

TABOOS IN YORÙBÁ INDIGENOUS RELIGION: ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS
FOR SOCIETAL UPRIGHTNESS IN OKE OGUN, OYO STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This work attempts to address the societal ethical challenges in Oke Ogun that arise as a result of the weak responses by the contemporary society in the keeping and observance of taboos as demands by the ethos of the Yorùbá Indigenous Religion which will help an individual in discharging their societal responsibilities faithfully. Ethical challenges have riddled every sector of the nation. The problem is that the forefathers seem to be uprightly conscious compare with this contemporary society. This is because of their worldview of taboos. Breakings of taboos attract death penalty or misfortune. This happened because the missionary religions that should have helped inculcating uprightness in the society are also guilty of ecclesiastical moral decadence. This does not mean that the missionary religious sacred prohibitions are impotent when it comes to inculcating upright living in the society; it is only that the response of the adherents to the religious prohibitions seems to be weak. Some people of Oke Ogun are still involve in fraud, injustice, violence, oppression, murder, robbery, and all sorts of impurity. Therefore, these studies, *Taboos in Yorùbá Indigenous Religion: Ethical Implications for Societal Uprightness in Oke Ogun* examined Yorùbá cultural beliefs and practices in form of taboos, overview of customs and taboos in Yorùbá Indigenous Religion and missionary religions, the contemporary challenges facing keeping of taboos in Oke Ogun to promote moral stability in the society. The study is descriptive in nature and the researcher adopted phenomenological and comparative approaches to analyze the virtues in cultural heritage of the Yorùbá Indigenous Religion. Yorùbá Indigenous Religion cultural heritages in form of taboos are encouraged for inculcating societal uprightness in Oke Ogun community and other contexts to curb societal malignancy. The realization of pending societal malignancy is a great motivation for this work not only in Oke Ogun but also in other contexts of Nigerian society. Based on the examination, certain implications of taboos in Yorùbá Indigenous Religion were brought out and used as means to curb societal moral evils in Oke Ogun Community and other contexts. This is to promote moral standard, peaceful co-existence, and preservation of good cultural heritage. The Biblical position of human traditions warns Christians not to adhere to any human traditions. The taboos that preserve cultural heritage and still biblical should be cherished. Based on this, it was recommended among others that Christianity and Islam should not mellow down Yorùbá cultural beliefs and heritage, neither should Yorùbá cultural values be allowed to dictate missionary religion adherents' convictions. The church should embark on biblical teachings that would dispel any misconception and confusion among members of the church as regard cultural beliefs in form of taboos. This will curb increase in societal malignancy.

5. 2 CONCLUSIONS

It is indispensable to see that the observance of taboos among Christians in some towns and villages of Yoruba land poses some challenges to Christian faith, Church of God, Ministers of the gospel and individual Christians. The Bible warns Christians not to adhere to any human traditions. This study posits that some taboos have ethical values, which preserve moral standard of the society. These taboos should be cherished and embraced. Therefore, Bible should be the basis of all issues relating to taboos in Yoruba context and even in other contexts. The church of God

should intensify her efforts in teaching the sound word of God. Elevation of taboos over the power of Jesus Christ should be discouraged. The church should step into the case of her member(s) anytime they are in danger of observing taboos that are against the biblical injunctions. The Christians should not in any sense observe any taboos at the detriment of their salvation in Christ Jesus. Observance of taboos is real in Oke Ogun community and its effects cannot be over-emphasized. This poses some challenges to Christian faith and practices in Oke ogun community.

God desires humans to serve and worship Him in a relax atmosphere and a peaceful habitation. Humans disrupt societal uprightness as a result of disregarding cultural beliefs that promote rightness in the society. In contemporary society, the effects of societal decadence are disturbing. It is very important to know that weak response to cultural heritage, which promote sound living, contributed to societal decline. The society should be peaceful, healthy, accommodative and conducive because life deserves it.

5. 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This work has examined taboos in relation to societal uprightness in Oke Ogun community from the perspective of both the Yorùbá indigenous religion and missionary religions with deadly consequences, the responses of the concerned adherents and their ethical implications for societal uprightness, the following are the recommendations with the hope that if implemented, everyone will live uprightly in the society. Therefore this study offers the following recommendations;

It has been critically viewed that taboos concerning the societal rightness in the Yoruba setting have both positive and negative effects on the life of the people. Where any of the taboos militate against sound living, it implies that it has no

scientific base. It is an outright deprivation or oppression of humanhood. It is therefore imperative that enlightenment campaign through the media be carried out to educate the public about the negative effects that some of these taboos could have on individuals in the society.

Individual Christian

- i. Societal malignancy is an ethical issue; Christians should not fold their hands while the peace of society is being disrupted. Every individual Christian should be committed to the cause of improving and promoting societal uprightness.
- ii. Every Christian should carefully observe and discharge their Christian ethical responsibilities within and outside the society and promote cultural values that enhance mutual relationship.
- iii. There is need to repent of both cultural and modern beliefs and practices that negate biblical teachings. Although, the consequences of the past sins may hang on for a while, with sincere heart and humility, acknowledgement of God would heal (Acts 3:19).
- iv. Christians should cherish their cultural beliefs and heritage without making mess of their faith.
- v. There should be adequate and sound biblical teachings on cultural heritage. Biblical teachings would dispel any misconception and confusion among members of the church as regard cultural beliefs in form of taboos.
- vi. Christians' response to their religious code of conducts and prohibitions should be positive; otherwise, they will render it impotent.

Society

- i. The campaign could be carried to the various maternity, clinics and centres, where pregnant women regularly assembled for medical attention, to educate them on the truth concerning taboos for pregnant women in the traditional Yoruba society. It is hoped that with such efforts it will come to a time when the fear surrounding these taboos will be clearly dispersed by the floodlight of awareness through proper and adequate education
- ii. It is a means through which cultural values can be improved upon, and it can serve as podium through which religio-cultural ethics can be instilled to caution the leaders in their acts of governance.
- iii. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) should be given the power, not only to bark but also to bite. It should not be used to harass political opponents. Rather, it should be objective in its arrests and prosecutions. It should not be selective. Therefore, those found to have embezzled public funds should not be allowed to go with impunity to enjoy their loot.

Religious Centre

- i. The increase in religious centres at this contemporary time should improve the quality of societal uprightness. There is virtually no moral improvement in the disposition of Nigerians who claim to be religious.
- ii. Christians and Muslims are supposed to be good examples to the adherents of Yorùbá Indigenous Religion. Those charged with leadership responsibility should have the fear of God, and the interest of the people in their hearts.

