Ewe divide into four categories and phases. The early phase embraces the period from the earliest European contact up to about the late nineteenth century. The second dates around, the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The third period is vaguely contemporaneous with the high-water mark of colonial administration.

The fourth phase is the most recent-past 1960. There are obvious linkages and overlaps but on the whole the type and nature of historical writing in these four phases are fairly distinct.

The country occupied by the Ewe people is bounded by the rivers Mono and Volta and extends from Atlantic coast in land up to about lat. 7°06'N in the east and lat. 7°20'N. in the West.

Across the south-eastern boundary live the related Fon people of the republic of Benin (Dahomey)

This territory is divided into three broad geographical areas: a southern lowland region, a coastal plain and a northern upland cum valley region. The southern lowland is characterized by a low sandy undulating coastal belt that varies in width from 400 yards to two miles. Behind this belt and running parallel to it is a long depression which is straddled by lagoons and creeks. Behind the depression stretches the central plain whose monotonous undulating landscape is broken by isolated hills like the Adakluto (1960 ft.) and Aguto (3346 ft.). The general level of the plain rises north eastwards to 550ft. behind the central plain is the northern hilly region where rivers rise and flow southwards to discharge into either the mono or Volta or empty into the depression that lies between the coastal belt and the central plain.

The southern lowland enjoys 25-30 inches of rain. Natural vegetation on the seaboard is grass and low bushes. Along the lagoon shores it is coarse grass and mangrove swamps. The soil is also able to support coconut, cassava, okro, maize and tomatoes. In the marshy areas, sugar-cane and rice are grown. Shallot farming is undertaken along the Keta lagoon from Woe to Anloga.

Animal husbandry and poultry-keeping are undertaken. Besides farming, sea or lagoon fishing is another important occupation. Salt is also obtained when it is tried.

In the central plain, rainfall varies from 45 inches in the south to 53 inches in the north. The area abounds in oil-palm thick stands of which stretch across from west to east. The rich soil also supports food crops like maize. The upland cum valley region enjoy up to 70 inches of rain. The hills are naturally forest but shifting cultivation has replaced the original forest with secondary forest Rubber Vines, silk cotton tress and ferns abound. Cocoa and coffee are also grown. Subsistence crops like yam, rice, cocoyam, cassava, plantain and citrus fruits are cultivated.

Ewe traditions recall a migration from the more precisely Ketu – (also called Amedzofe or Mawufe) a town in modern Dahomey now the republic of Benin. In the walls of Ketu lived, besides the Ewe forebears of the Yoruba and the ancestors of the present Aja, Fon, Ada and Ga. The expansion of the Yoruba people pushed the Ewe and related people west. On departing from Ketu, the people split into two big divisions. One of these went due south and in turn split up. One of these subdivisions went to found settlements near the River Mono and called it Tado. The second subdivision also founded a settlement between the Rivers Haho and Mono and called it Notsie.

The second big group went to the Adele region. To this group belong those who came to be known as Anlo, Be, Agu, Fon. This group also split up sooner or later. A part of the group went

to settle at Allada from where they founded the Aja kingdoms of Allada, Whydah, Popo and Jakin and later the Fon kingdom of Dahomey. The forebears of the Anlo, Be, and Ewe went to settle by their relations at Notsie. There, they were known collectively as Dogboawo. Like Ketu, Notsie was also walled round. The entire community lived within the walls, each in its own individual ward under its own head or chief but all alike were ruled by one supreme king. Some of the wards were Tegbe, Agbanadome, Kli and Adima.

The early king of Notsie ruled well and the kingdom expanded, trouble began when king Agɖkɖli ascended the throne. He was tyrannical and wicked. Various accounts of Agɖkɖli's alleged wickedness have been presented.

He is alleged to have killed all the elders of Notsie, except one who had been hidden by his son, because they disapproved of his policies. He waged un-called for wars with the sole purpose of wiping out his subjects. He requested his subjects to knead clay into which cacti, thorns etc. had been secretly embedded and he also demanded that his subjects make ropes out of clay. Chief Agɖkɖli's anger apparently became boundless after he discovered that he had been tricked into surrendering his son to be killed to revenge a murder falsely alleged to have been committed by his son.

As chief Agɖkɖli's rule became unbearable various groups of the population decided to take to the road once again to flee from his harshness. They dispersed to populate the territory between the Mono and the Volta.

During the migration from Notsie also called Glime and Kpɔme, an allusion to the excessive heat of the location, the people split into three broad groups, one went to settle in the northern part of the new home in the upland and valley region. It founded the town of Hohoe, Matse, Peki, Kpando, Awudome, Alavanyo, Kpalime, Agu, Ve, Kpedze and Wodze. The second group also found the settlements of Ho, Akovia, Takla, Kpenoe, Hodzo, Klevi, Sokode, Abutia and Adaklu.

The third group took to southern route and went to settle in the coastal region of the new homeland. This also founded Tsevie, Be (which later gave birth to Agoenyive in Togo), Bagida and Lome, Togo, Bobo, Wheta, Anlo, Klikor, Some, Ave, Fenyi, Afife, Tsiamé, Agawe, Tavia, Tanyigbe, Game etc. Later others also came from west of the Volta to settle near and amidst them. The Ga (from Accra) came to settle around the borders of River Gbaga, the Mina (from Elmina), near them at Anexo and the Adangme (from Ladoku) at Adangbe and in Agotime, etc. the Denkyera at Torgorme and Vume and in Battor, Mafi and Mepe and the Akwamu in Mepe - all in Tongu. The Ewe traditions do not provide any absolute chronology of the episodes and incidents recounted. However, at the turn of the twentieth century when the accounts were first recorded, tradition put the arrival of Ewe in their new home at ten or more generations back. Ewes generally trace decent patrilineally, that is membership of clan or any of its segment is traced through the male parental line to a common ancestor. Hereditary succession to property and office is also patrilineal. While the patrilineal principle no doubt informs the two practices or tradition normally it is the direct offspring of deceased male parent who succeeds to the property left belong by him

Primogeniture, i.e. the right of the first born son to inherit the property of his ancestor to the exclusion of his sibling was the norm in the past among the Ewes. This tradition has given way to equal access to inheritable property by all siblings.







### **3.7 Types of Gbi traditional customary marriages.**

Marriage is a very important event in the life cycle of the people of Gbi just as it has been in other human communities since time immemorial. Bachelors or spinsters' life, therefore stigmatizes one's social standing. It is therefore the responsibilities of a young man's parents to marry for him and it is the same responsibilities for girl's parents to marry appropriately for their girl. During the olden days, nobody on his own or her own should marry without the prior concern of his or her parents. Parents, however in Gbi consider such girl or boy a disobedient person and in some instance, parents in Gbi even separate or disown their children due to such unruly behavior. Being wedlock between cousins excluding first cousins, all are the types of marriage allowed in Gbi traditional area. Levirate (that is a brother marrying the widow of his deceased brother or sororate, that is a widower marrying the younger sister of his deceased wife) are no longer practiced in Gbi. Polygynous marriage, though unfair as regards gender equality, is justified by the Ewe in terms of (a) uneasiness of a husband about bodily intellectual and spiritual defeats of his first wife. (b) Superstitious ideas about menstruation, (c) the desire of a man to have many children, a status-enhancing phenomenon, (d) the need for adequate farm labour. (e) Barrenness of the first wife. (e) Strict observances of post – partum chastity (normally three years) and the associated libido, and (f) poor sexual performance of the first – wife. Asamoah (1971) in Gbi, a woman from outside married to a man in Gbi enjoys all the privileges of the clan or lineage of her husband.

The only exception is that when deceased, her body must be collected for burial by her own clan after wake keeping at her husband's home.

While parents of both sides take it upon themselves to choose good wife and good husband's for their children, they follow certain criteria but not just to choose anybody that comes their way anyhow. A good family must not be married with dreadful diseases like tuberculosis (TB), leprosy, epilepsy and other stigmatic trails like witchcraft, lunacy, immorality, quarrelsome divorce and criminality. Marriage within the Gbi traditional customary rites may then be preceded by either courting or betrothal.

The different types of marriages in Gbi traditional area are:-

1. Asivisrɛ́e or Tababiasrɛ́e – Normal marriages by the youth
2. Asikesrɛ́e – Kpekpla or ahiasrɛ́e
3. Fiasrɛ́e – Marriage by a chief, slaughtering a sheep on to the foots of the new bride.
4. Ahosrɛ́e or Ahosiɛ́e – marriage by a widow or widower or Ahosidede
5. Dekudedetsimena ame or akɛ́kɛ́nana or Nugbetɛ́srɛ́e : betrothal; replacement, of the married woman back to her clan or family
6. Afesidede or Fomesidede: Endogamy. Marriage from within the clan or lineage.
7. Dumesiɛ́e or dumesrɛ́e: exogamy, marriage from a different town or lineage.
8. Alɛ́lɛ́srɛ́e; Holy matrimony in a Christian church.
9. Amekukusrɛ́e: a man who does not marry a woman customarily and the woman dies in the cause of being a wife to the man are forced to marry the dead body customarily.
10. Tanuxexesrɛ́e or Amesrɛ́xɛ́xɛ́: A woman who has been already married customarily to a known husband but has been snatched by another man. The new man has to pay for all the cost of the bride wealth that the first husband paid plus all other expenses incurred on the wife.

During the olden days, very important standard the parents of a boy look for before going ahead to marry for their boy are; hard working on the part of their son. Has he got a house or a home of his own? Has he got a gun? Has he got a bed for the couples to sleep on when he is married? Has he got enough clothes? Has he a good character? But some of these requirements are no longer considered critically these days.

And on the part of the two spouses, the Gbi traditional community looks for mutual respect, security and protection of the wife, fertility of spouse, fidelity, and natural sexual satisfaction from the couples as virtues. Extra marital sex by a wife is a serious social stigma, while adultery committed by a male spouse is not deemed so seriously. Infidelity on the part of any of the spouses can, however, lead to divorce.

While polygamy is allowed in Gbi traditional marriage, polyandry i.e. a woman having more than one husband is unheard of. In case of divorce, the female spouse pays back the bride price and the cost of personal belongings bought for her by the husband, if her behavior in a way is found to be the cause of the collapse of the marriage. By Gbi tradition, children brought into wedlock by a woman belong to the original genitor, and not to the step – father. But within the wedlock if it happens, the children are given to the husband. Ghanaian art and culture, and for that matter, Gbi art and culture strengthens respect for marriage and contributes to stricter observances of the rules of sexual morality among the married and the unmarried, especially the women of the communities on Eweland.

#### **“Fomesrɛ́e alo Dekudedede Tsime na ame”**

In Gbi traditional area, *fomesrɛ́e*, or *dekudedede tsime na ame* i.e. Betrothal is the best and the earliest well acceptable marriage in Gbi and we shall now see the use and the importance of art

in it categorically. *Asivisr* ̤e̤e also known as *fomesi* ̤e̤e or Betrothal is started by the boy's parents.

After they are well satisfied with their investigations about the girl and her family, that the girl has got the desirable qualities they would like in their future wife of their son, an evening appointment is sought with the girl's parents.

***Tababia or v̤̤fofo.*** One evening the boy's "tasi" i.e. paternal aunt and an uncle go to the girl's parents with *tababiaha* or *v̤̤fofo* "the intimation drink" which is usually two bottles of foreign schnapps according to the customs of Gbi. The first stage of the marriage arrangement is called "v̤̤fofo alo tababia) which means "knocking" and is done only on a market day called "Asigbe" usually, it is on the early morning of that day when everybody is at home. It serves as an official notification of marriage interest of a boy in a girl. The girl's parents usually accept the drink but will say that "Ahafo de tsime" when translated literally means "the drink has poured into water" this is another way of saying that they have accepted to drink the intimation palm wine but it should not be taken to mean a commitment on their part to give the hand of their daughter in marriage to the boy's parent. Usually before the intimation drink is offered to the girl's parent, boy's parents have assured themselves already that the girl will be given to their son in marriage. This is done to avoid any embarrassment in case of public refusal of the girl's parents to give away their daughter. The marriage brokers are then asked to come back on the third day for an answer and after all have taken the drink they depart to report the result. After "v̤̤fofo" the girl's parents officially inform other members of the extended family to find out their reactions to the proposal. A thorough investigation is also conducted into the boy's family by the girl's parents through information supplied by other members of the girl's family about the boy's family.

### **Akpedada; thanks giving drink, (*See plate 9*)**

The next stage after “*uṣfofo alo tababia*” is akpedada. This is an acknowledgement from the boy’s parents to the girl’s parents that they are happy that their proposal has been accepted before presenting the akpedaha. The boy’s parents have to send half keg of palm wine one early morning to find out from the girl’s family about the day they have agreed to meet and accept the Akpedadaha.

On the agreeable day, the boy’s family present two big pots of good palm wine and two crates of soft drinks to the girl’s family to thank them for giving their daughter’s hand in marriage. Other members of the girl’s family are summoned to witness the acceptance of the drink which is called “Akpedaha” that is “thanksgiving drink” and to join in drinking it. After this rite the marriage contract is partially completed and the parents of the girl cannot give their daughter to another man without breaking the contract. The man can now visit the girl’s parents in the evening and converse with them. When he goes to visit them he sits round with the family to release his tension.

One very important rite the people of Gbi do not allow to pass is that before the akpdaha is accepted by the girls family, the girl’s family finds out if there, are not any disputes between these two lineages. And if there is any, the dispute is first settled before they all join to drink the akpedaha.

### **“Sagbledede” Service to in-laws**

This process of customizing the marriage gives the man the chance to show his prospective in-laws how hardworking and helpful he can be. This is the time that the man proves how husbandly he can be. If he is a salary worker, he starts to be giving out gifts in form of

commodities but if he is a farmer, he occasionally presents firewood to his in-laws. Occasionally when the farming season comes, the man with his friends arranges to work for his In-laws on the farm. They clear bushes and sow maize or cassava. On the working day, it is usually the responsibility of the man to arrange for meals for his friends on the farm. He does not take part in the meals when his in-laws are present on the farm because they might see him eat or know that he eats a lot, (*see plate 10*)

### **Gḅmekpḹga**

Those men who are not in the locality where the girl is or want to pay for “**sagbledede**” pay hundred thousand old Cedis in place of “sagbledede”.

In Gbi tradition marriage customs, **Gḅmekpḹga** of hundred thousand old Cedis ₦100.00 is collected from the man when he is presenting brides wealth.

This means that when the girl is married to the man. She is no longer probably going to reside in the same community in order to take part in communal activities which she used to take part in formally so this money is paid to replace her absence during such labour as sweeping and tidying up the community in which she leaves.

### **Sṛhakpakpa or Dehoho na sṛẹe.**

This is a traditional art activity as a rite in Gbi by which the uncles of the man tap palm wine purposely for the other members of the girl’s extended family.

Many matured palm trees are fallen, left, for about two weeks. The branches are then removed and a hole is bored in the palm tree for the wine to be sipping gradually into this hole and then



The *n̄ha* comprises of one full keg of wine. Two bottles of gin and a half piece of cloth. In the process of drinking *n̄ha*, the family wishes their daughter and her husband good wishes and good luck. The half piece of good cloth in the bride wealth is an acknowledgement to the mother of the girl for molding the girl to a good wife.

“Saha” this is the climax of the whole and traditional marriage rite transaction in Gbi and it involves everybody in the village. Half keg of palm wine is sent to the family of the girl as “*kakraha*”, “information drink”. The half keg of wine is to serve as letting the parents of the girl to fix a suitable day for the presentation of the final marriage bridge wealth, and the performance of the final rites. Usually, this day is fixed on “agblemigbe: which is Saturday or Thursday.

At this stage the marriage is formally customized by an act known as “*Saha no gbe*” or “*N̄gb̄nutata*” the art of clothing the wife by man’s family. On this occasion, the fiancé equips his fiancée with all the remaining things that the girl’s family demands, (*refer plate 12*)

These are two crates of soft drink; minerals or more.

Two bottles of foreign Schnapps or more

Two bottles of Akpeteshie or more

(*Nugbedosiḡ*); engagement ring,

Three or six pieces of cloth.

Three big pots of good palm – wine out of

Which two pots will be used at the gathering?



One pot of the wine will be used to mix

The wine i.e.” *Ahadzrodzro kɛnu*”

Before the palm wine is collected by the girl’s parents, part of the drink is given to those who brought them as “Tsihe e le ta” the removal of the cloth that carries the drinks” this means those who carried the pots of wine to the girl’s parents have to drink portion of it immediately they have assisted to bring down the pots of wine from their head.

After these rites, there are some selected people from the two families; the girl’s side and the boy’s side. They will be made to go through an important rite called “*Ahadzrodzro*”. This act means tasting or drinking from all the different pots of the wine to testify whether the wine they brought as “Saha” qualifies to be accepted for drinking as good wine? At this stage, if the drinks are not good palm-wine, they are rejected back to the boy’s parent. And new wines have to be brought for the same occasion.

The rest of the bride’s wealth is also presented on this same day. This includes most of the items the girl’s parents listed for the boy’s parents. Formerly, these items include most of the items the new wife will use while she is in the husbands home. And because of the present economic financial crises, parents of the girls do not now-a-days become so strict on items to present as brides wealth. Some of the items according to Gbi traditional marriage rites include,

1. “*Dotata*” from 3 pieces of good cloth to 6 depending upon the boy’s ability.
2. 6 pieces of head scarf’s.
3. Pairs of sandals or shoes,
4. Neck laces, beads, a number of panties, i.e. “*Godotse*”
5. “*pɛkete*” mat, stool, an amount payed depending on ability of the boy

6. Suitcase to carry the items.
7. White Ewe kente called “ve□oyi”
8. Some cooking utensils together with the pots of palm-wine, gins, and minerals

All these items will be sent first to the “tɛvi’s” home for the necessary inspection and preparation on his advice before the items are sent to the girl’s eldest paternal uncle who in turn present them to girl’s parents. All these activities take place on the final customization day, (*refer plate 22*).

During this final marriage rite, jubilation goes on while the drinks are served to all those who come to witness the occasion. At this occasion, the bride will be presented to the groom after the elders have inspected the bride’s wealth and are satisfied with it. Formerly, this last presentation were exposed for those present at the occasion to inspect but due to reasons of people suspected to harm the married couples by bewitching them, the items to be presented are covered from public eyes. All these final customization usually takes place in the “samemetsitsia’s” home and the eldest uncle home of the brides and during the drinking of the “saha” the parents of the girl and the whole gathering sit in a horse shoe manner. The elders take the senior positions and the drink is served in that manner. The elders of the girl’s clan or lineage take the good palm-wine before the junior members. If a chief is present at the ceremony he is served after two “samemetsiawo”/”dzotimemetsitsia” and his vice are served. This is so because of some protection and some security reasons. If there is any poison in the drink, those elders; the two “dzotinumetsitsiawo” will first suffer the brunt before the chief. By that time, the unexpected would have been noticed and the chief will be prevented from drinking the wine.

Tsitutu: tsitutu which literally means “watering the occasion” is a peculiar rite to the people of Gbi in their traditional marriage rites. It expresses the man’s gratitude to the girl’s parents for giving him a wife and his appreciation of his new wife. The “tsitutu” is an art of wishing the girl

well, prosperity and peace in her marital life. During the occasion, the good palm-wine is left for some of *tsitutu* ceremony and after finishing all other drinks which has been presented, the whole gathering become silent and the “dzotinumetsitsia” or the eldest of the lineage takes the wine into a calabash, strip himself off the cloth he is using to the waist, mentions the Almighty God’s name three (3) times, call the living chiefs of the clan’s names, call the stool names of other chiefs who were present, the ancestors of the lineage are not forgotten

He continue to say, *“I have not called you for nothing. It happened that this young man by his name has come to marry our daughter customarily according to the Gbi tradition. I emlore all of you both the living and the dead to wish them good luck. When red is seen in their home, then it should be birth or hunting of big game and not calamity. Their work place should benefit them to have enough money to look after their children and all of us at home. When any bad eye sees them, there should not be any havoc unto them. Whoever thinks badly about them should rather bare the calamity himself. Their parents should live long to enjoy their fruits and let their children grow to see their great grandparents!”* he then asks permission from the gathering to end the prayer. When the elders gathered agree upon his permission, then he says “Minξ anyi loo!

Gbξto ninyξ yu loo!

Ne wokpξdzesi la nenyē vidzidzi

Ne wokpξ dzesi la, nenyē ade

“Adekle neva afe”

Tξgbui Agbanyafe tsi

Tɛgbui Adzofusu fe tsi

Mɛre fe tsi enye si.

Finally tɛgbui Allala fe tsi enye tsi loo!

“medzɛ na mi loo!

Etɛ enye agbe loo!

Fien..... mido afe! You are at home, or you are welcome.

“Bafafa” now goes on with 2 fingers and it is given to four samemetsiwo from the girl’s lineage.

“Ami” with the signs on the forehead and on the chest by everybody at the gathering ends the whole ceremony.

Culturally, all the various types of Gbi traditional marriages go through similar customary rites except few additions to the marriage rites of the following types.

1. Amekukusrɛe,
2. Fiasrɛe,
3. “Dekudede “tsime na ame”
4. Tanuxexesrɛe

(I) Amekukusrɛe; In the case of this type of marriage the husband of the deceased wife will be forced to pay money in place of presenting brides wealth the items. He is also punished to pay some penalties for refusing to marriage the woman customarily when

she was alive. Most often, such penalties are in the form of drinks and sheep in addition to the current cost of brides wealth items. Fiasrꞑeꞑe, special significance is attached to the customary rites for a chief's wife, *(See plate 21)*

(II) Symbolically, a sheep has to be slaughtered and the blood from the sheep is poured on to the feet of the chief's wife. This rite is customarily to strengthen the bond between them and to scare other members from the community about the woman since she now belongs to the royal throne *(See Plate 13 and 14)*.

(III) **“Dekudede ttime na ame”** childhood betrothal. In Gbi traditional marriage customs, a father who wants his lineage to continue may engage a baby girl for his son by giving a calabash of water with palm nuts in it for the young girl instead of other betrothal method engaged in by other ethnic community members.

The water with the nuts will be used to bath the little girl seven times one after the other nut. This act seals and customaries the engagements that the baby girl has been betrothed. The palm nut from the tree is believed to be symbols of prolificacy. This engagement ceremony according to Gbi marriage rite is more than a customary act. It is prayer for the baby to grow and for the prospective marriage to succeed and be blessed with many children. This type of marriage is frequent with “Akꞑkꞑnana” especially when a woman has been married to another lineage away from her home, a daughter from that lineage will be betrothed back to a member from the mother's lineage.

(IV) **Tanuxexesrꞑeꞑe**; all the cost and expenses incurred on a wife by a legal husband will be paid by the new husband of the woman. Customarily, the costs of the bride's wealth will be calculated on current costs of the items paid formerly by the first

husband. And in some cases, if the unfaithfulness from the woman becomes so painful to the first husband, penalty is added to the cost of bride's wealth, or if the first marriage will not be dissolved, a penalty of "Ayefare" will be paid by the involved man to the legalized man.

### **3.8 Importance of Art in Gbi Traditional Marriage.**

Aesthetically, every artifact used or ritual that takes place in Gbi traditional marriage customs is believed to function positively by promoting symbolic, aesthetic values and concepts to specific customs for which it is used. Before the researcher goes on to identify the roles and the socio-cultural significance of the artifacts employed in the Gbi traditional marriages, he explains the concept of brides wealth as gifts intended to be an expression of gratitude to the parents and family of the girl.

*Mbit (1991, p.89)* also describes it in these words. The "marriage-gift" is an important institution in African societies. It is a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom's people to those of the bride, for their care over her and for allowing her to become his wife. At her home, the gift "replaces" her, reminding the family that she will leave or has left and yet she is not dead. She is a valuable person not only to her family but to her husband's people. At marriage she is not stolen but is going away under mutual agreement between the two families. The gift elevates the value attached to her both as a person and as a wife. The gift legalizes her value and the marriage contract. The institution of this practice is the most concrete symbol of the marriage covenant and security. The woman therefore is not regarded as a chattel of her husband who has made a payment for her. On the contrary, the bride wealth "payment enhances her value both as a person and a wife

*Atsu Dzatse* (1989, p.45) a traditional priests in Gbi also says; in Gbi traditional marriage, it is the head of the man's lineage "*samemetsitsiea or dzotinumetsitsia*" who present the wine or head wine to the girl's family. The wine or wine presented is known as "head wine". It is the giving of the wine that establishes a legal marriage. The giving of the head wine entitles the husband to have sexual rights over the wife and would collect an adultery fee called "ayefare" in case the girl is unfaithful.

It's wrong to consider this as a purchase price with which the husband bought the girl. Money which may be included is distributed among those present especially the youth to keep watch over her. The drink known as the "head wine" part is poured out to the ancestors to seal the contract.

According to Dzatse (1989, p.51) the wine is needed to propitiate the family gods and the ancestors to grant the new couple with long life and to bless them with many children. The rest of the drink is handed round to those who are present, who along with their ancestral spirits become the witnesses of the marriage contract.

Dzatse went on to emphasize that the payment of the bride wealth remains a necessary ritualistic token payment guaranteeing, the stability of the marriage. The head wine is returned on divorce through the same channel, should it occur. From my numerous interviews and research into the function of most of the artifacts used in Gbi traditional marriage rites, it has been identified that the art forms are not needed only as objects in the customary marriage rites to please and entertain but they are indeed also used to instruct; examples are fertility of sexes. It is also believed in Gbi that after the nubility rites for the young girl she is dressed and adorned in very

attractive mood that young men who might not have the intention of marrying may suddenly change their

mind to properly engage that particular girl they have seen after her puberty rite, (*See plate 19*).

The arts are regarded to maintain values, dignity, attitudes and sense of reality from one generation to another. The rich kente, beads and other ornaments worn by the brides at the “Saha” celebration in Gbi are all artifacts and symbols to identify and give status to the engaged woman.

The accessories and the rich adornments at actual “nɛgbɛnutata or saha” day also serve to effectively communicate to the public about the status of the people involved at the marriage customary rite that day. Social relationship and communication are also conveyed to the people in Gbi when artifacts are used in the Gbi customary marriage. E.g. The stool that is presented as one of the requirements for the bride, links with ancestors and encourages effective social relationship in the society. It also expresses essential things of life e.g., the warmth hospitality of the married woman, the seat or the stool represent this when it is used by women, since it is circular, (*See plate 18*)

Culturally in Gbi, whenever artifacts are used in traditional marriage customs, the arts relate to everyday life. They are so integrated with life that the absence of singing, drumming, dancing at marriage rites in Gbi makes it meaningless and boring. In all social institutions especially Gbi marriage customs, the art objects such as drums, “akaye”, a type of appellation which is used to enhance the aesthetic value of the customary gathering during Gbi marriage customs continue to secure the spiritual, physical and economic welfare of the community, (*See plate 15*).



Common to all members in the community, the concept, form, belief of all the art forms used at Gbi marriage customary occasions, motivate the creation of the art works and they are understood and shared by all members in the society. E.g. The use of white kente and its accessories and symbols, the drums or musical instruments and the purpose of relatives gathering for such occasion are known to all in the society especially when the sound of the musical instruments are used for the benefit of everyone. The arts employed at Gbi customary marriage are also used to record events. The arts reflect the struggle and aspirations of the people of Gbi especially, their economic, religious and philosophical aspects of their lives. As they are used to record and communicate events, the arts reflect the philosophy and idea (reasoning of the people) in the form of proverbs, riddles and parables especially during “tsitutu” rituals which in turn reflect the impact of history on the people of Gbi. In Gbi marriage customs, artifacts are used to function as teaching aids. Education of Gbi people without written language is primarily through sounds and images i.e. (audio – visual) the arts in Gbi marriage customs are also seen to express the culture of the people. The young people who attend the Gbi marriage rituals are introduced to the cultural activities through the arts. A passage from childhood to adolescence and to adulthood is marked by initiations, rites, and ceremonies. The arts are used to teach young people in Gbi and the adults in the Gbi society are always reminded of their responsibilities by the artifacts. “*Mama Agbanya*” , queen mother of Agbanavi clan shared the opinion that apart from serving as entertainment and cosmetic value myths, an earth colour serve the purpose as medicine to expel havoc and bad omen whenever, married woman paint her body before appearing in public during “nɛgbɛnutata” a customary ritual.

She went on to explain about types of coiffuré braided in Gbi society which enhances ones beauty with prestige and caters for good hygiene.

Just as every parent in Gbi welcomes traditional marriage for their daughters and sons, the same way chiefs and queen mothers embrace the welcoming news of their subjects to marry legally either through traditional marriage, customary way or in the Christian way.

When marriages are to be contracted customarily in Gbi, the chiefs and the queen mothers all attend the marriage customary rite. The Chief, most often makes use of his linguist in such occasions. In the culture of Ewes of Gbi, it is not proper for a chief to address his subjects directly in Gbi marriage ceremonies. In the same way, it is an act of disrespect for any person to address the chief directly. The linguist therefore, is the official spokesman of the chief through whom all statements to and from the chief are addressed. As a sign of his office, the linguist bears a staff which has a proverbial symbol and this staff is an artifact. The socio-cultural significance of this staff is that it has brought authority of the chief to the marriage ceremony.

The stool on which the chief sits at the marriage ceremony is also an artifact which has been carved and designed from wood. It symbolizes the soul of the Ewe Society. It is also the symbol of the chief's authority. It also serves as a symbolic link between the common people in the society and their head that is the chief of the village

There are two types of stools usually used at Gbi marriage ceremonies. The chief's stool and the female stool. The female stool is believed to be the first stool designed and created. The top of the stool (shaped like a crescent moon) symbolizes the loving embrace of a mother for the children among the Ewes of Gbi. It also represents the warmth of the female influence in society.

***General Knowledge in Art for Senior Secondary School*** confirmed this fact. Pg- 157 by S. K. Amenuke etc. "Tati and to", pestle and mortar are all artifacts and are wooden vessel and a stick used to prepare *fufu*,

a popular dish among the Ewes of Gbi during marriage customary occasions

,(See plate 17)

Among the Gbi people, *fufu* is considered the best meal one could welcome a visitor with, and it is usually enjoyed during joyous occasions. Comb “davufe/yida” This is flat wooden carved product or artifact used domestically to comb the hair. Decoratively carved wooden combs are one of Ewes delightful aesthetic expressions, and they receive a great artistic attention. The delicate openwork format provides the carver with a vehicle for a charming, sometimes elegant display of virtuosity. Principally an Ewe form of carved comb are traditionally owned and used only by women. Combs are also used among the Ewes of Gbi as one of the components added to bride’s wealth items, and it is also used to make beautiful designs on the human body during body paintings. Symbolically, the comb serves as wealth for the woman at home and some of them are shaped and carved for fertility as Akuaba doll. Body painting, classified as personal adornment has always played a strong role in projecting the histories, value and ethnic identity of the Ewes of Gbi. Another artifact used probably just after indigenous marriage customs in Gbi during the olden days was a type of carved wooden figure called “ametikpakpe” it is carved from a tree called “sese” and blackened with a black colour prepared from a mixture of soot from the base of the cooking pot and albumen from raw egg. Also added to the mixture is potash from burnt plantain peels, cocoa pod and rust from metals. Wooden figures among the Ewes of Gbi have four main purposes that are linked with Gbi traditional marriages.

In their socio-cultural and religions importance are; they serve as fertility symbols, beauty symbols, children’s dolls and charms. All these functions have something to do with birth and this is one of the significance of marriage among the Ewes of Gbi.

A childless woman in Gbi may request a wooden figure which is believed to make her fertile. For example, the form of fertility figure is determined by the wish of the woman and her husband. If a female is desired, the figure is carved with the characteristics of a female. The figure on the other hand also represents a twin or sister who is dead. It is believed that the dead twin has her spirit in the wooden figure that had been carved to represent it, therefore what is done to the live twin is done to the wooden figure also. This reaffirms the existence of the dead twin. Wooden figure dolls are also used among the Ewes of Gbi as charms; they are also used in finding missing children from their homes. In the past, among the Gbi, it was believed that a missing child was captured by dwarf spirits. Therefore a figure was carved to represent the image of the missing child. This was dressed up in clothes and was placed by a tree at the edge of the nearest bush.

Unsalted, mashed yam, mixed with palm oil and eggs was placed by the wooden figure to attract the spirits, thus it was believed in their scramble for the food, and the dwarf spirits set the child free.

Apart from body painting as identified among the Ewe of Gbi earlier on, fire places are also painted by women. Floor and walls around the hearth are painted together with different colours of clay. This type of painting is done in order to keep the fire side tidy and neat before cooking. Among the Ewes of Gbi, general cleaning in the home is one of the most important lessons considered in the training of neophytes at puberty rites before marriage.

Since art and life cannot be separated among the Ewes of Gbi, the use of indigenous art forms begins from the day a married woman conceives. The following artifacts are used by the woman

till she delivers. They are body markings, body painting, hair styles, clothes and sculpture figurines for fertility as we have seen earlier.

Among the Ewes of Gbi as among any other ethnic groups on the Eweland, pregnancy is held to be a state of war and danger. Besides the pregnant women's physical well-being, her spiritual well-being becomes a matter of great concern to her families.

The woman's physical states are believed to depend on her spiritual state. Towards delivery, the expectant mother leaves her husband's home for her mother's, where she is given pre- natal care. An aspect of this is the ritual protection of the pregnancy. There is a belief that the fetus in the pregnant women's womb may be "stolen" during pregnancy. This means that she may lose her child through spontaneous abortion. With this belief, her parents consult ritual experts who prescribe various protective measures to be taken. Some spiritualists of Gbi prescribe charms to be worn around the waist as a girdle or around the neck as a necklace; some also are worn around the wrist as wristlets or bracelets or around the ankle as anklets. At times incisions are made on parts of the body with a pen knife or a razor blade or a python's tooth, and a black powder rubbed into the cuts to protect the pregnant woman and her fetus. Such incisions are usually made around her navel and they are covered by the woman's clothes to prevent the enemy from neutralizing the potency of the charms and that of the black powder put into the incisions. Sometimes the expectant mother may be advised by a member of her family to smear her body with white clay in order to strengthen and sustain her spirit. No special cloth is prescribed but the pregnant woman is advised not to wear black cloth, as black is often associated with death and misfortune and it is believed to invite ill- luck.

The risk of child bearing is seen as equal to going to war among the Gbi. Not to add to her enemies, a woman tries to adopt a low profile by refraining from the use of attractive make-ups such as stylish hair and dresses that might invite the envy of people. Anything that makes her conspicuous is believed to attract the evil eye. What then is noticeable about a pregnant woman in Gbi after her indigenous marriage rites is her deliberate use of body paintings and markings for medicinal and spiritual reasons.

In summary, all the various indigenous visual art forms used above by pregnant women play the roles of adequate protection, strengthening and for her easy delivery.

In all the indigenous marriage ceremonies in Gbi, white colours play very significant roles as its indigenous meanings assigned to them are not based on scientific theories but rather on its philosophical, psychological and spiritual values related to life.

In Gbi, marriage is considered a joyous moments and victory to the families from which the two couples come. White clothes, white clays, white beads and other accessories are all used to enhance the beauty and success that complement the marriage customary rites.

Libations are poured in various stages during indigenous marriage rites in Gbi and indigenous visual arts forms are used to invoke the wisdom and authority of the ancestors. Calabashes, native palm-wine and the linguist pouring the libation speak of the way of life or the way one should live as acceptable life according to Gbi custom.

The indigenous artifacts that are used also express familiar loyalties and social responsibilities in order to bring about success in the lives of the Ewes of Gbi.

One very important thing that could not be done away with is the native wine of Gbi during the traditional marriage rite. This wine is palm wine and all the activities that go on in producing this wine are very artistically followed to produce very good acceptable wine at the marriage rite ceremonies. The palm wine tapper fells the palm tree with the mattocks, uses knife to create holes in the trees to produce the sweet wine. What then collects the sweet drink under the fallen palm trees is specially designed by a potter only for that purpose.

The pot is known as “Lubu” the pots or gourds in which the fresh wine is conveyed to the marriage customary ground are designed by artist.

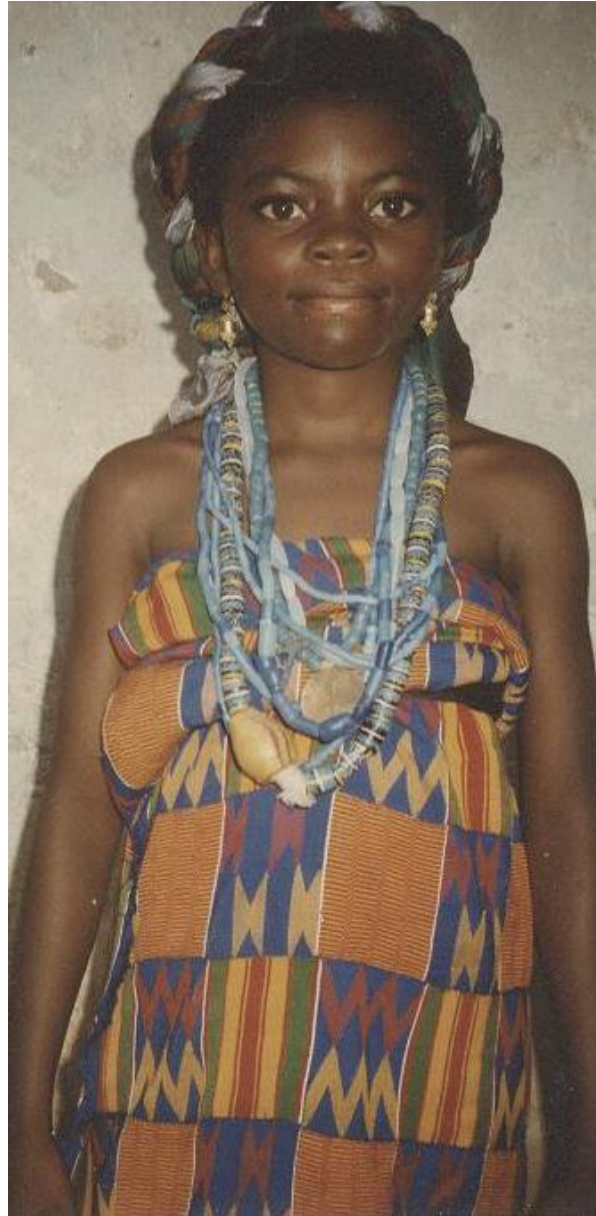
So to sum up, it has been found out by the researcher that art plays very significant roles in the indigenous marriage in Gbi.



**Plate 3**

*The stool, one of the art forms used in the presentation of bride wealth in Gbi traditional marriage to empower the married woman.*





**Plate 4**      *The use of white beads and kente as signs of victory and adornment during nobility in Gbi.*

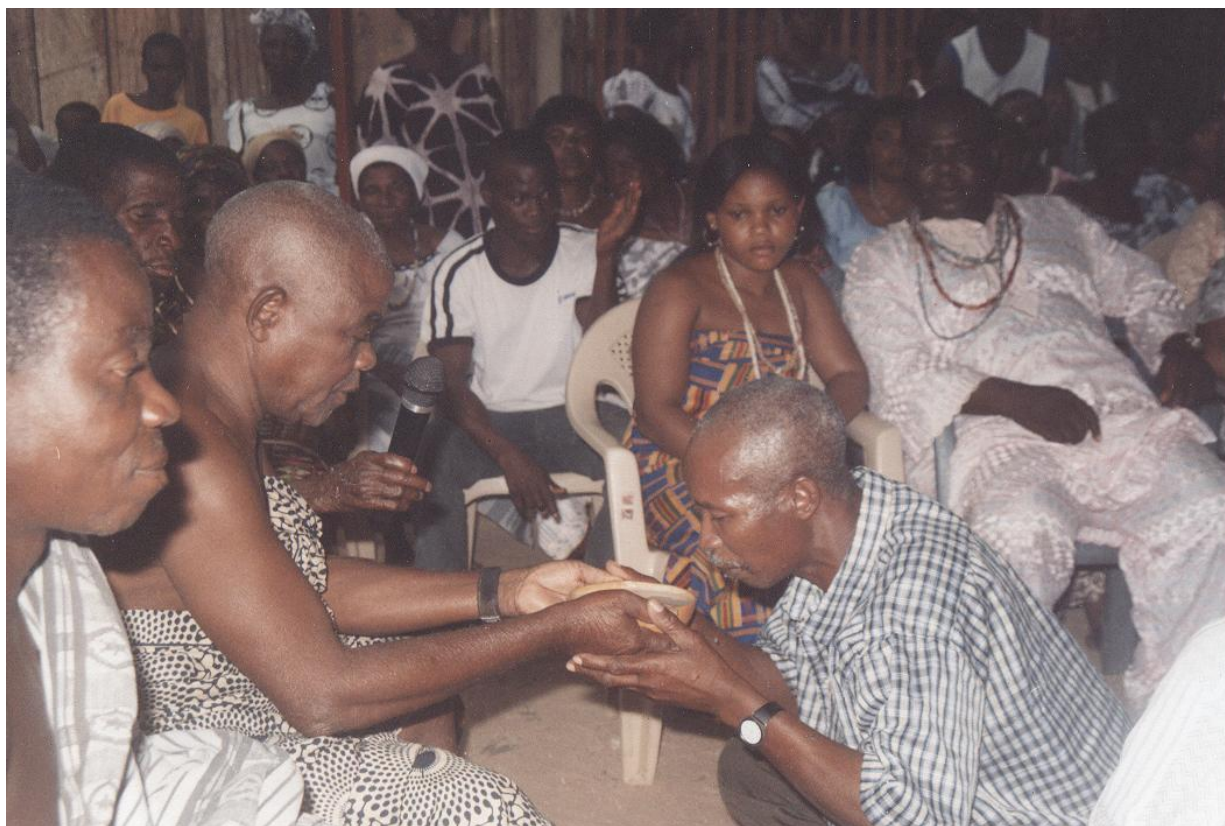


**Plate 5**      *“Bḡresasa na srḡnyḡnu” one of the art forms during “saha” celebration is used to heartily accept and welcome the bride into the groom s family*



**Plate 6**      *“De kpakpa” for good palm wine during Gbi traditional marriage presentation.*





**Plate 7**

*“Tsitutu” a dramatic verbal art form is an act of invoking the spirit of the ancestors and the elders of the lineage to pour their blessing on the new married couples.*

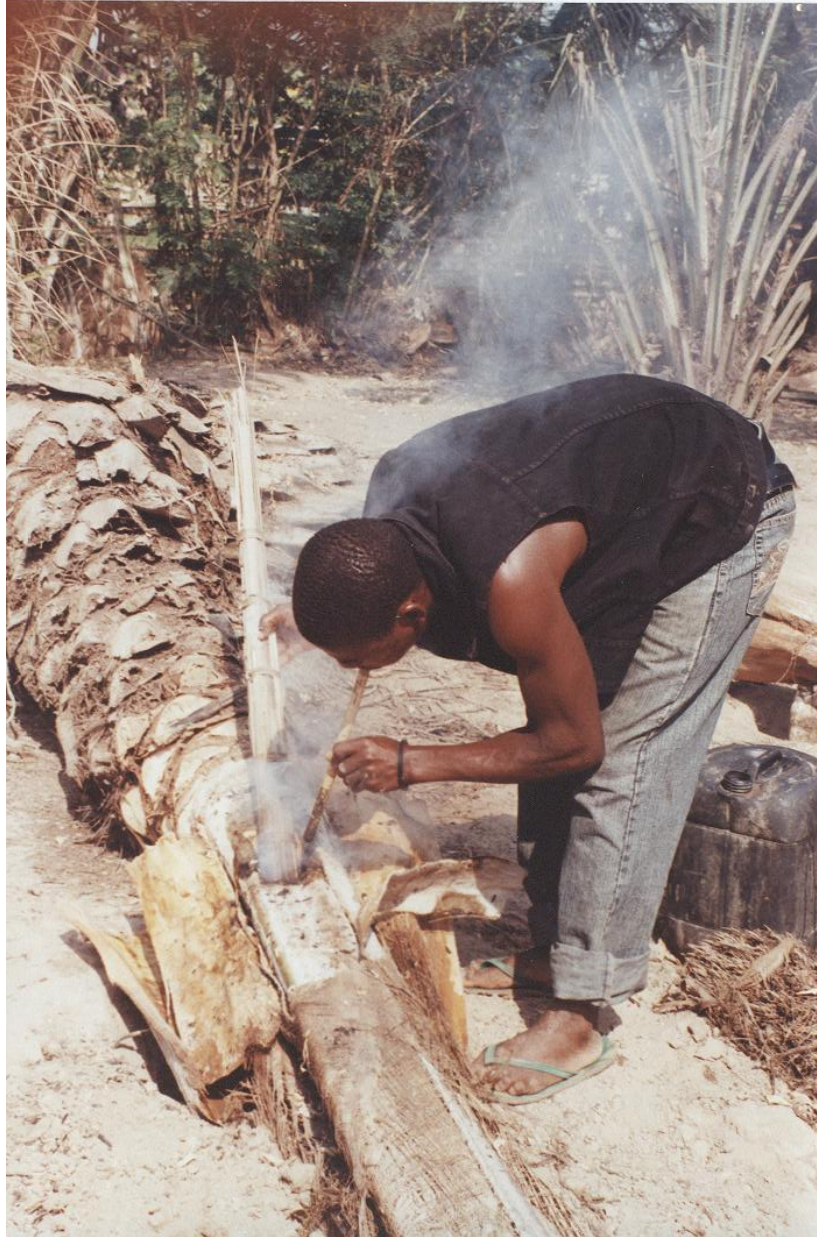


**Plate 9**      *Elders of the lineage gathered to drink “Akpedaha”. At Gbi traditional marriage custom.*



**Plate 10**      *Artistically designed maize on the barn from “sagble”*





**Plate 11**      *Rhythmical blowing of the fire into the designed hole in the fallen palm tree to yield good palm wine.*



*Plate 12      The art of Zenua enjoying the good palm wine during “saha” marriage customary rite in Gbi.*





**Plate 13**      **Wotso ale □e fiasrξ fe afξta**



**Plate 14**      *Dramatic artistic recognition rite of the chief's new wife into the royal family*



**Plate 15**      *The use of “akaye” a musical instrument to enhance singing and dancing during Gbi marriage rites*





**Plate 17**      *The use of pistle and mortar to prepare fufu for the married couples durign Gbi tradional customary marriage rites.*



**Plate 18**      *Adorned seated marriage couples at Gbi marriage customs*



**Plate 19**      *“Akpedah nono” in Gbi traditional marriage custom.*





**Plate 20**

*Use of drums to enhance jubilation during Gbi marriage customary rites*



**Plate 21**

*The adorned “fiasrξ” after the welcoming customary rite*





**Plate 22**      *Elders accepting dowry or brides wealth from the man's parents after inspection.*



**Plate 23**     *Performing art, visual art, body art and verbal art have all been included in the training of the nubility initiates*

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.9 Summary**

The Gbi people of Volta Region are one of the Ewes speaking people of Ghana that are found north of the Southern Ewes. Other people who are located in the same group are the people of Ho and Kpando

Agbodeka (1997)

They can be classified in to two broad groups based on language and origin. The first group, comprises the majority of the people, and generally called "Wedometɛwo" by other Ewes who speak Ewe as mother tongue and has a common migration and settlement history.

They are descendants of two of three major Ewe groups that migrated from Notsie during the wicked reign of Togbe Agorkorli I in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Amenumey 1997/ 1986).

The Second group of Northern Ewes speaks a variety of Guan and Akan dialects as well as Ewe as a second language and claim different origins. For easy clarification, the Gbi people fall into this first group and shall be referred to as the Ewe group, while the second group are also called the Guan group. The Gbi are the people of Peki and Hohoe, the people of Hohoe settled now at the North of Peki are known as Gbi Dzigbe and Peki which is also at the South of Hohoe, just about 50 Kilometers from Hohoe are also known as Gbi Nyigbe The different Northern Ewe groups were influenced by Akan and by German and other European Missionary /activities and lived under German and British colonial rules and also shared similar socio- political and economic experiences since the independence of Ghana. Gavua (1980) Konu (1981) noted that

by the end of 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the different Northern Ewe groups were settled in small autonomous and relatively peaceful communities in their present territory. It was however, noted that the departure and migration and relocation of the small Ewe groups from Notsie were not sudden but took many years and was towards the Volta River. Many of their towns were founded by renew hunters and farmers who sought and found arable lands. Defenses and availability of water. Arable lands and wild games were their major considerations of the easy settling in terms of the particular location where towns were cited. Most of the founding fathers were custodians or chiefs of lands they had acquired and were guided and protected by gods through powerful deities (trɔwo) and ancestral spirits. Since 1930s, several able farmers and their families relocated to Kute, Ahamansu, and Ayoma and other villages in the Jasikan and Buem districts of the Volta Region and acquired land mainly for cocoa and coffee farming. In this central plain, rainfall varies from 45 inches in the South to 55 inches in the north of the central plain. The area abounds in oil - palm thick stands of which stretches across from West to East. The rich soil also supports food crops like maize. The upland cum valley region enjoys up to 70 inches of rain. The hills are naturally forested but shifting cultivation has replaced the original forest with Secondary Forest. Rubber Vines, silk cotton trees and ferns abound subsistence crops like yams, rice, cocoyam, cassava, plantain and citrus fruits are all cultivated.

Chiefs offered land to new comer individuals and families that joined them for settlement and farming. Additional lands were sometimes acquired by individuals through warfare.

Christian's prayer camps and religious sanctuaries have also, been established by individuals and families from different Ewe towns and villages.

Common ancestry association during the journey from Notsie and during warfare led to the establishment of alliance networks among different town with allied towns and villages having

common names and celebrations and these are administratively autonomous. Other allies however lived closed to one another and constitute single chiefdoms with paramount chiefs, although each town is semi- autonomous, (Gavua, 1980; Konu, 1981)

When one speaks of the family in Ghanaian context, one is referring not only to the nuclear family consisting merely of husband wife and children, but to the extended family which comprises a large number of blood relatives who trace their descendants from a common ancestor and who are held together by a sense of obligation to one another. The communal value, such as solidarity, mutual helpfulness, interdependence and concern for the well-being of every individual member of society find their highest and most spontaneous expression in the institutions of the family.

This is why each individual member of the Gbi family is brought up to think of himself or herself always and primarily in relation to the group of his or her blood relative and to seek to bring honour to the group. It is the responsibility of every member to seek and maintain the cohesion of the family.

Marriage as we all know has not been an institutional concept from man but has been laid down by God from time immemorial when God created earth and all things in it. It is considered a basic institution in every human society. It is recognized as a social institution, not only for establishing and maintaining the family but also for creating and sustaining the ties of kinship. Without the institution of marriage there would be no family, nuclear or extended and therefore no kinship ties.

According to the culture of Ewes of Ghana, marriage is one of the most important aspects of life and it is observed among the many other transitional rites of the people of Gbi in the concept of

the rites of passage but unfortunately it seems the people of Gbi could not notice the use and the importance of Art in the Marriage Customs, therefore there is the need to research into it in order to bring out the importance of art in the rites.

It has been noted by the reviewer that the main reasons for Gbi customary marriages are to marry and procreate in order to provide adequate parental care for the children. To marry in order to command respect and social standing in the society that one belongs to. In Gbi, one marries to continue with the lineage as an institution or the formation of new families in order to come together for lineage to be preserved. Another essence of traditional customary marriage in Gbi is to serve as uniting link in the rhythm of life. Generation in Gbi are said to be bound together in the act of marriage. Past, present and future generations. In Atabu, which is one of the villages of Gbi, marriage and child bearing are considered as a remembrance.

Through these, the children are remembered when their parents die. Anyone who dies without having anyone behind him to pour out libations for him is a very unfortunate person. Therefore, marriage is intimately a confirmation of life beyond death. Marriage is also regarded in Gbi traditional society as the counter measure against the lost immortality. Through marriage, the departed are in effect reborn not in their total being but by having some of their physical treasures and characteristics or personal traits reborn in the children of the family. If no children were born, these traits and features of the departed members of the family would not be seen again.

According to the customs of Gbi in the Volta Region, rites of passage and transition are not different terms but are also the same in the African traditional societies all over.

Initiation therefore, is a traditional ritual ceremony that uses the passage or transition from one stage of change to another. Transition, from one stage to another according to customs of the Gbi cannot therefore take place without initiation ceremony.

The use of art forms in Gbi traditional marriage started with pre-marital customary rites namely puberty initiation rites and it is usually acceptable traditional customary activity to usher the marriageable girl into the family.

Puberty rites have been instituted in Ewe society not so much as the celebration of the capability of a boy or a girl to procreate but as an informal School to prepare young people for marriage. In Gbi, this ceremony is known as "Gbɛtowɛwɛ" which means "living outside the house" This rite has such name because when the pubescent has her first menstrual period, it is believed, she is ritually unclean and so she is not allowed to stay in her house but goes out to live in a special hut built in the village for menstruate for the duration of menstruation.

Puberty rites for the boy in Gbi on the contrary is not elaborate as that of the girl and it is called 'Tunanavi' literally meaning 'the presentation of a gun to a son' that is arming a son to defend the lineage and to hunt for big game economically for the family. The gun is an artifact which has been design by an artist and the act of hunting is also dramatic art form in the ritual ceremony.

It has also been studied that the Akans of Ghana use art forms to cure bareness. Art in a form of sculpture is also used to invoke spirits to induce pregnancy. In Akans, art is also used as offerings to gods who empower them at shrines. Undoubtedly, the art forms in sculpture figures are used among the Akans of Ghana as advertisement figures for the god's ability in the shrines to help women to become pregnant and also have a safe delivery.



In Gbi traditional society, several art forms are also used and combined for the purpose of marriage. For example, sculptures, music, textiles, singing and dance, body painting, cloths, ornamentations are used simultaneously to enhance the beauty of the indigenous

Marriage ceremony.

"Ayawagba" one of the most important traditionally designed brass bowls is usually used to contain bride wealth during bride presentations to the bride parents is one of the art forms used in Gbi. During the olden days those who own such customary bowls were very influential and wealthy members in the Gbi Community. "vebo" beads, drums, rings, necklaces, pottery items, vases, silver wares, footwear's, drama, dances, body arts like painting, marking, "botsre" are all the different art forms used at Gbi traditional marriage ceremonies.

Marriage is a very important event in the life cycle of the people of Gbi just as it is in other human communities else where. Bachelor or spinster's life, therefore, stigmatizes one's social standing. It is therefore the responsibility for parents to marry for their daughters or sons.

Monogamy, endogamy, exogamy and wedlock between cousins excluding first cousins are the types of marriages allowed in Gbi traditional area. Levirate or sororate is no longer practiced in Gbi. Polygynous marriage, though unfair as regards gender equality is justified by the Ewes in terms of uneasiness of a husband about bodily intellectual and spirit defeats of his first wife, superstitious ideas about menstruation, the desire of a man to have many children, a status enhancing phenomenon and the need for adequate farm labour. The reasons are barrenness of the first wife, strict observances of post - partum chastity normally three years and the associated



libido and finally poor sexual performance of the first wife in Gbi are all allowed in Gbi traditional marriages for divorce.

Parents of both sides take it upon themselves to choose a good wife and good husband for their sons and daughters but not just to choose anybody that comes their way anyhow. A good family must not be married with dreadful diseases like tuberculosis ( T. B.), leprosy; epilepsy and other stigmatic trails like witchcraft, lunacy, immorality, quarrelsome, devoice and criminality. Courting or betrothals are then preceded provided each part, together with their parents is satisfied with the choice.

The following are the various indigenous customary marriages that are allowed in Gbi traditional area.

1. Asivisrɛ́e Alo Tababiasrɛ́e (marriage through traditional knocking).
2. Asikesrɛ́e Alo Kpekpla Alo Ahiasrɛ́e (marriage through flirting).
3. Fiasrɛ́e (marring a chief).
4. Ahosrɛ́e (marring a widow).
5. Dekudede tsime na ame Alo Akɛ́kɛ́nana Alo Nugbetɛ́srɛ́e (betrothal).
6. Afesi Alo Fomesrɛ́e (marriage within one owns family).
7. Dumesi Alo dumesrɛ́e (marriage from another lineage).
8. Alɛ́lelesrɛ́e (marriage through matrimony in the church).
9. Amekukusrɛ́e (marring the dead body).

10. Tanuxexesrξ□e□e (marriage through payment of penalty i.e. for snatching someone's wife).

#### **4.0 Conclusions**

At any point in time, the human being is advancing in age, physique and knowledge. So it is with all human endeavors such as, trade, manufacturing, housing, education, cultural practices. Changes do occur in all these fields. The change must be positive to help make life more comfortable and beneficial to the people of Gbi and Ghana at large.

However, in the case of indigenous marriage in Gbi, every artifact used or ritual that takes place in Gbi traditional marriage, is believed to function positively by promoting symbolic, aesthetic values and concepts to specific customs for which it is used.

In Gbi, indigenous marriage custom is among the most well preserved customs in the life cycle of the people. So much importance is attached to the ideals of art in indigenous marriage customs yet the people do not know that the violation to perform these rites accurately constitutes a crime or taboo.

It has been identified that, through the payment of bride wealth during indigenous marriage in Gbi, the stability of the marriage is maintained. The art forms, apart from being pleasing and entertaining during the marriage rites, they are also used to instruct fertility of sexes. They are also regarded to maintain values dignity, attitudes and a sense of reality from one generation to another.

The quality accessories and the rich adornment at “Nξgbξnutata” serve to promote effective communication to the general public about the stator ship of the people involved at the marriage.

It has been identified that social relationship and communication are also conveyed to the people in Gbi when artifacts are used in the indigenous marriage.

The arts are also related to everyday life as information to marital life at home for example, they are so integrated with life that the absence of singing, drumming, dancing at marriages make life so meaningless and boring. It also loses the social cohesion of securing spiritual, physical and economic welfare of the people in Gbi community.

The concept, form, belief of all the art forms used at Gbi marriage customary rites motivates the creation of art works for economic benefits and national development.

The employment of artifacts at Gbi marriage customs also promotes the recording of events like history books. The artifacts reflect the struggle and aspirations of the people of Gbi about their economic, religious and philosophical effects of their lives.

The culture of Gbi is promoted during the Gbi marriage rites to outside world.

From the findings of the research, the researcher has noted that the indigenous visual art forms cannot be ignored at all in the day to day activities in the life cycle of people in Gbi and in Ghana as a whole. Every aspect of life namely, conception, birth, naming, puberty, marriage, death and funeral depend very much on the use of indigenous art forms for the reasons of protection, guidance and enhancing life support activities.

As marriage is a joyous occasions, the use of white indigenous visual art forms such as white beads, white clothing, body painting, silver ornaments dominate ceremonies during indigenous marriage rites in Gbi. White colour as a symbol of joy, happiness and victory plays very significant roles among the people of Gbi especially during indigenous marriage occasions. It in

used to strengthen and boost high morals of people as a sign of victory over their enemies and also as thanks giving to the Almighty God.

- To the researcher, art is a language through which the people of Gbi are identified.
- The importance of the study;
  - a) The thesis is a body of knowledge which will enhance the understanding of the roles of indigenous visual arts in customary marriage among the people of Gbi
  - b) It will also serve as a model or example of the importance of indigenous visual art among other ethnic groups in Ghana
  - c) The materials will serve as reference to other researchers and those who want to contract indigenous marriage in Gbi.
  - d) It will also be very useful to artists, art teachers, art historians, anthropologists and researchers on Gbi culture.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

The researcher, after carefully weighing both the positive and the negative sides of indigenous marriage rite in Gbi, makes the following recommendations for the consideration of all who believed in indigenous customary rites.

- a) Cultural secretariat should be opened or set up in Gbi to see to the proper administrations and co-ordination of all cultural activities.
- b) For the ideals of indigenous marriage to make any profound impact on the lives of the women in Gbi it is recommended that all the young girls be advised to marry customarily in order for them to go through the informal initiation rites at puberty before proceeding to marry. During puberty rites in Gbi, ideals of life such as vocations that is weaving,

pottery, beads making, tie and dye etc. cooking and proper home management and family life are all taught.

As the teaching of these skills would require funding it is recommended that district assemblies in Gbi should assist in this areas.

- c) It is again recommended that, the elders and Queen mothers of Gbi traditional area should form an association in order to create dialogue with traditionalist and the churches to explore systematic ways of using puberty rites to help educate, train and control premarital sex promiscuity and also prevent HIV in the Gbi society.
- d) The indigenous visual art forms are used alongside with the contemporary art forms among the Ewes of Gbi in indigenous marriage rites and because of this, the indigenous visual arts are losing their values and roles gradually, so there is the urgent need for Volta Regional Centre for National Culture to preserve the indigenous visual art forms from the contemporary arts and make useful changes from the indigenous arts wherever it is necessary to fit into contemporary arts.
- e) The youth of Gbi who should be at home to learn much about the roles of indigenous visual art in the life cycle of the Ewe are now in towns and cities and these artifacts are not taught in schools, so there is the need for the indigenous visual arts to be taught in schools by either inviting indigenous resource persons to the schools or taking the youth to these resource persons to teach them at home about the importance and the roles of indigenous art forms in marriages among the people of Gbi.
- f) Since there is no written document on this topic apart from this write up, the department of African Art and Culture is tasked of making available copies of this document so that it can reach individual schools in Volta Region for the effective teaching.

- g) Copies should also be made available to the libraries and museums in the Volta Region for people to use.

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## **APPENDIX-A**

### **Questionnaire**

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI  
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICA ART CULTURES**

### **TOPIC: ARTISTIC ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS MARRIAGE AMONG THE GBI OF GHANA**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE NO TWO FOR GBI FEMALES ONLY.**

Kindly answer the following question by ticking ☐ ☐ the appropriate response

- 1) Age group: 5-10 ☐ , 11 - 19 ☐ , 20-40 ☐ , 41- and above ☐
- 2) Religion: Traditional Worship ☐ , Christianity ☐ , Islam ☐ , Others ☐
- 3) Do you have any knowledge about indigenous marriage in Gbi?  
Yes ☐ No ☐

4) Please, did you undergo the indigenous marriage rites in Gbi?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5) At what age did you undergo the customary marriage rites in Gbi?

18-22 ☐ 22-26 ☐  
26-30 ☐ ,30-34 ☐  
34 and more years. ☐

6) How many days were used to perform these marriage rites customarily?

3 days, ☐ 4days ☐ 5days ☐ 1 week and more ☐

7) Can you remember some of the things you learnt from these rites?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8) Can you identify those artifacts that were used during Gbi indigenous marriage ceremony?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9) Can you mention them? Yes ☐ No ☐

10) If yes, then mention them .....

11) Why do you think those not forms were used?

.....

12) Do you think without the use of those artifacts, the indigenous marriage rites and be meaningful and interesting? Yes ☐ No ☐

13) If No, then why these Gbi marriage rites could would not be meaningful and interesting

.....

.....

14) Would you like the Gbi indigenous marriage rites as it is now be modified?

Yes ☐ No ☐

15) Kindly suggest any way(s) in which these rites should be modified.

16) Had the performance of Gbi indigenous customary rites affected your life in any after marriage?

If yes, please briefly state how?

.....

.....

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI**  
**(DEPARTMENT OF AFRICA ART CUTURES)**

### **ARTISTIC ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS MARRIAGE AMONG THE GBI OF GHANA**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE NO. ONE FOR GBI MALES ONLY.**

Kindly answer the following question by ticking ☐ ☐ the appropriate response

1) Age group: 5-10 ☐ , 11 - 19 ☐ , 20-40 ☐ ,41- and above ☐

2) Religion: Traditional Worship ☐ , Christianity ☐ , Islam ☐ , Others ☐

3) Do you have any knowledge about indigenous marriage? Yes ☐ No ☐

☐

4) Please, did you undergo the Gbi indigenous marriage rites? Yes ☐ No ☐

5) At what age did you undergo these rites? 18-22, ☐ 23-27 ☐ 28-32 ☐

33-37 ☐ 38 and above years. ☐

6) How many days were used to perform the indigenous marriage rites? 3days ☐

4days ☐

5days ☐ 1 week ☐ 1 1/2 weeks and more ☐

7) Can you remember some of the things you learnt from the rites?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8) Have you noticed any art form being used during the Gbi indigenous marriage rites?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9) If any art form has being used, can you mention them?

.....  
.....

10) What do you think has the Art form being used in the marriage rites added to the rites?

.....  
.....

11) Would you allow your son or daughter to undergo these indigenous marriage rites?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12) Why? Kindly give reasons

.....

13) Would you like the marriage rites as it is now to be modified? Yes ☐ No ☐

14). Has the use of art forms added to the beauty of the rites? Yes ☐ No ☐

15) Had the performance of Gbi indigenous marriage rites affected your life in any way?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please briefly state how

.....

.....

## **APPENDIX-C**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**KW AME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI  
(DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN ART AND CULTURE)**

**ARTISTIC ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS MARRIAGE AMONG THE GBI OF GHANA.**

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHIEFS, QUEEN MOTHERS AND ELDERS**

1. Kindly describe a brief history of Obi indigenous marriage customary rites.

2. What are the significances of art forms in indigenous marriages customs in Obi?
3. Have you noticed the use of any art forms in the marriage rites?
4. What importance has art play in these marriage customary rites?
5. Who has the absolute control and authority on the organization of Obi indigenous marriage rites?
6. Who can make charges or bring innovations into these marriage rites?
7. What are the roles of the queen mothers and chiefs in Obi indigenous marriage rites?
8. How do the traditional rulers influence the Obi marriage customs?
- 9) Do you have any Suggestion about any change or modifications on any of the Obi indigenous marriage rites?
10. If yes, what are they?