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THE TEACHINGS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION IN NIGERIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The paper examines the teaching of African traditional religion in Nigeria secondary schools curriculum because Christianity and Islam had been enshrined into the national curriculum. The research also intends to examine moral behaviours that could be acquired through the teaching of African traditional religion. Students should be able to have a clear understanding of their indigenous religion by identification of certain religious concepts, thus; norms and values that are relevant in Christianity and Islam or any other world religion. The teaching of African tradition religion would also increase students understanding of their culture generate experience and strengthened their community life, through the value skills and attitude as well as companies the modern and traditional ways of life.

Keywords:*Teaching, African, Traditional, Nigeria, Secondary Schools.*

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of African traditional religion is very essential to the student of secondary schools. African traditional religion should serve as an instrument to be used to help the child understand the foreign religion better. The intention of his paper is to draw the attention of the followers of both Christianity and Islam to identify the areas of African traditional religion which are very essential, especially the aspect of norms and values which are particularly African. Also to find out those values that the advent of Christianity and Islam had avoided for long. (Wadams 2004), the way in which African presents his/her intention/anxiety before God shows that there are values in his religion.

In this paper we are concerned on the inclusion of African traditional religion into the secondary schools in Nigeria and also to examine how teachers will inculcate these moral norms and value to the Nigerian child. The paper examines the definition and concept of African traditional religion, the value of the implication of African traditional religion to secondary school curriculum and the value of arts as instrument of moral teaching in the society.

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 books and articles.

Many African scholars have defined African traditional religion based on their understanding. Metuh (1987) lamented that it is necessary to preface the definition of African religion with the definition of the general phenomenon of religion in order to understand some of the problems writers who have tried to define and interpret African religion face.

Religion is a very illusive concept to define this partly because the object of religion for the most part is invincible and spiritual beings that are not subject to observations and are conceived in different ways by different people. Besides, the study of religion interest theologians, anthropologists, psychologist, and sociologist each of the see from different perspectives. Paul Gbenga (2006), said a traditional African in general and Nigerian in particular is deeply religious. While Ifanye (1987) the term world generally denotes, among other things, the following; earth, people, humanity and the universe. He then defines world view as denoting an outlook towards the universe, philosophy of life, creed and ideology. Also it involves how the world as conceived, contemplated, perceived and observed by people who live in it, based on the cognitive perspectives which again depended on human environment. Metuh (1987) provided another stimulating and all-embracing description of world view when he observed that the people's world view maybe define as the couple of their beliefs and attitudes concerning the origin nature structure of the universe and interaction of it beings with particular reference to man. Turaki (1999) further explains that traditional world view

helps in understanding of the nature and the theological basics of traditional believe system e.g. in gods, divinities or deities and spirits.

THE VALUE OF ART IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Roberts F.S. (1997) said that African traditional religion is a religion which has been in existence before the advent of missionaries. He further maintained that it is called African because it is practiced in several part of Africa particularly in South Sahara and Madagascar roughly of the third continent of the religion has been described as part of African heritage.

Mbiti (1975) lamented that the religion came as a result of experienced and thinking of our fore fathers, they are actually regarded the mystery surrounding them in their various environment. Huge River trees, rocks, mountains and all kinds of created things. He went further to maintain that they felt sense of age and urge to recognise a Supreme Being and creator of man and creatures.

It leads them to the formulation of religious ideas and beliefs; consequently they continued to observe religious ceremonies. Joseph (1985) says that it is traditional because it is the religion of the people; it permeates every aspect of their lives. It is not primarily means of the individual but the entire community. Africans can hardly survive without religion because every activity involves religion. The religion was born with the society and all the practices connected with religion are perfectly what are needed within the society or environment.

Ekwunife (1990), explain traditional religion in Nigeria situation or understanding religious beliefs and practice which are rooted in the past religious culture that was transmitted to the present overt and covert voluntarily by successive for bears mainly through oral traditions (myths) and folktale, song and dances, liturgies, rituals, proverbs, sayings, and names of sacred space and object and religion works of arts of the religion which is slowly but constantly updated by each generation in line with new proves of continuities or discontinuities.

Mbiti (1975) said that one can deduce the African traditional religion, is a living is not statistic, but dynamic in nature of the religion enables you to adjust to changes and widen religions experience, there by leading to no modification and continuity of some elements.

Ekpunobi (1990) said there is a need for heritage of respect; he identified three (3) dominant attitudes toward African for the week of our category. African traditional religion (ATR) which provides a spring board for the feature, the second categories, describes as romantic embraces everything in African cultural Romanticism in search for identity.

Ezeaku (1989) have been able to prove Africa have a rich and glorious culture that could even surprise those of their colonial masters the third categories is child, realistic appraised. Onalaiyekan (1990) added through the study of ATR students will discover what our fore fathers left behind.

The study will go beyond observations of contemporary practices as traditional religion. The study is also undertaken to enable scholars in the areas of African traditional religion will be provided a document for the future generations to read or belief and practices of our fore fathers.

Caron (1990) slated that we know the traditional religion was passed down by word of our fore fathers from generation to generation

Robert E.R (2014) has outline ten (10) facts about African religion are unique and interesting to read, African continent is filled with lots of countries with different cultures, ethnic groups and languages. There is no wonder that the religious embraced by the people in Africa are also different fact about the African religion: the traditional religion in Africa.

Bolaji E.R (1973) observed all that could be seen to them where ruins and monuments that will be part of successors evidence. However, like assurance with the two foreign religion when they feel form for hospital institution or journey, until recently, students also study it as an interest in Africa recent times.

Clerk J.P (1983) confirms that it has become a global matter as the study of African traditional religion the new centres have been introduced into the curriculum list of Higher Learning, here in Africa and throughout the world.

THE VALUE OF ARTS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

They need for identifying art as an instrument of moral education in Nigeria secondary schools cannot be over emphasized. Mbiti (1975) lamented that moral deal with the questions of what is right and also good, what is wrong and evil.

In human conduct, African people have deep feelings of right and wrong. This moral sense has produced customs, rule, and law in the society. It is also belief that all African societies that their morals were given to them by God from the very beginning.

This provided unchanged behaviours and morals. It is also such belief that there are some of the departed and the spirits kept watch over people to make sure that they observed the moral laws and are punished when they break them, this traditional beliefs strengthens authority of moral.

Bolaji (1973) support this ideas, said moral which deals with human idea conduct, this conduct has two dimension, there is personal conduct, which has to do with specifically life of the individual for example he would ask himself whether if right or wrong for him to work on his field, to visit the doctor or medical care when he is sick and so on. The greater number of moral has to do with social conduct since that the life of a society at large, the conduct of individual exist only because others exists.

In an interview with Sule John on 20/07/2019, he said morals have been involved to keep society not only alive but in harmony with others, without morals, there would be much confusion. Morals guide people in doing what is right in the society. It is morals which has produced virtue of the society that appreciated endeavour to preserve, such as friendship, love, honesty, justice, courage, self-control, helpfulness bravery and so on.

On the opposite side, moral sharpens people's dislikes and avoidance of vices, teaching dishonesty and greed. Joseph (1985) lamented that morals keep the society from disintegration, even if the ideas in morals are not always reached. Nevertheless, challenges people to aspire to the life sense of inner peace of one whom observed them in his conduct within his community or among the associates; because he knows that he is not wrong or going against an accepted code of conduct.

Many morals have become rooted in life of people concerned because of a long traditional ways of lives. Therefore, during certain things and avoiding others for that reason, some morals apply in one area but not in the other or at one time but not forever. This is because of the differences of culture, language and societal structure, economic and political factors as well as changes that take place slowly or rapidly in every society.

When interviewed, YakubuDogo on 20/08/2019 on the including African traditional religious but Nigeria curriculum has instruction of secondary schools, he said, Africans traditional religion is part of religion is a part of religion which has to do with the ideas that safeguard and uphold the hires of the people. It creates relationship with one another and the world around them. African tradition helps the people of its value and norms to cover such things like trurh, justice, cover of right and wrong, good and evil and decay, respect for people's properties such as keeping promises, agreement, praise and blame. The crime and punishment are certain qualities which behaved to Africans religious philosophy that our younger talented future scholars need to begin with.

CONCLUSION

The paper examines the teaching of African traditional religion in Nigeria secondary schools. It has established and identified certain areas in African traditional religion with a careful reviewing of their beliefs and understanding of their religious philosophy that are most crucial and termly, even in this contemporary Christian and Islamic period, some norms and values are found to be interwoven the issue of religious discipline which was found to be necessary in African traditional religion.

It has also examines the work of some African religious scholars views with regards to the significance of African traditional religion, thereby calls for onward reviewing.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on what has been written the researcher made the following recommendations:

- a. The federal government should make the teaching of religions compulsory including African traditional religion and be taught in all secondary schools in Nigeria.
- b. African religion should be taught as a special subject in the secondary schools.
- c. A greater attention should be paid to increase teachers' satisfaction and motivation to enable them does their best.

- d. The teachers' should use various methods in teaching African traditional religion.
- e. The teachers should use various methods in teaching African traditional religion

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