

## AN ISLAMIC ASSESSMENT OF INTER-MARRIAGE BETWEEN TANGALE-WAJA AND HAUSA-FULANI COMMUNITIES IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract (In English).** Marriage as the only legitimate institution that guarantees procreation, plays a vital role in promoting strong mutual and cordial relationships between ethnic groups. Gombe State originated from the fusion of two distinct large groups of the Gombe Emirate in the North and the ethnic grouping in the South, known as Tangale-Waja. Therefore, the paper is an Islamic assessment of inter-marriage between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani communities in Gombe State. It gives a brief account of the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani communities of Gombe State, their marriage rites and practices, impact, and challenges of Inter-marriage between them were also discussed. Qualitative methodology was adopted for the research because of its suitability. The interview was used as an instrument for obtaining primary data. The research found out that some families among the Tangale-Waja Tribes and the Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State still frown at inter-ethnic marriages because of the challenges that occur frequently even though they could be eradicated with time with the rising number of inter-marriages among them nowadays. To this end, the research concludes that Islam does not in any way make any tribe to be a sign of elevation or prestige and Islam came to level all distinctions and does not limit marriage relationship to tribe. Marriage should be based on love, sympathy, and affection between the couple.

**Keywords:** Marriage, Islam, Assessment, Inter-Marriage, Tangale-Waja, Hausa-Fulani, Gombe State

### INTRODUCTIONS

Islam as a religion endorses human rights based on equality and abolishes discriminatory practices against partners. There are numerous cultural practices in different Muslim societies, about the choice of partner as it relates to Islam. Mate selection for marriage is the most significant event in the life of all humans and makes marriage a very important event of one's life as a spiritual, moral, and social union of two persons based on certain rights and duties for both husband and wife. As society is changing very quickly; it is the need of time to understand the importance of varying trends for marriages and to see the effect of these



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trends.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage is one of the oldest institutions in the world. It occurs in every culture and tribe. It is regarded, in most cultures, as part of man's life (male or female), and without it man is incomplete. In Islam Marriage is a religious sacred covenant that legalizes sexual intercourse leading to the procreation of children. It reflects 'the practical bent of Islam, for it combines the nature of both worship and social relations.'<sup>2</sup> It also facilitates the maintenance of a sense of security, self-content, and chastity for both husband and wife.

Marriage has been ordained by Allah as the correct and legal way to produce children and replenish the earth. The family is the basic unit of an Islamic nation or society. Marriage in Islam is more than just a means of obtaining legal sex; it is an extremely important institution that safeguards the rights of men, women, and children while satisfying the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of the family members.<sup>3</sup>

Marriage as a social norm defines and controls the relationship between husband and wife, their kinsmen, their offspring, and society at large.<sup>4</sup> Marriage means a customary, legal, or religious approval of the provision for forming a new family. Marriage is the foundation of social life in which mutual consent of both mates is required and somehow woman's position in society is linked with her marital status.<sup>5</sup> As stated in most of the contemporary societies' marriage is certified by the government. Although practices vary from one culture to another all societies have their own rules and principles considered appropriate for arranging marriages. In most societies and religious systems, women have no independent right to go into a marital relationship with their own free will. As in Islamic law, consent is an essential element in marriage negotiation because marriage under Islam is a contract.

Marriage is a legal contract that enables each spouse to have enjoyment with the other. Marriage is an integral part of a Muslim's life; indeed, it is too important in our religion Islam that it is one-half of one's Faith.<sup>6</sup> Marriage is the lawful and legitimate way to indulge in intimacy between a man and a woman. Marriage is a great virtue and means of salvation in religion Islam. Marriage is a contract made by a male and female to live together as wife and husband to strengthen their relationship. Allah Almighty mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an:

*And marry those among you who are single and (also marry) the Saliheen (pious) of your (male) slaves and maidservants.<sup>7</sup>*

Marriage is an act of Sunnah.<sup>8</sup> Some many Ahadith instruct us to get married. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself got married and encouraged others to marry too. It is obligatory for whoever has the means to do

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<sup>1</sup> M.I., Zakariyya, Marriage, and Partner Selection in Islam: Relationship between the Partners, International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 6(3), 2006.

<sup>2</sup> L. Hayatullah *et-al*, "The Contract of Marriage and Its Purposes from Islamic Perspective", *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2014, pp. 139.

<sup>3</sup> A.B., Dogarawa, Marriage and Divorce in Islam. Being Text of Lecture Presented at the NTA/FRCN, Ramadan Annual Lecture Series 1430, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Islam, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Chaudhry, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> A.B., Dogarawa, Marriage and Divorce in Islam. Being Text of Lecture Presented at the NTA/FRCN, Ramadan Annual Lecture Series 1430, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Qur'an, 24:32

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*.

so and a fear of committing what is forbidden. It has been reported that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

*O, young men! Whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity.*<sup>9</sup>

Marriage is a way to acquire spiritual perfection and married people remain healthier physically and mentally. When a Muslim gets married, he/she fulfills the religious obligation and duty. Through marriage fulfill the need of each spouse by the other, to maintain their chastity by satisfying natural sexual desires. It is an essential element in the proper and actual upbringing of children. Marriage safeguards from the sins of fornication, homosexuality, and masturbation.<sup>10</sup>

Ideas on ethnic intermarriage are informed by general notions of preferences, opportunities, and third parties. Prevailing research tends to assume that people search for marriage candidates who are attractive in terms of more socio-economic resources. Unmarried persons who are well educated, hold more prestigious jobs, and command higher incomes, are assumed to be in more demand as potential spouses.<sup>11</sup>

As a system, marriage is consummated, following a series of monumental procedures as practiced and understood by the cultures of the parties involved. Different communities recognize patterns and types of marriages according to their cultural or social worldview.<sup>12</sup> Gombe State originated from the fusion of two distinct large groups: the Gombe Emirate in the North and the ethnic grouping in the South, known as Tangale-Waja<sup>13</sup> and they recognize patterns and types of marriages according to their culture.

On the other hand, intermarriages are on the rise in our society today. The old tribal traditions are disappearing, and more Nigerians are adopting them. It seems to be very common to find marriages that incorporate two or maybe more cultures and traditions. Inter-marriage also creates harmony among the different parties involved (the groom's and the bridal's relatives, clans, tribes, ethnic groups, races, and in some instances dynasties- thereby solidifying relationships and sustaining peaceful coexistence. Each party respects the other based on certain rights and privileges.<sup>14</sup> Despite that many frown at inter-cultural marriages sometimes prohibited, regarded as a forbidden endeavor.

It is against this background that the study examines an Islamic assessment of intermarriage between Tangale-Waja and Hausa Fulani communities in Gombe State. It also gives a brief account of the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani communities in Gombe State, their marriage rites and practices, and the impact of Intermarriage between them. The study, therefore, is limited to the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani of Gombe State without discussing other tribes of the State.

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<sup>9</sup> Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 5065

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> S. S. Hwang, R. Saenz, & B. E. Aguirre, Structural and assimilationist explanations of Asian American intermarriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59, 1997, pp. 758-772.

<sup>12</sup> R.A.R. Gurung, & T. Duong, "Mixing and matching: Assessing the concomitants of mixed-ethnic relationships". *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 16(5), 1999, Pp. 639-657.

<sup>13</sup> [https://cirdoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Gombe\\_State.pdf](https://cirdoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Gombe_State.pdf) retrieved on 7th-May-2023

<sup>14</sup> M.H. Kurfi "Changing Patterns of Marriage Courtship among the Hausas: The Case of Emerging Role of Marriage Brokerage in Contemporary Kano Metropolis" *Journal of Sociological Research*, 2012, Vol. 3, No. 1, P. 43

## METHOD

The methodological survey was utilized in the conduct of this research. There are a variety of ways to collect data for survey-based research, the most popular of which are interviews and observations. However, the primary data used for research is obtained through the interview methods. Finding and gathering reference materials that are relevant to this research is the first of three processes the researcher adopted when putting this piece together. Secondly, several interviews have been conducted, analyzed, and elaborated to fully understand the intersections of this essay. Thirdly, the researcher concludes the research by giving a highlight and the outcome of the research for further study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Definition of Concepts

Some terms inherent in this research are discussed for clarity.

1. **Marriage:** is a contract between a man and a woman, who can legally marry, to establish a joint life and procreation. The Arabic term ‘*zawaʾ*’ (“marriage”) stands for association and coming together. This term is used in the Glorious Qur’an in the same sense of bringing together or of being together. Besides, the term *nikah* is defined as “a purposeful contract to obtain and possess an enjoyment.” It also embodies the meaning of coming together or assembling.<sup>15</sup>
2. **Culture:** Generally, is defined as peoples’ way of life. According to Anyanwu<sup>16</sup> culture is the aggregate of the social, ethical, intellectual, artistic, governmental, and industrial attainments of a community, and which can be distinguished from any other community. It includes the ideas, traditions, customs, usages, institutions, associations, and material objects as well as characteristics of such community.
3. **Inter-Marriage:** Inter-ethnic or interracial marriage occurs when two people of differing racial groups marry. This is often a form of exogamy (marriage outside one’s social group) and can be seen in the broader context of miscegenation (mixing of different racial groups in marriage) cohabitation, or sexual relations.<sup>17</sup> Inter-ethnic marriage involves cohabitation, sexual relations, and marriage or inter-breeding involving persons of different races, especially in historical contexts as a transgression of the law. Inter-ethnic marriage is also considered as a relationship between, among, or involving members of two or more ethnic groups.<sup>18</sup>

### B. Brief Account of Gombe, the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities in Gombe State

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<sup>15</sup>L. Hayatullah, “The Contract of Marriage and Its Purposes from Islamic Perspective” P.139.

<sup>16</sup> C.N. Anyanwu, *Community education: The African dimension.*, Alafas Nigeria Company, Ibadan, 2002. P.32

<sup>17</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/interracial\\_marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/interracial_marriage). Retrieved on 11 July 2023 from

<sup>18</sup> Webster’s New World College Dictionary (2010). Inter-Ethnic marriage. Retrieved on 11th July 2023 from [www.yourdictionary.com/interethnicmarriage](http://www.yourdictionary.com/interethnicmarriage).

This section briefly explains the area under study for a better understanding of where the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State can be found.

### **i. Brief History of Gombe State**

Gombe State (*Jewel in the Savannah*) is in the Northeast geopolitical zone and was created out of the then Bauchi State in 1996, with Gombe town as its administrative and commercial capital. The State covers an area of 20,265 km<sup>2</sup> and shares common boundaries with all the five other States in the Northeast: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Taraba, and Yobe. The State has Eleven (11) Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 114 Wards. The Local Government Areas are Akko, Balanga, Billiri, Dukku, Funakaye, Gombe, Kaltungo, Kwami, Nafada, Shongom and Yamaltu/Deba. Gombe State originated from the fusion of two distinct large groups: the Gombe Emirate in the North and the ethnic grouping in the South, known as Tangale-Waja. The Gombe State population census is now estimated at 573,161.<sup>19</sup> Major tribes in the State include Waja, Tangale, Tera, Fulani, Bolewa, Kanuri, Jukun, Cham, Tula, Pero/Shonge, and Kamo/Awak.<sup>20</sup> However, the Hausa language is widely spoken all over the State.

### **ii. The Tangale-Waja Tribes of Gombe State**

Tangale and Waja Tribes are found in Balanga, Biliri, Kaltungo, and Shomgom Local Government Areas of Gombe State which make up the Gombe South Senatorial District. The term Tangale-Waja was used sometimes to refer to the people or area where the Tanga and Waja lived.<sup>21</sup> This was as a result, the Tangale and Waja tribes have some similarities in terms of cultural heritage being stationed in the same locations over some time and a long history of inter-marriages<sup>22</sup> between them though with several diversifications in some areas. Both the Tangale and Waja people claimed that they migrated from Yemen through what is now called Borno State and their social life of is based on the culture inherited from their forefathers and ancestors. For example, in earlier times, the Tangale-Waja men wore skins of animals they killed during hunting expeditions around their waists to cover their crotch, while the women wore leaves that covered only their crotch and occasionally, the breasts. They also worship a god called (*Yamba*), which they believed in.<sup>23</sup>

### **iii. The Hausa-Fulani of Gombe State**

Hausa-Fulani is a term used to refer collectively to the Hausa and Fulani people particularly those in West Africa. The two are grouped because since after the 1804 *Jihad* led by *Shaykh* Usman Dan Fodio who happened to be a Fulani, their histories have been largely intertwined within Nigeria. It must be noted though, that a significant portion of Fulani society is opposed to the use of code-

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<sup>19</sup> <https://wordpopulationreview.com/world-cities/gombe-population> retrieved on 15th Sep-2023

<sup>20</sup> [https://cirdoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Gombe\\_State.pdf](https://cirdoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Gombe_State.pdf) retrieved on 7th-May-2023

<sup>21</sup> I.Abdulrasheed, "The Role of Da'wah in the Islamization of Tangale-Waja Tribes of Gombe state" M.A Dissertation, Islamic Studies Department, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. 2021. p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> I.Abdulrasheed, "The Role of Da'wah in the Islamization of Tangale-Waja Tribes of Gombe state" p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> J.S. Hall, *Religion, Myth and Magic in Tangale* Ed.By H. Ungraithmayr and J.Adelberger, Roddiger Koppe:Kolin, p. 116.

mixing and code-switching, which has been made popular most especially in recent times by its increased use in mass media. But the fact remains that after the Fulani settlement in Hausa and intermarried with the Hausa people after conquering them and this was how the name Hausa-Fulani came about.<sup>24</sup> Today, the Hausa-Fulani people are found mostly in the West African regions of northern Nigeria and south-eastern Niger. They are also found in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Sudan Chad, and smaller communities scattered throughout West Africa and across the Sahara. The Hausa and Fulani speak the Hausa and Fulani languages sometimes both and they are culturally close to Mande, Songhai, and Tuareg as well as other groups in Chad.<sup>25</sup>

They also established several strong states in Eastern Niger, Northern and Central Nigeria. They took control of central and northern Nigeria from the Nok and Sokoto, who were previously controlling the area. The two tribes became a strong force to reckon with in Africa by 1100 CE.<sup>26</sup> The Hausa-Fulani of Gombe State is found in Akko, Dukku, Nafada, Funakaye, Gombe and some parts of Kwami Local Government Area.

### C. Marriage in Islam

The Arabic term *zawaj* (marriage) stands for association and coming together. It also means conjugation, uniting, betrothal, and binding of the two. Besides, the term *nikah* (marriage) is defined as a purposeful contract to obtain and possess enjoyment. It also embodies the meaning of coming together. It is also considered to be a unity that connects a man and a woman whose aim is to share a life and establish a Muslim family by the instructions of Almighty Allah and His Messenger.<sup>27</sup>

The term *zawj* is used in the Qur'an implying a pair or a mate. The word: '*nikah*' is mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an in several places:

*And do not marry Idolatress till they believe (Worship Allah Alone). And indeed, a slave woman who believes she is better than a free Mushrikah (Idolatress, etc.), even though she pleases you...<sup>28</sup>*

Marriage occupies a very pivotal position in the legal system of Islam. It can be judged from the fact that Muslim jurists regarded the protection of marriage among the five fundamental objectives of *Shariah*. Marriage in Islam is essentially a righteous act and an act of devotion (*Ibadah*).<sup>29</sup> And there are certain procedures and rules that *Shari'ah* has prescribed for the process of entering the contract of marriage which has to be abided. The absence of any of the prerequisites can render marriage ties invalid.<sup>30</sup> Among these prerequisites are *Al-Wali* (Guardianship), *Sadaq* (Dowry), *Al-Shahidain* (Witness), and *Al Sighah* (Proposal and Acceptance).

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<sup>24</sup> U. A. Umar, "An Islamic Assessment of Inter-marriage between Kanuri and Hausa-Fulani Muslims in Maiduguri Metropolis" M.A Dissertation, Islamic Studies Department, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. 2021, pp. 21-23.

<sup>25</sup> U. A. Umar, "An Islamic Assessment of Inter-marriage between Kanuri and Hausa-Fulani..." p.23

<sup>26</sup> A. Babagana, "Origin and Meaning of Borno" <https://www.researchgate.net/publication> retrieved on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

<sup>27</sup> R.A. Abdul-Aziz, *Marriage the Sunnah of the Prophets and one of the requirements of Fitrah*, n.p,

<sup>28</sup> Qur'an 2:221

<sup>29</sup> S. S. Haneef, "Shariah Objectives of Marriage: The Significance in Stabilizing Families". *Malayan Law Journals Articles*, Vol. cl xiv 2013, pp. 18-19

<sup>30</sup> H.Abdullahi, *Islam in Focus*, American Trust Publication, 1975, p. 202.

Al-Jaza'iri<sup>31</sup> in this book, says: "The marriage, or wedlock, is a contract in which, it is lawful for every one of the two married to enjoy his companion."<sup>32</sup> It is an important institution in Islam that can be defined as a contract that has for its object the legitimate procreation of children. It is a blessed contract between a man and a woman, in which each becomes permitted to the other.<sup>33</sup> Khan,<sup>34</sup> describes marriage as a civil contract that can be signed and terminated at any time by either side. Socially, culturally, and religiously, marriage in Islam is a very sacred institution to be protected by spiritual and economic means."<sup>35</sup> Allah (SWT) says in the Glorious Qur'an.

*And of everything we have created in pairs: that ye may receive instruction.*<sup>36</sup>

### **Position of Inter-Marriage in Islam**

There is no verse in the Glorious Qur'an or Prophetic *Hadith* that shows that a marriage can only be established among members of the same tribe. Islam came to level all distinctions, whether social, tribal, or racial, and therefore it does not limit marriage relationships to tribe. The principle that tribes and families have no special value with Allah is established in the Quran:

*O you men! We have created you male and female and made you into tribes and families that you may know each other; the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you who is most careful of his duty.*<sup>37</sup>

There were instances of intermarriage in the early period of Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) recommended the marriage of a lady of the tribe of *Quraish* and the noble family, his aunt's daughter Zainab bint Jahsh (R.A), to Zaid bin Thabit (R.A) who was a liberated slave from the northern Arabs. Bilal a Negro was married to the sister of Abdulrahman ibn Auf (R.A). The Prophet (PBUH) as a leader showed an example of intermarriage.<sup>38</sup> So, Islam does not condemn any inter-ethnic marriage.

### **D. Inter-Marriages between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities in Gombe State**

Marriage is the oldest established form of human behavior providing kinship ties and an avenue for peacemaking between tribes. Beyond this, it does not only imply kinship; marriage can also be an exchange of goods and culture. Thus, every marriage, be it homogamy or heterogamy, contains its own acculturation, assimilation, and integration process by its social environment. In this section, therefore, marriage in Islam, among the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State, position of inter-marriage in Islam and Inter-

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<sup>31</sup> A.J. Al-Jaza'iri, *The Methodology of the Muslim*, Vol.2, Alasila Islamic Publications, Lagos.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid* p. 523.

<sup>33</sup> [www.islamlaws.com/marriage-nikah-in-islam-d...](http://www.islamlaws.com/marriage-nikah-in-islam-d...) Retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup>/4/2015.

<sup>34</sup> M.A. Khan, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Women's Rights*, Nahar Light Foundation Publisher, Bangladesh, 2008.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* p.187.

<sup>36</sup> Qur'an 51:49

<sup>37</sup> Qur'an 49:13

<sup>38</sup> Y.Y. Ibrahim, *A Glance at Surah Al-Azhab*, np, nd, p. 25.

marriages between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State is discussed.

#### **i. Marriage among the Tangale-Waja Communities of Gombe State**

In terms of marriage among the Tangale-Waja, the groom gives a dowry of a hundred large hoes to the bride's father, which must be returned to him should his wife leave him without giving birth to a child. He also gives one goat to the priest that he may intercede with "Yamba" to give him a son, and another to the headmen that they may make a feast.<sup>39</sup> On matters of inheritance, if Tangale man is sick and has given up all hope of recovery, he usually makes a will dividing his properties among his children. The wives do not inherit anything. If he has no children, his relatives get the properties<sup>40</sup> while Marriage among the Waja Tribes is that Girls do not marry under the age of eighteen or nineteen. The groom gives his mother-in-law one goat with which to make a feast, and his father-in-law three live goats. He also gives a goat to the priest, so that prayer may be made to the god "Yamba" that he may beget a son. Should his wife leave him without having given birth to a child, her father must return the dower.<sup>41</sup>

#### **ii. Marriage among the Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State**

In terms of marriage among the Hausa for instance, it may officially begin with *Tambaya* "knocking at the door"- which means the person interested in the lady's hands in marriage seeks the consent of the lady's parents. Once approved, the dating continues. The exchange of gifts occurs between the parties, which is evidence of acceptance and goodwill. Tradition demands that the groom-to-be parents pay homage to the bride's parents with the presentation of some token as "material evidence" *Na gani, Ina so*. Sooner or later, *Gaisuwar Uwa da Uba* a certain homage accompanied by gifts set aside for the biological or social parents of the bride follows. The dowry and the bride's price usually come before or during the wedding but in some rare instances after the wedding.<sup>42</sup>

Marriage among the broad Fulani ethnic group is generally supervised and solemnized with an admonition from a Muslim cleric called *Modibbo*. The bride price involves a young cow given as *Sadaaki* and belongs to the woman. It generally symbolizes the legality of the union and is regarded as part of her property. Another aspect of the Fulani marriage culture is the share (public flogging). In the past, share formed an integral part of the marriage ceremonies, and no young man could marry without participating in it. *Sharo* is a test of manhood, and a bride is expected to congratulate her bridegroom on successfully enduring the flogging and pain.<sup>43</sup> The patterns and manners of marriage among the Hausa-Fulani are almost the same thing all over Nigeria and other parts of the world. Therefore, the research discusses the main issues and ways of marriage among the Hausa-Fulani which is the same thing with the Hausa-Fulani of Gombe State.

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<sup>39</sup> C.L. Temple, *Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, p. 350.

<sup>40</sup> A.B. Mathew, "Reports on Tangale Waja District, Western Tangale, in Pagan Administration" Bauchi Province, National Archives SNF 17/21108 P.46

<sup>41</sup> E.J. Bala, "Waja: A People and their Cultural Heritage", *Paper presented at the opening Ceremony of the Exhibition of Waja Progressive Association Abuja Chapter*, Nicon Luxury Hotel, Abuja, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2018 p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> M.H. Kurfi "Changing Patterns of Marriage Courtship among the Hausas: The Case of Emerging Role of Marriage Brokerage in Contemporary Kano Metropolis" *Journal of Sociological Research*, 2012, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> U. A. Umar, "An Islamic Assessment of Inter-marriage between Kanuri and Hausa-Fulani...p. 27.



## **E. Inter-Marriages between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities in Gombe State**

The importance of inter-ethnic marriages in a plural state like Nigeria could not be over-emphasized. Apart from serving as a bond between people of different backgrounds, it is a veritable tool of national integration and social cohesion.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani are the major ethnic groups of Gombe State with Tangale-Waja dominating the Southern Senatorial zone while the Hausa-Fulani the Northern Senatorial zone and part of the Central zone. Several individuals (couples) both Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani were interviewed (which the researcher was unable to report all due to time constraints) about their marrying each other despite being from different ethnic groups and backgrounds.

Mallam Abdullahi Isa (a Tangale) narrated that he met his wife during their university years in Maiduguri and they have been together now for over two decades with four children all of their children can speak both Tangale, Hausa, and Fulani dialects fluently.<sup>45</sup> Asking the wife Mallama Aisha Attahir (a Fulani) about their story, she said even when they were in school with her husband he wanted to learn her language and he would follow her around with a tape recorder wanting to tape every word she said in Fulfulde language. She further said; she could recall the first time that he met with her parents and spoke the Fulani dialect to them, they all thought he was also a Fulani until later she told them. But that does not deprive them of marrying her to him though there are some objections from some of her uncles.<sup>46</sup>

Another example is that of Maryam Jatau Tal who narrated that she married her schoolteacher after her conversion to Islam who is a Hausa man and they have been together for nine years with three children. She explained further that she has never regretted marrying him for once. He knows the religion and has been teaching me, now, I have memorized about forty *hibz* of the Qu'ran and studied some books on *Fiqh* and Hadith with his mentorship.

## **F. Impact and Challenges of Inter-Marriages between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities in Gombe State**

In each relationship, there are positive impacts and challenges, particularly when it comes to tribal and cultural differences. This section, therefore, explores both the positive and negative Impacts of Inter-marriage between the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State.

### **i. Positive Impact of Inter-Marriages between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities in Gombe State**

Inter-marriage among the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State has played a vital role in the spread of Islam among the Tangale-Waja tribes. Some of the Tangale-Waja women who married among the Hausa-Fulani are interested in the way Islam established the rights and duties of couples, where the husband is obliged to feed, clothe and shelter his wives and children.

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<sup>44</sup> E. J. Nhadi, "Socio-Cultural Impact of Inter Ethnic Marriages in Nigeria", *International Journal of Social Relevance & Concern*, Volume 4, Issue. 2016. p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Mallam Abdullahi Isa (51 years), Civil Servant, interviewed at Kaltungo, 10<sup>th</sup>, May 2023.

<sup>46</sup> Mallama Aishatu Attahir (47 years), Civil Servant and Islamic, interviewed at Kaltungo, 10<sup>th</sup>, May 2023.

This is directly opposite to the Tangale-Waja way of giving wife, a large plot of land to cultivate what to feed herself and her children.<sup>47</sup> So, therefore many women became ready to embrace Islam and get married to Muslim husbands that will adequately take good care of them, just as in the case of Mallama Maryam Jatau Tal who narrated that she married her school teacher after her conversion to Islam.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile others do not convert to Islam but they were married by Muslims and bore Muslim children.<sup>49</sup>

## ii. Challenges of Inter-Marriages between Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities in Gombe State

One of the challenges of inter-marriage between the Tangale-Waja and Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State was lack of acceptance by the family of the husband particularly when the wife happens to be a converttee; Aishatu Joseph (Waja woman) who is married to her Husband Umar Lawan narrates that she has been together with her husband for almost six years now but cannot freely visit or associates herself with the family of her husband because of the abusive words used to her as *Tubabba* and sometimes even to her children *ga yaran tubaba* (converttee children).<sup>50</sup> Another example is Ahmad Sinatli (a Fulani) who narrated that when he wanted to marry his wife Zainab Ahmad (Tangale) there was a clear rejection particularly from some of his aunts that he would bring in someone to their family whose religion is not certain.<sup>51</sup> The other Muslims from Hausa-Fulani are also in the habit of disallowing their daughters to marry males from Tangale-Waja also referring to them as converts (*Tubabu*) which is another form of discrimination.<sup>52</sup> Likewise the Tangale-Waja elders are also discouraging their children (male children) from marrying the Hausa-Fulani, they refer to them and consider them as being lazy and having no respect for their husbands.<sup>53</sup> Other challenges may include Language Barriers, Imposing a Second Wife by a parent or relative, and Misconceptions of Cultural traits.

## CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is evident that marriage is a union of a man and a woman who agree to live together and bear children. Culture and tradition are found to have an impact when it comes to choosing a partner, but many are still guided by ethnic affiliations. Some families among the Tangale-Waja Tribes and the Hausa-Fulani Communities of Gombe State still frown at inter-ethnic marriages because of challenges that occur frequently that break the marriages. Similarly, the challenges could be eradicated with time if they would continue the way it is taking place among the contemporary Tangale-Waja Tribes and the Hausa-Fulani Communities. In the past, it was very difficult for such a marriage to take place but nowadays, many agree to marry from another ethnic group. It is

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<sup>47</sup> I. Abdurashed, "The Role of *Da'wah* in the Islamization of Tangale-Waja Tribes of Gombe state" p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> See the interviewed of Mallama Maryam Jatau Tal under Inter-marriage between Tangale-waja and Hausa-Fulani

<sup>49</sup> B. Saliyu, *Tarihin Zuwan Musulunci Kasar Tangale*, Baniwunno Books and Publication Tumfure, Gombe, 2014, pp. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Aishatu Joseph, (33 years), Civil Servant, interviewed at Federal-Lowcost Gombe, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

<sup>51</sup> Ahmad Sintali (37 years), Civil Servant, interviewed at Checheniya Quarters Gombe, 8<sup>th</sup>, May 2023

<sup>52</sup> Mallam Dahiru Abubakar, (53 years), Businessman, interviewed at Dukku, 11<sup>th</sup>, May 2023.

<sup>53</sup> Mallam Nuhu Abdullahi, (53 years), Civil Servant, interviewed at Bambam, Balanga, 13<sup>th</sup>, May 2023.

becoming simple and easier for both tribes now to understand the teachings of Islam concerning intermarriage. According to the teachings of Islam, marriage should be based on love, sympathy, and affection between the couple.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions, the study recommends that:

1. Both parties should see marriage as an act of *ibadat*, therefore ethnic differences should not be considered as a factor.
2. Marriage rites should be strictly based on Islamic Principles to avoid ethnic and cultural bias.
3. No tribe should consider itself superior to another tribe. Islam came to level all distinctions, whether social, tribal, or racial.

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### **List of Informants**

- Ahmad Sintali (37 years), Civil Servant, Checheniya Quarters Gombe.
- Aishatu Joseph, (33 years), Civil Servant, Federal-Lowcost Gombe,
- Mallam Abdullahi Isa (51 years), Civil Servant, Kaltungo.
- Mallam Dahiru Abubakar, (53 years), Businessman, Dukku.
- Mallam Nuhu Abdullahi, (53 years), Civil Servant, Bambam, Balanga.
- Mallama Aishatu Attahir (47 years), Civil Servant, Kaltungo.