

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IMPACT ON THE CULTURE OF ZAR PEOPLE IN ZARLAND

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ABSTRACT

The Zar people are located in southern part of Bauchi State. They are found mostly in Bogoro and Tafawa Balewa local government areas. This group of people have a unique culture that a paper examines its impact to Christian concepts. The purpose of culture in Zar land was to bring the young ones up with good moral behaviours and to teach them the way of respect to elders and act of living with relatives in community. In Zar culture, polygamy and monogamy marriage were part of their culture. Polygamy and divorce or separation were allowed because it was not seeing as a wrong doing. Choosing life partners courtship, engagement and wedding were done by parents and relations without the knowledge of their children. The coming of Missionaries in Zar land area has a tremendous impact on many areas of lives, most especially on their culture.

Keywords: Christian, missionaries' impact, culture, Zar people, Zar land.

They would also want to share their view to others in the academic world. Before the coming of Christianity and Islam every society whether simple or complex has its own

Introduction:

The culture and tradition of Zar people was based on what they beliefs and also practice that was regarded as a formal education, there culture includes blacksmithing, hunting, art and craft, traditional marriage, traditional dancing, traditional farming, traditional worship and other cultural norms and values.

However, the impact of Christian missionary's activities on ancient Zarland has caused the break down and destruction of their traditional culture. Nevertheless, this impact has its positive and the negative part in the culture of the people known as the Zar people.

Though many scholars have written in the impact of Christian missionaries activities in their cultures

system for traditional education for its citizen. This differs from place to place and from people to people.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in putting this paper together was historical analytical methods which are common in other related studies. Religion by its very nature is a human activity through experience that is liable to interwoven and coordinates all aspects of human life. Sources used are library documents, both published and unpublished, books and articles.

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Culture is difficult to defined because is moving many things however, it is used in various ways has different meanings. Consequently, there are various definition. According to Taylor I.B (1929), culture is a complex ways of life which includes knowledge belief, act, moral law, custom and many others.

Wesley (1970), define culture as many things acquired by human being that is not physical inherit it include everything that contribute to the survival of man.

According to Longman contemporary dictionary of current English is refers culture to the beliefs and customs that are shared and accepted by the people in the society he further said that, is the attitude and believe about something that are by a particular group of people or in the particular organization.

Also if the activities that are related to the art, music and literature, however, culture means different things to different people for instance a well-dressed or well behaved person or one who goes for food may be regarded as the culture. While missionary has simply had to do with someone who has being sent to a foreign country to teach people about Christianity and pursued them to become Christians.

According to Long man contemporary dictionary of English, refers to the ideas believes and customs that are shared and accepted by the people in a given society culture is the totality of man's ways of life including behaviour and traditional values.

The missionaries imply for therefore mentioned from the above which taught many left behind to recall in the culture of the Zar people.

THE CULTURE OF ZAR PEOPLE BEFORE COMING OF MISSIONARIES

The people of the area were practicing traditional religion that is to say that they were worshipping idols in their shrines the idols were highly honoured and held

in high esteem in circumstance of serious problem such as drought, famine, or disease epidemics in the village chief gung, council the chief priest will consult the (Sigwa'ari) and Gung's council will consult the deity (god) in their shrines the result of their consultation will be revealed to them immediately.

When going to the shrine the priest and his encourage are not supposed to be seen by women or men who had not gone through the process of circumcision and initiation rites to adulthood as the religion of the Zar people demands. Any women that happened to see them deliberately is punished accordingly.

This is where it is speculated that priests will Pass women has to hide themselves. Sacrifices are offered to the deity when need arises.

Initiation: means that a child belongs to a particular age group he has to be initiated the age level was normally twenty and above years. And is done yearly as a festival each year for their graduation from adolescence to early adulthood. It in this period that they are exposed to the norms and values of the society. During the training time, people are not allowed to visit them including their parents.

The end of initiation marked in the past during this time parents buy for their wards (son) new leather clothes and some ornament women prepared the best food in order to welcome their sons with it marked the joy of their successful graduation.

Later on after the festival ended they were taken to their various houses by the elders and priests. Indicating the success of each son with his flag flaying. When they reached the house of a disease grandaunts. The owners flag will be kept without flaying cultural festival known as Lembzar is celebrated in the month of October every year, to marked the thanks giving harvest and also the beginning of the new year calendar of the Zar people. Their favourable food and soup were; acca and missing volang (prepared groundnut soup). It was the time of sighting of moon that evening their environment used to be kept clean every house hold prepare food for this festival and every member of the family. The food was taken in age group. Normally outside their houses so that those passing by will also participate in eating with them.

MARRIAGE PRACTICE:

Husbands influenced the choice of their wives after the first wife. However, they were polygamous. They marry many wives, there was no restriction to a number

of wives that one wishes to maintain in spite of the first one, which is always chosen by their parents.

Adult proposed a spouse for their children at very tender age and has no right to object his father's proposal, at time, the spouse usually proposed to a boy even before she is born or immediately after birth the girl too may not be aware that she has been chosen for someone.

It happens that when a woman is pregnant the baby she is carrying will be proposed as wife on assumption if she is a girl, the proposer will present some gifts to the parents of the child including quantity of salt.

This determined the degree of man concern from there on word every year, a basket of guinea corn and salt is taken to the parents of the girl. When the girl grows up so also the quantity of both the corn and the saltiness. When she reached adolescence stages she will be required not to celebrate the yearly festival with her parents as custom demanded. But instead she celebrates with her proposed husband only to go back home after the celebration the first yearly. She will visit the proposed husband and stayed with him for the second time during which, the husband discovers her as his wife. The third festival when she was taken finally to her husband house with members of the family women and also with marriage celebration of eating and drinking and marry making in her matrimonial home.

THE ADVENT OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN ZARLAND

Prior to the arrival of Christianity to Zar land, there was two dominant religion groups thus: Islam and traditional religious beliefs and worshiped.

The missionaries who brought the Christian religious to Zarland comes along with the gospel mission in (1926). Among them were Mr. Charles Wedswood was the pioneer who come from Anglican denomination and stationed at Mwari in (1926).

Before his migration to Mwari Mr. Charles Wedswood was staying in Kabwin in Bauchi province, now in Plateau State. The duet (Gung Mwari) welcome him even though there was communication barrier between the two parents. Nevertheless, some interpreters from Kabwir who come along with Charles help in this regard, the major languages of interaction among the Zarland sets of Zar and houses only Mr. Charlese Was known and called by the inhabitancy, Mai Madubi. In Charledvicv-Zar was given this name to him because he always wears glasses.

Those in turn parents who come after Mr. Charles were Mr. Adamu has ethnic group from Kabwir, and that was the time that Zar people come under abstract, but by (1931), the abstracts was taken over by the missionaries of Sudan United Mission (S.U.M) Mr. R.S. Perfect of Sudan united missionaries wife arrived and started for six years at Mwari, while pastor Gonapon and Mr. Adamu helped as his interpreters in Hausa language unlike Mr. Charles the coming of Mr. R.S Perfect saw some development in the spread of the gospel in Mwari and its environs.

Having learned Hausa, but also introduces reading classes in the light of the new religions since the missionaries were not cultural practice they encountered a lot of problems.

In (1935), there has a growing opposition towards the spread of the gospel on all side children and adults are been warned and forbidden by their parents not to change their religions talk less of attending reading classes chief of Mwari were treated very badly because they were responsible for allowing the missionaries to come into their land to influence the native with their self-styled of religious ways of life converts to Christianity were persuaded both young and the aged by the government.

THE POSSITIVE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES ACTIVITIES IN ZAR CULTURE

Some of the achievement made by the missionaries are numerous. Before the end of (1935) there were many Protestants converts to Christianity and a considerable number of them could read and write. It was the same year that some of them and others were baptized by R.S. Perfect in Mwari through their effort the of evangelization was more of success Mr. Perfect understood a little Hausa language this enhanced heading classes and churches were built by the middle of (1935), boys of 15-17 years were coming to school.

Apart from school the missionaries also established some medical services to cater for the converts and the school pupils. In 1935, again Mr. Perfect went to Boi in search of side of preaching centre and the side was given in January (1937) while a side was also given to Maryam Daji a year later. The government decided to open school in Bogoro in (1940) about 45 children could read and write. Hausa Bible copies were also sold at this time when perfect and his family left for England in July (1940), Mr.Mc Kay took over from him.

Later on some Zar converts went to Bible training in Gindiri. On the other hand, the catholic Church come to Gambar in (1964) in TafawaBalewa local government and Bogoro Bauchi State through Pankshin their mode of evangelization was to a certain extend different from the protestants missionaries the convention of many traditional society members bone wiliness to the facts.

After Mckay left in (1946), British come and introduced Boys Brigade Mr. Bentley comes in (1956) and through him roads construction took place from Boi to Gambar by means of communal labour. The first pastor was ordained in (1965) Tafawa Bible school was opened in (1972) by then there were about 987 Zar who were Christians and have 20 local church councils (LCCS).

Later on the named Sudan United Mission (SUM) was changed to the church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) some people begin to questioned the changed of the name of the denomination the existence of both the catholic and protestants under the umbrella of Christian something strange were to Zar who battling with (Chong) the supreme being, Zar in their traditional religion they strongly believe in one supreme being called Chong and worshipped him through the deity (Wa'ar).

The missionaries planed their work to take care of the social welfare of the people this led the missionaries to construct roads. Established schools set up educational centres and hospitals were built in Gambar. The sick the needy, they abandoned the orphan and the helpless, funds already welcomes and solace in the hands of Christians missionaries.

It was this entering and selfless missionaries' charity that attract the Zar people which some assumptions made that they were converted to Christianity. Also social made to the development and progress of the Zarland, field. The missionaries identified that the so called ante social customs of the Zar people try to do destroy them. While their understanding could not be real and justified some of these customs of the Zar people are available now after the Christian missionaries have gone. The facts are that they condemned behaviours were teaching closely to the people traditions, culture and religion.

However, Christian missionaries brought many blessing to Zarland it gave the converts a new religion faith considers this faith superior to traditional religion. The missionaries also introduce new modern things such as a new craft modern health services and western type of education.

Before the advent of Christian missionaries to Zar people believed the Supreme Being God and approached him through deities. These deities believed to be in charge of the various aspect of life to their God was too distance and too remote to be concern of the people and approach from time to time. Human sacrifices were also abolished in all the could be traditional worshiped in African countries by the Christian missionaries.

THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARITIES

The early missionaries are generally accused of destroying the people cherished cultural values traditional dresses and households' items were seen as native materials. The Zar people had their own way of doing things. The missionaries introduced new ways of doing things like carpentry and masonry. The set up craft culture at Mwari area as people educational programme. Model farming modern agriculture was taught and new crops were introducing this lead to the production of better crops for their domestic use, the production food for their people, and the enjoyed better life during the early days.

The early missionaries who come to Zarland rendered the Zar traditional medicine to be useless and refused to recognize the role of medicine men and traditional medicine of Zar people. Until in recent times reversed is the case where hospital officers under difficult situation refers found themselves in research of the African tradition herbs. The western education introduced by the missionaries delayed the traditional technological advancement. While relying on foreign import of tools and materials. In time of their traditional religion, some aspect is still relevant to Christian concepts of beliefs and worship of the supreme or deity.

Modern building of churches and mosques has taken the places of their earlier worship place such as shrines was scrambled a scree, droved and destroyed. Many traditional rituals have failed into discuss and various cult and symbols cast away in the wake Zar people Zar societies one being eroded and modified as a result of a cross. Cultural sweeping through the land Mr. R.S Perfect (1937), started that Zar land is caught up in a world of evolution which is so dynamic that it has almost got out human control. The men of Zar get up and dance for better or for worst on the area of the world dream. His image of himself and of the universal and not simply that man language should not divide them, but should serve as means for beautifying their mode of worship and the universe as a whole bearing in mind that no culture is superior to another.

CONCLUSION

The paper finds out that Christian missionaries' activities in Zar land brought changes in the social lives of the people in those days; women were not allowed to seat in the council where an event takes place with their men counterparts. The Christian missionary's activities also brought education (Western) some schools were established in various stations to train the new converts and their children. Mbiti J.S (1975), observed that Christianity has made a great impact upon Africa people through its teaching. Schools and hospitals were built the gospel they brought in Zar land was an opener for modern civilization to know the idea of justice human dignity love, brotherhood as related to another. The paper also has mentioned the eradication of most of the customs that was against the practices of the religion. Though traditional religion has serious attacked by the missionaries, but still there are some few traditional worshipers and believers that exists along the line.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before the coming of the missionaries, the Zar people had their way of doing things. The missionaries introduced new ways of doing things such as carpentry, masonry and other traditional occupations. A review of the former traditional occupations of the Zar Arts and Crafts becomes obvious. Furthermore it becomes necessary for the research and development of the people's religion and culture, for some of the traditional technologies has been relevant in this present contemporary times.

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