

**CULTURAL PRACTICES IN BINI TRADITION AND THEIR  
GENDER  
DIFFERENTIATION**

**Lovely Adesuwa OSAGIEDE (*Miss*)  
ART1701385**

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THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BENIN**

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**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to God Almighty for His infinite mercies and love. Also, to my beloved parents Mr. and Mrs. Odion Osagiede whose wish for me is to be a successful person in life.

To my beloved Osariemen Terry Onaiwu whose support, advice and prayers are felt in every ramification of my life, he has been very understanding and cooperative.



## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Lovely Adesuwa OSAGIEDE** (*Miss*) with matriculation number **ART1701385**, Department of Linguistics, University of Benin, Benin City, under my Supervision

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**Lovely Adesuwa OSAGIEDE** (*Miss*)

---

**Dr. Mrs. I.N. George Essien**  
**Project supervisor**

---

**Dr. M. S. Agbo**  
**Head of Department**

---

**External Examiner**

## **UNDERTAKING**

This project work was carried out by **Lovely Adesuwa OSAGIEDE** matriculation number ART1701385. I have neither duplicated nor copied wholly the work of any other author(s). All works used have been duly cited and acknowledged.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound love and gratitude to all those who in different ways have contributed immensely to the successful completion of this project work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Bini people occupies the south/mid-western part of Nigeria now called Edo State. Edo state is the heartbeat of Nigeria and the cultural hub and crossroads of the country. Here a tourist will experience the real excitement of contemporary life and profound sense of history. Edo is predominately homogenous(same kind) and inhabited by the Bini speaking group. Their behavioral pattern is the same as they tend to trace their ancestry to the Benin kingdom.

This study aims at highlighting with thorough description, the cultural practices in Bini tradition, their traditional Rites and their gender differentiation. These traditional rites includes; burial rites, marriage rites, alongside the various festivals in Bini such as the Igue and New yam festival.

In Bini kingdom, gender differentiation is a critical aspect of their day to day life. There are things only women can do and say, and men cannot do or say. Same goes with the men, there are things they are allowed to do and also not allowed to do. In Bini gender differentiation, some of the acts are accepted while some of them are termed "dehumanizing". The present study employed data obtained through personal interviews ( A face to face) discussion, and question and answer segment.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview of the Study

Bini is said to be the first when it goes to other lands/state, or when these state comes to them. The bini people has rich cultures and rites, they occupy a large areas of the southern part of Nigeria, the number of the Binis residing in Edo state is respectively a million and half. A century ago, the Benin kingdom was called Igodomigodo. The kingdom looked like a cluster of small towns scattered over vast territories of what was then known as Bendel State.

When we talk about language, Language is a an important way/means of communication and transmission of culture, values, norms, and beliefs from one generation to another, every tribe has distinctly different ways of life. The cultural differences reflect in all aspects of human endeavours. The Bini language is a language commonly spoken by the Bini/Edo people. In Nigeria it is one of the oldest language in the history of the country. Statistics show that out of every ten (10) random

people you meet in Nigeria 3 speak the Bini language being indigenous to the Edo people. It is a robust language with a very rich history. It is spoken by 99% of Edo people. It is taught to the children by their parents at a very early age by constantly communicating with it. Every member of the household communicates in Bini language and demonstrates it to the child as well. Eventually through repeated communications and observations the child learns the language as well and the continuity of the language is ensured.

The cultural practices in Bini tradition are numerous to say the least. A few of these traditions that will be taken as a case study include:

- **Benin art and craft work**

Bini Kingdom is the home of art and craft in Nigeria. Bini art cuts across different media such as bronze, brass, terracotta, ebony wood, and Ivory. The Bini bronze mainly depicts a variety of scenes including animal, fish, humans, and scenes of court life. They are usually cast in matching pairs. It is thought that they are originally nailed to the walls and pillars in the palace as decoration, some possibly offering instinctive scenes of protocol.

- **Traditional attire**

The people of Bini are known for their traditional attires. The traditional male mode of dressing includes a flowing agbada made with Ankara, voile, lace, or guinea cloth material worn over a pair of trouser and topped with either a long or short-sleeved loose shirt of the same material, and an embroidered cap and carved walking stick compliments this dressing. For some traditional rites, the white wrapper is usually tied around the waist, and coral beads are popular among the men and women folks.

- **Tradition and festivals**

A rich tradition and festival of masquerades is one of the compulsory practices of the Bini tradition. The people use this to appease the various gods and goddesses, initiate men and women into age-grades, or as a traditional gettogether. The most prominent is the ‘Igue’ Festival, celebrated in December by the Oba, to usher his subjects into the New Year as a thanksgiving for the outgoing one. It even attracts tourists from Nigeria and abroad due to its flamboyance and lively nature.

- **Coral beads display**

Bini Kingdom has been known to have a very significant traditional role for the coral beads. They have mainly two kinds of beads;( 1)'Ivie' and (2)'Ekan.' They are both members of the coral beads family. Corals are mined from Coral stones in oceans and polished to jewelries. 'Ivie' is a specie of coral beads, an important type of jewelry worn by Edo Chiefs. 'Ekan' looks like a stone and is grayish in color.

- **Child Rearing and Education.**

Children are expected to be obedient and to show respect to their elders. Children learn gender-appropriate tasks early, especially girls. Traditional greetings are also taught to children at early age because these greetings are held in high esteem in bini culture.when a child is able to greet his or her elder with their traditional greetings, they are said to be well trained. Below are some of the bini families and their greeting method

<b>Families</b>	<b>greetings</b>
Iyase of bini	labvieze
Ezomo	lagiesan
Ero	lamosun
Ute	lagiete
Ogiamen	laire
Iguelaba	lakun
Iyase of udo	lagiewan
Igue	laini
Iyekorhiomwon	labo
Oshodin	laoloke
Ugha	laugha
Ureni	lairen
Igie	laige
Isienmwenro	latose
Igiehon of ibiwe	laru
Uselu	layede

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The study is geared towards an in-depth analysis of the cultural practices and gender differentiation practices in bini culture. The outline of this study is as follows:-

1. Highlight the prevailing traditional practices in bini tradition coupled with gender differentiation classifications and give insight on them.
2. Finding out what rooted these traditions in Bini culture.
3. Observing in details which of these practices are still carried out today Bini and to what extent.

## **1.3 Aim and objective**

The core aim of this study is to determine and explain in- depth the cultures and rites of Bini.

Specific objectives

The objective of study is to determine the few establishments in Bini that were selected for an in dept study for this purpose. This has prompted the

researcher to adopt a face to face interview for first hand information, and to ascertain the major rites performed in different ceremonies and to also determine how gender differentiation affect some cultural values.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The Bini people of the present Edo State are people with a history of rich cultural values. In some history books, the Bini people are sometimes referred to as Edo. It suffices here to say that the word Benin (which now is known as the capital of Edo State) is a corruption of the word 'Bini' which research has also proven is a corruption of the word 'Ubinu'. Omijeh (1975) posits that up until 1485, there was no such word as 'Benin'. He further clarifies that the Portuguese corrupted the word 'Ubinu' to Benin when they established trade relation with the Edo Kingdom.

Every tribe has distinctly different ways of life. The cultural differences reflect in all aspects of human endeavors. Just as there exist different tongues, so are there different cultures and traditions.

The study is geared towards an in-depth analysis of the importance of the cultural practices in Bini tradition, the values attached to these practices and how well they reflect in modern day life, as well as the in depth effects of gender differentiation practices in the Bini Tradition.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study will cover a few of the cultural practices in Bini tradition not limited to the following below and gender differentiation practices.

- **Etiquette**

Etiquette are set rules or custom that control good manners and behaviour of people in a particular society or community. This includes: Taking time to greet people properly using conventional oral formulas such as (traditional greetings) some are listed above.

Upon entering or leaving an appointment, it is appropriate to shake the hand of each person present. People who are well acquainted may greet each other by hugging.

Public displays of affection between members of the opposite sex are discouraged, but men frequently walk together holding offering food

and drink to visitors. This is a key element of hospitality, and to refuse is considered rude. Many people eat in the traditional style, using the fingers of the right hand. It is considered bad taste to eat with the left hand or offer another person something with it.

Another noteworthy mention is the stratification and placement of gender in Dahomey (Bini kingdom as it was once called). Some of these include:-

- **Division of Labor by Gender**

In farming communities, men do the heavier tasks such as clearing land. While women help to plant, harvest, and process many of the food products. Women carry wood and water and are responsible for household tasks involving food and children. Women are active in local and regional trade. The degree to which women work as healers and ritual specialists varies between ethnic groups.

- **The Relative Status of Women and Men.**

Although women in the Bini kingdom could increase their wealth and power as part of the royal palace organization and often served in

primarily male occupations, the general pattern has always been for women to be socially and economically subordinate to men. The 1977 constitution conferred legal equality on women, but this was ignored in practice.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

### **1.6.1 Personal Interview**

The researcher method of data collection for this project work was majorly on personal interview(a face to face question and answers/discussion)with some elders in the community, palace chiefs, and the general public.

### **1.6.2 Validity of Data**

In order to ensure validity of data collected, the researcher was conscious of group of persons interviewed. Therefore, the number and group of persons interviewed were only significant, and enlightened group of people residing and working within Bini.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviewed the work of some writers and at same time views critically some noteworthy mentions: -

Until quite recently, cultural evolution has commonly been regarded as the permanent design to move to a greater level of hierarchy, crowned by state formation. However, recent research, particularly those based upon the principle of heterarchy ... the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways” (Crumley 1995: 3) changes the usual picture dramatically. The opposite of heterarchy, then, would be a condition in society in which relationships in most contexts are ordered mainly according to one principal hierarchical relationship. This organizational principle may be called “homoarchy”. Of all the West African societies, the Kingdom of Benin is the one most mentioned in con-temporary European literature. Since the end of the fifteenth century,

a great deal of material about Benin was supplied by sailors, traders, etc., returning to Europe. However, information on the Edo people before this date is very difficult to obtain, as there was no written record and the oral record is at best rather fragmentary. Thus, there is a shortage of information on the early days of the migration and settling down of the Edo in their present-day home. At the same time, a re-investigation of sources dealing with the early history of Benin showed that some information has not been fully exploited yet, although there remain gaps in our knowledge which may never be filled.

## **2.2 Growth and Development**

At fifteenth century, Benin expanded into a thriving city-state. The twelfth Oba in the line, Oba Ewuare the Great (1440–1473) would expand the city-state's territories to surrounding regions. It was not until the 15th century, during the reign of Oba Ewuare the Great, that the kingdom's administrative centre, the city of Ubinu (or Ibinu), began to be known as Benin City by the Portuguese, a pronunciation later adopted by the locals as well. The Portuguese would write this down as Benin City. Edo's

neighbours, such as the Itsekiris and the Urhobos, continued to refer to the city as Ubini up until the late 19th century. Aside from Benin City, the system of rule of the Oba in the empire, even through the golden age of the kingdom, was still loosely based upon the Ogiso dynasty's tradition, which was military protection in exchange for pledged allegiance and taxes paid to the royal administrative centre. The language and culture was not enforced, as the empire remained heterogeneous and localized according to each group within the kingdom, though a local enogie (or duke) was often appointed by the Oba for specific ethnic areas.

### **2.3 Arts and Crafts**

It is true that since the earliest periods of man's civilization, professional guilds or societies instituted for the various arts and artists were accorded royal patronage. The guild of wood carvers and that of bronze casters are still operating at Igbesamwan and Igun streets in Benin City. The exact origin of bronze casting in Benin kingdom is hard to establish. What is very certain is that the art has been in practice from primordial reign of the Ogisos, the first royal dynasty without any break

though with discernible chronological stages of development. This ancient craft passed from father to son, from generation to generation continually to this day.

## **2.4 The Oba's Palace**

The Oba's palace situated with its unique traditional architecture and works of arts dating back to the ninth and tenth centuries is centrally located near the king's square popularly called Ring road in Benin City. It was learnt that the first palace was built by Oba Ewedo about 1255 AD. It was rebuilt By Oba Eweka II {1914AD-1932AD} after the 1897 infamous British punitive expedition destroyed the former palace. Anyone who knows the Kingdom properly knows that the palace is regarded as one of the greatest museums in the world because it still holds a large collection of royal court arts, scriptural pieces of past Obas in bronze and ivory and ancestral shrines.

## **2.5 Religion**

There are three predominate religion practiced by the Binis of edo state. Islam, Christianity and traditional Religion. The traditional religion

is today gradually giving way by the two other religions. The Christian religion was said to have been brought by the Portuguese in the 15th century with three cathedrals built in Erie (Aruosa), Oba market road and Akpakpava road in Benin City

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework adopted for the backup of this study includes the following theories:

#### **3.1 Blumer (1969)**

Blumer(1969) describes fashion influences as a process of "collective selection" whereby the formation of taste derive from a group of people responding collectively to the spirit of the times. Scholars such as Julie Moore, Peju Shoaib, Nkechi Okadigwe, Lilian Bakere amongst others have made important submission as Blumer on the nature and usage of African dresses, costume and makeup. This theory relates to the Bini unique traditional attire. The Bini dressing method is scared, it is a taste that the people correspond to collectively. This is because as wide as the Bini culture is known to be there is always a collective way of dressing.

### **3.1.1 Theoretical perspectives**

From the beginning, the study of rites has attempted to account for similarities and differences between the rites of different societies. The similarities of rites are at times striking and doubtlessly reflect the close similarity in ways of human thought. Modern attempts to account for similarities and differences have generally given little attention to and reached no consensus concerning the nature of the innate psychological factors involved in the genesis of the rites. Attempts to understand rites of passage have instead generally been sociocultural interpretations that view rites as part of an integrated sociocultural system, the human-made part of human life. Religion and rites of passage are thus seen as elements in a system that affect and are affected by other elements, such as the means of gaining a livelihood and the manner in which society is aligned in groups.

Most modern analysts have accordingly interpreted both differences and similarities in rites of passage in terms of their sociocultural context. The inventive and symbolic capabilities of humankind are treated as a constant factor, and analytic attention is given to differences and

similarities in the sociocultural contexts in which rites are found. In attempting to understand why marriage is an extremely elaborate rite in one society and a very simple one in another, for example, scholars have looked to the social order and to the manner of gaining a livelihood to judge the relative importance of the enduring unions of spouses.

Following the view that culture, including the social order, composes a , inclusive system, much modern scholarship has interpreted rites of passage in terms of their functional significance in the social system. According to the school of social science known as structural functionalism, each of the institutions, relationships, roles, and norms that together constitute a society serves a purpose, and each is indispensable for the continued existence of the coherent others and of society as a whole. Scholars of religion who adopt a structural functionalist perspective generally accept van Gennep's views about the social and psychological significance of rites of passage, which they see as helping to maintain societies in a "steady state" or to preserve the status quo. Such rites relieve the stress that individuals feel when great changes or

rearrangements in their lives occur, and they provide instruction in and approval of the new roles that may arise through such occasions. The rites are also seen to support social stability in various ways: by providing clear instruction to all members of society to continue life in normal fashion when confronted by new social alignments; by affirming the social and moral values expressed and thus sanctioned as part of the ceremonies; and by fostering social unity through joint acts and joint expression of valu

### **3.2 Emile Durkheim**

The French sociologist Émile Durkheim located the source of the moral authority of rites of passage in the social force or pressure exerted through the assembled members of a society. This pressure, the consciousness of a shared identity that is enhanced through common rituals, compels individual persons to conform themselves to their society's norms. Religious rites in particular exert such moral pressure owing to their divine sanction. The structural functionalists in anthropology—most notably Bronisław Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown—built upon Durkheim's vision of rites and further developed the

notion that a society utilizes public rites to order its members and thus to function in an orderly way. This indicates here that the Bini traditional rites such as the burial rites, the marriage rites are all done to bring order and enhance stability in culture.

### **3.3 Clifford Geertz**

The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz offered an explanation of how rites encourage conformity to a society's structural status. Rites of passage dramatize a society's worldview in ways that evoke certain emotions, which in turn provide experiential evidence for claims about the composition of the world and about the ways one should live within it. Thus, rites of passage support the reasonableness of a particular worldview and lifestyle by seeming to attune human experience to the cosmic order.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

For any research work to be meaningful the data collected must be analyzed and interpreted to facilitate the process of decision making. Interpretation and analysis of data are the means by which research questions are answered and stated for clarity

#### **4.2 What are the major Cultural Practices in Bini Tradition**

This question attempts to analyze in depth some of the major cultural practices observed in Bini tradition.

##### **4.2.1 Traditional Attire**

The people of Edo/Bini tribe are well-known for their traditional attires. male dressing mode includes the wearing of:

1. A flowing agbada made with Ankara
2. Lace, or guinea cloth material worn over a pair of trouser and topped with either a long or short-sleeved loose shirt of the same material,

3. An embroidered cap and carved walking stick which compliments this dressing.
4. Red Coral bead, usually worn around the neck

For some traditional rites, the white wrapper is usually tied around the waist, Bini people are known for elaborate and finely styled forms of dressing to match and suite different occasions ranging from marriages to house warming events, burial ceremonies and more.

Women traditional mode of dressing includes:

1. Beaded hair known as (okuku).
2. Red velvet wrapper tied around their shoulder region to their legs.
3. Beaded earrings and bags.

The above female traditional attire is mostly worn by the Oba wives (queen) and by Bini female during traditional marriages.

#### **4.2.2 Burial Ceremony**

The burial rite in Bini kingdom begins with the collection of the burial rite list of items from the Senior man in the family and (from the Father side) known as the Okaegbe.

The list includes:

1. Igbukpon (white clothes)12 yards
2. Osuonrue ( native chalk)
3. Uwawa ( native pot)
4. Igoghohon i.e. (eagle scout feather)
5. Obozo vbe owezo i.e. (Hand and leg of entelope )
6. Coffin(casket)
7. Goats some family require 2 some 4 each family differs in this.
8. Drinks of different types
9. Bottles of Hot drinks
- 10.Kolanuts (Evbe)
- 11.Transport money the family to convene themselves to the venue or  
vehicle to bring them to the venue

These are some of the items that will appear on the list.

**Procedures:**

The Bini Burial rites take seven days for the grass root people and fourteen days for the oba or for the bini chiefs.The deceased body is

washed and laid inside the house or embalmed in case of a mortuary the corpse is brought home to be prepared for internment. While the corpse is being prepared, the grave is also being dug. The children of the deceased then place red sand on the body of the deceased after putting the dead inside the grave. The days of burial rites are as follows:

**Day 1: IWA ORHIMWIN** (lay the dead in state) - iwa orinmwun begins on the appointed date with the ceremonial laying in state of the deceased. This involves using the (nails and hair) of the deceased that have been preserved and wrapped in a white cloth to represent the deceased body.

**Day 2:** This is when the male children and son-in-law of the dead person brings goats and food to prepare food for the people that came for the burial ceremony.

**Day 3: IZAKHUE** (slaughtering a cow or goat to the spirit of the family) – This ceremony involves the slaughtering of a cow or goat to the spirit of the family by the eldest son. The eldest son and his siblings and other family members in order of seniority dance around the community. This is done at night. The cow or goat is killed alongside kola nuts and drinks

are shared among the community and invited guest. This ceremony has a deep spiritual meaning and must not be taken for granted. It help cleanse off evil from the deceased children and members of the family.

**Day 4:** This day is used in the preparation for the next day event.

**Day 5: ISOTON** (A procession headed by the deceased son and daughter)

– This procession is headed by the eldest sons, alongside his siblings. He Carrie's (AN OKUN) a box decorated with multi coloured clothes, ornaments, which symbolizes the deceased property befitting his status in the community. He dances with the ikon within a short distance, and present the okun to the elders of the family. When the family accepts the okun from him, he takes his seat with the elders. This indicates that the son has taken the position of his father amongst the elders in the family. Then all his other siblings who went out in the procession then present their okun to their eldest brother as a sign of submission to his leadership.

Performing the isoton is very important to a Bini person because it indicates that a child has played his role in the funeral rites and he or she is therefore entitled to partake in the sharing of the deceased property.

**Day 6: OKPOVBIE** (wake keeping) this has to do with the entertainment of guest by the deceased children all through the night till dawn. They eat and dance till dawn.

**Day 7: ISUERHAN FUA** (Casting away) - At dawn, the decease representative lead the procession to a nearby bush, where a framework of stick covered with cloth is erected. The decease representative pretends to sit on it, and then the other mourners do likewise. Finally, the structure collapses and its components are thrown away. A few hours later, Ukhure “staffs representing the deceased” is placed upright on the altars of the deceased. A goat is then slaughtered for the offering.

### **4.2.3 Traditional Marriage Ceremony**

In Bini tradition, marriage ceremony is a very interesting and fun filled event that show case the rich cultures and beliefs of the Binis. when a man and a woman intends to get married, the both couples would go and

introduce themselves to both families. When this is done a date is fixed for the main traditional marriage. Before the main event, the groom to be would go to the bride's family and collect the list of items that is to be provided during the traditional marriage. Items on the list include;

1. Kolanuts (Evbe)
2. Coconuts (ivin)
3. Bag of rice (ize)
4. Yams (iyan)
5. Palm oil ( ofigbon)
6. Palm wine
7. Hand of antelope (obo-uzo)
8. Leg of antelope (owu-uzo)
9. Assorted drinks, cartons of beer, malts and minerals.
10. Bride price. ₦24 (Twenty-Four Naira).

The above quantities of items to be presented vary from family to family.

Some can be more while some can be few.

## **Traditional Marriage Process**

On the very day of the traditional marriage, the bride's family immediately welcomes their visitor (The groom and his family) by giving them kolanuts, hot drink, and carton of beer. As the grooms family accept these items, the items would be shared among the people present. It is customary that if the bride's family uses any number of drinks to say obokhian (meaning welcome), to the groom, the groom would bring in double of what was offered to them by the soon to be bride family.

Commencing the ceremony, proper introduction would be made by both families, thereby introducing themselves one after the other. Then the groom family would tell the bride's family the reason they are in their midst, haven't said so the groom family spokesman would say "we have seen a beautiful flower in your compound and have come to pluck the flower to be their own" and that there isn't any reason for them to go through the back door, so they have come out openly. The bride's spokesman would reply and say "we have so many flowers in this compound, which have you come for" The groom spokesman would then

call out the name of the bride they have come to seek. After this process, the bride would be called out and asked if she knows any of them, and if they can accept anything the groom family has brought. If replied yes, then she would be told to go back inside and the marriage rites begins.

### **Mother's money (igho iyemo)**

However, after the above process the groom is then told to go and pay the mother money(igho iyemo).This money doesn't have a specific amount. Items that goes with this money includes drinks, clothes depending on the groom. When the mother of the bride receives this items and is satisfied, she would then inform the elder that she is ok and they can continue with the marriage.

### **The Family Youth (Ibiegwei)**

This is another important stage in the marriage process that need to be done by the groom. The "ibiegweis" are the vibrant youth of the brides family. Without the youth settlement,the marriage wont proceed.so the groom is to pay them some certain amount of money,any reasonable amount,alongside drinks. when this is done,the youth would then inform

the elders that they are also satisfied and the marriage can move to the next level.

### **Road Block (Ode Quei)**

This happens when the bride is called out by her family so that the bride price can be paid, but before she comes out songs of praise are already going on in the room, during this process the female youth stand to block the way shouting and singing "ode quei ode quei" meaning the road is blocked. The groom is expected to go there and spray them money before the female youth would give access to the bride to pass through.

When the bride finally walks in majestically into the room with her beaded hair covered with a red veil, and her red flowing wrapper with beads arranged in order of sizes on her neck, the bride spokesman instructs the groom to unveil the bride to be sure she is the one he wants.

### **The Bride Price**

The bride price of Bini tradition is ₦24 (Twenty-Four Naira). But when the groom is to bring the bride price, it can be in form of a huge sum of money ranging in hundreds of thousands. Although there must be some

changes like ₦20 (Twenty Naira) notes, ₦50 (Fifty Naira) notes and ₦5 (Five Naira) notes on top of the money. The groom is to place the money in a broken plate alongside kolanuts, and some drinks and then hand over it to the parent of the bride, the father of the bride then take out ₦24 (Twenty-Four Naira) and give the remaining money to the groom to take care of his daughter. After this the bride would be placed to sit on the lap of the grooms father and then placed to sit on the grooms lap while counting the numbers ...owo( 1), eve (2), eha ( 3), ene ( 4), isen (5), ehan (6), ihinron (7) then the groom would say (eyor) meaning " I accept" and hold his bride this signifies she is officially his wife. Both families then offers prayers of blessings and fruitfulness upon the new couples.

They normally wave hands and chant *wa ruese* meaning “thank you”. After the appreciation, food, drinks and other refreshments are served to guests who will later dance with the couple and hand them gifts of different kind. After the celebration, the bride is usually escorted along with her personal belongings by elderly females and some youths from her family. Her parents are not involved in this ceremony. The brides

escort party will normally get to some distance from the groom's family house, and then send one of the youths to inform them of their arrival. A delegation from the groom's family will then proceed to meet them. On getting there, the bridal escort party will act like they are tired from a long journey and the groom's delegation will have to drop some money on the floor for them to continue the journey. This "drama" is repeated a total of seven times along the way before arriving at the groom's family house.

On getting there, the youngest wife in the groom's family performs the *ikpoba ovbioha* (washing of hands and feet). This ceremony involves washing the hands and or feet of the new bride and wiping it dry with a new scarf that has never been used by anyone. This scarf becomes the first property of the new bride.

After the washing ceremony, prayers are then offered for blessing and success of the union after which the bride is finally handed over to the groom's family amidst singing, dancing and merriment. Her escort party then leave her behind at her new home.

#### **4.2.4 Igue festival**

Materials needed for igue festival;

1. Guinea fowl. (oromwen)
2. Coconut sliced into 101 pieces.
3. A bottle of local hot gin,
4. Kolanut (evbe)
5. White chalk (orhue)
6. A cup of water (Ukpu amen)

#### **Practice**

This festival is announced by the Oba of Benin for the igue edoya (igue of all Bini) ...but before the (igue edoya), the Oba has already done this rites with the royal family.(Igue oba) meaning (the igue of the royal family)This festival is done before the new year celebration.

Igue festival is the worship of the head,(meaning the ancestral spirit guiding the family), thanking the head for enabling citizens for going through the year, and entering another new year in the bini land.

On the day of the igue festival, the native chalk is drawn in the ground to make a circular pattern. The cup of water is placed inside the circle. then the plate containing the 101 pieces of the coconut (the 101 pieces of coconut symbolizes greatness and the fulfilment that the head has brought good things from God) this is placed in a broken plate and placed by the side of the cup of water, along with the cock or Guinea fowl.

After this, a Male in the family will take the cock on his hand alongside colanut and use it to pray for the eldest person of the family, meanwhile all other families and friends invited are sited in the room, the Male person holding this items would use the items in his hand to touch the eldest persons head as he prays, while the people present would be saying (guawenyen), meaning Amen. when this is done, the wife of the elder of the house would also use this same method to pray for her husband during this period, there would be songs of praise going on thanking the head for seeing another new year.

After this ceremony of worshipping the head, the cock would be killed, and the blood is used to mark the fore head of everyone in the room

alongside the native chalk.as this is being done everyone choruses (guawenyen) amen.

### **New Yam Festival (Emoron)**

It is customary in Bini land that every traditional person that isn't a Christian before they eat this new yam called emoron, they need to use it to worship their various gods,so that, as they eat this new yam,it would not cause death or sickness for them and their families. And after this they can now use this yam to prepare pounded yam for eating.

### **Question 2: What are the major gender differentiation practices in Bini tradition**

This question attempts to analyze on some of the major gender differentiation practices observed in Bini tradition

The gender differentiation in Bini kingdom or land goes as follows. There are things the women folks in Bini kingdom are forbidden from participating in which the exclusive reserves for the men folk.

1. During the Ovia shrine festival, were we say that Ode- kwihi meaning (road close) as a result of the Ovia gods coming out,no

woman is allowed to see the Ovia masquerade that come out at night because any woman that see it will die. The gods appearance is announced to all and sundry beforehand.

2. During the burial ceremony in Bini kingdom, it is only the eldest surviving son that is allowed to perform some rites that the female children can not for example the ISOTON CEREMONY. meaning (Procession headed by the deceased eldest son).
3. It's the female that swear an oat of obedience to the man as husband, to be of good conduct during their marriage. This is called doven ehi-orinwim owa meaning (to swear to ancenstral gods).
4. In the Advent of a woman committing adultery in her husband's house, she is the one who will perform the cleaning rites to cleanse her into her husband's house if he so want her back. This is called- ofloweyoha meaning( adultery) this is a situation when a married woman goes outside her matrimonial home to have sexual intercourse with another man. But the Man is never guilty if he lives his wife and family to go after another woman.

5. Custody of Children: It is customary in Bini tradition that the father of a grown up child always has custody of the child, in a situation where his wife is deserted or divorced, custody of the child remains with the husband.
6. Widowhood Rites: In Bini, the wife of a deceased man must perform certain rites. she is subjected to oath taking, in denying her involvement in the death of her husband. In some families, the woman is forced to shave all her hair, she is forced to drink and bath with the water used in washing her husband's corpse, she is asked to wear black clothes for months. This act is only administered to women and not men. There is no fetish rites for widower, he is even pampered and cared for by his family during the loss of his wife, Women are the only ones that goes through the downgrading and inhumane act from the family of the men.
7. Women curses: A Bini woman can go completely naked at night to place curses on her husband, this process involves her touching her private parts or raising up her breast to lay curse words on the

man.this act is said to be effective immediately she speak for the curse words. A man cannot do this.

8. During family meetings, a woman is not allowed to use insulting words like

Ewobi, meaning (useless person)'

Emila, meaning ,(a person behaving like a cow)

Ozuo, meaning '(fool),'

Erere we ma gba,meaning ( your head is not correct)

Ozuo nu ma ko, meaning ' ( A fool that don't know his/her place)

Eyi Man'ue , meaning (it wont be good for that person )

But these insulting words can be used by men during the meeting,anytime they feel like using them.

9. A man is not allowed to go close to his wife during her monthly flow(period). In the past, men are forbidden to eat from the same plate of food women under her monthly flow uses to eat.

- 10.The man can not use fire wood use for cooking to hit is wife,during the process of misunderstanding or fight with his wife.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The analysis of various data collected revealed a number of thought-provoking findings. Based on these findings, some useful recommendations were made and conclusions drawn on the topic.

The following are the summary of findings after an extensive study of the subject matter. Cultural practices in Bini tradition and gender differentiation is as extensive as it gets:

1. Bini rites form an important role in Bini tradition.
2. These practices are implemented in day to day lives.
3. Travelers from one part of Nigeria to Benin have expressed interest in these practices.
4. People who reside in Benin City have also found these practices to be of immense value.

5. Some rites studied in this work are ok to be practiced ,while others are criticized and hope to be abolished,such as the widowhood rites and custom

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

From the result of the study, the researcher concluded that there are a lot of cultural practices in Bini tradition. It was obvious from the study too, that practices form the core of the Bini people day to day live and activities. Be it marriage ceremony, burial ceremony, festivals these practices are brought to life and also has its unique way of affecting life.

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