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Formal education and cultural changes in northern Uganda, 1911 to 2011

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This paper discusses the impact of formal education on the culture of the Acholi people of northern Uganda. Basing on the results of key informants interviews, focus group discussions self administered questionnaires and ethnographic analyses. The study established the elements, content, history and effects of formal education on African Culture. The findings are that formal education in northern Uganda is a product of British colonialism. The agents of formal education were Christian Missionaries mainly the Church Missionary Society who arrived from the south in 1903 and the Comboni Missionaries who entered Northern Uganda from the north in 1911. Although conservatives and traditionalists argue that changes in the morals and social aspects of life of the Acholi people caused by formal education, over the last one hundred years, are extremely distasteful, the paper concluded that the major impacts of formal education are largely, positive.

Key words: Formal education, cultural change, Acholi, morals, evangelization.

INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, the term “culture” has its origins in the Latin verb “cultura” literally meaning “cultivation”. It first appeared in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, to connote a process of cultivation or improvement, as in agriculture or horticulture. In the 19th century, the term developed to refer, first, to the betterment or refinement of the individual, especially through education and then to the fulfillment of national ideals (Harper, 2001: 2). In the 20th century, "culture" emerged as a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of human phenomena that cannot be attributed to genetic inheritance. The term culture can, thus, have various meanings to different audiences. In public policy circles, it is most commonly used to refer to the set of influences on how individuals, groups and society see the world and react to it. Cultural change refers to both interventions to influence underlying attitudes, values and aspirations and how this manifest into behavior, as well as the dynamic process by which behavioral patterns become established as part of underlying attitudes and values.

"Education" is derived from the Latin, ēducātiō ("A breeding, a bringing up, a rearing"). In its general sense, education is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic (Dewey, 1944: 1). Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. Education is divided into two major components namely formal and informal Education.

Formal education is the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded ‘education system’, running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training while Informal education is the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily...
experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

Formal education was introduced in Northern Uganda by European Christian Missionaries during the period of British colonialism. In Uganda today, formal education is state supported and state operated but it also allows and certifies private institutions which provide a comparable education. They all operate under the ministry of education and sports (MoES). However, informal /indigenous education is also carried out by each ethnic group in Uganda and by each clan of the Acholi.

This paper sets out to evaluate the effect of formal education over the last one hundred years that it has existed in northern Uganda. Initially, the schools were run by European Christian Missionaries and there was no clear boundary between evangelization and formal education but when Uganda became independent in 1962, the government took over and schools were secularized. However, the educational system still remained “British” with the effect that its products are heavily assimilated into the European culture. This has had a profound impact on the Acholi culture.

METHODS

The study used a cross-sectional survey design adopting qualitative and quantitative methods. This design were used because of its advantages in obtaining data; it is also the simplest and least cost alternative. Quantitative method was applied in order to describe current conditions or to investigate relationships, including effects of education. In addition, it helped in answering questions concerning the current state of subject under the study. This study was carried out in the seven districts of Acholi-land, northern Uganda. These are Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, Kitgum, Lamwo, Agago and Pader. The study targeted the people of Acholi-land. It included both male and female respondents found in the above area. This enabled the researchers get systemic data as expected from respondents in regards to the impacts of formal education on African culture. This population is diverse and proved to be resourceful in the provision of the required information. A total number of 50 (Table 1) respondents was picked from each district. This included 5 housewives, 5 married men, 5 students, 5 teachers, 10 businessman, 10 traditional leaders/elders, and 10 religious leaders. The Acholi traditional leaders are targeted due to their unique functions, knowledge and attachment to the Acholi tradition and the people themselves. The religious leaders, teachers and students are seen as agents of cultural change. In total, 350 interviews were conducted.

The study used simple random sampling method in selecting the students and teachers, purposive sampling technique in selecting married women and men while snowballing was applied in choosing the traditional and religious leaders. Primary data was collected using self administered questionnaires to get information from students and teachers while key informants interviews were held with traditional and religious leaders. The researchers were directly involved in the data collection. They attended seven village meetings, three burials and five funeral ceremonies, nine weddings and nine traditional marriages, participated in three local council courts and attended twenty-one Sunday services where they heard, observed and even felt the effects of formal education. Data collected was checked to ensure regularity and accuracy; this was useful in ensuring that the objective of the study was accurately addressed. Analysis was done according to the objectives of the study; data generated by questionnaires was entered in the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS version 17), coded and edited before analysis and processing of document was done. Qualitative data was analyzed by way of triangulating the information from burials, weddings, churches etc. Research ethics was employed in a professional way to meet standards that is related to planning, collecting and processing data. Consent to participate in the study was sought first from every respondents, privacy was observed, as there was need to respect the respondents and believe that they may be with the ability to make informed decisions and only those who accepted to participate were given questionnaires. Students were interviewed with the permission of their teachers and all respondents were assured of their freedom to withdraw from the interview any time if they wished. Information got from respondents was used strictly for the purpose of this study. The names of those who requested for anonymity are not mentioned anywhere in this article.

RESULTS

Formal education was introduced in northern Uganda by European Christian Missionaries who ventured into Acholi-land from two directions; The Church Missionary Society from the south and the Comboni Missionaries from the north. The first Church Missionary Society preachers reached Acholiland in 1903 while those of the Comboni Missionaries, who later became known as Verona Fathers, came in 1911. The missionaries did not only introduce Christianity but also a formal education system which emphasized the 3Rs of reading, writing and religion. These had great impact on African culture. The missionaries built many primary, secondary and vocational schools in many parts of Acholi Sub region as stated by Bwegye (1985:15).

Bishop Daniel Comboni (1831-1881) founded the Comboni Missionaries in 1867. Under the Comboni Missionaries (Verona Fathers) St. Joseph’s College
Table 1. Showing the total number of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of respondents</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acholi men</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acholi women</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Leaders/Elders</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business community</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 districts</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Layibi was established, first as a Technical school and later Rev. Brother Fontana arrived in Gulu in 1952 to transfer the Technical School from Gulu Mission to St. Joseph’s College Layibi. Rev. Brother Fontana, Rev. Brother A. Biasin, and Brother Landonio started building the college by the end of 1953. (History and Profile of St. Joseph’s College Layibi). In 1956, Pope Paul VI Secondary School was established in Anaka. In Northern Uganda, initial Catholic education aimed at teaching the African how to communicate to his/her God, through prayer, recitation of the rosary, reading some and very few selected Biblical texts and simple spiritual literature such as Litany of the Virgin Mary. In academic and political circles, initial Catholic education is heavily criticized for producing docile, humble and politically lukewarm citizens for most of East Africa (Ssekamwa, 2000: 33). The strength of Christian education lies in the explicit academic performance of most of its salient Schools in Northern Uganda. Catholic Secondary schools are ranked as top Ordinary and Advanced level schools. For example, St. Joseph’s College Layibi, Sacred Heart School, Gulu High School, among other schools, for the last 5 years have been producing the best candidates for A-level and University in Northern Uganda (MOEs Ug. 2005-2010).

The advent of formal schooling in Northern Uganda in 1903 introduced a new dimension to education in this region. Prior to 1903 Uganda’s education pivoted on three salient factors namely: the family, tribe and clan. Each tribe, clan and family determined the nature of knowledge, values and beliefs transmitted to the children and their respective age. Commitment and professionalism were explicitly and implicitly shown/manifested by the character, knowledge and ability of the people especially the adults of that society for example in almost all African societies immoral and seemingly unbecoming character was seen as failed education. With the introduction of formal education and the implied formal pedagogy trained or specialized teachers, formal or gazette educational institutions with well laid out structures such as head teachers, deputy head teachers and teachers were set up for most of Northern Uganda.

After one hundred years, the schools have significantly impacted on all aspects of life of the Acholi people. Today, the forms of worship, marriage ceremonies, funerals, entertainment, economic activities and even communication are substantially different from those of the pre-1903 period. Contemporary Acholi are lost between the western and their traditional culture. The impact is greater among urban youths, who in the words of Mwambutsya Ndebesa, a Historian in Makerere University, have been uprooted but not transplanted.

DISCUSSION

A team of five Catholic Missionaries sent by Pope Gregory XVI reached Khartoum on 11th February 1848. A mission was opened and a boarding trade school for orphans and freed slaves was started (Uma-Owiny, 2010: iii). Although the aim of these missionaries was to spread the gospel throughout the Nile Valley, they were bogged down by insecurity caused by slave traders in the upper Nile valley. The first Christian Missionaries in what became Uganda were Lt. Shergold Smith and Rev. C. T. Wilson who arrived on 30th June 1877 following a 1875 letter of invitation from the king of Buganda that appeared in the London Times. They belonged to the Church Missionary Society. Later, Father Lourdel and Brother Amans of the White Fathers landed at Entebbe in southern Uganda on 17th February 1879 and began to preach the Gospel among the Baganda.

According to Rev. William Onyango, the Chaplain of Gulu University, Rwot Awic of Payira Chiefdom, one of the largest and most central of the Acholi Chieftdoms, invited the first missionaries to work in northern Uganda. The missionaries invited were serving in the neighboring Bunyoro Kingdom where they had been since the defeat and capture of Omukama Kabalega in 1899. The new king had not only been converted to Christianity but had also allowed Christian missionaries to settle in his kingdom.

If we are to believe Rev. Lloyd, one day while serving in Bunyoro, he received a deputation of five stalwarts with Omukama Andrea’s messenger in his house. The king’s messenger carried a letter written by his master to
Meanwhile on 17th February 1910, three Catholic Missionaries namely Bishop Geyer, Brother Cagol and Father Albino Colombaroli set off from Nimule and arrived at Koba among the Acholi. They had arrived at Nimule from Khartoum on 2nd February 1910 (Pinkman, 2010:16). The missionaries worked hard and by 1912, they had set up six chaplains with schools attached. These were at Patuga, Dognam, Pa-Ucen, Pa-Ali, Pa-Otto. A year later, Fr. Beduschi wrote to the Superior General in Verona, “The Chaplain-Schools have great influence: the pupils sing what they had learnt of the prayers and catechism while they worked in the fields and shared what they learned with their families; so more and more come to know Christ...Next year we want at least a thousand of them” (Pinkman, 2010: 26). The schools built by the earliest Christian missionaries all over Uganda formed the backbone of formal education.

The current system of education in Uganda has a structure of 7 years of primary education, 6 years of secondary divided into 4 years of lower secondary and 2 years of upper secondary school, and 3 to 5 years of post secondary education. By the end of second decade of the twentieth century missionary education in Northern Uganda was well under way. This was especially so in the Acholi Sub region. Two missionary bodies were engaged in opening up educational space throughout Northern Uganda, one Roman Catholic, and the other Anglican Protestantism. The education system they set in motion was within the circumstances and the limitations of the time, a model any country would have been proud of.

On the level of physical plant, things were rudimentary. Except in few cases, Classrooms were constructed with wattle and mud walls and grass thatched roofs, they were neat and good to look at. Walls were neatly pasted with whitish clay soil while floors were pasted with cow dung, which when dry gave a net green gray appearance. Every Friday of the week, the bigger girls would re-do the classrooms floors; younger boys would clean the school compounds while older boys worked on the school gardens. Everybody was kept busy. Schools were well kept. There were lawns, edges, flowers and orchards. Schools were lovely sites that attracted children and excited the local community.

Teachers were smart, well-fed, healthy and well motivated. They were dignified confident people, knowledgeable and of high moral standard. They loved teaching and were proud to be teachers. Their influence was felt well beyond the schoolyard. Whenever there were football matches between parishes, teachers were called upon to preside over the matches as referees. Teachers respected themselves and kept good families. The thought of a teacher going for sex with a school kid, a practice sadly so prevalent today, was unheard of. So the teachers were role models. As Bhekithemba (2010:1) has stated, Education, however it is defined, is the verve and nerve of every society around the globe. In Uganda education has gone through three phases; the pre-colonial education, the colonial education and the post-colonial education. Each of the phases had a distinct objective. The colonial education was meant to assimilate Africans into the European culture, prepare them for colonial administration and evangelization. The legacy of this education is that the post-colonial education is still the relics of the colonial one. This explains why cultural changes are major aspects of both the colonial and post-colonial education.

Head-teachers were efficient and competent managers. Teachers throughout the primary school system were custodians of values and disseminators of knowledge and skills. They were consultants in many spheres. In the 1940s and 1950s, during the First World War and
the Mau Mau war in Kenya, many citizens of Uganda were drafted in the colonial army and fought alongside the British far from home. These soldiers sent letters and sometimes money to help their parents back home. Most parents could not read nor write. Teachers were called upon to read letters and help collect money that serving soldiers remitted. They gladly obliged and gave of their service freely.

School kids were smart in their school uniform. They were well fed, lively, cheerful and of good manners. They were the envy of those kids unable to go to school. They enjoyed school life, took their class-work seriously and excelled at games and sports and other extra curricula activities such as crafts. There were no malnourished or stunted children in whole of Lango and Acholi areas. The land was fertile, the people hard working. Food was good and plentiful.

The missionary and the colonial school systems were well run in every way. They were closely supervised by competent and dedicated school Supervisors who visited and inspected the schools regularly. Teachers took their work seriously and received their monthly salaries on time and in full. Teachers were well motivated and were satisfied with the salary they earned. Education system functioned to the satisfaction of all the stakeholders. The education sector was full of unsung heroes.

Education in Africa began as a tool to prepare its young to take their place in the African society. The African education experience was strictly set up to prepare the young for society in the African community and not necessarily for life outside of Africa. The pre-European colonialism schooling system consisted of groups of older people teaching aspects and rituals that would help them in adulthood.

Cherry (1990) states that education in early African societies included such things as artistic performances, ceremonies, games, festivals, dancing, singing, and drawing. Boys and girls were taught separately to help prepare each sex for their adult roles. Every member of the community had a hand in contributing to the educational upbringing of the child. The high point of the African education experience was the ritual passage ceremony from childhood to adulthood. There were no academic examinations necessary to graduate in the African educational system.

When British colonialism took place it began to change the African education system. Schooling was no longer just about rituals and rites of passage, school would now mean earning an education that would allow Africans to compete with countries such as the United States and those in Europe.

Among the Acholi, indigenous education was offered by each clan to train young men and women how to become acceptable and responsible in the eyes of their own groups as revealed by Ocitti, (1973:54). The years between 1908 and 1918 however witnessed the introduction and development of formal education by the religious organizations in every parts of Uganda, Acholi sub-region inclusive. They set the syllabi, wrote the curriculum and grade examinations, set standards for accomplishment for each, built and administered schools and trained the teachers who staffed them. Christian missionaries sought to win the souls as much as possible to cultivate African minds. Their method was to educate African elite cadres who would demonstrate the advantages of Christianity and thereby attract converts.

The formal western education is very important in the lives of the Acholi people today; the poor peasants today struggle a lot and spend much of their little earnings in educating their children from the polygamous marriage/families. Adult education is also very much emphasized which majorly targets the adults to gain the basic skills and knowledge practically applied in daily life. For example, counting, reading.

There has been massive influx of poor peasants from rural homes to urban areas, as each of them runs in search of better education in towns. In Uganda today, the increased movement of people from rural to urban is majorly due to pull factors like search for better education. This has thus, caused a big problem of rural-urban population, causing shortage in services in facilities to serve the excess population in urban areas and shortages of health facilities, accommodation and above all, educational facilities. Besides, rural urban migration has robbed the rural areas of labor force that may be used in agricultural sector, leaving agriculture in the hands of the elderly, children and women who only produce to feed the family.

In pre-colonial Acholi-land, like in all other pre-literate societies, education was achieved orally and through observation and imitation. The young learned informally from their parents, extended family and grandparents. At later stages of their lives, they received instruction of a more structured and formal nature, imparted by people not necessarily related, in the context of initiation, religion or ritual.

Formal education has caused a great change in the moral aspects of Acholi people. For example in the way of eating, before the advent of formal education girls used to eat with their mothers in the kitchen and boys separate while the father would eat with the male visitors or other male elders in the extended family but today every one sits round the dining table and eat together. Still under morals, there is the issue of relating because of money. Mass media like newspapers, magazines, and movies make young people exposed to pornographic images thus leading to moral decay as the young people watch and practice what they see. For example prostitution (sex for money), rape (forceful sex against one’s will) etc. Young people also tend to dress like the people they see on television hence end up dressing indecently. Finally Children and women’s rights also make them indisciplined thus escalating moral decay.

Several changes were witnessed in the marriage
institution after the advent of formal education. These include: same sex marriage (homosexuality-between man and man; lesbianism-between woman and woman); monogamy (nuclear families) except for the Muslims who allow polygamous marriage; Short period of courtship. Unlike before the introduction of formal education where courtship would take between one to five years, today it is less than a year making it difficult to know the real character of the other partner; In relations to short period of courtship, divorce which is the breakage of marriage is the order of the day; Before the coming of formal education, virginity was highly valued but with the advent of formal education where young people want to copy the lifestyle of the Whites, valuing virginity is thought of as a conservative mindset. Some parents today only mind about the wealth of the other family before giving the hand of their children in marriage; equal rights over family property, with the emancipation of women brought about by the advent of formal education, couples have equal rights of family property; In the olden days, parents used to be key in selecting marriage partners for their children but after the advent of formal education, marriage only concerns the two and it is only their choices that matter; the quality of a marriage partner in Acholi before the advent of formal education consisted of hard work, body built, education not considered but nowadays its beauty and money that is considered.

In terms of traditional, the pre-colonial Acholi people believed in a supreme being called Jok. The shrine for Jok was known as the Abila. All sacrificed were made in the abila. The spirits of the dead were believed to appear near the abila. They were offered meat, pudding, simsim and beer. The missionaries made the Acholi to adopt the concept of Lubanga to represent God. Formerly, among the Acholi, the term Lubanga was used to mean death or evil. No huts or shrines were built for Lubanga in the villages. Sacrifices or cooking for Lubanga was done outside the village and the dung of fowls was often added to his food as another step to degrade him. New religions that the missionaries introduced in Acholi were Islam, Christianity. These religions contrast greatly with the African Traditional Religion. For example they preach monotheism which they say is the worship of one true God, discourage sacrifices and consider shrines (Abila) as evil and look at African Traditional religion as Satanic. This is because before the Missionaries introduced these new religions, Africans and Acholi in particular used to worship many things among which were: big mountains e.g. "Got Abayo" in Palabek, and "Lagoro" in Pader, trees among others; shrines "abila" in Acholi were the worshiping places before new religions came into Acholi, but with the advent of formal education the newly introduced religions worship in churches (for the Christians) and Mosques (for the Moslem); Many of the Acholi believe that, after death the spirits or souls go to live in the hand of the Creator Spirit. Both the good and the malefactors go to the same God and are received or dealt with separately. Some of the Acholi people believe that after death, their ancestors keep themselves active and are interested in the welfare of the children left behind on earth. There was also a wide belief in black magic. Lajok is generally one who generally harmed other human beings or property through evil means. A sorcerer (Layir) is believed to have the power of casting an evil eye on someone who refused to give him (or her) something he had asked for. A sorcerer might make the victim blind and it was only when the victim made a genuine public apology that the sorcerer would use his charm to restore his sight. A latal on the other hand, is someone who practiced black magic by dancing round people's houses at night for evil purposes. Using ash and placing charms in a courtyard, a latal can put everyone in the house to sleep by touching the building. He can then roam around freely. Magic can help with success in hunting, legal cases in court, economic production or gain, political favors, healing magic and purification.

As a result of formal education, many new foreign languages were introduced in Uganda e.g; English, French, Swahili and German. These foreign languages have gained the status of official language in most part of Uganda and English is used as both official and national language. As a result of the afore statement, local languages are nearing extinction-children of today are taught in foreign languages and can't speak their mother tongue fluently. Introduction of the foreign language has also led to emergence of much slang among the Acholi youth. For example "zeyi" meaning father, "sisto" meaning music and many others. However, credit should also be given to formal education because with formal education the deaf Africans started communicating using sign language; the foreign languages have also helped the Acholi language build vocabularies and names of things that were non-existent for example the words million, generator, wire etc which are not found in Lwo.

In the traditional societies of the Acholi, communication was done by beating drums (bul) in Lwo, the language of the Acholi, and use of messengers (lakwena) and through yelling (oduru).

This made it very difficult to send messages to long distances. However, because of formal education, communication systems also improved due to technological advancement. For example phones, internet and email, fax, e-trade, e-learning among others. And this enables easy flow of communication and also promotes e-learning (learning where students receive lectures and learning materials online). All in all, formal education has helped in improving communication system leading to easy flow of information.

There has also been a change in the ways of entertainment, for example dancing has changed from traditional dances like Bwola (a royal dance), Larakaraka (youth's courtship dance), Apiti (women's dance for praising men and outstanding persons on joyous
occasions) Myel Lukeme (youth dance for entertainment) to ballroom dance; squeeze etc; The traditional dances are now seen as something for the uneducated with exception of Interschool cultural galas held by some schools and institutions. There has also been a change in the type of musical instruments used. For example in the olden days the Acholi used to use Olere (flute), Bila (horn), Gara/Lacukuku (ankle bell), Lukeme (Concertina) but after the advent of formal education modern musical instruments like Piano, saxophone, guitar, violin etc are used. Many of the Acholi young people can no longer play the traditional musical instruments because at school they are only taught to use the western musical equipment. In the words of Okot (1973: 13);

Overdressed in his dark suit, he walks out of the university gate, out into the world, materially comfortable, but culturally castrated, dead. A lost victim of the school system, he cannot dance the dance or play the music of his own people.

The indigenous education in pre-colonial Acholi was carried out through playing, practical work, dance, rites and ceremony and in very rare instances did formal education take place. Such instances were for example when wanted to be a black smith, herbalist, craftsman etc. They would undergo formal training at an expert’s place of work (Ocitti, 1973: 31). Folktales/oral literatures (Ododo) were also used to educate youngsters on Virtues such as communal unity, hard work, conformity and honesty were reflected in many of the folktales. They dealt with familiar situations or recalled some ancient customs. They were based primarily on day to day happenings. Most of them bore a very close relationship to life. Through folktales, children learned a lot about human follies, faults and weaknesses. The usual time for narrating folktales was at night at the courtyard fireplace (wang oo). With the advent of formal education, the curriculum emphasizes the three Rs and other content that are not easily applicable in the day to day happenings like the informal education. Likewise, traditional Acholi burial ceremonies varied according to status in society; chiefs were buried in an elaborate ceremony with pieces of bark cloth, seeds of millet, his walking stick, and smoking pipe. After death they would take days before burial meanwhile commoners were buried instantly without personal belongings. All dead people were buried close to the house of their chief wives or mothers with their heads facing the homestead. Traditional Acholi believed in the life after death. This particular burial ceremony was meant to ensure that the dead feel the company of the living. Mourning was forbidden for those who died at advance age. Instead, people sang and danced in praise of their achievements. Funerals for departed males were held after three days of mourning and four for females. Today, burials are performed after requiem mass and in cemeteries or specifically gazetted places for burials far away from home. Funerals are held either immediately after burial or long after it depending on whether the family has resources to entertain guests. The three or four days after burial required for funeral to take place are no longer observed.

Even though formal education has helped a lot in transferring knowledge created, organized and accumulated by humanity to the next generation and has improved the life of people, it has been recognized for some time that uniform and centrally designed examinations, curricula and courses tend not to be sensitive to local circumstances, needs and historical precedents. When established, formal education systems may be exclusionary of those of different cultures and those not accustomed to the methodology of conventional science. As Meltem (2013: 001) has said, culture affects peoples’ ideas, choices and their life inevitably.

Formal education can compete and replace in classrooms many traditional stories about lands, mother earth, water sources, good behavior, respect for elders, the environment, and so on. The introduction of fables in to schools from outside can interrupt local/ indigenous knowledge. In most of the cases traditional stories were ignored and replaced by European based literacy education. Knowledge systems about the traditional institutions of customary law, land tenure systems, inheritance rights, and rituals, were guarded and preserved not through westerns systems but through stories, legends, folklore, fairy tales, trickster tales, and in some occasions, petro graphic art. This is highly compromised because of formal education. As cultural knowledge and biodiversity are closely linked, the destruction of one may cause the significant declining of the other.

The emphasis on literacy and the foreign content of education combine to seriously alienate Acholi from their traditional environment and culture. As the most lucrative jobs opened to them are those requiring their newly-acquired ability to read and write, and these jobs, apart from teaching, are located mostly in the larger towns, there is always the tendency on the part of School leavers to emigrate

Formal education also forces the people to take to European lifestyles. In dress, food-habits, music, dance, entertainment and many other aspects of social life it has become the fashion for school leavers to follow Europeans. In fact, it is the lure of these European ways which give the greatest attraction to formal education, at least for a large number of people.

Traditional culture is not only absent from the school curriculum, but concerted attempts are made to prevent students from following it. For example speaking Luo, the language of the Acholi, at school is an offence requiring several lashes.
Table 2. Showing opinions of respondents as to whether or not formal education has impacted a lot the Acholi culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available options</th>
<th>No of responses (n=)</th>
<th>Percentage responses (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>350</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Showing opinions of respondents as to whether formal education has gotten more negative or positive impacts on the Acholi culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available Options</th>
<th>No of responses (n=)</th>
<th>Percentage responses (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative impact</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>350</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Showing opinions of respondents as to whether formal education has gotten more negative or positive impacts on the Acholi culture.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents (80%) are of the opinion that formal education has impacted a lot on the Acholi Culture. Only 20% think otherwise so the fact is that formal education has impacted a lot the African Culture.

The information in Table 3 can be represented graphically as shown in Figure 1;

Table 3 and Figure 1 clearly show that majority of the respondents (88%) believe that formal education has had positive impacts on the African culture and only 12% think that the impacts were negative.

According to the respondents, in the field of teaching in Acholi culture, children were taught right from childhood. This was done at the fire place (wang oo), children were told riddles, proverbs (caroo-lok). Boys were taught by the fathers, uncles things like digging, looking after cattle. The girls were taught by the elderly women feminine roles like cooking, fetching water, fetching firewood and how to look after themselves. With the coming of formal education, the mode of teaching has totally changed. For example learning now takes place in designated areas called schools, learners wear uniform, and foreign languages are used for instruction among many other changes.

Majority of the respondents reported that the major impact of formal education on African Culture is moral degradation. Many respondents feel that the dressing code of people nowadays if compared with the one before the advent of formal education, there is a big deal of deviation. For instance, wearing miniskirts, tops that exposes the breasts, translucent dresses among others. Others also say after the advent of formal education, some Africans have adopted undesirable systems of life like night discos, watching pornographic movies, all these promote immoral acts like prostitution, rape, incest among others.

Some written responses also state that in the African Traditional Society, Acholi in particular, women were taken as property of men without any rights. They could be beaten up by their husbands; they had no voice and could not own property. Those who argue for formal education say it has improved the status of women in
society through women emancipation.

Conclusion

Formal education in Northern Uganda owes its existence to the Christian Missionaries especially the Verona Fathers whose founder Daniel Comboni said;

“The only thing that matters to me – and this has been the only true passion of my entire life, and will always be until my death, and nothing will make me ashamed of it is that Africa should hear the gospel, and I would like to have a hundred tongues and a hundred hearts to speak for Africa” (Ward 1998: 6).

Evangelization in northern Uganda, like elsewhere in Africa went hand in hand with formal education and this was how the missionaries prepared the hundred tongues and hundred hearts to speak for Africa that Bishop Daniel Comboni envisioned. After one hundred years of formal education in Acholi-land, there are visible effects on the culture of the people. Although there are cases of cultural erosion, these effects have largely been positive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is strong need for the civil society organizations and the church to build the capacity of the community level structures in terms of their technical knowledge about approaches to sensitize the local communities on the adverse effects of some foreign practices that emanated from the advent of formal education like moral decay as exhibited by the dive towards homosexuality, pornography, drug abuse and pre-marital sex among others. The government should increase support and funding to institutions such as the churches to help devise an appropriate approach to help inspire the members of the community comprehend the good effects of formal education and reconcile it with some of the desirable aspects in the African traditions.

REFERENCES