

Dagaari Questionnaire

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

- Dagaari, Mabia (Oti-Volta) language of the Gur branch of the Niger-Congo family (2p54).

1.2 Location:

- Upper-west region of Ghana (2p54).

1.3 Brief history:

- No data found.

1.4 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- No data found.

1.5 Ecology:

- No data found.

1.6 (Estimated) number of native speakers:

- No data found.

1.7 Alternate names:

- Dagaare, Dagara, Dagawie, Dagaaba, Dagao, Dagari, LoDagaba, Dagaba, Dagarti, Dagaarhre, Dagbani...
- LoWiili, Wiili, Lobis, Waale, LoDagaa, LoDaga, and probably many more.

2 Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- Cultivation of guinea-corn, or sorghum; maize; millet; groundnut, or peanuts; cowpeas; and root crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, and yams cultivated (1p2).
- Wild fruits, such as dawa-dawa, baobab, and shea gathered (1p2).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Cattle, sheep, goats, dogs, chickens, and guinea-fowl raised and cultivated (1p2).
- Wild animals, fish, oysters, and turtles hunted (1p2).

2.3 Sexual division of production:

- Tasks such as fetching water and firewood assigned to women (4p5).

2.4 Land tenure:

- Historically farmers and hunters (1p3).
- Land ownership is egalitarian, collective, communitarian, and usufructory (3p5).

2.5 Ceramics:

- No data found.

2.6 Food taboos:

- No data found.

2.7 Food staples:

- Saabo, also called to, composed of millet, sorghum, and/or maize (1p4).
- Saabo typically eaten with soup (1p4).
- Pito, a mildly alcoholic sorghum beverage (1p4).

3 Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height:

- No data found.
- 3.2 Mean adult weight:
- No data found.

4 Life history, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche:

- No data found.

4.2 Age at first birth:

- No data found.

4.3 Completed family size:

- No data found.

4.4 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- No data found.

4.5 Percentage of marriages polygynous:

- No data found.

4.6 Arranged marriage, bride purchase, dowry:

- Occasional arranged marriage, usually to maternal uncle's son (1p6).
- Brides picked for husbands by relatives (1p7).
- Elopement also common (1p7).
- Elopement involves either persuasion or kidnapping (1p7).
- Other marriage initiations involve formal proposal from man (1p7).
- Husband and kinsmen deliver "bride wealth" to woman's family (1p7).
- Bride wealth often not accepted until third presentation (1p7).
- Bride wealth includes cowries, cash, and livestock (1p8).
- Wife brings gifts of calabashes, bowls, basins, and baskets to groom's family (1p7).
- If husband plans to be polygynous, his family is not involved in paying bride price for subsequent wives (1p8).

4.7 Gift-giving to wife/husband and family:

- Kinsman of proposing man expected to "shower" potential in-laws with gifts such as pito, cola-nuts, and money (1p7).

4.8 Inheritance patterns:

- Patrilineal (1p4).
- Rights of tillage of land inherited by any one close agnatic kin (1p4).
- Surviving full brother or senior son will become farm-owner after the death of a family head. The successor must provide land for his dead relative's children when they desire to farm by themselves (1p4).

4.9 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- No data found.

4.10 Same-sex behaviors:

- No data found.

4.11 Attitudes towards same-sex behaviors:

- No data found.

4.12 Relocation patterns after marriage:

- Virilocal (1p6).
- Woman leaves father's house to join her in-laws/husband's patrikin (1p6).

- 4.13 Role of males in conception:
- No data found.
- 4.14 Role of females in conception:
- A woman's worth in marriage is her capacity to bear children, especially males (4p8).
- 4.15 Preferential category for spouse:
- Hard-working, physically fit, and strong enough to be a pog kura (female farmer completely responsible for farm labor and birthing many sons) who comes from a family with good health and conduct (1p7).
- 4.16 Female sexual freedom:
- A man has exclusive sexual rights over his wife; the wife does not have these rights over her husband (4p7).
- 4.17 Kin avoidance and respect:
- No data found.
- 4.18 Joking relationships:
- Between people and their brothers' wives (1p4).
 - Women pretend to be men when making jokes with brothers' wives (1p4).
 - Between grandparents and grandchildren, which aids in grandparents imparting wisdom (1p4).
- 4.19 Patterns of descent:
- Only the offspring of women who are married in the fully acceptable manner are considered legitimate children of the society (1p13).
- 4.20 Incest taboo:
- Universally taboo (1p6).
- 4.21 Marriage ceremony:
- No data found.
- 4.22 Marriage within or outside community:
- Outside community preferred, but in villages near to husband's family (1p6).
- 4.23 Family relationships:
- Terms "brother" and "sister" used to refer to all siblings and cousins (1p4).
 - No specific term for cousin (1p4).
 - Wives of males of the same descent refer to each other's children as "daughter" or "son" (1p4).
 - No word for "step-child," although children generally know who their mothers are and women will sometimes treat step-children differently (1p4).
 - N pog, or my wife, is used by both males and females to refer to a brother's wife, or by grandfathers in reference to granddaughters (1p4).
 - N seere, or my husband, is used by grandmothers to refer to their grandsons (1p4).

5 Warfare/Homicide

- 5.1 Percent adult male deaths due to warfare:
- No data found.
- 5.2 Outgroup/ingroup cause of violent death:
- No data found.
- 5.3 Reported causes of outgroup/ingroup killing:

- No data found.

5.4 Number, diversity, and relationship with neighboring societies:

- No data found.

6 Socio-Political Organization and Interaction

6.1 Mean local residential group size:

- No data found.

6.2 Mobility pattern:

- No data found.

6.3 Political system:

- Limited vertical structure (1p11).
- Centralized at the unit level and decentralized at the societal level (1p11).
- Different villages cooperate on large-scale issues, such as warfare or resistance against slave raiding (1p11).
- Central authority derived from *ninbere* (elders) of different kin-based groups within the territorial area (1p11).
- *Ninbere* deals with most issues of general community interest (1p11).
- The *tendaana* (custodians of the land) are the final authority in matters related to the village and land deity (1p11).
- Each village's political system separate from the others(1p11).

6.4 Post-marital residence:

- Woman leaves father's house to join her in-laws/husband's patrikin (1p6).

6.5 Territoriality:

- No data found.

6.6 Social interaction divisions:

- No data found.

6.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

- No data found.

6.8 Village and house organization:

- There are usually a cluster of compounds inhabited by several nuclear families of the same descent (1p4).
- Typically composed of seven large compounds situated about a hundred yards from one another (1p4).

6.9 Housing:

- Most houses are made of mud and/or cement with either thatched, laterite, or aluminum roofs (1p4).
- Houses virtually have neither doors nor locks (1p12).

6.10 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

- Some men specialized in blacksmithing, others in making xylophones (1p3).

6.11 Crime and punishment:

- Until recently, theft was a rare occurrence (1p12).
- Theft viewed as a repulsive and anti-social act condemned by all (1p12).
- Ancestors and spirits invoked to severely punish thieves (1p12).

6.12 Trade:

- No data found.

7 Ritual, Ceremony, Religion

7.1 Specialization:

- The Tengdaana (High Priest of Tengbane) holds the highest socio-spiritual and moral authority in any village (3p6).

7.2 Passage rituals:

- No data found.

7.3 Other rituals:

- Rituals around slain animals and crops (1p8).
- Myriad different rituals performed on a regular basis, often almost daily (1p9).

7.4 Myths:

- General belief in life after death (1p9).
- Revere the earth as sacred and divine (3p5).
- The Tengbane (Mother Earth) is the second most powerful deity after the supreme God Nangmen (3p6).
- Humans created from a combination of soil, okra, God's saliva, and the semen and eggs of flies and cats (3p7).
- The Father of Bagre sends rain from the sky which falls and impregnates the Mother of Bagre (Earth), giving birth to a tree that becomes the highway to Nangmen's residence (3p7).
- The gods give the first man a wife and a child. He returns to Earth with his family, but because the gods gave him a child, he doesn't know how babies are made. His wife learns the act of sexual intercourse from the boa constrictors, both watching and participating (3p8).
- A man breaks the code of relationship between humans and animals, and kills a nursing buffalo, leaving her calf orphaned. The calf grows up, turns herself into a beautiful woman, and goes to seek revenge. She marries the hunter who killed her mother, and tries to kill him (3p8).
- They perceive plants as living beings with spirits of their own (3p9).
- Believe that gods, spirits, and ancestors can inflict pain, bring sickness, and even cause death.

7.5 Cultural material (arts, music, games):

- Playing xylophones (1p3).

7.6 Sex differences:

- No data found.

7.7 Missionary effect:

- The offspring of newly-converted people are often cut off from their roots.

7.8 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- No data found.

7.9 Funerals/death ceremonies:

- There are special "funeral xylophones" (1p4).
- People required to run and wail as they approach the funeral ground (1p4).
- All funerals involve musicians, mourners, and assembled villages and guests from neighboring villages (1p9).
- Music group consists of drummers, xylophonists, and singers (1p10).

- Singers reproduce history of family up to the death (1p10).
- The goal of the singers is to stir the maximum level of grief in the chief mourners with word choice (1p10).
- Mourners wail, scream, groan, run, jump, dance, and sing to express their grief (1p10).
- Shedding tears is both encouraged and admired (1p10).
- Chief mourners are expected to shed as many tears as possible (1p10).
- Dead person is dressed in a ceremonial outfit, seated on a high wooden stool (paala) constructed from a special kind of tree, and surrounded by valuable possessions (1p10).
- The entire funeral area is marked by turmoil and turbulence as people act out their grief (1p10).
- Chief mourners are tagged with ropes similar to leashes for easy control by people who occasionally calm them down by holding onto the rope (1p10).
- A funeral with a lot of guests is indication of a household with high social reputation (1p10).
- Funeral length varies between one and five days (1p10).
- The dead person is buried on the final day of funeral (1p10).
- Designated grave diggers and specially trained people do the burying (1p10).
- It is believed the dead is capable of preventing one from exiting the grave once the funeral has ended (1p10).
- Highly respected elders typically buried in the middle of the family compound or in front of the family house instead of in a cemetery (1p10-11).
- Libation and sacrifices sometimes made on graves (1p11).

7.10 Taboo of naming dead:

- No data found.

7.11 Major religions:

- Those who live near foreigners/trade routes mainly Muslim (1p3).
- Most others follow traditional religions, and address words to their ancestors and to Nature (1p9).
- There are also a good number of Christians (1p13).

7.12 Other:

- Some practice divination (1p3).
- It violates a moral proscription to have sex in the bush outside human habitation (4p7).
- An adulterous woman must be ritually cleansed before she can have sexual contact with her husband (4p7).
- Adultery is a serious offense and more so when committed in the bush (4p7).
- If adultery is not atoned for, there will be no rain (4p7).

8 Adornment

8.1 Body paint:

- No data found.

8.2 Piercings:

- No data found.

8.3 Haircuts:

- No data found.

8.4 Scarification:

- No data found.

8.5 Tattoos:

- No data found.

8.6 Adornment:

- No data found.

8.7 Sex differences:

- No data found.

9 Kinship Systems

9.1 Sibling classification systems:

- No data found.

9.2 Other kinship typology:

- No data found.

10 Other Interesting Cultural Features

Bibliography

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