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THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN COMBATING SOCIAL EVILS: A CASE STUDY OF IKWO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research project is to identify the role of Christian religion in combating social evils in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The study examined the geographical location of and social background of Ikwo Local Government Area. The study discussed in detail the traditional religion of the people, types of social evils, advent of Christianity and also the roles Christianity played in combating such social evils in Ikwo Local Government Area. In carrying out the study, the researcher administered questionnaires and conducted interview on the 10% of the population used for the study in each of the sampled village and gathered information from relevant texts, magazines and memo graph. As the research was aimed at obtaining general ideas and views of the public in the areas the Christian religion played a role in combating social evils. Statistical data from ten villages were organized and analyzed for the general interpretation. Findings from the research showed that there is violation of human rights in Colleges of Education by both lecturers and students male and female. It was also discovered that lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting human rights in Colleges of Education because religious education aims at developing effective knowledge of the basic facts of what life is all about as expressed in the Bible.

Key words: Role, Christian Religion, Social Evil.

Introduction

Religion can be defined as a belief in the existence of a super human controlling power especially of God or gods usually expressed in worship. The world today believes or belongs to different religious groups such as Christian religion, Islamic, Hinduism and African Traditional Religion (ATR). All these system of worship aimed at worshiping

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the supernatural beings who is the creator of universe. Oxford dictionary defined Christianity or Christian religion as religion based on the belief in Jesus Christ the only son of God and his teachings. Kalu (1980): Defined culture as a totality of people's way of life. So, the culture of Ikwo formed the core of their curriculum before the advent of Christianity and still continued after. Horny (1963): defined a role as a duty or task in an understanding. Combat according to Horny (1963) is a struggle or fight against something. It is an effort of Christian religion in a bid to stop evil in our modern society, such as exam malpractice, killing, rape etc. Elias (1975) defined evil as a grave and serious form of anti-social behaviour. It is an act of commission or omission which tends to the prejudice of the community and forbidden by the law of natural justice. Evil or evils in another aspect can also be something bad or harmful but the irony of it is that something bad or harmful in accordance with Christian precepts might have been good to the people of Ikwo before the advent of Christianity. The social evils include the following: Indiscipline, adultery, rape, bribery and so on.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of Western education along with Christian religion has been heralded by few people of Ikwo as a right step in the right direction. So, fear have been expressed many by some adherents of African traditional religion (ATR) as how the Christian religion would be effectively carried on without destroying the already existing culture in Ikwo. The fear expressed above were contained in the oral interviews granted to some natives in Ikwo including the priest of Alobu Noyo and the chief priest of Ubali Okpitumo. According to them Christian religion has not only killed the culture of Ikwo people but has buried it. Where this kind of thought is prevalent, the tendency is to retain and insist on practicing those old and obnoxious rituals to the detriment of individuals and society at large.

Research Questions

1. What are the roles of Christian religion in combating social evils in Ikwo L.G.A?
2. What are the views of both Christians and non-Christians on the role of Christian religion in combating evil in Ikwo?
3. Do you think it is possible for Christian religion to combat all the social evils?

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Research Method

The descriptive research design was used in this study. This study embraced all the people of Ikwo Local Government Area. The researcher used 10% of the entire population of the entire villages used for this study. These was randomly selected from the master list of all the villages in Ikwo town. In each of ten villages, 30 adults were used for the research.

Questionnaire was designed with closed ended questions which was used as instrument for data collection.

Presentation, Analysis and Summary of Data

Presentation was based on the research questions that guide the study which was conducted orally. The data was analyzed in this form:

a. The people of Ikwo Local Government Area responded that Christian religion has played a great role in combating social evils.

b. Percentage response by male and female Christians and non-Christian priest of certain villages in Ikwo Local Government Area. In analyzing the data, percentage were used. In this analysis, any item or heading that has 45% is taken to mean that Christian religion played a great role in combating hat particular evil.

Presentation among the ten villages who received the questionnaire, 180 people completed and returned theirs. The presentation and analysis was analyzed based on these 180 people.

Table 1: Showing percentage distribution of respondents by sex.

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	74	41.1
Female	106	58.9
Total	**180**	**100**

Table 1 above shows that out of total number of 180 respondents 74 were male represented by 41.1% while female respondents were total 106 which represented 58.9%.

Table 2: Showing percentage distribution of respondents' age

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
25 – 30	58	32.2
30 – 35	36	20.0

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35 – 40	43	23-9
40 – 45	29	16.1
45 & above	14	7.8
Total	**180**	**100**

Source: Field Work, 2022

Table 2 above shows that out of the 180 people that returned their questionnaire, those aged between 25–30 were 58 by frequency and represented 32.2%. Respondents aged between 30–35 were 36 by frequency and represented 20%. Those ages between 35–40 were 43 by frequency and represented 23.9%. Respondent aged 45 and above were 14 by frequency and represented 7.8%.

Table 3: Showing percentage distribution of respondents by village units.

S/No	Village Units	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ekpelu	29	16.1
2	Ameka	24	13.3
3	Echara	20	11.1
4	Okpitumo	9	5.0
5	Aminyima	21	11.6
6	Alike	9	5.0
7	Ekpomaka	15	8.4
8	Ezeke	15	8.4
9	Amegu	29	16.1
10	Igbudu	9	5.0
	Total	**180**	**100**

Sources: Field work, 2022.

Table 3 above show that out of 180 questionnaires returned by respondents. People from Ekpelu were 29 by frequency and representing 16.1% people from Ameka were 24 and represented with 13.3. Echara were 20 represented with 11.1%. Okpitumo were 9 represented by 5.0%. Aminyima were 21 represented by 11.6%. Alike were 9 represented by 5.0%. Ekpomaka were 15 represented 8.4%. Ezeke were 15 represented by 8.4%. Amegu were 29 represented by 16.1%. In Igbudu, we

have 9 respondents in frequency and they are represented by 5.0%.

Table Four: Showing percentage distribution of respondents by Christian and non-Christians.

People	Frequency	Percentage
Christians	148	82.2
Non-Christian	32	17.8
Total	**180**	**100**

Source: Field Work, 2022

Table four 4: above shows that out of 180 questionnaire returned, the Christians respondents were 148 in frequency representing 82.2%, while non-Christians were 32 representing 17.8%.

Table 5: Showing reactions of the respondents to question number 5 of the questionnaire which says "Do you think Christians religion has played a vital role in combating a particular evil of slave trade.

Sex	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	Percentage
Male	5	26	75	106	58.89
Female	13	20	41	74	41.11
Total	**18**	**46**	**116**	**180**	**100**

Table 5 above indicates response from male and female on the role of Christian religion in combating social evils as it was obtained by the researcher in oral interview.

Table 6: Showing reactions of the respondents to question "Do you think it is possible for Christian religion to combat all the social evils?

Sex	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	Percentage

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Male	5	26	75	106	58.89
Female	13	20	41	74	41.11
Total	**18**	**46**	**116**	**180**	**100**

Table 6 above indicates response from male and female on the possibility of Christian religion combating all the social evils in Ikwo as it was obtained by the researcher in oral interview.

Discussion

The research has shown areas in which Christian religion has been combating social evils and the areas where it has not been able to combat as expected. It has also ex-rayed the general opinion of the people, both Christians and non-Christians on the roles of Christian religion in combating certain aspect of social evils. The implication is that the general public has seen the areas of social evils which have been entirely combated by Christian religion and area which Christian religion has not been able to combat as clearly shown in table 6. Finally, non-Christians also entertain fear of being robbed off their culture as discovered from the research. This research project was based on the roles of Christian religion in combating social evils, using Ikwo Local Government Area as a case study. The research revealed that Christian Religion has done much work in combating social evils in the area but there are some of these social evils that are still lingering in some towns.

Conclusion

From the general view of the responses, comments and observation concerning the phenomenon studies, a conclusion has been made that Christian religion has played a vital role in combating many evils such as human sacrifice in Ikwo Local Government Area as a whole. The study has stressed much on the idea of proper disciplinary measures that can be effective in application as the importance of this cannot be over emphasized because a neglect of it could tantamount to state of anomie which do not produce stability in any given society.

However, this study also helps us to understand that not all cultural practices are evils. For a detailed study of this case, this study stressed much on the religion practice in Ikwo Local Government Area, social evil and its types. The study therefore, conclude that there are some areas which Christian Religion is not able to combat.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the researcher recommended as follows:

There is need for revitalization of moral instructions in both primary and secondary schools where the children would be educated more on effects of social evils and religious evils.

The researcher also recommends that the spirit of ecumenism should be encouraged in order to modernize and banish those aspect of culture that tends to create social evils. Finally, the researcher recommends that the government should aid Christians to establish more churches in rural areas in our country in order to make the gospel reach the grassroots.

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