

DYNAMICS OF AFRICAN HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO GBAGYI PEOPLE IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ABUJA

Eucharia Ugochi Opara PhD,
Department of Religions and Intercultural Studies,
Veritas University, Abuja.
oparaureuk@gmail.com, oparae@veritas.edu.ng

Executive Summary

African people are not here by accident. They existed from the beginning of time. It was not by accident that they ended up on the African continent. Every ethnic group has a birthplace from which they derived their cultural traditions. Gbagyi is one of the 350 ethnic groups that make up Nigeria, one of the West African countries. The north-central region of the nation was inhabited by the Gbagyi indigenous people as part of their cultural legacy. The 1976 transfer of the federal capital territory from Lagos, in western Nigeria, to the country's agrarian centre Abuja facilitates transformation. The nation's capital relocation helps in the development of the Gbagyi ethnic group's environmental and cultural transition. They asserted themselves as the legitimate native inhabitants of Abuja. A wealth of natural and human development is ushered in by the relocation of the federal capital to Abuja and the Gbagyi territory. The dynamics of African ancestry and the Gbagyi people's sustainable development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, are examined in this study. To gather information, the researcher consults relevant literature, personal observations, and interviews. The Gbagyi territory inhabitants, encourage diligence and dedication to the cause of sustainable human and ecological development. It is necessary to organize and activate the portions of the Gbagyi people's vital cultural legacy for tourism.

Keyword: Gbagyi, Culture, FCT Abuja, Nigeria, Sustainable development

Introduction

The Africans are the people domicile in the African territories. The topography is enriched with natural and human resources prevalent within its continent. Virtually, African nations are similar as pertains to heritage. Something that has been customarily passed down from the past: a brave, honourable, and proud national history. Heritage entails something that one inherits or is due to them by virtue of their birth; a legacy of hardship and poverty (<https://www.dictionary.com>). According to Huang “Heritage

encompasses many things. It's about our ethnic roots, of course, but it also includes cultural teachings and personal experiences. It's about who you are and where you have come from to get to where you are today". This implies that every ethnic group has a birthplace from which they derived their cultural traditions. The ethnic groups in Nigeria sum up to 350 of which Gbagyi is one of them. They inhabit the central part of the country. Gbagyi people are found in other States of Nigeria such as: Kaduna State, Niger State, and Nasarawa States. However, they synchronize their heritage but the dynamic of their sustainable development differs due to their different geographic locations.

The Gbagyi aborigines inhabiting Abuja are privileged to be bona fide indigenes of the city of Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, one of the nations in west Africa. The Gbagyi ethnic group calls the north-central region of the country their home. This implies that, the virgin agricultural area inhabited by the Gbagyi indigenous people was privileged to be selected in 1976 to become the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja in order to relieve traffic jams in Lagos and decongest the former capital of Nigeria. As a result, the ethnic group of Gbagyi residents of Abuja experienced a change in their ancestral cultural and natural heritages.

The natural and cultural history of the native ecosystems was impacted by the invasion of the new capital territory. The demand for sustainable development became loud and clear. This research uses the Gbagyi ethnic group in the federal capital area of Abuja as a case study to examine the interplay between African heritage and sustainable development. The native inhabitants of Gbagyi were blessed with a cultural heritage even before the national capital, Abuja, was established. The truism is that cultural legacy refers to a group or society's tangible and intangible heritage assets that have been passed down through generations. Not all heritages of previous generations are referring as heritage rather, legacy is a product of societal selection. The Federal Capital Territory Abuja constitutes six geographical area councils situated on rocks, valleys, mountains and streams. They are predominantly farmers, hunting and crafting and pottery. The advent of the Nigerian capital to Gbagyi land ushers in intensive sustainable development through the agencies of education westernization, urbanization and globalization.

Methodology

The nature of this study is ethnographic and descriptive. The Gbagyi ethnic group in central Nigeria, west Africa is examined in its endowed natural and cultural heritages. The dynamics stages of development are highly estimable. The oral witness of the physical nature of the mountains, hills, valleys, streams and rocky ground glare visible. The indigenes give authentic narration patterning to the historical origins and existence

of the Gbagyi heritage and the transformation leading to development. A tour was made to observe the natural and cultural heritage of the Gbagyi ethnic group to synchronize the dynamism of sustainable development in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

Gbagyi Ethnic Group of People

Tracing the historical culture of the ancient people that occupied the central Nigeria, it falls back to the Nok people. Encarta dictionary posits the fact that, it is a “civilization located in the forests of central Nigeria that flourished between 500 BC and AD 300. It is known for its highly developed art style”. It is obvious that certain individuals were inhabiting the central part of the Northern Nigeria prior to the existence of Gbagyi ethnic group of people. Nwanaju argues that the eastern section of the central Nigeria region has a diversity of ethnic groups such as Gwari, Jakun Koro and, Nupe (43). Prior to the amalgamation of Northern part and Southern parts of Nigeria in 1914 by the then British Governor, Sir Fredrick Lugard, the Gbagyi indigenous were existing in the central part of Nigeria. Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu and Nwaubani in a history of Nigeria for schools and colleges, confirmed the amalgamation of Nigeria by the colonial administrator for effective administration (218). The ethnic group of Gbagyi are privileged to find their habitations in the Federal capital territory Abuja. Gbagyi is one of the many ethnic groups that live in Nigeria's north-central region. People referred to them as "Gwari" or "Gbari," depending on where they settled. They are the original owners of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. They were discovered in states bordering the capital territory, such as Nassarawa, Niger, Kogi, and Kaduna. They are in large numbers. According to the 2006 national population census (King np), it had a population of 5.8 million people. However, because of more modern facilities that help preserve and prolong life, they may be more than that now. Bwari settlers preferred to be addressed as Gbagyi rather than Gwari. They are genuine citizens of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

In addition, scholars have emerged with various views on the origin of Gbagyi ethnic group into the Federal capital territory, Abuja. Some Gbagyi scholars have researched the historical origins of the Gbagyi people and have come up with various versions. Gbagyi's historical background is unknown. It dates back to the dawn of time (Kuta 1). Shaibu agreed with this viewpoint. He said that, the people of the Gaba settlement, for example, claimed to have lived in their environment since time immemorial. According to the oral history, they did not migrate to or from another location. Alternatively, oral tradition holds that "the Gbagyi originally came from the east and lived in Borno around 1600 AD." "However, they were forced to migrate as a result of Kanuri wars to Islamize them" (Kuta 2). "Whatever was widely assumed prior to the 1804 Danfodio led Jihad, the Fulani were penetrating various Hausa states in the late 15th century," Kuta

continued to assert that. "Originally, the Gbagyi (Gwari) were listed as one of the seven Hausa states" (3). In line with argument on the historical origin of the Gbagyi tribe, Ayuba posits that, the Gbagyi people lived in Saudi Arabia before migrating to Africa. He claims that oral tradition testified that Gbagyi originated from Yamen or Israel (Yamma 3). It is important to note that the people of Gbagyi and the Kanuri tribe in Bornu State have traditionally resembled the tribal mark. Although modernity has had an impact on the people by erasing the Gbagyi tribal marks. More importantly, the women in some parts of Bornu still carry their loads at the back shoulder like the Gbagyi women in FCT Abuja. Gbagyi's indigenous people are noted in living in settlements. People describe them as peaceful, generous, accommodating, and hospitable because they enjoy their homogeneous lifestyle so much. "Doing things Gwari Gwari," which means "doing things with a good heart, justice, and a pure heart," is a popular phrase among Hausas and other ethnic groups (Kuta 5). Strangers are welcomed by the Gbagyi people, and people from other ethnic tribes are tolerated in their homes. It is observed on the fact that, Gbagyi amuses visitors with food.

The Gbagyi people have delicious food known as "ezhe" or "wyizhe," which is very delicate to them, and a special drink called "Zehpwo." It is prepared with Guinea corn or maize. The process of cooking it involves grinding, sieving, boiling water, and adding potash water to the cooking pot. The potash is for the preservation of the food for up to two weeks (Asough np). It could be eaten with kandolo. Kandolo can be made with gari, corn, eggplant, pepper, and spices in addition to Dawa Dawa locust beans. Ezhz could be eaten with soup or soaked like gari for two weeks. Socially, Gbagyi practice infant and later marriages, as well as elopement marriages and legal, proper marriages. Women in Gbagyi are highly valued. They live subservient, docile, and submissive to the established authority.

Federal Capital Territory Abuja (FCT)

The decision to shift the capital of Nigeria from Lagos to a more central area of Nigeria was taken during the regime of the Major General Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Head of States and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Federal Republic of Nigeria. On February 3rd, 1976, a more suitable centralized geographic area was established in Abuja, in the north central region of Nigeria. According to Abubakar, a well-known fair man named Abubarka JA, an indigenous person who had lived there in the distant past, is responsible for Abuja's name. His last name, JA, was combined with his first name, Abu, to form Abuja. (3) Abubarka added that, Nigeria's capital was moved from Lagos to Abuja on December 12, 1991, under the rule of Major General Badamasi Ibrahim Babangida, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's president, head of state, and supreme military commander. Due to its north-central geographic location, Abuja was the most suitable. As the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja was selected. The Gbagyi or

Gwari aborigines dominated the population of the new capital territory. They were formed from Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Kogi states, with the bulk of the land coming from Niger State. The Gbagyi people live in harmony and are inherently peaceful. The dispositions of docility and compatibility are present in women. Consequently, The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja was made up of the mapped-out districts, all of which were claimed by the federal government. Indigenous people of Gbagyi were uprooted from their ancestral lands and relocated backwards. They were relocated to the limits and periphery of the capital territory. One of the areas that has been out sketched, pushed backwards, and added to as a suburb of the Federal Capital Territory is Bwari. The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, comprise six local area councils that make up the Federal Capital Territory, and was established in 1996 (Yamma 5). The six area councils include: Abaji, Abuja municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, kuje and Kwali area Councils.

Prior to the influx of the federal capital territory Abuja. The indigenous people of Gbagyi has both natural and cultural heritage from their ancestors. The topography of the Federal Capital Territory constitutes mountainous areas, hills, valleys, and streams. The Governing body under the military government launch drastic constructions of roads, bridges and modern houses with road networks of major and minor roads and streets and recreational grounds. Human and natural development were in earnest. Gbagyi indigenes were relocated from their ancestral heritage and pushed out to the suburban of the capital territory. Some relocated by themselves, while others were compensated with lower modern edifices. Gbagyi heritage was transformed into modern outlook.

Natural Heritage of Gbagyi in FCT

The land of the ethnic people of Gbagyi is endowed with natural heritage such as mountains hills, valley, forests, water, soil and iron. These natural heritages are treasure when they are utilized properly. They are sources of wealth to a nation when they are harnessed properly and adequately. The mountainous terrain commonly seen in Gbagyi land is one of the natural heritages. It had been a rescued place for the fore fathers who migrated from Zaria in the 16th century to settle on the mountains for refuge. Oral interview testifies that, most of the early Gbagyi people were migrants from Zaria. War broke out they dispatched to various places searching for safety. They dwelt on the mountains and hills to have a clear view of their enemies and strategize techniques of overcoming them and to defend themselves. Most of the mountains in the Federal capital territory bear the names of the ancestors who discovered and resided on them. For Example, Sunape, Sherepe, Barongaripe. Some were given names in reference to the special and remarkable events that occurred while they were living on the mountain examples Igupe a home of hospitality and peace. Bwayape, Bwari mountain means

pound here given by Tayegbegbe. Mountainous and hills serve as ancestral home for the settlements. On the mountains are traces of antiquated pots, huts, spoon, plates and graves are found there presently. The indigenes still climb there for farming or burying of “Esu” the ruler of their communities. Traditional shrines are set there to offer sacrifices for the ancestors and invoke their spirits on the rocks, hills and mountains (Opara 76).

Mountains have valleys or foot of the mountain. This can be sloppy or flat ecosystem. The area can be fertile for cultivation of crops. Most times river flows in between the river to provide water for animals and crops. Forest is a heritage the Gbagyi indigenes acquired that facilitates the farming occupation. They grow yams, guinea corn, maize, rice, sorghum, millet, black-eyed peas, groundnuts, bananas, calabashes, melons, and cotton in large quantities (Yamma 38). Domestic animals kept by the Gbagyi include cattle, chickens, ducks, dogs, goats' horses, pigeons, turkeys, and sheep (39). Some of the raw materials are used to make items required in the community. Cotton is used to make clothes, particularly Jobode and Ajesuda. Gbagyi has excellent clay soil for the production of various pottery (40). The Gbagyi people have a reputation for being hardworking and dedicated to agricultural products. They engage in hunting of animals from the forest. Materials for producing iron and steel are available locally. The weapons made from steel are used to produced such as knives, digger, hoes, gun and arrows. It is pertinent to appreciate the natural gift of rivers and streams that supply water for drinking to the communities. The water is used to water farm crops, and mixed clay. Gbagyi inherited clay soil from their fore fathers. They discovered three types of clay which the frequently experimented till they were able to mold durable pots (Research and Documentation division of the Arts and culture department social development secretariat FCT 57). The women specialize in pottery, molding different shapes of vessels for domestic usages. After molding the pots and other vessels, they would fire it with dry sticks and grasses to make strong and durable. The streams and rivers are source of catching fishes for cooking food. The research and documentation division of the Arts and culture department social development secretariat FCT on Social-Cultural study of the Peoples of Abuja Volume 2, highlights a “fish method which involves damming the river with sticks and grasses, then the traps and cages are attached to the dam into which these fishes enter” (53). It is imperative to harness the water heritage endowed on the Gbagyi people of Abuja. Gbagyi people are good in making mats with the use of available materials of guinea corn stalks, raffia, palm front and tall grasses found in swampy areas (76). Naturally, materials for making mats were fetched within the environments. Gbagyi explores various copious of tangible natural raw materials unknowing the treasure worth of thousands of Naira. Mats are used to sit down at cultural ceremonies of marriage and funerals.

Cultural Heritage of Gbagyi

People are identified by their culture as an explicit way to show who they are in the society. In the argument of Aremu, states in Nigeria Heritage that “culture has been succinctly defined as the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design for living, including dressing, language, music and dance, the way their children are brought up, and their governance, among others” (74). In line <https://en.wikipedia.org/> with the totality of human person in Africa, a person's knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs, laws, abilities, and habits are all included in their culture. Culture also includes the social behaviour, institutions, and norms that are present in human civilizations. A certain region or location is frequently cited as the source of culture (<https://en.wikipedia.org/>). In addition, a cultural symbol is a tangible manifestation that represents a specific culture's philosophy or just has meaning within that society. Culture is the sum of a group's beliefs, traditions, language, and values.

The indigenous people of Gbagyi in the Federal capital territory of Abuja Nigeria, inherited cultural identity from their fore fathers refers as “Knunu” which depicts the tradition, culture and religion of Gbagyi people. More importantly, it refers to their way of life circled round the worship of a supreme being refers as “Shekwoi” God. The heritage of *Knunu* makes them peculiar people, outstanding and differentiate them from other ethnic groups of people in Nigeria. Otonko and Opara testify that, they are known for their cultural attire, called ajesuda, (188). The fabric is locally produced from the cotton trees planted within the settlements. The women tie the cloth round their chest, while men wear an abache, which looks like pants and crosses the gonads while exposing the buttocks. This cloth serves as a unique identification symbol for Gbagyi. It's a tie-dye fabric made of traditional cotton and dyed locally. The colour is entirely black. A source from the Gbagyi indigenes argues that, in their culture, women carry large objects or burdens on their shoulders instead of their heads, due to the fact that their head is a notable feature that has received widespread attention. The cranium is usually recognised as a source of wisdom and information. According to their cultural system, the head holds ultimate power over the entire body (Otonko and Opara 191). The women carry log of fire wood and harvested farm produce with a basket or calabash on their shoulders. Oral source highlights that the gods forbade men from carrying loads because they placed a high value on them in the families as heads which they traditionally claimed.

The Gbagyi people use the Gwari language as a mechanism for preserving and promoting their cultural heritage (198). Like other ethnic groups in Nigeria, Gbagyi language is undergoing process of standardization. From the oral source, it has been observed that the indigenous population employs two distinct dialects for communication, which are widely recognised as the Gbari (Gwari yamma) and Gbagyi

dialects (199). The most common acceptable language that is going into studies is Gbagyi dialect which is slightly different from Gwari yamma. The cultural food for Gbagyi is Ezhe, a delicate, delicious, and valuable food for the indigenous people of Gbagyi. It is a corn-based meal that is cooked into a soft dough and served with soup. Ezhe, which is made from guinea corn or maize is grinded on stone, can take up to three hours to prepare. Shekwoisa argues that it should take little time because the corn flour has already been prepared. It must be cooked with sifted potash water (Asough np) for preservation. Cooked Ezhe can be stored for up to two weeks. It goes well with special soups like Agbenyi, Agunlala, Takwa, and Nkunlo. It can be soaked in water and drunk in the same way that gari is. Kandolo is another dish made with corn, gari eggplant, pepper, and locust beans (Dawadawa). It complements Ezhe. Gbagyi in exile pines for the flavours of Ezhe and Kandolo. This food is served at weddings and the Gbagyi festival, along with traditional Gbagyi attire. Culturally, Otonko and Opara assert that, Within the Gbagyi culture, there is a customary expectation for women to demonstrate characteristics such as submissiveness, obedience, respect, subservience, docility, cooperation, and support towards men (204). These are cultural values heritage from the ethnic group of Gbagyi inhabiting the present federal capital territory Abuja. This can be cooperated into the working values of the council areas and the nation. Another important aspect of Gbagyi's culture is dancing. The ethnic group of Gbagyi are lovers of music in entertainments. In an observation, the men beat the local instruments with gung, drum, calabash and pots while both the men and women take dancing steps. The waists are bent down with two arms stretched out and face down, the legs are moved backwards and forward to the rhythm of the music. Gbagyi can dance from morning to evening uninterrupted.

The Gbagyi's Dynamic Heritage and Sustainable Development in Abuja's Federal Capital Territory

The ethnic group of Gbagyi is privileged to inhabit the Federal capital territory, Abuja since its creation in 1976 and establishment in 1991 (Abubarka 1). The creation of this central part of Nigeria is a huge source of blessings and successes. It ushered in structural and human development, urbanization, modernity, civilization, emancipation and empowerment in various capacities. Although, the Federal capital brought from Lagos came with lots of changes, yet the aborigine of FCT Abuja remains resilient and resolute to preserve their cultural heritage. The augment is that a preliminary decision was made in 1975 by Major General Murtala Mohammade in 1975 the then Military Head of States, fully created by Major General Olusegun Obasanjo 1976 and implemented by Major General Ibrahim Babangida in December 12th, 1991 (Abubarka 5).

In order to establish the federal capital territory and to turn it into the master plan, affected the natural and cultural heritage of the indigenous people of Gbagyi and its inhabitants changed. These alterations resulted into the promotion of sustainable development. cursory looking into the influx of the colonial masters, westernization, civilization, urbanization and human empowerment brought radical structural changes. According to the master plan, the development came in phases. It ushered in structural and human development, urbanization, modernity, civilization, emancipation and empowerment in various capacities. Original names of places altere such as, Wushapa to Ushafa, Bwaya to Bwari, Mawupe to Mabushi, Gbangadna to Gwagwalada, Agazhima to Galadimawa (Yamma 27). Phase one were Garki, Wuse and Maitama. The hills were bulldozed, the valleys were filled up, drainages were constructed to give way to rivers and streams to flow on the track mapped out for water ways. The road networks were mapped out in different trunks and shapes to give it a befitting outlook. Abubarka and Akpen gave a vivid description of the natural terrain of FCT Abuja in their article titles “Changing Environment and History in Nigeria: A study of Federal Capital Territory Abuja since 1976.” *In Studies in the History of Abuja*, indicates massive transformation undergoing structurally. Modern settlement coupled with urbanization were introduced and established (42). Many government workers were transferred and relocated to the Federal capital territory Abuja especially, the federal government workers. Subsequently, many roads, streets, and houses were constructed and erected.

Trees are part of Gbagyi heritage from the natural forest within the habitat. Trunks of trees were caught to aid in roofing houses and different offices to facilitate sustainable development in the federal capital territory. Forest product include timber, paper wood pulp and fuelwood, other products from woods are, mortars, pestles, tobacco pipes, mask, musical instruments and household utensils (Aondoakaa 30) to sustain the development in FCT. Aondoakaa argues on the progress of forest areas of the Federal capital territory into root crops like yam, potatoes, cocoa yam and cassava (26). Other crops include, groundnut, and cowpea, grains: maize, guinea corn, millet, sorghum, rice, watermelon, beniseed, carrot, cucumber, cabbage, green beans, peas, garden egg, fruits and vegetables. Animals include, goats, dogs, cattle sheep and poultry. However, agriculture is an important occupation in the federal capital territory, Abuja especially among the Gbagyi indigenous people. More quantity of yams in millions are produced by the farmers, many quantities of bags of rice and corn, millet and guinea corn in thousands of bags are produced and supply to the public for consumption. More importantly, some of these farm crops are used as raw materials for industries and factories, to supply food to the nation.

Other natural heritage of mineral resource, the people of Gbagyi has to embark on sustainable development in the federal capital territory include: marble that had existed

in commercial quantity around the village of Burum, Kanada, Taka Lafia and Ele. It is pertinent to know the existence of tin found around Kusaki Kuje. More importantly, granitic stones are found all over the federal capital territory Abuja. Wolframite and tantaline are compound and iron and managanese. Tantaline is black. Lead and clay which is suitable for bricks making are found around Gwagwa, Dangara, Izom. Ceramic clay are discovered at Ruboci, yaba and Bwari. Another mineral found at Mangoro is mica (Aonodakaa 27). The minerals are source of wealth to the nation. To harness it gears towards sustainable development in the Federal capital territory.

Water is an essential need to human beings, animals and plants. Water ways are the natural heritage of the indigenous people of Gbagyi on the federal capital territory. The rivers, Usuma, Jabi and Gurara are the major water in the capital territory. The fishermen and women use them to catch and supply fishes to the populace. The presence of the Capital territory resulted in the construction of the two dams, the Usuma dam and Jabi dam. Oral discourse testifies that, there are presence of steel, iron which are used to produce hoes, digger, shovel, arrows and ornaments (30). The clay uses for material of pottery. This is a special soil found at Ushafa and Giri. The potters mold different varieties of vessels such as pots, jugs, flower vessel, cups, water cooler, water storage, ear rings, neckless and bangles. Gbagyi pottery has been recognized locally and internationally. Two international exhibition of pottery vessels in London and New York (yamma 42). Ladi Kwali got international recognition in special techniques she employed in pottery making (44). The federal Government immortalized her name in the print of 20 naira Nigerian currency and a street in Wuse zone 4. In addition, making of wool for producing traditional cloth are inclusive in natural heritage for Gbagyi indigenes in FCT, Abuja. The hills and mountains are source of sustainable development through satellite and media, there exist Aso Radio cited at the middle of Nigeria in Katampe and Jordan FM radio at Ushafa in Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

Dynamics of Cultural Heritage and Sustainable development in FCT, Abuja

Cultural legacy refers to a group or society's tangible and intangible heritage assets that have been passed down through generations. Not all former generations' heritages are "heritage," but rather the result of societal selection. Intangible cultural assets include folklore, customs, language, and knowledge; tangible cultural assets include buildings, monuments, landscapes, archival materials, books, artwork, and artefacts; and natural cultural assets include biodiversity and culturally significant landscapes, proverbs, poems and riddles (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_heritage). Ifamoshe and Ojo highlighted the concept, role of culture and development, that culture plays significant and substantial roles in the people's daily life (282). The argument lies on the fact that, culture affects all facets of life both ancient and modern, and they all survive when things develop and utilized. Culture affects other facets of life such as

family, religion, economy, politic, law, social, habit and technology. Modernization and civilization can be achieved when culture is transformed (Ifamoshe and Ojo 282). Cultural heritage depicts itself as it passes from generation to the next. It is beyond doubt.

Gbagyi cultural heritage of Gbagyi language is radically progressing to a higher sustainable development. Gbagyi scholars have emerged to take counsel and decided to improve on Gbagyi literary arts especially in forming vowels and consonants. They had developed Gbagyi dictionary (Audu 2012). Language is intertwined with culture. It is a prerequisite in cultural exhibitions. Oral traditions and expression, including language as a means of transmission of cultural heritage (Usman). Gbagyi has a peculiar custom that explicitly differentiate them from other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The women carry loads on their shoulder backs. Gbagyi people are known for their agricultural products which the women carry on their backs with the use of calabash, such items include, farming tools, water, prepared food to be eaten at the farm. Other things to be carried on the shoulder are log of firewood and farm products such as guinea corn, maize, rice, millet sorghum and beans (Yamma 38) The men carry things in their bags slung on the shoulder (37). The argument is that the head is regarded as sacred and the domicile of intelligence, wisdom and knowledge, it does not need to be disturbed. This method of transportation of farm produce on the shoulder had to be changed due to the advent of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the habitat of Gbagyi indigenes. The importation of modern means of transportation such as cars, lorries, carts, tricycle, bicycles and multicycles by the federal government to change the outlooks of transporting farm produce in Gbagyi land brought sustainable development of the heritage in farming couple with new innovations in farming such as, irrigation, use of fertilizer and mechanize farming to bring abundant food production.

Another important cultural heritage of Gbagyi ethnic group in Nigeria is that, Gbagyi is noted for the traditional cloth refers as ajesuda. The cloth is produced from cotton material planted within the environment in a small industry at Abaji, Kwali and Ushafa. The cotton is treated through spin and weave and dyed black. It can be designed with other colours to make it attractive (Research and Documentation division of the Arts and culture department social development secretariat FCT 75). The argument is that the cultural attire of Gbagyi ethnic group of people has gone into tremendous transformation. It is compulsorily attire for every Gbagyi indigenes. The materials are now imported with quality fabrics in different designs and styles. They are worn on special events, ceremonies and festivals. Gbagyi indigenes wear the cultural attire for dancing and cultural display. They wear it for national and international arts and culture days.

Food is a necessity in human needs. Every African society is recognized for the food she eats. This is applicable to Gbagyi people in the federal capital territory Abuja. They are well known with Ezhi, Whizw and Kandolu. These are delicacies to Gbagyi indigenes. The Gbagyi in diaspora often long to eat the ezhi and kandolu. They are prepared with guinea corn or maize with potash for preservation. The source of kandolu is prepared with garden egg, pepper, locust beans (dawadawa) and groundnut. The food is served in all Gbagyi's occasions. Areh argues that, to promote Nigerian Culture and Heritage Museum is a great way to teach Nigerians to appreciate the diversity of our human world. It will teach and encourage students that culture and tradition usually come from family backgrounds. Museum in the Federal Capital will promote Nigerian rich culture and create a cultural exchange between tourists and local citizens. Exhibitions will attract foreigners. (Areh np).

Findings and Recommendations

- There are six Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory.
- The Abuja Municipal Area Council has gone far in terms of sustainable development.
- The other five Area Councils: Abaji, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kwali and Kuje are yet to experience much sustainable development.
- The natural and cultural heritages of Gbagyi are yet to be fully recognized and utilized by the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- Both the National Museums and Arts and Culture House centers in Federal Capital Abuja are having insufficient artifacts and symbols that depict Gbagyi natural and cultural heritages.
- The Arts and Culture and the national Museum should have more artifacts and cultural symbols of the ethnic group of Gbagyi.
- The ancient mountainous sites should be developed into Tourism so to yield more money for the Nation.
- Tourism attracts foreigners for site view and relaxation.
- The indigenous people of Gbagyi should be encouraged to have more interest in Gbagyi natural and cultural heritages and to preserve them accordingly.
- The Federal Government should look into the plight of the suburban's area in FCT and extend massive sustainable development to them.
- Gbagyi indigenous language should be developed and be inclusive in school curriculum in FCT Abuja.

Conclusion

Gbagyi ethnic group is one of the occupancies of the Federal capital territory established in 1976 to decongest the former capital of Nigeria Lagos. Prior to the establishment to the federal capital territory Abuja, the following people were co-

inhabiting with the Gbagyi: Koro, Gbede, Ganagana, Bassa and Nupe. Oral tradition asserts that Gbagyi aborigines migrated from Bornu to the North central due to war in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Gbagyi people are seen in Kaduna state, Niger State, Nasarawa state and Kogi State. The Gbagyi living in the federal capital territory could trace their origin from Zaria. They lived on hills and mountains to be able to view their enemies and strategize the appropriate techniques to combat them. The ethnic group of Gbagyi domiciling in the new capital territory Abuja possess both tangible and intangible heritages from their fore fathers. These heritages are grouped into natural and cultural heritage.

Natural heritage comprises natural endowment from the supernatural being. They are fixed and human being migrated to meet them and utilize them. Natural heritage in Gbagyi land of the Federal Capital Territory includes land, valleys, hills, mountains, plain land, rivers, stream, trees, forest, rocks, grasses, soil, sand, gravels, steel and minerals. The influx of federal capital territory and civilization and modernization brought implicit and explicit transformation of these natural heritage for sustainable development in the new federal capital territory, Abuja. These natural heritages generate sources of raw materials for industries, factories and producers in various production and tends to produce and supply goods and services in larger quantities. New road networks are planned and mapped out into roads and streets and flyovers. Residential buildings started in Garki. Government Offices were erected, ministries and paramilitary houses and offices were built. Electricity and pipe-borne water were installed. In addition, water ways were constructed and Usuma and Jabi lakes were constructed to serve as sources of water supply and generating power to the residents. Other inheritance embedded in culture.

Cultural inheritance of the ethnic group of Gbagyi in the Federal capital territory include traditional attires of *ajesuda* cloth. It was manufactured locally from the cotton wool obtained from the environment into fabrics through weaving. In the sustainable development, the fabric industry is robust and the materials are imported to sew variety designs. The women carry loads on their shoulders but transportation has improved to the extent that the incoming of the FCT brought new system of transporting goods and services through the use of cars, lorries and motorcycles. These have brought increase in food supply and massive production of fabrics in large quantities. In the cultural heritage, music, modern instruments are supplied and added to the verities of musical melodies. The dynamics of Gbagyi heritage and sustainable development in the federal capital territory has pushed forward the utilization of Gbagyi heritages into transformation of the federal capital territory Abuja into a modern society. There is vacancy for more improvement in speeding some left over Gbagyi natural and cultural heritages which the FCT Minister and the federal Government should look into for sustainable development. Ancient mountains like Bwayape, Igupe sunape and other undeveloped mountains and hills should draw attention of the federal government to

utilize these high levels of the mountains as tourist centers to yield money for sustainable dynamic development. The copious minerals deposited in some FCT soil should be highly identified for extractions and usages.

Names of Interviewees

S/N	Names	Male	Female
1.	Aye Samson	male	-
2.	Tanko Ayuba	male	-
3.	Mrs Timi Audu	-	female
4.	Oga Jeo	Male	-
5.	Shekwosa Awytu	-	female
6.	Dorcas Musa	-	female

.Works Cited

- Abubarka, B. "Origin and Meaning of Abuja the Capital city of Nigeria." https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345166243_Origin_and_Meaning_of_Abuja_the_Capital_city_of_Nigeria 2020, accessed May 17 2024.
- Abubarkar, I.W, and Akpen Philip, "Changing Environment and History in Nigeria: A study of Federal Capital Territory Abuja since 1976." *Studies in the History of Abuja*. Edited by I.W. Abubakar Folasade Ifemase, Philip Akpen. Lagos: Bahita and Dahila Publishers, 2014.
- Aondoakaa, S. C. "Geographical and Environmental Backgrounds of FCT, Abuja." *Studies in the History of Abuja*. Edited by I.W. Abubakar Folasade Ifemase, Philip Akpen. Lagos: Bahita and Dahila Publishers, 2014.
- Are, C. "The Need For A Museum In Abuja," *Leadership*, 2023, <https://leadership.ng/the-need-for-a-museum-in-abuja/>accessed 20th May, 2024.
- Aremu, D.A. "The Role of Cultural Administrator in the Preservation of Culture Towards National Development in Nigeria" *Nigerian Heritage*, Edited by Eboreime. O. etal Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments Volume 15, 2006.
- Asough, Aveseh. "Ezhe: Gbagyi's meal that takes 3 hours to prepare and eaten for 2 weeks." *21st Century Chronicle*, September 4th 2021, <https://21stcenturychronicle.com/> accessed 17th May 2024
- Audu, A.Y. Gbagyi Boda-Byegye Concise Gbagyi – English Dictionary and Proverbs, Minna: Integrated Zhpwo Innovation, 2012.
<https://www.dictionary.com>
- Atkinson, Ti-Grace. The Descent from Radical Feminism to Postmodernism. <https://www.bu.edu/wgs/files/2013/10/Atkinson-The-Descent-from-Radical-Feminism-to-Postmodernism.pdf>. <https://www.bu.edu/wgs/files/2013/10/Atkinson-The-Descent-from-Radical-Feminism-to-Postmodernism.pdf>, 2013.
- Ayeni, Olamide. "5 reasons why you should consider having a court wedding." *Pulse Ng*. 2022. <https://www.pulse.ng/lifestyle/relationships-weddings/court-wedding-in-nigeria-Assessed> August 23 2022.
- "Cultural Heritage." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_heritage accessedmay, 21 2024.

- Eluwa, G.I.C., Ukagwu, M.O., Nwachukwu, J.U.N., Nwaubani, A.C.N. *A History Nigeria for Schools and Colleges*, Abuja: Africana First Publishers PLC, 2016.
- Heritage. <https://www.dictionary.com>
- Huang, Cen. “What Does Heritage Mean to You?” <https://www.ualberta.ca/the-quad/2021>.
- Ifamoshe, F. and Ojo, O.E. “Abuja the Evolution of a Pan Nigerian Socio-Cultural Identity.” *Studies in the History of Abuja*. Edited by I.W. Abubakar Folasade Ifemase, Philip Akpen. Lagos: Bahita and Dahila Publishers, 2014.
- Microsoft® Encarta®. © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation, 2009.
- Kuta, B.A. Notes on Some Aspect of Gbagyi History. Minna: Abayi Resources Productions, 2008.
- Nwanaju, I. *Christian- Muslim Relations in Nigeria*, Lagos: Free Enterprise Publishers, 2005.
- Opara, E.U. “Impact of modernization on the Traditional Marriage Rites of Gbagyi women in Bwari Area Council of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja” a PhD Thesis submitted to the Nasarawa State University Keffi, 2013.
- Otonko, J.O. and Opara, E.U. “Gender Equality in Gbagyi Women's Faith and culture: An Ethnographic Investigation” *AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy*, ISSN: 1597 – 0779, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21646.33605, Vol. 21, No. 4, 2023. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374911242> Accessed May 16th 2024.
- Origin and Meaning of Abuja, the Capital City of Nigeria*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345166243_Origin_and_Meaning_of_Abuja_the_Capital_city_of_Nigeria, accessed May 17, 2024.
- Research and Documentation Division of the Arts and Culture Department Social Development Secretariat FCT, “Social-Cultural study of the Peoples of Abuja Volume 2” Edited by Iyimoga, Jogai, Ufomadu, Yaru, Nwezeh, Abuja: Department of Arts and Culture Social Development Secretariat, 2006.
- Usman, Y.A. “Managing Intangible Cultural heritage: Methodology and Challenge.” *Nigerian Heritage:Journal of the National Commission for Museums and monuments*, Volume 17&18, Abuja: The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 2008&2009.
- Yamma, E. *Comprehension History of Gbagyi/Gbari People of Nigeria*. Abuja: Eve Bright Star Print, 2015.
- <https://en.wikipedia.org> Accessed 15/5/2024.