

THE METHODS USED IN TEACHING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS CONTENT IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SERCONDARY SCHOOLS IN MARAKWET DISTRICT, KENYA

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching methods used in teaching African Traditional Religious content in the 8-4-4 Christian religious education. The research designs adopted in the study was descriptive survey. The population comprises secondary schools in marakwet district. Simple random sampling was used to select eight secondary schools within the schools sampled and random sampling was used to select twenty respondents from each school and one C.R.E teacher from each selected school. Questionnaire, interview schedules and an observation checklist was used as the research instruments.

The study revealed that thought African Traditional Religion (A.T.R) content was taught in all schools, the teachers encounter various challenges which include lack of in servicing, over dependence on transmissivity methods of teaching. The study recommended that there is need to organize regular in-service course to motivate and inform the teachers on the teaching approaches and assist in solving problems encountered.

Keywords: A.T.R- African Traditional Religion, C.R.E, Curriculum, Teaching methods.

1. INTRODUCTION

African Traditional Religion content is very vital in schools, the content need to be emphasized in secondary schools to disapprove the vie held by many Europeans who first came to Africa. They argued that the Africans were a “savage, a pagan with no history or culture to perpetuate” (Sifuna and Otiende, 1994:129).

The Europeans mistaken beliefs reflected their ignorance about A.T.R and African culture. (Mbiti 1992:48) defines religion as “a way of looking at life”. He says of Africans that a man carries his religion everywhere, for instance into the field when planting seeds, to the funeral, to a beer party, even a student into the examination room. A.T.R is there part and parcel of an individual; Therefore, much should be done to ensure the teaching of A.T.R in secondary school benefits the learner.

The introduction of Christianity by missionaries was aimed at eliminating the A.T.R content, which was seen as barbaric and primitive, laced with unproductive practices such as female circumcision, killing of twins, deformed children and witchcraft. Despite the existence of the above practices, A.T.R content is very rich with values and virtues, which must be integrated and strengthen under the C.R.E curriculum.

Statement of the problem

Considering the African environment today it can be observed that it is no longer realistically possible to practice A.T.R in its pure form free from western influence manifested by western education. This A.T.R has found itself competition with other beliefs such as Christianity. This study was design to investigate the methods used by teachers in teaching the

content. To the European education meant western civilization. They therefore neglected anything traditional because of this restrictive view. African traditional content is only taught through the C.R.E syllabus in Kenyan secondary schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional methods of instructions were both formal and informal. Formal methods include constant correction and initiation while the informal methods included oral literature, dance and use of punishment.

According to Mugambi (1997), traditional educators were concerned with all learning domains including religion. They applied various methods of instruction which included: -

Rites of passage: This marked the stages of a person's life from conception to death. The stages include birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death. During this stage the African traditional community taught the young on how to acquire various habits, attitudes, values and skills. Formal education took the form of succeeding stages of initiation during puberty.

Oral literature: Oral literature through myths and creation stories state the origin of man. Allied to myths are legends. Legends are fragments of actual history which are close to real life than myths. Folk tales are based primarily on day to day happenings. Children also learn through dance and folk song, music form an integral part of the people's daily lives. Oral literature can be used to play a significant role in inculcating discipline, values and personality development.

Constant warnings, corrections and punishment: Traditional learning also involved the use of deterrent and inculcating fear in the children. From there youth, children were meant to conform to the moral customs and standards of behavior in errant in the clan. Bad habits and undesirable behavior such as cruelty and deft were not tolerated (Mugambi, 2002). Those who commit offenses were rebuked, beaten or assigned pieces of work which they would be expected to complete before being allowed to eat. They would be ridiculed or given funny or nasty nick names.

Productive work: Learning through the medium of work enabled children to acquire the right type of masculine and feminine skills. Children were given gradual training into tasks according to age and sex. ATR molded character and emphasized on hard work. It developed physical aptitude and combined manual activity with intellectual activities. Socially, children learn to be the elements of the whole, the law and manners of the group, decency of speech and behavior and corporation in common tasks were thought to mold the learners as a cooperate member of the society. (Sifuna, 1980)

The following are suitable methods for teaching ATR:

Discussion method: Guided discussions can provide a very effective learning environment and can also be educative to learner. There are several ways of organizing guided discussions and a creative teacher can make many variations and adaptations.

Class projects: Each student may be encouraged to do some research on a topic and write down the findings. This method is student centered and may be of a great value if carefully prepared and monitored (Mugambi, 20202).

Resource persons: The local community may also participate in learning process by providing resource persons to occasionally discuss with the students on some relevant topics. In this case the teacher would need to carefully prepare the class and identify the appropriate resource person (Mugenda,2002).

Lecture method: It is an oral presentation of a pre-planned set of data, meanings an application, examples, explanations, summaries and evaluations, with or without visual support. (Groenewegen,1993).

Text reading: It is the use of selected or specially composed text for the transmission of content, or to facilitate the acquisition of dispositions other than knowledge, (Groenewegen,1993).

Role play: Many topics in CRE syllabus lend themselves to the use of the role play. Without role play students may find it sometime difficult to get involved in a topic (Groenewegen,1993). It is not a time consuming method and it can be used to introduce a lesson.

Story telling: The narrative is an oral presentation of a string of events, often with explanations of even in terms of motives, causative factors, local cultural conditions and effects (Groenewegen,1993).

Case study: It is more theoretical simulation method, although sometimes real cases may be used without much simulation. It is a critical method because it provides practical experience in decision making (Groenewegen,1993).

Life approach: This is an approach in which teachers deliver content to the learners starting with the actual daily experiences that the learners actually encounter, there after by way of reflection on the experiences making the child to understand their religious significance (Shiprah, 2004).

According to Shiprah (2004), the life approach has the following steps as emphasized in a lesson presentation;

- Human experiences
- Biblical experiences
- Explanation
- Application and responses.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The design adopted was Descriptive. The study was carried out in Secondary schools in Marakwet District in Rift Valley in Kenya. Random sampling was used to select the participants. Questionnaires, interview schedules and classroom observation were used as the research instruments for collecting data.

The validity of the research instruments was given by the experts and the reliability was reached through Test-re-test method.

Data presentation

Method used by teachers	% of teachers using
Discussion method	75%
Class projects	-
Resource persons	50%
Lecture method:	62%
Question and answer	87.5%
Text reading:	87.5%
Role play	62.5%
Story telling	-
Discovery	62.5%
Case study	-
Life approach	62.5%

5. DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Shiprah,(2004) recommended the use of life approach in teaching CRE, however, during observation the approach was not fully utilized. Only 37.5% of the teachers were using the approach. This was due to lack of time and skills thus supports Gross et al (1971) assertion that when members of the organization lack the skill to perform in accordance with the demand of the innovation, it will be impossible to implement the innovation.

Some of the methods that were popularly used were discussion, text reading, question and answer method. The methods which were rarely used were field trips, life approach and discovery, which were seen to be costly and time consuming.

Nabwire (1998) stated that learners centered methods enable learners to retain more information. Participation of the learners during learning process creates interest and motivation thus leading them in to more learning.

6. CONCLUSION

The teaching of ATR should not just be descriptive. There is demand for prescription beyond teaching. Teacher should teach student in a way that they can apply the knowledge acquired faced by real life situations.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The use of life approach be encouraged so that learners can apply their academic knowlagde to real life situations.

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