

The Paradox of Religious Education in Secondary School Curriculum: An Exploratory Study in Mara Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: The present study attempted to investigate on the paradox of Religious Education in Mara Region through qualitative approach. Twelve schools composed the population and purposive sampling came up with 17 students and 4 teachers from three schools to release information through Focus Group Discussion and Interview Schedule. Expert judgment established validity of research instruments. To maintain ethical considerations, anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of respondents were maximized during data collection. The study established that Divinity Subject has peculiar features which are not found in other academic subjects. Failure to integrate Religious Education is influenced by scarcity of teachers, lack of textbooks and non-availability of syllabus to guide the teaching and learning of the subject. Excluding Divinity in selection for tertiary education leads students and teachers to disregard the subject regardless of its benefits. Researchers recommend that Secondary Schools in Mara Region should integrate Religious Education by making it compulsory. Availability of teachers for CRE and good supply of textbooks and syllabus must be ensured in order to enhance proper learning. Divinity should be considered in selection for tertiary education in order to encourage teachers and students to teach and learn the subject. Finally, the government should make efforts to prepare experts to teach Christian Religious Education.

Keywords: Paradox, Christian Religious Education, Divinity, Bible Knowledge, Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

Religious Education is a possible solution to the problem of moral decays among youths of contemporary world. As it has been documented by existing literature, “modern time education has lost its moral character” [1] and with a huge expansion of education systems, there is a marked decline in the characters and moral values [2]. In response to this problem, a range of writers expect education systems to come up with strategies to rescue the situation. Chukwu [3], for instance, argues that education has a vital role for character building and that every education system needs to integrate in its curriculum specific studies aiming at inculcating moral values in the mind of the learners. S. Jain and K. Jain [2] contend that the only way to arrest this decline is by integrating value-orientation in school curriculum and increasing ethical values and moral development strategies. Jarrar and Althubetat [4] and Ogwara, Ondima, Nyamwange and Nyaundi [5] support this view by holding that education is strongly needed to make further efforts to bring the concepts of morals into practice.

With respect to the issue of moral decays in the society, a range of writers have particularly, pinpointed religious education as the best possible way

to inculcate morals, values and positive attitudes in school systems. Ilechukwu and Ugwuozor [6], for instance, argue: “Religious Education ... helps to streamline the thought, character, moral and aspiration of the students. It also offers hope for a future integrated, disciplined, harmonious and progressive society.” Anangisye [7] adds, “Ethics education [*which is part of religion*] is an integral part of the teaching enterprise.” In supporting this claim, scholars in religious studies “regard religion ... as a means toward ultimate transformation ... *having* to do with reaching far and deep into the most significant wellsprings of our lives” [8].

In Tanzanian Secondary Schools, Religious Education is divided into Christian Religious Education and Islamic Studies. Christian Religious Education is further divided into two cycles. The first cycle, commonly known as Bible Knowledge with four years duration, prepares students for Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE), while the second cycle, commonly known as Divinity, lasts for two years and leads to Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (ACSEE). The second cycle is a bridge between secondary and tertiary education. One of objectives in Secondary School curriculum in Tanzania is to inculcate ethic, personal integrity, human

rights, moral values and civic responsibilities in the youths [9]. Apart from Religious Education, there is no any other specific subject that can meet this objective in a more meaningful sense. Thus, Christian Religious Education becomes the best possible means for instilling morals and values in the mind of Secondary School students. Yet the subject has not been properly integrated in the school curriculum in the sense that it is optional and very few students opt to take it. Further, the government does not train teachers for CRE, something which may bring questions regarding the quality of teaching and learning Bible knowledge and Divinity.

Divinity subject “has always been taught by Church Ministers from various denominations ... and its syllabus has been written by religious groups themselves. Therefore it differs from other academic syllabi used in schools” [10]. This suggests an existing paradox in the teaching and learning of CRE in Tanzanian Secondary Schools. Paradoxical nature of Christian Religious education in Mara Region, particularly, can be seen in the fact that out of 16,763 Certificate of Secondary Education Examination candidates in the year 2013, only 1,117 (6.7%) sat for Bible Knowledge subject. Out of 173 Secondary Schools in the Region, only 25 (14.5%) had candidates for Bible Knowledge subject. Particularly, 17 (68%) out of 25 schools with Bible Knowledge candidates were private while public schools were only 8 (32%). Further, out of 2,443 registered students for CSEE in the 25 schools, only 1,117 (45.7%) sat for Bible knowledge subject (CSEE Results, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

While Divinity is intended to inculcate moral values in the mind of Advanced Secondary School students in Tanzania, integration of the subject in school curriculum is paradoxical in nature. This is revealed by the fact that only 4% of 2014 ACSEE candidates sat for Divinity subject, and only one of 12 schools in the region taught the subject regularly while the other two schools allowed interested students to take the subject privately and sit for ACSEE. Besides, the subject is not considered in selection for higher education. This scenario raised curiosity among the researchers to investigate on the Paradox in order to come up with a clear picture as to why selected schools teach Divinity subject and why students opt to take it even though the results have no bearing in their tertiary education.

Research Questions

The present study intended to find out answers to four research questions namely:

1. What is the perceived value of Divinity subject in Secondary School Curriculum?
2. What are modalities of teaching and learning of Divinity subject?

3. What is the view of students and teachers on inclusion or exclusion of Religious Education in school curriculum?
4. What is the feeling of students and teachers about excluding the subject Divinity from selection in tertiary education?

RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

In this section, literature and studies are consulted in journals and books to throw more light on the paradox of moral education in Secondary School curriculum and on the place of Religious Education in moral values inculcation.

The Concept of Christian Religious Education

Christian Religious Education is an academic subject taught at Secondary Schools in different countries of Africa. In Nigerian, it is viewed as a subject that helps to streamline students' thought, character, moral and aspiration. It fosters morals among students, teaching them to live in the world guided by moral ideas of loyalty to God, charity and justice to their fellow human beings. It inculcates in students positive attitudes and moral values such as humility, respect, love, kindness and spirit of forgiveness [6]. In Kenya, CRE is regarded as a core subject that shapes the Secondary School youths into ideal personalities in the society. It is a subject that goes beyond the classroom, leaning more on character formation rather than knowledge acquisition. The main objectives of CRE education in Kenya, among others, is to enable learners to gain insight into the unfolding of God's self revelation to humankind and use the acquired social, spiritual and moral insights to think critically and to make appropriate moral decisions in a rapid changing society [11].

According to Nyaundi [12], the meaning of religion is complex in nature. The term is translated from about four different Greek words in the Holy Bible, namely *Theossebeia*- meaning reverence for God as used in 1Timothy 2:10, *Eusebeia*- meaning awe or piety as used in 1 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:5, *Threskeia*- meaning worship as used in Acts 26:5; James 1:26, and James 1:27, and *Deisidaimonia*-meaning fear of the gods as used in Acts 25:19. To crown it up, he quotes William James [1842-1910] who considers religion to be “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine” [p. 33].

Education, on the other hand is a process of bringing out a person from the state of ignorance to knowledge, from the dominion of darkness to light, or a process of change in knowledge, skills, and attitude that leads to change of behaviour. With this background, we can come up with concrete definition of CRE as a social study that is used to shape human beings to fear God

and live harmoniously with other people in the society. According to Nyaundi [12], religion plays a pivotal function in the life experience of people in the society. "It is an important area of study because it provides meaning to life and imparts a cosmic view which gives the individual a basis for making vital decisions of life. Religion impacts the way the individual perceives reality, the society and the individual's role in the structure" [12].

The Place of Moral Aspect in School Curriculum

Importance of Religious Education is indicated by the fact that it inculcates moral aspects in the mind of the learners, preparing them to be good citizens in the society. According to Raley and Preyer [13], religious education is the hope of the world through which people can hope to attain freedom, happiness and peace. Schools are important context for moral development [14].

Existing literature has thrown light on the importance of moral aspect in school curriculum. Winch and Gingel [15] consider moral education to be indispensable element in the process of life preparation. They go further arguing [p. 79] "moral education concerns the relationship between right and wrong actions and the abilities of children to distinguish the two and to engage in the former." This implies that moral education is a tool that can be used by schools to identify the right and wrong and choose to do the right things in their lives. Ellen Gould White, a prominent writer in the 19th century came up with the concept of holistic education that emphasises on three important dimensions of true education: physical, mental and spiritual. According to her, true education prepares learners in a triangular perspective:

True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come [16, p.13].

Aristotle, one of profound philosophers also explained the importance of spiritual aspect in school curriculum. He particularly argued that the purpose of education and the role of the teacher in the society are to prepare virtuous men, men who are in harmony in body, mind and spirit [17]. Aristotle looks at teachers as imparters and developers of moral principles to the learners in any given society. He recommends teachers to possess such qualities as honesty, fairness, courage, self-control and compassion for them to be able to impart moral and spiritual aspects in the mind of the

learners in a more practical way [18]. Aristotle's moral thought further established a model of moral education which is still widely popular. He recommended that children should be trained in morally appropriate modes of conduct. This model of moral education is largely compatible with biblical verse which states that "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will never depart from it" [19]. Further, a teacher in the society is regarded by Aristotle as a facilitator and enhancer of character and intellectual growth while character education, aimed at the inculcation of specific virtues, depends heavily on identification and description of exemplars.

In addition, Aristotle regards teachers as promoters of moral and political leaders in the society. This can be seen in what he held: "the upbringing and training of the young in society should involve both moral and political education" [20]. He further held that a teacher has a responsibility to teach the virtues and examples of both being good and doing good [20]. This assertion also implies inclusion of spiritual aspect in school curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Section was organized into the following parts: research design, population and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, data gathering procedures, statistical treatment of data, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The present study employed qualitative research methodology. Exploratory research design was used to investigate on the Religious Education Paradox in schools under investigation. Qualitative research provides deep and detailed information by using open-ended questions which are detailed and comprehensive [21, 22]. In qualitative approach, researchers are able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively [23]. According to Merriam [24], "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of it or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them." In this study the researcher visited selected students and teachers in Mara Region to investigate on Religious Education Paradox.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population of this study was twelve secondary schools in Mara Region with Advanced Level of Secondary Education. Purposive sampling technique was employed to establish a sample of three schools. According to Koul [21], in purposive sampling, a sample is selected at the discretion of the researcher who exercises his own judgment based on experience for including a given subject in the sample. Mugenda and Mugenda [23] have it that purposive sampling is a procedure that allows a researcher to use cases that have

the required information with respect to his or her objectives. Particularly, the researcher selected three schools namely Ikizu Secondary School, Musoma Secondary School and Songe Girls Secondary School that teach Divinity subject or allow students to study it privately and sit for ACSEE. A total number of 17 students and 4 teachers were approached to release information through Focus Group Discussion and Interview Schedule regarding the Religious Education Paradox in Mara Region.

Research Instruments

Three research instruments were used for data collection. These are Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Interview Schedule (IS) and Document Analysis (DA):

1. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** A round table FGD with students in two schools where Divinity is taught or students are allowed to study the subject privately was conducted in order to establish views on the REP. A standardized discussion guide was prepared by the researcher and approved by research expert.
2. **Interview Schedules (IS):** This was done with four teachers (One CRE teacher and three Academic Masters) to find out why do students take the subject regardless of its results not being considered for promoting students for tertiary education.
3. **Document Analysis (DA):** A number of documents, including Divinity Syllabus and Books were used to throw more light on the REP in data analysis and interpretation.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Validity means accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences reached based on instruments used to obtain data and reliability is a measure of the degree to which research instruments yield consistent results [23]. Two methods were used to establish validity and reliability of research instruments. First, expert judgment was used in that an experienced professor of research and statistics at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton looked into research instruments against research questions and commented where necessary adjustments were to be done. Corrections were made accordingly before actual data collection. Triangulation was used to establish reliability of research instruments.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before actual data collection, the researcher visited Mara Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) with a letter seeking for permission to collect data from selected Secondary Schools in Mara Region. Upon receiving the permission, the researcher moved from one school to another to administer data collection procedures for the period of one week. The researcher reported to the School Heads' Office and was given

permission to interview teachers and conduct FGD with students. All respondents were willing to give required information and data gathering procedures went on successfully.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data from interview schedules, Focus Group Discussion and Documents was analyzed and arranged using thematic approach. According to Mugenda and Mugenda [23], data collection and analysis in qualitative research go hand in hand and are done simultaneously.

Ethical Considerations

Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy were maximized during data collection. Respondents did not mention their names and the researcher used the data confidentially and only for the intended purpose. Students and teachers were labelled with numbers for easy recording and anonymity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study intended to find out answers to four research questions regarding the value of Divinity subject in Secondary School Curriculum, the modalities of teaching and learning of Divinity subject, the view of students and teachers on inclusion or exclusion of Religious Education in school curriculum and the feeling of students and teachers about excluding the subject Divinity from selection in tertiary education. Using qualitative approach, this chapter presents the findings, analysis and interpretation of data.

What is the perceived value of Divinity subject in Secondary School Curriculum?

In order to determine the value of Divinity subject in Secondary School curriculum, the researcher used various strategies including Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students and Interview Schedules with teachers. Respondents revealed that Divinity is very important subject in inculcating moral values to the learners. They also indicated that the subject has some peculiar features that other subjects do not possess. Particularly, the subject transmits moral standards, reduces crimes and prepares students to be obedient and to live peacefully with fellow students and other members in the society. Student No. 8 in School A, for instance said, "Religious Education helps us to acquire moral standards, giving us practical knowledge that helps us to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong in day-to-day life." In addition, Student No. 7 added: "Through Divinity subject, morals are implanted in the minds of the learners so that we become mature and responsible citizens before God and fellow human beings. So this subject is practical and valuable in secondary school curriculum". These observations are in harmony with one of objectives in secondary school curriculum in Tanzania, which is to inculcate ethic, personal integrity, human rights, moral

values and civic responsibilities in the youths [9]. This implies that the subject is valuable and can be used as instrument to fulfil this particular objective.

In addition, Student No.3 in school “B” added: “Divinity subject reduces crimes in the society and helps students to regulate themselves into acceptable standards in the society” while Student No. 2 in School “B” contended that “God is love. Divinity subject teaches students to know God. Anyone who knows God lives peacefully with fellow human beings. So this subject helps us to live acceptable and peaceful life in the society.” This observation is in harmony with Harish [25] who contends that “Education is just like a torch that enlightens the way of human beings by not only imparting knowledge in the relevant field but also inculcating moral values, spiritual attitude, and the righteousness in character.”

In response to this question, the Teacher 1 also gave some observations on the importance of Divinity subject. According to him, practical lessons are derived from the bible stories and contextualized to solve practical problems in the contemporary society which is full of immoral behaviours. This is what he said: “We teach particular themes that make students morally upright. In Divinity II, for instance, we teach about the birth of Jesus where Mary, the mother, was found virgin when Joseph came to propose her. This encourages girls to remain faithful until marriage.” In addition, the teacher indicated that: “Boys are also encouraged to avoid pre-marital relationships with girls. As a result, our students live like brothers and sisters and in that way avoid sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS.” The teacher gave another example in Divinity I saying, “In Divinity I, we teach about the story of David and Uriah. In this story we discuss detrimental results that came to King David and his house as a result of Killing Uriah and taking his wife. This act opened flood gate of evils in the house of David due to his disobedience to God. This teaches students to be obedient to God and to authorities in order to avoid evil experiences in their lives. The teacher added, “One of the themes in Epistles is about obedience. So in this way students are prepared to be obedient and disciplined members of the society.”

In order to explore more on the value of Divinity subject, the researcher was also interested to see whether Divinity subject makes any difference in terms of student behaviour as observed by teachers. Teacher 4 revealed that “students in this school are well disciplined as compared to students in surrounding schools where Religious Education is not taught. Our students live like brothers and sisters. This must be a result of values taught in religious education.” This is in harmony with observations of Teacher 2 who revealed that “students who take Divinity subject ... are well disciplined as compared to the rest of students. As I said before, most of Divinity candidates had studies Bible

Knowledge. So it seems like Religious Education plays a big role in their good behaviour.” Teacher 3 also indicated that “most of those taking Divinity have good behaviour as compared to the other students.” This implies that Divinity subject has power to shape the behaviour of students and can be used to improve the behaviour of students in secondary schools.

What are modalities of teaching and learning of Divinity subject?

In response to this research question, the views of teachers and students were used to establish modalities used in teaching and learning of Divinity subject in schools under investigation. It was indicated that the teaching and learning of Divinity subject in the schools that had trained teachers for Religious Education was excellent. This was revealed by Student No. 8 in school “A” who explained that “the learning of Divinity is like the learning of any other academic subject. First, the subject appears in School general time table. Secondly the subject has trained teachers who really help us to have a deeper understanding of biblical themes.” The only problem in this school was that the teachers of Divinity were busy with other religious activities such as worship in such a way that they did not have sufficient time to cater for the needs of students. This was indicated by Student No. 2 in the same school who stated: “Our Divinity teacher is also a chaplain in this school. Time is not sufficient for him to cater for our needs in this subject because sometime he is occupied with worship programs.”

Interview with Teacher 3 revealed that there is no clear policy on the teaching and learning of Religious Education: “Our school organizes logistics but we don’t have clear policy on how Divinity should be taught. Interested students find volunteer teachers. And since we have very few interested students, the school cannot invest in recruiting teachers to teach this subject.” The teacher further indicated that the school once had a religious teacher who taught Divinity, but regarding his qualifications, he said, “I am not sure because really there was no formal follow up, and this is a volunteer work.” This suggests that teachers of Divinity can be obtained on volunteer basis.

In some schools the learning of Divinity was quit challenging. Student No. 5 in School “C” for instance, revealed that “one student who sat for Divinity National Examination in the previous year “used free periods to read divinity topics and then sat for Form Six National Examination.” Student No. 6 in the same school further revealed that “we did private studies and we did not have any assistance from teachers” while Student No. 5 contended that “we studied individually, and sometimes when we met as religious group for worship we discussed some religious lessons.” Student No. 6 also revealed that “there was no syllabus to guide us to study Divinity” and “there was no Divinity teacher

to help us learn this subject, so it was like we are wasting our time.” As a result, only 6 out of 218 students in this particular school were interested in Divinity subject when they joined the school. The students took the subject privately and even did initial stage of National Examination registration. But when final stage of registration was conducted, all the six students dropped the subject. These imply that the teaching and learning of Divinity subject in this school was done in such a way that did not encourage students to proceed with the subject. Teacher 1 revealed that schools in Mara Region “do not have trained teachers to teach Divinity. ... It is only religious universities that prepare experts to teach divinity. The few products from these universities cannot suffice the needs in all schools in the country.” This was supported by students in school “B” and “C” where Divinity was not properly taught and learned.

Ineffectiveness of Religious Education is also indicated by the fact that schools do not have important documents to guide the teaching and learning of the subject. This was shown by Teacher 3 that “Students were discouraged because no documents for them to use such as past papers.” Student No. 6 in School “C” also added: “There was no syllabus to guide us to study Divinity.” Teacher 1 also explained that “Divinity textbooks are in scarce. It is very difficult to find them in book stores.” These lead to poor preparation for National Examination, reduces the quality of teaching and learning and discourage students to take Divinity as indicated by Student No. 5 in School “C:” “We decided to study the subject privately and even did initial stage of National Examination registration ... but when final stage of registration was conducted we withdrew because our preparation was not satisfactory.”

Another feature that indicates ineffectiveness of Religious Education is that Divinity is optional and there is missing link between Ordinary Level and Advanced Level of Secondary Education. “*Not all* of those who opt for Divinity subject have background of Bible Knowledge at Ordinary Level. *But most* of them came from Secondary Schools where Bible Knowledge is taught” (Teacher 2). Teacher 3 added that foundation in Ordinary Level plays a big deal in determining those who will take CRE at an advanced level of Secondary Education: “In my experience, those who did Bible Knowledge in Ordinary Level are strongly motivated to continue with Divinity at Advanced Level.” This implies that students may opt to take it or not to take it at any level. As a result, some students took Bible Knowledge at Ordinary Level but when they came to Advanced Level they did not find the subject at their schools. On the other hand, some students did not take Bible Knowledge at Ordinary Level, but when they joined Advanced Level they took the subject.

According to Henson [26], learning occurs in steps, each part building on simpler content learned earlier. It is characterized with repetition of some content at different levels of learning so that learners will develop understandings that were beyond their capacity when simpler elements of the topic were introduced. This suggests lack of continuity, an alarming concern in curriculum supervision in Mara region. Hatuina [27] uses the concept of Spiral Curriculum and comes up with a thorough description on continuity aspect in school curriculum. She contends that themes should be taught repeatedly throughout the curriculum but with deepening layers of complexity. After a mastery of initial topic, the learners spiral upward as the new knowledge is introduced in the next lesson enabling them to reinforce what had been learned in the past. In the end, a rich, breadth and depth of knowledge is achieved. In structuring a course, she argues, certain prerequisite knowledge and skills must be first mastered, an experience which provides linkage between each lesson as the learners spiral upwards in the learning experiences. In a simple term we can say that spiral curriculum is one which extends various experiences, themes and or topics of a given subject matter from lower levels to higher levels of education. In this context, there is a necessity for those who take Divinity subject to have Bible Knowledge background at Ordinary Level.

Teacher 1 particularly noted that “there is no continuity because some Advanced Level students do not possess religious education background. And most of these perform very poorly at National Examinations.” This was supported by student No. 5 in School “C:” “I did not do Bible knowledge in Ordinary Level, but when I came here, I found one student who was doing Divinity ... I decided to join him.” Student No. 6 in the same school explained: “I did Bible Knowledge in Ordinary Level, but when I came here I ... was disappointed by lack of teachers for Divinity.” When Teacher 1 was asked to give experience of Advanced Level students with no religious education background, this is what he said: “Divinity and Bible Knowledge are compulsory in our school.” He also explained that students with no background “register for national examination but they don’t make any effort to study. As the result, they perform very poorly.”

What is the view of students and teachers on inclusion or exclusion of Religious Education in school curriculum?

The paradox under investigation raised a curiosity to find out about inclusion or exclusion of Religious Education in school curriculum. Documents and observation from respondents indicated that the subject is excluded in the sense that not all schools teach it and even in schools where it is taught not all students take it. They also expressed their opinion that

there is a serious need to incorporate it in school curriculum.

Data from Divinity syllabus, for instance, indicated that the place of Religious Education in School curriculum is highly limited. This is revealed by the fact that MOEVT does not regard it like other academic subjects, and is further evidenced by modalities of teaching and syllabus preparation. Divinity is regarded as religious but not academic subject. This is because of the following statement in the Syllabus: “*This syllabus... differs from other academic syllabi used in schools*”[10]. This discrimination leads us to an interpretation that Christian Religious Education is in a way excluded from school curriculum.

Interview Schedule and Focus Group Discussion with teachers and students also indicated that the place of Religious Education in School curriculum is limited. Teacher 3 for instance, noted that Religious Education “is excluded and the time has come now when Divinity needs to be included as it is not formerly included now; even NECTA does not recognize it.” When students were asked to give their views, only one out of 17 in FGD suggested that “This subject should be optional. Those who want it let them take it. And those who do not want it let them do as they wish” (Student No. 4 in School “A”). The student gave the reason that “some of us did not take religious courses in Ordinary Secondary School. It becomes quite challenging for one to start learning this subject at Advanced Level of secondary education”(Ibid). This also touches the issue of lack of continuity. Majority of students, however, suggested otherwise. Student No. 7 in the same school, for instance suggested that, “Divinity should be part of Secondary School curriculum” while Student No. 8 said, “I think this subject needs to be compulsory in Secondary Schools. This is due to the reason that the subject touches issues in our daily lives in a practical sense.” Teacher 1 added, “To rise up a nation that does not know God is risk. ... Schools need to teach religious studies in order to provide balanced education.” With regard to this, White [16] describes true education as “the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.” This implies that Divinity needs to be included in school curriculum in order to produce balanced products with physical, mental and spiritual powers.

Exclusion of CRE from school curriculum can also be seen in the fact that, unlike other subjects, qualification of those who teach Divinity is not well monitored. The fact that the subject is taught by religious ministers from various denominations suggests that there is no criteria for CRE teachers. It is

true that these ministers might be experts in the area of religion or theology but they may not necessarily have teaching skills and competence to teach the subjects. On top of that, the number of religious ministers in the country is not satisfactory to suit the needs of schools. “The government, on the other hand, does not prepare teachers for religious education. It is only religious universities that prepare experts to teach divinity. The few products from these universities cannot suffice the needs in all schools in the country” (Teacher 3). As a result, there is serious scarcity of CRE teachers in Secondary Schools. Teacher 2 confirmed this by saying, “We used to have a teacher who taught this subject but this teacher has been transferred to another school. So we don’t have a teacher for this subject.” The teacher added: “As you know, this is a public school, and the government does not locate religious teachers. ... So it is difficult to find someone to replace.” Finally, Teacher 2 concluded that due to this uncertainty of teachers, “there is no good future for Divinity at our schools.” This scenario raised curiosity for the researcher to know the teaching qualification of this particular teacher and it was realized that the teacher “was primarily employed to teach other subjects, particularly, Chemistry and Biology. But when he joined this school, he submitted his Bachelor of Theology certificate and showed interest to teach Divinity subject, and we allowed him to do so.”

What is the feeling of students and teachers about excluding the subject Divinity from selection in tertiary education?

Performance of Divinity subject is currently not considered for selection of students to join tertiary education. This implies that however much students devote their time and effort to study the subject; their efforts do not contribute anything to selection for further education. The researcher intended to explore the feelings of students and teachers in schools under investigation. In response to this question, students had mixed feelings. While one student did not care about Divinity not being included, most of students in the FGD were highly discouraged by the exclusion. Student No. 3 in School “C”, for instance, said, “I am happy because students are free to do or not to do it.” She also added: “Well, May be because few people take Divinity that is why it is not considered.” According to this student, NACTE might have not considered results of Divinity for tertiary education selection because the number of those students taking this subject is insignificant. The rest of students in FGD showed great concern about the exclusion of the subject for selection. Responses indicate that students were highly disappointed by the trend. Student No. 4 in School “A” for instance, gave the following views with deep emotions: “I did not register myself to write national examination at this subject ... because this subject is useless. Even if I score a good grade it will not help and it will not contribute to my selection into higher

education.” The student also expressed empathy to those students who registered for the forthcoming National Examination: “I feel empathy ... because is like they are wasting their time but I have nothing to do to help them.” This implies that excluding the subject disappoints students and discourages them to study the subject and sit for National Examination.

Another student explained that “Failure to include Divinity in the selection really discourages us. As a result, we spend less effort in the learning of this subject as compared to other academic subjects.” This feeling denotes that students do not take Divinity subject seriously as compared to the rest of subjects in their respective schools. This response was in harmony with what Teacher 1 said: “These students ... don’t make any effort to study. As the result, they perform very poorly.” This feeling also indicates that poor performance in Divinity subject is highly contributed by failure to include it in selection for tertiary education.

Student No. 5 in School “A” also expressed similar feelings that: “Exclusion discourages students to take this subject seriously. Students are not serious with this subject and in this case they miss important things that would have prepared them to be more effective leaders in the near future.” Student No. 1 in School “C” added, “When I heard that it is excluded, I felt very bad because this is a tough subject that needs serious study. Therefore, this made me very discouraged, and I think that is why I did not register for national examination.” This finding suggests that students understand the importance of Divinity subject. They also consider it to be tough but due to its importance, they are willing to take it but again they are discouraged by failure to consider it for tertiary education selection. It was also felt that due to failure to consider Divinity for selection, the subject should not be taught. This was indicated by Student No. 6 in the same school: “... No need for Divinity to be taught because students waste their time. Or else the government should ... consider it for selection in higher education. In fact many students ignore this subject because it is not considered.” Student No. 2 added: “When I came to realize that it is not considered, I was disappointed and decided to quit.” This might be the reason as to why government does not take trouble to ensure the teaching of Divinity in public schools as expressed by Teacher 2:

We used to have a teacher who taught this subject but this teacher has been transferred to another school. So we don’t have a teacher for this subject. As you know, this is a public school, and the government does not locate religious teachers in our schools. So it is difficult to find someone to replace. And this indicates that there is no good future for Divinity subject at our school.

Another feeling of Teacher 1 was that, disregarding Divinity for selection lowers the standards of the subject. He was highly disappointed and indicated the impact of not considering Divinity for selection. Teacher 4 added: “This lowers the standard and makes students not serious in religious education. Students do not use much effort in studying this subject.” Teacher 1 also added, “That is why many schools have dropped the subject. Last year I went for Mock examination marking and I came to realize that only three schools in region the taught Divinity.”

Teachers in all three schools expressed similar negative feelings toward Divinity subject not being considered for selection. Teacher 4, for instance, said: “Exclusion is unfair. It makes students to have negative attitude toward religious education. ... As a result, students spend less effort in studying Divinity as compared to other subjects.” The Teacher added: “It is quit unfair to exclude it. Rather, the subject needs to be regarded as Principal Subject.”

The view of Teacher 2 on failure to include Divinity subject for selection is also worth noting:

I feel very much disappointed because Divinity is very important like any other academic subject. I really sympathize with Divinity students who spend much effort to study divinity, yet their results are not recognized. I would advise that the Ministry of Education should make Divinity subject compulsory in all schools so that our students will acquire moral values that prepare them to be good citizens in our country. Secondly, the government should make efforts to prepare experts to teach religious education in all secondary schools.

These feelings suggest that Divinity is considered to be like any other subject and teachers are not happy with failure to include it for selection. The feelings also suggest that NECTA does not treat students fairly by offering the subject without recruiting experts to teach it. Teacher 3 also indicated disappointment and gave suggestions: “This demoralise both the teachers and students of Divinity. I think the government needs to look for solution to this problem. These feelings propose great need of to include Divinity in school curriculum.

To windup, students and teachers gave different opinions on what can be done to improve the teaching and learning of Divinity in Secondary Schools. These included the following: The government needs to prepare trained teachers for Divinity. As religious education teachers are currently prepared in Religious Universities, there is a need for Public Universities to offer religion as one of teaching subjects for teachers in training. Secondly, National Examination Council of

Tanzania should consider Divinity as other academic subjects and particularly, Divinity subject should be part of secondary school curriculum. Thirdly, teachers of Divinity should be free from other responsibilities in order for them do dedicate sufficient time to teach students. Lastly, there is need for the Ministry of Education to make religious education compulsory in all schools.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Value of CRE

Divinity Subject has some peculiar features that other academic subjects in Secondary Schools do not possess. It inculcates moral values and prepares students to live peacefully with fellow students and other members in the society. It makes them mature and responsible citizens before God and fellow human beings. It reduces crimes and helps students to regulate themselves into acceptable standards in the society. Therefore, it can be used as an instrument to inculcate ethic, personal integrity, human rights, moral values and civic responsibilities in the youths. Students who take Divinity are well disciplined as compared to their counterparts in other schools where Religious Education is not taught.

Modalities of Teaching and Learning of Divinity Subject

The teaching and learning of Divinity subject differs from one school to another. In schools with Religious Education teachers it is treated like any other academic subject. It appears in School general time table and teachers are committed to help learners to have a deeper understanding of biblical themes in the classroom settings. The only challenge in these schools is that teachers of Divinity are sometimes busy with other religious activities such as worship in such a way that they do not have sufficient time to cater for the academic needs of students.

In schools without Religious Education teachers the teaching and learning of Divinity is unsatisfactory and the subject is optional. There is a serious scarcity of syllabus and textbooks to guide students in the learning process. Interested students are responsible to find volunteer teachers but there is no follow up on the qualifications of those who volunteer to teach. The subject is therefore taught by religious leaders without consideration of their teaching qualification. In some schools, students study individually using free periods to discuss. As a result, students are demoralized due to these shortcomings. They are also discouraged to take this subject. Due to these shortcomings, there is no good future for Divinity subject in Secondary Schools.

There is a missing link between Ordinary Level and Advanced Level of Secondary Education. Students may opt to take Religious Education at any

level. As a result, some students take Bible Knowledge at Ordinary Level but when they came to Advanced Level they do not find the subject in the newly joined schools. This suggests lack of continuity, an alarming aspect in curriculum supervision. As a result, students without religious education background perform very poorly at national examinations in the advanced level.

The View of Respondents on Inclusion or Exclusion of CRE

Divinity subject is excluded in school curriculum in the sense that not all schools teach it and even in schools where it is taught not all students take it. The place of Religious Education in School curriculum is therefore limited. It is not regarded like other subjects or in other words it is religious but not academic subject. Students and teachers felt that Divinity should be part of secondary school curriculum. It should be compulsory because it touches important issues in a practical sense. They also noted that to rise up a nation that does not know God is risk and therefore schools need to teach religious studies in order to provide well natured people in the society. The government should make efforts to prepare experts to teach religious education in all secondary schools.

Feeling about Excluding CRE from Selection in Tertiary Education

Students and teachers felt that poor performance in Divinity subject is contributed by failure to consider it in selection for tertiary education. This seems to be a great challenge that needs immediate attention. Students showed special concern about exclusion of the subject for selection. They were highly disappointed by this trend to the extent of considering this subject useless regardless of its important themes. Excluding the subject disappoints students and discourages them to study it. In those schools where the subject is compulsory, students use less effort in the learning of this subject as compared to other academic subjects. This causes them to miss important concepts that would have prepared them to perform better and to be more useful members in the society.

Teachers felt that there is no need for Divinity to be taught in secondary schools unless the government considers it in selection for tertiary education. They felt that disregarding Divinity for selection lowers its standards and makes it useless in the eyes of the learners. They also felt sympathy with students who spend much effort to study Divinity, yet their results are not considered. They suggested that the Ministry of Education should make Divinity subject compulsory in all schools and consider it for selection so that students will acquire moral values and at the same time be promoted for tertiary institutions for higher learning.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings, this study comes up with four conclusions in regard to observed Religious Education paradox in Secondary School Curriculum:

1. Divinity Subject has some peculiar features that are not found in other academic subjects in Secondary School curriculum.
2. Failure to integrate Religious Education in secondary school curriculum is influenced by scarcity of teachers, lack of textbooks and unavailability of syllabus to guide the teaching and learning of Divinity.
3. Failure to consider Divinity subject in selection for tertiary education causes poor performance, leads students and teachers to disregard the subject and makes students not interested in the subject regardless of its other benefits.
4. Lack of Bible Knowledge background in Ordinary Level leads Advanced Level students to perform poorly in Divinity National Examinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on aforementioned conclusions, the researcher gives the following recommendations in order to tackle the existing Religious Education Paradox:

1. Secondary Schools in Mara Region should integrate Religious Education in school curriculum by teaching Divinity subject in order to inculcate moral values and prepare students to live peacefully with fellow students and other members in the society, making them mature and responsible citizens. Divinity subject should be part of secondary school curriculum. It should be compulsory because it touches important issues in a practical sense.
2. Secondary Schools in Mara Region should strive to ensure availability of teachers for Christian Religious Education and good supply of textbooks and syllabus in order to enhance the teaching and learning of Divinity subject and in that way improve students' academic performance.
3. National Examination Council of Tanzania in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should consider Divinity subject in selection for tertiary education. This will raise credibility for Divinity and motivate students to study it seriously and perform better.
4. Tanzania Institute of Education should establish continuity in Christian Religious Education by paving ways for students to study Bible Knowledge at Ordinary Level

before they enrol for Divinity subject in Advanced Level. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education should make Religious Education compulsory in all schools so that students should benefit from its moral lessons. Finally, the government should make efforts to prepare experts to teach religious education in secondary schools across the country.

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on results and conclusions of this study, the researcher recommends the following topics for further investigations.

1. Exploratory Study on Religious Education Paradox in Secondary School Curriculum in Tanzania.
2. Integration of Moral Values in Social Science Subjects among Secondary Schools in Mara Region.

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