

The Nupe People of Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of Nupe kingdom

The Nupe kingdom was founded by *Tsoede*, alias *Edegi* who was born in 1465. The early Nupe history recognised *Tsoede* and his fundamental contributions to the building of Nupe dynasty. *Tsoede* was the son of a Nupe mother and an *Igala* father who was raised at the *Igala* court in *Idah* but later returned to his natal home in Nupeland. He returned with magical and symbolic regalia bequeathed to him by his father, the *Igala king*. On his return to his maternal home he gained control over the vast area of Nupeland and extended his kingdom by conquering the lands of neighbours as well. The people conquered were the Yoruba in the south and the *Kamberi* and *Kamuku* in the north. He founded *Nupeko* as his administrative capital and from there asserted his political might and authority in the entire Nupe kingdom. *Tsoede* passed away in 1591 in one of his military expansionist missions, north of the Nupe kingdom. Hence, *Nadel* refers to *Tsoede* as the culture hero and mythical founder of the Nupe kingdom.

The Nupe people have been recognised for their tremendous achievements in the history of the black race, according to valuable information from the work of the renowned anthropologist, Professor S.F. *Nadel*, the author of the *Black Byzantine*, who spent over 20 years in Nupe Land and spoke Nupe fluently in those hectic years of anthropological research. His adopted Nupe name was *Ndakotsu Nasara* (Etsu's grandfather, the white man).

The Nupe people have historical links with the Hausas of Katsina, Kano and Borno people. This is evident with few examples. Both the towns of *Abaji* and *Eggan* have traditions which confirm that they were founded by men from Katsina. *Bokane* was first settled by a man from Kano (Hausa: *Bakano* i.e. a Kano man) while *Kutigi* and *Enagi* became the homes of settlers from Borno whose origin gave the whole region its name, *Benu*. They are said to be specifically from

Kukawa.

Despite the ever-increasing connection in social and commercial relationships which gradually spread over Nupeland from the north, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Nupe culture, especially prior to the nineteenth century, was firmly linked to that of its neighbours across the River Niger. Due to overwhelming data on Yoruba history over that of other Nupe neighbouring tribes such as *Igala*, *Gwari* and *Borgu* we can see through documentation and interactions of the long-term connection between Yoruba and Nupe. There is reason to accept the evidence, in this connection, of major shifts in population as well as the emigration of individuals and small groups. For instance western Nupe had once been settled by Yoruba-speaking people who, it was gathered, as a result of integration moved to the south of the River Niger.

It has been interesting to note that historically, it is established that *Oranmiyan*, a descendant of *Oduduwa*, the founder of the Yoruba race, married *Elempe*, the daughter of the Nupe King. Their son was the powerful thundering *Sango*; thus he was half-Nupe, half-Yoruba. He later became the *Alaafin* (King) of Oyo Empire. After *Sango's* brother invaded the Nupe people during his reign as the king of Oyo, the Etsu-Nupe, known then to the Yoruba as *Lajomo*, fought back strongly and the evidence of that historical event could be traced to *Ede* and *Ilesha* and the conquest of Oyo Empire. However, events of the following years showed that the relationship between the Nupe people and, the Yoruba became to be cordial. This explains the introduction of *Egugu* into Yoruba land by the Nupe. Subsequently, with the introduction of Islam into Nupe Land, it equally spread fast to the neighbouring Yoruba towns like *Offa* and *Ibolo* communities.

Nupe servants to leading Yoruba chiefs were treated with cordiality. A prominent example was the *Tapa Oshodi*, the servant of *Kosoko*, the King of Lagos, who recognised or treated slaves as free natives. Hence, the Nupes in Yoruba land made themselves at home throughout the 19th

century. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *Tapa Oshodi's* name has become a popular or household name in Lagos and beyond.

Also, during the 1980s and 1990s, the wind of unity blew across the entire Nupe speaking communities in Niger, Kwara and Kogi states. For instance, this period witnessed a clamour for *Ndaduma* State, a dream that is still dear to the hearts of Nupes in Niger, Kwara and Kogi states. The recent approval and construction of a major road and bridge across River Niger through *Nupeko* the historic headquarters of the Nupes to Pategi is a development that is heartily celebrated among the *Nupes*.

Nupe Kingship Structure

It is good to understand the evolution of leadership structure in Bida, the undisputed headquarters of Nupe people in Nigeria. The traditional inhabitants of the ancient city (*Banin Bida*) were known as *Beni*. These were very powerful people with mystical powers (now overtaken by Islam). The original house of *Etsu-Yisa* was the palace of the leadership where the *Etsu* came from before the conquest of Nupe land by the Fulani rulers (*Goyizhi*) in 1804, who displaced the Bida Nupe leadership structure in early 19th century. The Fulani leader-*Mallam Dendo (Manko)* who became the new leader of this empire started it all. His son, *Usman Zaki*, became the first *Etsu Nupe* in 1832.

There are three houses in Bida where *Etsu Nupe* rotates. These are:

- (A) USMAN ZAKI HOUSE
- (B) MASABA HOUSE
- (C) UMARU MAJIGI HOUSE

Since the emergence of the first Etsu-Nupe of Fulani descent in 1832, there have been twelve *Etsu Nupes* from the three houses as follows:

S.No.	Name	Position	House	Year	Number (Year)
1.	Usman Zaki	1 st Etsu-Nupe	Usman Zaki	1832-1859	27 years
2.	Masaba	2 nd Etsu-Nupe	Masaba	1859-1873	14 years
3.	Umaru Majigi	3 rd “ “	Umaru Majigi	1873-1884	11 years
4.	Maliki	4 th “ “	Usman Zaki	1884-1895	11 years
5.	Abubakar	5 th “ “	Masaba	1895-1901	6 years
6.	Muhammadu	6 th “ “	Umaru Majigi	1901-1916	16 years
7.	Bello	7 th “ “	Usman Zaki	1916-1926	10 years
8.	Saidu	8 th “ “	Masaba	1926-1935	9 years
9.	Muhammadu Ndayako	9 th “ “	Umaru Majigi	1935-1962	27 years
10.	Usman Sarki	10 th “ “	Masaba	1962-1969	7 years
11.	Musa Bello	11 th “ “	Usman Zaki	1969-1975	6 years
12.	Alhaji (Dr.) Umaru Sanda Ndayako, CFR (Incumbent)	12 th “ “	Umaru Majigi	1975 –	

The incumbent Etsu-Nupe is *Alhaji (Dr.) Umaru Sanda Ndayako*, CFR, the 12th Etsu-Nupe who ascended the throne in 1975 about 28 years ago, he is direct descendant of Umaru Majigi and the son of *late Etsu-Nupe – Alhaji Muhammad Ndayako, KBE*. *Dr. Umaru Sanda* was educated at *Elementary School, Bida, Ilorin Middle School, Barewa College, Zaria* and later at the nation's Premier University – the University College, Ibadan where he bagged B.A. (Honours) degree of the University of London in 1962.

He was a career Civil Servant in the Federal Service and rose to the position of Permanent Secretary and the Head of Political Affairs in the Federal Cabinet Office in Lagos before he was crowned the Etsu-Nupe in 1975.

The Etsu-Nupe appoints credible people to several traditional title offices. These title holders are the *Etsu Nupe's* loyalists, who advise him from time to time, while several district heads are appointed to head several districts in Bida Emirate. The same is practiced in other emirates. Some of the current titles are given in table 1.

Location

The Nupe people live in the heart of Nigeria, spread over the low basin formed by the two rivers, Niger and Kaduna popularly referred to as *Edu* and *Lavun* respectively.

BIDA: THE CAPITAL OF NUPE LAND

Before the Fulani conquest in 1804 the Nupe Empire has reached the height of its fame. Later developments brought the kingdom under the domination of the dynasty of the empire of *Gwandu* – after the Fulani conquest of the entire Hausa States. After the seizure of authority from the natives (non-Fulani rulers) in 1810, *Mallam Dendo* (locally called *Manko*), a Fulani scholar

Table 1: Traditional titles in Nupe Kingdom

A Royal Titles		
1. Etsu	8. Lakpene	15. Taka
2. Shaba	9. Kafa	16. Lukpan
3. Kpotun	10. Ginya	17. Cekpa
4. Makun	11. Benu	18. Tsoyida
5. Madami	12. Fogun	19. Tswashako
6. Nagenu	13. Kusodu	20. Rani
7. Nakorji	14. Ceceko	
B Civil Titles		
1. Makama	7. Madaki	13. Nnafyanea
2. Sardauna	8. Wali	14. Tswankuku
3. Magajin Gari	9. Swajiya	15. Tabo
4. Ndeji	10. Santali	16. Man Takada
5. Sonfarako	11. Mijindadi	17. Garkuwa
6. Tswayan	12. Dan Mansani	
C Military Titles		
1. Maiyaki	7. Galadima	13. Barize
2. Ubandawaki	8. Ejiko	14. Soje
3. Sokiara	9. Turaki	15. Yerima
4. Somasun	10. Nagun	16. Waziri
5. Saganuwa	11. Tsowa	
6. Tsadza	12. Sonfadako	
D Special Trade titles		
<i>Title</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	
1. Muku	=	Head, Brass-worker
2. Sokiara	=	Head, Barber
3. Samfawa	=	Head, Butcher
4. Ndaceko	=	Head, Hunter
5. Egba	=	Head, Carpenter
6. Masaga	=	Head, Glass worker
7. Majin Kimpa	=	Head, Leatherworker
8. Kuta	=	Head, Fisherman
9. Bagba	=	Head, Woodworker
10. Dokodza	=	Head, Blacksmith
11. Majin Cigbe	=	Head, Traditional Medicine
12. Majin nya lechi	=	Head, Beads worker
13. Etsunu	=	Head, farmer
E Women's Titles		
<i>Title</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	
1. Sagi	=	Head of women
2. Soniya	=	Head of market women

from *Bangana* (a village near Brinin Kebbi) established himself as the new leader. He thus moved the then Nupe capital from *Raba* to Bida.

On the world map, Bida lies between latitudes 6°20' and 7°15' North of the Equator and longitudes 5°40' and 6°33' East of the Greenwich Meridian. This geographically places the area almost in the centre of Nigeria.

Bida is generally regarded as the capital of Nupe land in Nigeria. Its rapidly increasing population is put presently at more than 600,000

people.

History has it that by 1352, the Nupe people were already settled in this location. Geographically this location shares boundaries with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in the South East of Bida and Minna towards Suleja. While to the North it shares boundaries with *Zungeru* and North West by *Zugurma* towards Kontagora. In the South West end of *Jebba* it shares boundaries with Yoruba villages near *Kabba* in the West of River Niger towards *Okene* down to Lokoja. Hence, the Nupe people are spread over a large space in central Nigeria.

Cultural Identity

The Nupe people are called different names by various tribes in Nigeria. For example, the Yoruba refer to them as *Takpa*, the Hausas call them *Nufawa* (Plural) or *Banufe* (Singular). *Gwaris* refer to them as *Anupeyi*. The Nupe people refer to themselves as *Nupecizi* (Plural) and *Nupeci* (Singular). The Nupe comprises other related ethnic groups or sub-tribes namely; *Beni*, *Benu*, *Kusopa*, *Dibo*, *Gana-Gana*, *Kakanda*, *Basa*, *Cekpan*, *Kede*, and *Kupa*.

Characteristics of Nupe people

Nupe people have diverse physical characteristics in relation to body appearance. Some are tall, others are of medium and short heights. Some people are very light, others are light and majority are dark skinned while some are extremely dark. Interestingly, a mixture of fat, but not too many obese people, is common; though, there are fat and strong agile looking people too. A minority are lanky and slim-shaped. Also, within the social and political engineering of Nigerian nation, the Nupe people have come along way. Apart from the historic feat of the founders of Nupe Kingdom, the present generations have continued to blaze the trail.

PROMINENT NUPE PEOPLE

1. His Royal Highness, Alhaji (Dr.) Umaru Sanda Ndayako, CFR, Etsu Nupe, Bida

Alhaji (Dr.) Umaru Sanda Ndayako CFR, the Etsu Nupe is a prominent Nupe personality in every aspect of national life. He was born on 13th February, 1937 to Etsu-Nupe, Alhaji Muhammadu Ndayako, CBE and Hajija Aishetu in Bida town,

Niger state. He is married with children.

His educational career started at the East primary school, Bida between 1945-1948. He immediately proceeded to the middle school, Ilorin between 1949-1950. In 1951 he was admitted into the famous Barewa College, Zaria. On completion of his secondary education in 1956, he opted for his advanced level at the Nigerian College of Arts, science and technology Zaria, between 1957-1959. After his advanced studies in Zaria, he proceeded to the nations Premier University, the University College, Ibadan now University of Ibadan, between 1959-1962.

He graduated with Bachelor of Arts (London) in 1962. He later proceeded to the University of Manchester England 1967.

Umaru Sanda Ndayako's career which span over a decade started with the Northern Regional Civil Service as an Administrative Officer in July 1962. He served in the Ministry for Local Government, TIV Division during the TIV riots of 1963 and lastly in Kano Province. He was promoted Administrative officer class III and transferred to the Federal Civil Service in 1965. He served in the Ministry of Lands and Survey and later in the cabinet office where he held several positions including that of the first secretary of the National Rehabilitation Commission, Secretary to the Justice Bello Visitation to University of Ibadan and University of Lagos. He was promoted Administrative Officer Grade II in 1967. Grade I 1969 and Staff Grade in 1974. He rose to the position of permanent Secretary and Head of Political Division of the Federal Cabinet Office until his appointment in 1975 as the 12th Etsu-Nupe. After a successful career in the public service Alhaji (Dr.) Umaru Sanda Ndayako has continue to serve the nation at various capacities in different national assignment. This led credence to his exceptional brilliance and commitment to the nation where he was appointed a member of National Universities Commission in 1975 and pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Governing Council of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In the second Republic, he was appointed Chairman, National Ethical Re-orientation Committee on the state of National Ethics and Discipline. He is the Chairman, Niger State Council of Traditional Rulers and was appointed as a member of the National Council of state between 1979-1983; Vice President. Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs of Nigeria. He served as the Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife between

1984-1999. He was also appointed Chairman, Niger State Police Public Relations Committee in 1988. He was appointed to serve as a member of the constituent Assembly in 1988. He later served as a member of the Vision 2010, committee in 1997. Also in 1997, he was appointed Chairman, committee on the Future of Higher Education and later member of National Council on Nigeria Vision in 1998 and Member, Nigeria Inter-Religion, Council in 1999. He was a member of the Committee on Zafara Crisis in 2001.

Honours and Distinctions

1. Appointed the 12th Etsu-Nupe January 1975
2. Recipient of National honours Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR) 1980.
3. Honourary Doctorate Degree of the University of Ibadan 1988.
4. Honourary Fellowship, Nigeria Academy of Letters – August 2001.

Dr. Umaru Sanda's dynamic reign has witnessed unprecedented development in the history of the Nupe kingdom. Not only have prominent sons and daughters of Nupe attained national and international laurels, the entire kingdom has experienced more development than in any other decade in the past.

Dr. Umaru Sanda Ndayako is a recipient of national honours – Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR), Honourary Doctorate Degree of the University of Ibadan – 1988. He was a former Chancellor of the *University of Ife* (now *Obafemi Awolowo University*) *Ile-Ife* and on 9th August 2001, he was decorated with an honorary membership award of the Nigeria Academy of Letters (NAL) at its 3rd convocation and investiture ceremony of fellows, held at the University of Lagos.

During the vote of thanks at the occasion, a fellow recipient, *Chief Emeka Anyaoku*, the former Commonwealth Secretary General, acknowledged the Etsu-Nupe as the first traditional ruler in Nigeria to receive the prestigious award. He declared that his first encounter with the Etsu-Nupe when he was the Permanent Secretary, Federal Cabinet Office, Lagos, was a remarkable one, when the *Etsu-Nupe's* intellectual precision and handling of matters was simply fantastic. Hence, his appointment as Etsu-Nupe was a blessing to the traditional institution in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, his distinguished services in different national committees in the last two

decades have attested to this assertion. Hence, *Chief Anyaoku* concluded that

The Etsu-Nupe has brought dignity to the traditional institution in Nigeria

It is noteworthy, that the title of Etsu-Nupe is original to the Nupe people and has been retained even after the Fulani conquest.

In the entire Nupe Kingdom, there is only one Etsu-Nupe. The seat of power of the Etsu-Nupe is Bida, the capital city of Nupe Kingdom. Therefore, others are *Etsu* in their respective domains only and bear allegiance to the Etsu-Nupe. Other *Etsus* in prominent Nupe towns are under the overall leadership of the Etsu-Nupe.

It is noteworthy that several Nupe people have played significant roles in building, the Nigerian nation, not only for their roles in social and cultural integration, but as active participants in the socio-political development of Nigeria.

2. Alhaji (Dr.) Shehu Ahmadu Musa, CFR, (Makama Nupe)

Alhaji (Dr.) Shehu Ahmadu Musa, CFR, Makama Nupe, was born on January 16, 1935 in Bida Niger State to the family of Mallam Musa and Hajiya Maimuna. He is married with children.

Alhaji Shehu Musa attended South-Elementary School Bida between 1943 and 1947 and Bida Middle School, Bida, in 1948. His Secondary School Education was at Zaria Secondary School now Barewa College, Zaria, between 1949-1954. After a brilliant performance in the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in which he obtained Grade I, he proceeded to the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Zaria between 1955-1957 where he studied for the University of London General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced level in Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Physics (Combination that was known to scare many people but exclusively reserved for gifted individuals). He immediately proceeded to the nation's premier University, the University College, Ibadan now University of Ibadan (the University he is always very proud of and never hide his affection and gratitude to this great institution). He obtained a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Honours (London) in Mathematics and Physics in 1960. He holds the record of being the first Nupe man from Bida to hold a University degree. Alhaji Shehu Musa's search for the golden fleece (Education) took him to the

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis's U.S.A. between 1962-1963 for a Master of Science (M.Sc) in Public Administration.

(ii) Public Service

Alhaji Shehu Musa is one individual in Nigeria that his entire life after school has been dedicated to the service of his fatherland. His career in the public service started in 1960 in the Audit Department of the former Northern Region where he rose to the position of Senior Auditor between 1963-1965. He was on service transfer to the Federal Civil Service in 1965 as Senior Assistant Secretary, Board of Customs and Excise – 1967 – 1977. He was later appointed the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, 1971 – 1974 and later Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Health, 1974 – 1977. Based on his Wealth of Experience and reliability, he was appointed as Director of Customs and Excise on special assignment by the General Martala Mohammed Corrective regime to reorganize the Department of Customs and Excise and streamline its operations. This assignment was between September 1975 to March 1976 and it provided the very foundation which the entire department was built for its viable role in the economic life of the nation. Between 1978 – 1979, he was the Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Finance. He got to the peak of his career when he was appointed Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) in the Second Republic. Alhaji Shehu Musa became the first Nupe man to be appointed to such an exalted position in Nigeria. These among others provided a potent source of inspiration to the succeeding generations who witnessed the emergence of the first Nupe man to be to the highest position of authority in Nigeria. He has been a role model to the younger generations for his intellectual gift, humility and patriotism. During his tenure as the Secretary to the Government of the Federation between 1979 and 1983, the then Executive President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria – Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari described Shehu Musa as:

... a man of courteous but authoritative bearing, Shehu Musa was clever, impressively efficient and widely respected by his colleagues. He seemed all the apposite as I felt that our new democratic voyage needed as the first SGF someone who knew his way around the federal bureaucracy, how it worked, or didn't work.

Moreover, as a non-party man he would not be seen as a rival by ministers or special advisers. As the SGF, the homotype of Britain's Secretary, Shehu Musa was unarguably the single most powerful official in the Federal Government or indeed in the country (Shehu Shagari: Beckoned to Serve p. 294)

To every Nupe man, this is a man of honour, distinction and pride. He is acknowledged not only at home but in the committee of nations for his historic feat and breaking the myth for organizing the only acceptable National Population Census in 1991 when he served as the Pioneer Chairman of National Population Commission, after several unsuccessful attempts.

No wonder, he has been honoured by several local and International Organisations. He is a recipient of Honourary Doctorate Degrees of the University of Jos, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and the *University of Calabar*. His contributions are of significant bearing in national life. His appointment into the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as a National Commissioner remains one of such important contributions to the democratic evolution of Nigeria. He has attended several in-service courses, seminars and conferences in Nigeria and abroad, including representing Nigeria at World Bank, I.M.F., Commonwealth Heads of Government (Officials) and Finance Ministers Meeting.

(iii) Community and Social Services

Alhaji Shehu Musa's contribution to national development is not only in public service but in other sectors of national life too. The picture of this "National Servant" can be seen from his record of service to his community, the nation and humanity. He has served as a member and chairman to over twenty parastatals including private sector organisations and Non Governmental Organisations.

(iv) Awards

Alhaji Shehu Musa is indeed a man of honour and a national servant per excellence! In recognition of his tremendous contributions to national development; several communities in Nigeria have honoured him with various traditional titles. These are in addition to national and international awards he had received at one

time or the other.

(i) National Honours

Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (C.F.R.) - 1982

(ii) International Mercury Award - 1992

(iii) Traditional Awards

1. Makama Nupe (Niger State) - 1980
2. Onotu of Ogume (Delta State) - 1982
3. Boba Selu of Osogbo (Osun State) - 1983
4. Ezeanyin of Ibusa (Delta State) - 1988
5. Jagunmolu of Ikirun (Osun State) - 1990
6. Onwanitilora of Assah Ibilerem (Imo State) - 1991
7. Batolu of Lagos (Lagos State) - 1991
8. Aare Atunluse of Ibadan (Oyo State) - 1991
9. Seriki Mayegun of Oke Ona Egba (Ogun State) - 1991
10. Bajowa of Eefon Alaaye (Ondo State) - 1990

3. Mrs. Sarah Nnadzwa Jibril

Mrs. Sarah Nnadzwa Jibril is a prominent Nupe Woman of National and International fame. She was born on 6th March 1946 in Patigi, Kwara State. She is married to Col Jibril (rtd). They are blessed with four children. She speaks Nupe, English, Hausa and Yoruba fluently.

Mrs. Sarah Jibril's brilliant academic career started at the S.I.M. Primary School, Patigi between 1953-1960. Her secondary school education was at Queen Elizabeth Secondary School, Ilorin where she obtained the West African School Certificate (WASC) in 1965. Mrs. Jibril proceeded to the prestigious Dartford College of Education, University of London in 1967 where she obtained a Diploma in Education in 1970. Between 1974 and 1975, she was at Kansas University, U.S.A. where she obtained a Bachelor of Science in Education.

Mrs. Jibril's educational career was boosted when she read for a Masters degree (M.Ed) in Educational Psychology at the University of Lagos, Nigeria between 1977-1980. She specialized in Guidance and Counselling. By 1981 she registered for her Ph.D. programme at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (She completed her one year course in Social Psychology) but due to the challenges in her national life, the entire programme remain uncompleted, hence, the supreme price she had to pay as a renowned and unrepentant woman activist and social crusader.

Mrs. Sarah Jibril has an impressive record in

service for the advancement of human course. She started her working career as a Primary School Teacher at SIM Primary School, Patigi between 1966-1967 and House Keeper, Children's Home, Dartford, U.K. in 1968. She was also Assistant Athletics Coach with the Kaduna State Sports Council in 1970 after which she taught Physical and Health Education at the Advanced Teachers College, Kano between 1971-1972. She obeyed the call for the National Service (NYSC) between 1975-1976 as Research Assistant, Remand Home at both Ibadan and Lagos. She later became a Counsellor at the Armed Forces Psychiatric Hospital Lagos 1977 and 1978. She also taught Psychology at the School of Nursing, Makurdi between 1980 and 1981. Mrs. Jibril was appointed Honourable Commissioner for Social Development, Youths, sports and Culture in Kwara state between 1987-1988. During this period she was also a Board Member, Kwara State Broadcasting Corporation.

Mrs. Sarah Jibril has a laudable record in community and voluntary service to the course of humanity. She was the Secretary, Army Officers wives' Association, 30 Brigade, Nigeria Army-Makardi between 1978-1979 and became the President of the Association between 1979-1980. She later served as the Executive Director Yyetsusa Counselling Services, Kaduna, 1985-1986. She is the initiator and founder of Human Development Foundation of Nigeria and School for Beggar's Children 1985-1987.

She was at one time or the other been active member of Psychologists, Society for International Development, Philosophical Society of Nigeria. Mrs. Sarah Jibril is a patriot in search of an ideal Nigerian Society, this is evident from her remarkable strides towards national peace and conscience building efforts. She was the initiator and facilitator of Loans to Women's Cooperative Societies and Youth Clubs in Edu Local Government Area, Patigi, Kwara State between 1988-1990. She is the promoter for conscience for All (for peace) by the year 2000. A project she started in 1989. She is also the initiator of promoter of Merit above Money Crusade and Convener General – Consultation of Patriotic Politicians for Citizens - CPPC in 1996. She was also an active member of National Council of Women's Societies in 1980.

She also served as a member, Nigeria/American Chamber of Commerce, Kaduna, 1985-1987 and member, Institute of Management Consultants.

Honours and Distinctions

Due to the outstanding contributions of Mrs. Sarah Jibril to the advancement of humanity, she has been honoured by different organizations at both community, national and international levels. She was an Award Winner of the Army Officers' Wives' Association in 1987. She became honorary member Lioness Club, Ilorin and Inner Wheel International, Kaduna and Ilorin.

She is patron, Patigi Youth Association, Patigi Development Association and Jaycees International Ilorin. She has also served as Trustee to several organizations among which are the following:

- a. Women Environmental Programme (WEP) Nigeria – 1998
- b. National Dialogue – Nigeria (Global Meeting of Generations (UMG) – 1999.
- c. National Youth Environment Network 1999
- d. Isah Kaita Memoria Club – 1998.
- e. National Association of Nupe Students in ABU Zaria and Kaduna Polytechnic.

Mrs. Sarah Jibril is a "peace crusader". She became the Nigerian Chancellor of National peace under the auspices of International Association of Educators for World Peace (IAEWP) – 1995. She was the spokes person at the Beijing Conference where she gave a world press conference on "peace first" in her capacity as the World Vice President, Central African Affairs, International Association of Educators for World Peace in Beijing – China – 1995.

This development culminated into her been the co-founder and president of African Fund for Democracy, Peace and Reconciliation (AFRIF – DPR) in 1999. She later became a Trustee by the year 2001. She is a promoter of Christian Code of Righteousness. By 2001 she was appointed Trustee to Women Build Peace For All (WOBPFA) Nigeria.

Landmark Achievements of Mrs. Sarah Jibril in the Political Landscape of Nigeria

Mrs. Sarah Jibril is an outstanding woman among other women and a towering example to others with her tenacious courage to challenge men in the tough political landscape of Nigeria where women are often relegated to the background.

Mrs. Jibril in 1983 was a senatorial nominee. Undaunted by the gender oppressive political

scenario, she later in 1993 won the presidential candidate nomination for Kwara State under the Social Democratic Party (SDP). A ticket she took to the national scene and to date she holds the record of being the First Nigerian Woman – National presidential contestant. At the end of the primaries she came 4th in the entire race and 3rd in SDP National primaries.

There is no doubt Mrs. Sarah Jibril is a pride to womanhood, without fear of contradiction. In 1994, she served as the Chairman; Task Force on Political Awareness of National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) and represented Nigeria at the consultative forum of African Women in Politics in Botswana in 1995. She later served as a member of the Forum of Nigerian Women in Politics (FONWIP). Mrs. Sarah Jibril, out of her desire to mobilize women for political development, is the National Coordinator, Nigerian Consultation of Women Political Empowerment Facilitators (NCOPEP).

Awards

Mrs. Sarah Jibril has been honoured by several local and international organizations for her enviable record in the advancement of humanity. In 1998, she received the International Woman of the Year Award for 1997/98 – by the International Biographical Centre England. Also, in 1999, she was appointed Ambassador Extra Ordinary and Plenipotentiary – US African Development Consortium (USADC). Mrs. Sarah Jibril also received the International Woman of the year 2000/2001 awards by the International Biographical Centre, England. Similarly, American Biographical Institute awarded Mrs. Jibril the Commemorative medal of Honour - Hallmark 2000.

In another development, Mrs. Sarah Jibril received the Indomitable Spirit Award (ISA) - national award of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) Women National Mobilization Committee.

Mrs. Jibril is indeed a role model for young girls and women for her dogged role in the history of women's contribution to nation building.

4. Hajiya Amina Iyami Ahmed

Hajiya Amina Iyami Ahmed 56, had her primary education at St. John's Primary School, Bida between 1953 and 1959. Thereafter she proceeded to Queen Elizabeth College, Ilorin where she had her secondary education. Later on she proceeded

to the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where she graduated with a B. A (Hons) in English Language. Between 1981 and 1982 she was at the University of Wales, Cardiff, U. K where she obtained her Masters degree.

Hajiya Amina Ahmed started as a teacher and later became an accomplished ad-ministrator which span over three decades. A transparent workaholic who started off as a teacher at the then Sheikh Sabah College, Kaduna in 1971. She later assumed the post of Principal at the Government Girls' Secondary School, Talatan Mafara (North-Western Nigeria) in 1976. And in 1979, she was transferred to Government Girls' Secondary School, Bida, Niger State. She resumed as a lecturer at the College of Education Sokoto in 1980. Hajiya Amina Ahmed is undoubtedly recognized as a steadfast achiever. This was confirmed when she was appointed twice as the Permanent Secretary in the Niger State Ministry of Education and later became the Honourable Commissioner of Education from the period of 1984 to 1987. Having proven her mantle of leadership as an educationist of repute at the state level, Hajiya Amina Ahmed was appointed as the first Executive Secretary, National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in 1996. During this period, she worked closely with the United Nations and World Bank Programmes in Nigeria particularly UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP.

In 1996, she was appointed the State Programme Monitoring Adviser (SPMA) by the UNDP, a post she held until 1999 when she became the executive Secretary, National Primary Education Commission (NPEC). She held the post until voluntarily stepped down for a successor.

Mrs. Ahmed is an active mobilizer, a worthy philanthropist and Community builder. She is an active member of a number of organizations, particularly National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), Nigeria National Council for Adult Education (NNAE), National Council on Education (NCE), Zonta International Rotary Club, Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults and Federation of Women Educationists (FEW).

Hajiya Amina Ahmed is a change agent, hence she is able to make a difference in everything she accepts to do. This is evident when she successfully mobilized women groups to come together and form a network. Also, she is able to facilitate the creation of more Cooperatives and enhanced

capacity building of Community-based organizations/groups in resource mobilization; skill acquisition within groups/organizations for sustainability. She is at the forefront of advocates of women empowerment both economically and educationally. She will always be remembered for her remarkable feat for the establishment of Women Day College in furtherance of the 1984 edict on withdrawal of girls from school due to early marriages and unwanted pregnancies which she posited should not be an hindrance to education. This way to encourage re-entry of drop-out married women into the formal school system to reduce relapse into illiteracy and poverty. She is the founder DEC's College, Minna one of the most progressive modern colleges in Niger State. She is also a member of Board of Trustees of a number of organizations particularly, Project YES, Minna and Centre for Communication and Reproductive Health Service (CCRHS), Bida both in Niger State.

A shining star among Nupe women, Hajiya Amina Ahmed had a brilliant academic background which earned her a wonderful working career. She is the kind of woman always referred to in Nigeria as "whatever a man can do, a woman can do better". This is evident from her landmark achievements when she served as Commissioner for Education in Niger State and later Executive Secretary, National Primary Education Commission (NPEC).

Language Tone

There is a remarkable difference in the language tone of the Nupe people, that distinguishes individual's location in the zonal distribution of Nupe people. For instance, Nupe people around *Lafiagi/Pategi* and *Bacita* have a distinct tone from others. Similarly, the tone of Nupes from *Lapai* is clearly different from that of others from other zones. The same thing goes with the tonal expression of Nupes in *Lokoja*, *Muye*, and *Budan* areas. However, there is a common definition and understanding when the central Nupe tone is used.

In another perspective, the use of Nupe in its spoken term is pure. However, it is noteworthy that due to long time or centuries of intercultural activities between Hausas and Nupes, certain words seem to have been integrated into the lifestyle and certain expressions in Nupe culture. Most importantly too, the sharing of practices based on the common principles of Islam that is

the predominant religion of the Nupes and subsequent Jihadist activities have left traces of language sharing and combination of Nupe and Hausa words. A similar trend is observed among the Nupes in *Lafiagi* and *the Igbomina Yoruba* in the South Western Nupeland. The interrelationships are so deep that in some Yoruba villages in the *Igbomina* area, in certain ceremonies, a Nupe head presides with deep sense of respect for ancestral backgrounds of the two groups. This is particularly significant, given the history of several families formed as a result of Yoruba – Nupe intermarriages.

Occupations

Nupe land is made up of an agrarian population, where the economy and social life revolve round agriculture. The people are active farmers. Major crops grown are rice, sorghum, sugar cane, millet, melon, vegetables, yam, homestead livestock management and fishing. Food processing is entirely done by women. Also, marketing of farm produce is in the hands of women. However, many people are civil servants, employed in government establishments only. There are very few industries and private companies that employ the services of people. Despite the unique history of the Nupes, they have not had fare sharing in national development. The commonest occupation in Nupe land is teaching. Most of the schools in various zones are predominantly handled by teachers of Nupe origin. Those around the riverside areas are predominantly fishermen and their wives are actively engaged in processing and selling of fish.

Industries

Some of the cottage industries that are simple income-generation avenues to Nupe people are traditional soap making, blacksmithing, brass work, wood work, tailoring and cooperative engagements.

Modern industries in Nupe land include Nigerian Sugar Company, *Bacita*, *Sunti Sugar Company*, *Sunti*, *Jebba Paper Mill* and the two major Hydro Electricity Stations in Nigeria – the *Kanji Dam*, *New Bussa* and *Jebba Dam*, *Jebba*. Hence, Nupe land is the power base of Nigeria.

Dress

The indigenous Nupe dresses like "*bente*" under wear have been replaced by modern pants

and boxer shorts have replaced “*Ganpegi*” short knickers. It is also significant to note that due to the common mode of worship in Islam which requires long dress for prayers, the Nupe people are found of using the same type of dress common with Hausa people especially the “*Babariga*” (Big flowing Gown) and “*Dan Kano*” (long dress) that is now regarded as “Senegalese” because of the “over size” pattern of the dress. Interestingly the Nupe youths are highly sociable and adventurous. Due to the inter-state travels and sojourn of these youths in cities like Lagos, Kaduna, Ilorin and Minna, they have brought along the western mode of dressing, for instance, wearing jeans-trousers and shirts to match.

Food

A major staple food that is common to many households in Nupe land is rice. This is prepared either as *joloff rice* or in the form of “*eje boci*” (mashed) rice. The reason for this development is due to the fact that majority of the farmers both within and around fadama lands (Low land marshy areas) which allow for the cultivation of rice, in communities like Jima, Doko, Edozhigi, *Bacita*, *Katcha*, *Gbara* etc have rice production as a major and profitable venture. Hence, the explanation why rice is a common feature in households’ diet in Nupeland. Another delicacy that goes with rice is fish; both smoked and fresh fish are in abundance, especially from adjoining tributaries around Rivers Niger and Kaduna. All villages and towns around the bank of these rivers and other smaller rivers engage in fishing activities all year round.

It is a tradition in Nupe land to welcome visitors with delicious meals from rice and fish soup. Also, during ceremonies such as naming or marriage ceremonies as well as festivals like *Sallah* (end of Ramadan) *Id-El-fir* or *Id-Kabir* celebrations, rice feast is a common feature.

Other food types include mashed meal “*eje boci*” which Hausas refers to as “*tuwo*” from – sorghum, millet, and maize. These are served on alternate basis with beans, cooked yam, potatoes and *garri*. Sometimes beans is mixed with “*Yiwara*” (ground sorghum) or millet sprinkled on beans after conversion into paste form. Other common foods are porridge from millet, sorghum or maize called “*Kunu*”. This is consumed along with certain snacks like *akara* (bean cake), “*masa*” sorghum cake, “*mashe*” (early millet cake) or “*Dankuwa*” special confectionery from a

combination of fried ground nut and maize and lastly *Kuli-Kuli* made from groundnut after extraction of groundnut oil, where the paste from that process is fried; this is popular with students as African “biscuit”. These snacks are very important in Nupeland because they facilitate “casual” eating especially among children when they like to soak *garri* and drink along with these snacks of interest. Most significantly, they are used to take breakfast when served as porridge.

This also brings to focus, the consumption of “left over” (*Jekun*) that is cooked with fresh ingredients. *Jekun* is the second cooking of left-over food from previous supper. This left-over is from “*eje boci*” (mashed food) of rice, millet, sorghum or maize origin.

Several dishes are served with specific soups in Nupeland. Some of these soups are stew made of tomatoes with either meat, chicken or fish. It is good for all kinds of food; it goes with “*eje boci*”, white rice, yam, etc. Other soups are *Ezowa* (bean soup) significant for “*eje boci*” from rice and vegetable soup that is sometimes mixed with melon that is served along with “*eje boci*” rice. Others are *Ningbana* (from liquid ground sorghum). *Ningbana* is delicious if served with left-over (*Jekun*) second cooking of left-over food. Other common soups are from *Herbiscus Sobderifa* (*Calyx*) known as “*Emagi*”, Okro soup, Baobab leaf soup (*Kuka*) among others. One significant soup ingredient in Nupe land is “*Kula*” processed locust bean that is Nupe’s version of “*Dadawa*” (Hausa) and “*Iru*” (Yoruba).

Religion

Islam is the predominant religion in Nupeland, though Christianity is a common religion in very few communities where the pioneer activities of missionaries were recorded. Traditional religion was practised before the introduction of Islam. Therefore, traditional religion is no longer recognised nor practiced in Nupeland. Where such practices still occur, there is no societal recognition and practitioners are in secrecy due to shame, isolation and degrading status and the condemnation which practitioners are likely to face. Therefore, Islam is undoubtedly the predominant religion in the entire Nupeland with Christianity as the other religion practised by a lower proportion of the population. Hence, the majority of Nupe people have their culture altered with the introduction and acceptance of Islam.

The Nupe culture contained certain practices which when viewed from Islamic perspective were good and some which were bad. Those customs that were consistent with Islamic values were preserved and those that were contrary to Islamic principles were rejected. For example, the local custom recognizes the right and consent of the parents or guardians in the marriage of their children, Islam recognizes such aspects of the culture. But if on the other hand, the local custom encourages illicit relationship between sexes or other degrading practices which are unacceptable in Islam, such cultural norms or practices are rejected.

Marriage in Nupe Culture

Among the Nupes, marriage is a sacred institution which is contracted between a man and a woman. The two people involved are referred to as “*eba yawo and yawo*” meaning husband and wife.

In the earlier Nupe tradition, young boys and girls did not on their own choose who to marry. This arrangement was left for the two families to decide on behalf of their children. However, this has changed significantly over the last three decades. Young boys and girls now meet and agree with one another before they involve their parents. However, one thing is very clear, the practice follows mutual understanding, consent and approval of both parents. It is against this background that when the boy’s family wants to ask for the hand in marriage of a girl (desire to marry their daughter) to their son that one of the elders or a family friend (*Rinna*) is sent on delegate mission to meet with the girl’s family. The *Rinna* is very important in Nupe marriage; he is the intermediary between the two families, though with paramount interest of the boy’s family.

At the inception of negotiations, the *Rinna* goes to see the girl’s family on a mission called “*Egi wa*” meaning seeking for marriage of a girl. This mission is accompanied with Kola-nut and some money as evidence. The girl’s family collects the items and a reply will follow sooner or later. This is marked by the distribution of these Kola-nuts and money (no matter how little) to immediate family members and distant relations of the girl’s family announcing that their daughter Miss A is now blessed with a husband, which the family after due consultations and investigations will finally approve of.

The next stage now is for the *Rinna* to broadcast same to the boy’s family that mission has been accomplished, marking a good beginning. Therefore, the boy and his friends will now carry on a special visit called “*emisa*” (greetings) to the girl’s family to show appreciation for such approval. This visit affords members of the girl’s family to know their son – in – law. The period usually attracts a lot of jokes from older women in the girl’s compound who will claim to be the first wife, hence, a big challenge for their future bridegroom or son-in-law. Infact, some will even go ahead to assess in joking pattern, his completion, physique and handsome looks. That is not a problem, as majority of Nupe people have similar looks – handsome, sociable and peace-loving. In the post-jihadist movement, there has been no reported communal, religious, ethnic or political upheaval of any magnitude in Nupeland. Hence, Nupe people are models in peaceful coexistence.

The subsequent stages are related to the wedding plans. These start with the negotiation of “*Ewo yawo*” (bride – price) which differs from one Nupe zone to another but majority are in accordance with the tenets of Islam. After a specific amount is agreed upon, the *Rinna* ensures prompt payment and other charges are set aside like “*Godiyagi*” (small thanks) and “*Godiyako*” (big thanks). The amounts are used to show appreciation to relatives and the girl’s parents respectively. The later in addition to other resources the girl’s parents can afford are used to acquire wedding gifts such as plates, cooking utensils, dresses and new cloths for their beloved daughter. Any sacrifice in this direction is not too much. This is because in Nupe custom there is a wise saying that “The daughter of a bride must also become a bride” many women look forward to this land-mark event in their lives. When all the conditions are fulfilled and the girl reaches puberty and is assumed “matured” to undertake maternal responsibilities, the *Rinna* meets with the boy’s family to decide on the month of the year they want the marriage ceremony. He then communicates this to the girl’s family who will give approval after due consultations with other family members. Finally, a specific date is fixed in the approved month and the wedding proper is arranged.

On the night preceding the wedding date, the girl is formally initiated into marriage “*yawo rufa dan*”. This date in the 19th Century up to the

early 20th Century, is kept secret and the girl does not know about it. However, things have since changed, that not only are Kola-nuts distributed to all well-wishers from both sides openly, but also, the introduction of invitation card in accordance with the dictates of modern civilization characterizes Nupe marriage in the 21st Century.

On the wedding date, *Mu'alims* (Islamic scholars) are invited by the girl's parents to carry out the solemnization of their children's wedding *fatiha* with representatives of the boy's family in attendance and other well-wishers present to bear witness and share the joy of the occasion.

After the pronouncement of the couple as husband and wife, celebrations follow all through the night. In some families, Islamic preaching is observed all night, while in a majority, beating of drums and folk songs are engaged in with well wishers joining the families in celebrations.

Late in the evening of the wedding *fatiha*, the new bride is prepared for the journey to her husband's home. She goes round relatives to bid them farewell, that emotional moment is not always easy for both the bride and the parents as tears and prayers flow freely. Others give her final counselling and guidance for a successful marriage life. Then the parents finally handover the girl to *Rinna* (*yawogo*) and she is usually accompanied by a little girl and another married woman to her new home.

In the new home she is received into a newly prepared room by the groom's family. Here, another round of celebrations continue for the next 24 hours. This time around, it is merry making galore and the atmosphere becomes charged with dancing and singing as the common feature. In the traditional age-old Nupe culture, this ceremony may last between 5-7 days. But nowadays, the entire ceremony is completed within 24-48 hours.

Several traditional practices in Nupe marriage have been jettisoned due to the enlightenment created by Islamic preaching and educational programmes.

In Christian communities, church wedding systems are adopted based on the teachings of each denomination. However, varying degrees of celebrations are observed in terms of entertainment and support by friends, family and well-wishers.

Festivals

The common festivals in Nupeland are

- (i) *Pategi Regata* – A colourful canoe festival on River Niger in Pategi.
- (ii) *Bariki* celebrations in Bida – The fifth day of *Sallah* festival of both *Id-fitr* and *Id-Kabir* celebrations in Bida. Each of this celebration lasts five days. The fifth day is marked with fun fare, where the Etsu-Nupe rides on a horse backed with all titleholders on ground to support the Etsu Nupe in a beautiful procession of horses. People come from far and near to watch this colourful event. The procession is from the Emir's palace in *Wadata* through the heart of the city to the Governor's lodge in (GRA) Government Reservation Area known as *Bariki* (Elite's residential area).
- (iii) *Gani* festival in Kutigi – Annual traditional boxing contest, where men display their strengths. A strong confident person comes out and challengers file out and he chooses who he feels like taking on. It normally attracts large crowds from different parts of Nupeland and beyond.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

1. Confluence of Rivers Niger and Kaduna

The confluence of Rivers Niger and Kaduna at *Muregi* shows a clear distinction, with marked differences showing River Kaduna, whitish in colour and River Niger greenish in colour. The two never mix as the confluence progresses down, until after several kilometers where the influence of other smaller tributaries alters this natural process.

2. Masaga Glass work in Bida

It is a wonderful tourist resort in Bida town. The glasswork involves melting of present day bottles as raw material. The melting process involves intense application of heat to the bottles under a furnace or local fire point in a traditional parlour (*katamba*) dedicated to melting bottles and glasswork. The broken bottles placed on fire normally melt into liquid product that is used to make different types of ornaments such as bangles, bracelets, beads, snake like toys etc. Interestingly, only members of this family can melt and mould bottles in this *Katamba*. No other person outside the family of the glass workers can practise this trade.

3. Other Tourist Attractions in Nupe Land

These are Kanji National Park and Mokwa Cattle Ranch

4. Entertainment

Nupe people are generally lively and happy people. They enjoy entertainment in the form of music. Traditional music with folksongs are prominent features during marriage ceremonies at both the bride's and groom's houses. It is an occasion where friends and well-wishers come over to dance and spend money to the praise singers as a clear demonstration of love and best wishes. In the past, women dominate praise singing in Bida areas, but men feature prominently in *Lafiyagi* area. The youths have captured the scene in Bida area in recent years with the emergence of *Nma Gongoni* and *Umaru Lanle's* group, *Babaminin* and *Ahmed Waka* groups. This type of music has been quite sensational and the attractive one to the youths is the *Angale* (narrow drum) construction that the sets are erected on the flow as *Angale* drums. However, the foundation of Nupe Music is rooted in the original "Eyan dukun" (pot drum) and later "Gbagurasa" bigger drum that can be hung on the shoulder.

The woman who brought Nupe music to national and international recognition is *late Hajiya Fatima Lolo*. She was a delight to watch and she no doubt brought beauty and glamour into Nupe music with her spectacular performances at various national and international festivals. Some of these include the Kaduna Durbar and Festac 77. Also the memory of her wonderful outing at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, still lingers on. She was succeeded by her supportive lieutenants like *Hajiya Halima Bida*, *Hajiya Kulu Lafiyagi*, *Hajiya Nnasha Emigubagi*, *Hajiya Nnasha Ewonko*, *Hajiya Kulu Kuchi*, *late Hajiya Nnadzwa Egwa* and *late Fatima Raba*. The adult men in the trade are *Ndayisah Kusomunu*, *Alhaji Sheshi Emigubagi* and *Ndanuwa Kpandaragi*.

Finally, Nupe music has served as a motivator in-group farming in the past, where *Gbagurasa* drum is used to praise men in action at the farm level on competitive execution of farm operations. In recent years, it has proved to be popular social mobilization tool. Recent experience in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign reveals that Nupe *Angale* Music is a viable tool for mobilizing people for change in Attitude, Knowledge and Practices.

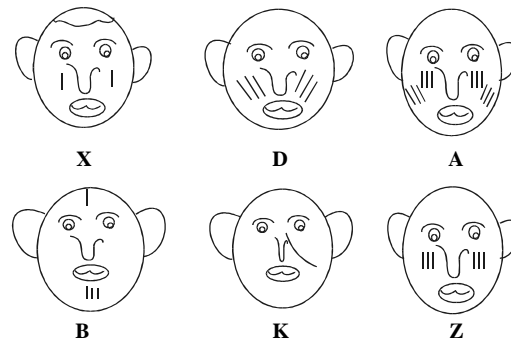
This was demonstrated with *Nma Gongoni* and *Umaru Lanle's* group during an HIV/AIDS entertainment-education experiment in Bida Emirate. The result of such effort was mass awareness from 83.4% lack of knowledge of HIV/AIDS in pre-intervention assessment in 1998 to 100% awareness and knowledge of the disease in post-intervention assessment in the year 2000 (Yahaya, 2000).

Special Body Marks

In the past, apart from the facial marks that are still practised on a lower scale in some parts of Nupe land, other body marks are common. Some people still inflict body marks on their chests, shoulders and stomach. In the last decades women used to have tattoos but this custom is no longer practised.

One prominent mark is the neck mark that is associated with traditional treatment of sleeping sickness. It is believed that those who are not treated thus will be stunted in growth and sometimes could lead to mental illness. Now, this belief system is almost extinct as it is not common to see people with neck bandage or fresh neck incisions again as practised in the past.

The Nupes bear facial marks of different cuts that range from single vertical marks on both sides of the cheek (*kpelle*) to three horizontal cuts (*eyagi*). Sometimes the three horizontal cuts have additional three smaller vertical cuts all on both sides of the cheek. However, some others especially, the Kutigi people have a distinct single-long cut on the forehead (*yegunla*) and sometimes, additional three to five cuts on the chin (*nungbe*). Some of these facial marks are presented in pictorials below.



A = Eyagi and Giye guta, B = Yegunla be nungbe'e, D = Eyagi, Z = Giye guta, X = Kpelle, K = Saye

Major Towns and Cities in Nupeland

Nupeland is divided into six zones

(1) **Zone A:** Nupe towns South Bank of the River Niger.

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. Jebba South | 8. Tsaragi | 15. Duma |
| 2. Patidzuru | 9. Zanbufu | 16. Gbugbu |
| 3. Shonga | 10. Koro | |
| 4. Pategi | 11. Bacita | |
| 5. Lafiagi | 12. Kusogi-Danchi | |
| 6. Kpada | 13. Tankpafu | |
| 7. Lade | 14. Rogun | |

(2) **Zone B:** Nupe towns South East Bank of the lower River Niger.

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1. Egan | 3. Lokoja | 5. Duro |
| 2. Buddan | 4. Gingi | 6. Abugi |

(3) **Zone C:** Bida central and environs.

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. Bida Township | 10. Gaba | 19. Lenfa |
| 2. Kataeregi | 11. Busu | 20. Danko |
| 3. Baddegi | 12. Patishabakolo | 21. Sosa |
| 4. Katcha | 13. Gbadafu | 22. Egbagi |
| 5. Doko | 14. Batati | 23. Kopa |
| 6. Jima | 15. Gbara | 24. Batagi |
| 7. Kuchi | 16. Muregi | 25. Ebba |
| 8. Wuya | 17. Nupeko | 26. Elomi |
| 9. Edozhigi | 18. Essan | 27. Dutsun |

(4) **Zone D:** Nupe towns East of Bida.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------|
| 1. Agaie | 6. Muye | 11. Ebbo |
| 2. Katcha | 7. Abaji | |
| 3. Lapai | 8. Koton Karfe | |
| 4. Gulu Vatsa | 9. Egwa | |
| 5. Arah | 10. Evuti | |

(5) **Zone E:** Nupe towns South West of Bida.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Mokwa | 8. Muwo |
| 2. Bokani | 9. Dabban |
| 3. New Bussa | 10. Katamba Bologi |
| 4. Ibbi | 11. Kudu |
| 5. Kutigi | 12. Kpaki |
| 6. Enagi | 13. Raba |
| 7. Jebba North | 14. Gbajibo |

(6) **Zone F:** Nupe towns North West of Bida.

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Lemu | 6. Makusidi | 11. Gudugi |
| 2. Legbozokun | 7. Gbarijiko | 12. Charati |
| 3. Kpata Wushishi | 8. Wasagi | 13. Akere |
| 4. Kanko | 9. Zugurma | 14. Gbangba |
| 5. Madegi | 10. Somaji | |

POPULAR NUPE WISE SAYINGS

1. If a child is found walking in the night, there is an elder behind him.
2. If a child is climbing a tree with his hands relaxed, there is an elder holding and assisting him from below.
3. A patient should not be in a hurry to sleep, there is enough opportunity ahead in the grave.
4. They had wished you to sleep with hunger, but early the next morning you were seen eating prepared rice left over with chicken.
5. Nobody sows good seed and reaps evil, nor will anybody who sows evil ever reap good result.

Whatever you sow is what you reap. Hence, you do not sow millet and reap sorghum.

6. A child that answers for his father will be buried ahead of his father
7. Nowadays, religious people are many, but Godly people are few.
8. The person preserved by God will definitely be left alone by human being.
9. You don't go to the river with a basket, the way you go to the river with it is the same way you return with it.
10. The son of the soil is doing a bad thing, but it is that of the visitor that is obvious.
11. Whatever is meant for a Toad does not climb up.
12. Tough Aliyu
Aliyu is like whirled wind, Aliyu is like thunderous rain,
Aliyu stays on top of mountain and sees next year, Aliyu joined a canoe and the paddler says he is going down the slope, but Aliyu insists on moving up stream.
13. *Kuta Donbashi!* (Worthy praise for the leader of fishermen)
No man ever praises his wife, it is in the presence of a dog
that an elephant enters the bush, and it is in her presence that
the elephant will come out.
14. It is only cricket you catch, hold and break its legs but not a scorpion.
15. Richness is not hereditary, poverty too is not inherited,
you can be rich today and get poor tomorrow and you can also be
poor today and become rich tomorrow.
16. If God relieves your burden throw away the carrier, but if human
being should assist relieve your burden hold on to your carrier.
17. He that assists others is only helping himself; equally, he that cheats on others is cheating himself because whatever you do to others will be paid back to you.
18. Who is a blind man deceiving that he is sleeping? Is there any difference between when he is awake or when asleep?
19. It is from the point where farming starts that boundary demarcation is effected.
20. The tick (*Koti*) that cow goes for grazing with, is that which kills a lamb.
21. Fly that moves with a leopard will never eat rotten meat.
22. Familiarity with a chicken does not prevent its slaughtering when needed.
23. A newly wedded young man must not go hunting for a Buffalo or else the new bride will easily become a widow.
24. A widow should not celebrate, what took her husband is not yet fulfilled.
25. We should not be too proud, because grasses are growing on a mountain while others are dying in the *Fadama* (marshy land).
26. Love breeds happiness while hatred breeds disaster.
27. The dog that will miss its way will never hear the

- sound of the whistle of its owner.
28. Leave the dancing stage when the ovation is loudest, or else it is shame that will follow soon.
29. Any Goat that follows dog about will soon start eating faeces
30. If you dig a trench for a bird it will definitely come and pass?

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KEY WORDS Nupe kingship; marriage; tourist attractions; entertainment and wise sayings

ABSTRACT The paper provides an insight into the historical origin of the Nupe people of Nigeria. It tries to establish the link between the Nupe people and other tribes particularly Hausa, Kanuri and Yoruba tribes in Nigeria. The paper further sheds light on the Nupe kingship structure from the traditional point of view of the inhabitants of the headquarters Bida from the era of the Fulani rulers since 1804 till date. Furthermore, the Nupe society has been fully organized with the integration of the Fulani rulers and natives who shared other traditional titles. In the last century Nupe people have come of age with some of the Nupe sons and daughters that have made remarkable contributions to nation building. The paper provides such a unique picture of the Nupe people from the perspectives of language tone, body marks, occupation, tourists attractions, dressing, foods, festivals, religion, wise sayings, major towns and cities and elaborate description of marriage in Nupe culture which is a significant cultural practice. The paper attempts to add to existing literature for the benefit of future generation of Nupe extraction and others who

may be interested in exploring the rich social and cultural heritage of Nupe people of Nigeria.

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GLOSSARY

Table 1: Explanation of local or unusual words used in the text.

Word/Phrase	Meaning
Tsoede	The founder of Nupe dynasty
Elempe	Mother of <i>Sango</i>
Sango	The thunderous and fire spitting son of <i>Elempe</i> who was half-Nupe and half-Yoruba. He later become the <i>Alaafin</i> (King) of Oyo Empire Edu River Niger
Lavun	River Kaduna
Nasara	White man
Nufawa	Hausa word for Nupe (plural)
Banufe	Hausa word describing Nupe person (singular)
Nupecizi	Self identification by Nupe (plural)
Nupeci	Self identification by Nupe (singular)
Kpelle	One single traditional vertical mark on each side of the cheek
Giye guta	Three short traditional vertical marks on each side of the cheek
Eyagi	Three horizontal traditional marks on each side of the cheek. Also, Nupe people refer to Yoruba person as <i>Eyagi</i> .
Ningbana	Ground sorghum/millet soup
Goyizhi	Fulani rulers.
Koti	Tick.
Jekun	Left-over food cooked for the second timethe next day.
Yawo	Bride.
Eba yawo	Bridegroom.
Ewo yawo	Bride price.
Yawogo	Handover and collection of bride.
Yawo rufadan	Initiation of a girl into marriage.
Rinna	Intermediary between the boy’s and the girl’s family in a marriage arrangement.
Kula	Locust bean soup ingredient also called “ <i>dadawa</i> ” and “ <i>Iru</i> ” in Hausa and Yoruba respectively.
Eje boci	Mashed food.

Table 1: Contd....

<i>Word/Phrase</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Fadama	Hausa word for marshy land known as Bata in Nupe.
Kuli Kuli	Groundnut cake
Dankuwa	Groundnut and maize confec-tionery
Kunu	Liquid porridge from sorghum, millet or maize.

Similarities between certain Nupe and Yoruba words/phrases.

Table 2: Examples

<i>Nupe word</i>	<i>Yoruba</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
1. Jekun	Ajeku	Left-over food
2. Yawo	Iyawo	Bride
3. Eba yawo	Óko Iyawo	Bridegroom
4. Rinna	Alarina	Intermediary for bridegroom
5. Ewo yawo	Owo yawo	bride price.

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