

Review Article

Assessing the Relevance of Indigenous Moral Education in Contemporary Akwamu Society

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Abstract: The primary role of indigenous moral education is to inculcate positive attitudes, moral norms, ideals and virtues such as honesty, kindness, compassion, respect for others, and a sense of a common good. In a Ghanaian traditional society's perspective, the morality of a person is judged according to his or her character. This position paper discusses the relevance of indigenous moral education and its relevance in contemporary Akwamu Traditional society in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The sources of indigenous moral education among the people of Akwamu society are proverbs, taboos, naming, puberty and marriage rites. The indigenous moral education provides moral values such as respect for authority, truthfulness, loyalty, obedience, tolerance, chastity and godliness to members of the Akwamu community. Besides the foregoing, the indigenous moral education systems, such as proverbs and puberty rites have outlived their usefulness in recent times among the Akwamus as a result of modernity which has introduced an alternative means of initiating young girls into adulthood. It is also important to note that even though some of the indigenous moral education systems have outlived their usefulness in contemporary times, the surviving ones should be incorporated into the modern moral education system so that the cultural identity of the people is preserved.

Keywords: Relevance, Indigenous, Moral, Education, Contemporary, Society

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1. Introduction

The conduct of a person is a reflection of the kind of moral education he or she receives from his or her community. It is from this backdrop that Akwamu traditional society before the advent of colonialism and missionary activities in Ghana used their indigenous moral education system to regulate the conduct of individual members in the community. Moral education took place within the family, social groupings, such as peer age groups and all members in the community and that urged individuals to live within the norms and values of the society, where the concepts of patriotism, godliness, communalism, truthfulness, purity, respect for human dignity, hospitality, respect for elders and traditional authority were taught [1]. This shows that before the advent of Westernization, the conduct of individual members in Akwamu traditional society was anchored on respect for indigenous ethical principles.

Even though there were no structured or formalized schools to teach indigenous moral education, Gyekye argues that the moral or ethical principles were preserved in customs, traditions, proverbs, myths, taboos, art and craft and symbols, and through the unique knowledge of experience, understanding and common sense, traditional leaders, parents and opinion leaders transmitted the ethical principles to the young ones to regulate their moral behaviour in the society and this led to social cohesion, harmonious and co-operative living and hence, a sense of duty to others [2]. This implies that indigenous moral education predates the coming of Europeans to Africa.

Qualitative methods which employed interviews and analyses of documents were used to collect data for the study. Based on the data analyses, the study examined the relevance of indigenous moral education in contemporary Akwamu traditional society. Specifically, the study sought to identify the main sources of indigenous moral education in Akwamu traditional society, to examine how indigenous moral education influences the moral lives of the indigenous people of Akwamu traditional society and finally, to assess the place of indigenous moral education in contemporary Akwamu traditional society. The study began by reviewing the concept of indigenous moral education from the Ghanaian perspective as a framework to underpin the work.

2. The Concept of Indigenous Moral Education: A Review

The primary role of indigenous moral education is to inculcate positive attitudes, moral norms, ideals and virtues such as honesty, kindness, compassion, respect for others, and a sense of a common good. It is a type of education informed by norms and values as well as duties and responsibilities that are prescribed by society and ought to be done by every member of that society [1]. In a submission made by Kwame Gyekye about morality, he asserted that the conduct of a person is a reflection of the kind of moral education he or she has received from his or her community [2]. In a similar submission, Kwasi Wiredu intimates that morality is essential to all human cultures and that any society without a modicum of morality can collapse [3]. The assertions raised by Gyekye and Wiredu therefore imply that to ensure peace and harmony, every human society has a lay down standards to guide and regulate behaviour for the common good and progress of that society. Thus, a strict adherence to and observance of the normative ethical principles helps people to develop good moral character in a society.

In Ghanaian traditional society, morality is conceived in terms of character which according to the Akan, literally means 'suban'. It is based on people's beliefs about what is right or wrong, good or bad character. For instance, among the Akan, when a person is honest, generous and trustworthy, he is judged by the people as a good person which means that he or she has a good character or 'suban pa'. On the other hand, when a person is dishonest, wicked and cruel, he is judged by the people as having a bad character or 'suban bone'. This means that from Ghanaian traditional society's perspective, the morality of a person is judged according to his or her character. It is for this reason that high value is placed on good character, and as Gyekye puts it, a 'good character is the essence of African moral system, the linchpin of the moral wheel' [4]. The assumption is that in the struggle to lead a moral life, the quality of a person's character is paramount and from this character, all his actions radiate. It is therefore important to note that from a person's deeds or actions, his or her character emerges and the persistent performance of a particular action or deed according to Gyekye produces a certain habit which will eventually lead to character formation [2].

In an Akan maxim, Gyekye says that 'one is not born with a bad head, but one takes it from the earth'. This means that a bad habit is not an inborn characteristic, but one that is acquired [2]. In an explanation of this maxim, Gyekye is of the view that the original nature of human beings is neutral, thus neither good nor bad, but as time goes on in his life, the original moral neutrality of the person comes to be affected as a good or bad character through his responses to moral instructions.

Before Western education, Gyekye and Wiredu claimed that one acquired and internalized moral values in society through traditional moral education where the whole society was one big school and through the process of socialization, one generation passed on its values, norms, culture, history, and religion to the next generation by word of mouth or by living an exemplary life. They contended that the whole society was the repository of knowledge whereby an aged person became the symbol of wisdom and society's memory databank. To illustrate their point, they asserted that in a traditional society, the most recognized and respected person is the one who was inclined toward indigenous

education and Western schooling. For this reason, they concluded that a person is ridiculed if he or had no traditional education regardless of the amount of Western schooling he or she might have [5]. They supported their claim with an Akan maxim that says '*efie nyansa nko, na sukuum nyansa nso nko, nanso efie nyanso hia sene sukuum nyansa*, meaning that "there is a difference between domestic wisdom and academic wisdom, but of the two, domestic wisdom supersedes the academic one" [5]. This tells us that indigenous education plays an important role in all facets of human life without which man is incomplete in the acquisition of knowledge.

In the work of Mbiti about African traditional ethics, he explained that there exist many laws, customs, rules and regulations that constitute the moral code of a given society and any breach of this code of behaviour is considered evil, wrong or bad, for it is an injury or destruction to the accepted social order and peace [6].

The foregoing discussions show that in Ghanaian traditional societies, moral education was a means through which African societies imparted ethical principles to their members. It is a form of education informed by norms and values as well as duties and responsibilities that are prescribed by society and ought to be done by every member of that society. Through traditional moral education, the child's moral education became the responsibility of the elders in the society, the home, parents and siblings. This type of education assumed a multi-dimensional approach which emphasized the development of the character of the child. Though there were no schools or classrooms, various means were used as methods to educate the young ones on ethical principles. Some of the means through which moral education was taught according to Ackah were funerals, marriage rights, child-naming ceremonies and festivals. These methods through which moral education was taught ushered children into the traditions, customs and values of the society and these helped the moral development of the people [7].

2.1. Indigenous Moral Education in Akwamu Traditional Society

Akwamu traditional area accounts for about 55% of the total population of Asuogyaman District in the Eastern Region of Ghana [8]. Some of the major towns in the Akwamu traditional area are Akosombo, Atimpoku, Senchi, Akwamufie, Gyakiti, Adjena and Akrade. The population of the area is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity and religion. The predominant ethnic group is the Akan followed by Ewe and the Ga-Adangbe. Other ethnic groups make up the remaining portion of the population. The dominant religion is Christianity followed by Islam and Traditionalist which accounts for 89 per cent, 3.7 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively. There also exist smaller groups of people who adhere to other religions or have no religion. The current chief and queen mothers of the Akwamu Traditional area are Nana Kwafu Akoto III and Nana Afrakomaa II [9].

Before Akwamus' encounter with the Western world in the latter part of the 19th century, their indigenous religion, known as the African Traditional Religion, was the only religion known to them. Through indigenous moral education, the indigenous religion of the people which placed much emphasis on morality profoundly influenced the moral lives of the people in the Akwamu traditional society.

In an attempt to establish the role that indigenous moral education played in the lives of the people of Akwamu traditional society, the study examines five main sources of indigenous moral education through which the people of Akwamu communicate moral values to members of the community. These are *proverbs, taboos, naming, puberty and marriage ceremonies*. Traditional leaders and opinion leaders in the Akwamu traditional area were consulted to seek their opinions on the sources of indigenous moral education, its role in the moral lives of the people and its relevance in contemporary Akwamu traditional society. These aged were consulted based on their rich experience in Akwamu culture.

2.1.1. Proverbs: A Source of Indigenous Moral Education

Traditional proverbs constitute one of the methods of teaching moral principles in traditional societies of which Akwamu traditional society is no exception. They are short and wise sayings which give colour and meaning to African religious beliefs and practices. According to Dzobo, proverbs express wisdom acquired through reflection, experience, observation and general knowledge [10]. Because proverbs tend to guide prescribed attitudes and behaviours of people at personal, group or societal levels, Dzobo argues that they are crafted from human experiences and insights and have been viewed over the years as a repository of social norms and values as well as an embodiment of culture and tradition [10].

Among the people of Akwamu, proverbs communicate expected codes of behaviour. They are wise sayings couched by the elderly persons in the traditional society. Like the Akan people of Ghana, the Akwamu people call proverbs “bɛ” or “abebusem”. They express a hidden or obvious wisdom, and they communicate expected codes of behaviour.

For the Akwamus, proverbs not only form the bedrock of their moral system and social ideology, but they also enunciate the principles of social order and good governance. In a personal interview with my informants, they explained some prominent proverbs and their application to the moral lives of the people of Akwamu society.

Below are some indigenous traditional proverbs and their moral teachings in Akwamu traditional society.

Proverb: *Wosen w’agya tenten a, na enkyeye se, wotipen ne no.*

Meaning: *If you are taller than your father, it does not follow that he is your equal.*

Application: *My informant explained that no matter how well off a person is in life, he must respect those in authority. To give further explanation to this proverb, one of my informants explained that the elders in the society are rich with wisdom, knowledge and history in the community which can be tapped by the youth, therefore it is prudent for them to show maximum respect to the elderly people in the community so that they can consult them for pieces of advice and directions in life. My informant further explained that now the youth cannot approach some elders in the community for help when they are in trouble because of disrespect. He attributed the cause of this indiscipline to the moral degeneration among the youth as a result of westernization which seeks to empower all persons irrespective of age and position to fight for their rights.*

Proverb: *Abofra bɔ nnwa na ɔmmɔ akyekyedeɛ*

Meaning: *A child breaks the shell of a snail and not that of a tortoise*

Application: *Children should do things that pertain to children and not things that pertain to adults. It is also used to advise people when they try to bite what they cannot chew or take on responsibilities that are beyond their limits. My informant explained that in Akawamu traditional society like what pertains to all Akan culture, it is taboo for a child to challenge adults in any endeavour. Hence, children should take care when engaging with adults in every endeavour. The respondent explained further that this proverb goes to the youth who have not reached the stage of marrying to stop because marriage comes with many responsibilities and that is why it is meant for only adults. By adult, he meant someone who has the full capacity to marry. He said that one may be responsible financially in his youth stage, but may lack what it takes to be a parent or a husband. In his final submission, he remarked that many*

marriages have broken among the youth in recent times as a result of a lack of physical, emotional, spiritual, and social care for the wife and children.

Proverb: *Akokoba a ɔben oni na ɔwe abeɛɛ sre.*

Meaning: *The chick that is close to the mother gets the thigh of the grasshopper*

Application: *According to my informants, the most devoted and obedient child gets the best of things from his or her parents. They said that when you are close to someone, he shares whatever he or she has with you. To them, this proverb is used to counsel truant children to live morally upright lives both at home and in the community. One respondent remarked that this proverb teaches one to contribute his quota to the development of the community.*

Proverb: *Seantie ne ɔnwam atiko pɔ*

Meaning: *Because the great hornbill (ɔnwam) did not listen to advice, he developed a lump on his head. Thus, if one refuses to take advice about his or her bad habit, it will one day land him or her in trouble.*

Application: *According to my informant, this proverb is used as advice to young people who do not respect or take heed to any advice given to them. My informant explained that if a member of the community breaks any of the traditional laws such as taboo, he or she faces a serious punishment to the extent that he or she has to perform a ritual sin to appease the ancestors for the sin committed. In an example to illustrate his point, he said that a man who had been warned severally violated a taboo law for visiting his farm on Thursday and was made to provide five sheep, five schnapps, a pot of palm wine and a fine of a thousand Ghana cedis for a ritual sin to be performed to ward off his sin. Amazingly, when he consulted one of the elders to plead on his behalf, his plea was not accepted and reminded him of the proverb, 'Seantie ne ɔnwam atiko pɔ' and added that if he had paid heed to his advice, he wouldn't have faced this trouble.*

2.1.2. Taboo: A Source of Indigenous Moral Education

Intimately related to proverbs as a source of indigenous moral education in Akwamu traditional society is taboo which represents the guiding principles regulating and directing the behaviour of individuals in the society. According to Mbiti, the word taboo originated from the Polynesian term "tabu" meaning forbidden thing or person or place [11]. In African societies, children are taught basic principles of morality embedded in taboos. A system of taboos and sanctions held in honour of the ancestor or ancestress, divinities and spirits are used in the African societies to enforce morality; because they are agents of morality in traditional African thought.

In Akwamu traditional society, taboos are one of the several systems that are in use to impart knowledge and good behaviour to the people. There are different taboos concerning sex, food, death and so on. Some of these taboos regulate how we eat, what pregnant women should and should not do, prohibitions about sex, how to conserve the environment and so on, Taboo is a religious injunction which is put in place by the indigenous people to ensure the sanctity and protection of human morality. According to one of my informants, he remarked that '*taboo practices are measures we put in place here in Akwamu to ensure discipline among individuals in the community*'.

According to the people, the motivation to abide by taboos and laws is provided and reinforced by the religious sanctions from the gods and the ancestors. This means that taboos are underpinned by religious considerations where whoever violates taboo laws is

dealt with by the ancestors through the traditional leaders who are the custodians of the ancestors. It is for this reason that Peter Sarpong intimates that the authority behind the interdict of taboos rests in some kind of supernatural power and the penalty upon infringement of a taboo is believed to be brought about by the mere fact of performing the forbidden act and those found guilty for violating taboos are made to undergo ritual cleansing to cleanse the community of the abomination [12]. Some of the taboos which are practised by the Akwamu people and their moral education are explained below.

Taboo Associated with Open Defecation along River Banks

Traditionalists, in Akwamu traditional society, believe that “water bodies are associated with gods or abosom who relay rules to the local folks through a fetish priest who is the mouthpiece of the gods”. These gods ensure that the indigenes are supposed to keep water bodies from impurities because they are regarded as the dwelling places of the gods (bosom). These measures are put in place to protect the water bodies and to avoid many water-related diseases which can affect the health of the people. Given this, it’s a taboo to have open defecation along the banks of the rivers. When one is caught in such an act, he or she is said to have offended not only the community but also the gods. He or she is sent to the palace for a ritual sin to be performed. The fetish priest who is the mouthpiece of the gods is consulted by the chief linguist to find out from him the ritual process to integrate the person into the community. When the fetish priest is being consulted, two bottles of foreign schnapps together with one ram and one white fowl are sent. The fetish priest upon receiving the items then proposes a day for the ritual to be performed. Normally, Wednesdays are more appropriate for the performance of the rituals because it is ‘awukudae’ where all the community members are supposed to be present to witness the occasion to serve as a deterrent to all of them so that the act will not be repeated. During the ritual, the same items used to consult the fetish priest are doubled on the day of the ritual to put fear in people not to commit that offence again.

In summary, it is seen that for fear of social embarrassment coupled with unwarranted fines associated with breaking a taboo law, the people end up adhering to some specified conduct and behaviour in the society which goes a long way in the management of natural resources conservation in the traditional area.

Taboo Associated with Eating of New Yam

In Akwamu traditional society, the preservation of people’s health is key to the sustenance of the community. Given that measures are put in place by traditional leaders to ensure that people adhere to certain norms. One of these norms is taboo associated with the eating of new yam. This taboo forbids people to eat new yam until a ritual has been performed. Oral tradition has it that:

“in the olden days, yam was the only common food on Akwamu land and so people could harvest yam when it was not matured for consumption and it was found out that they were being attacked by diarrhoea when they ate the new yam. He said that when the ritual is performed, it is believed that the ancestors have eaten it and have blessed it for human consumption.”

The taboo implied that “if people eat the yam without observing the taboo, they develop a severe cough called “Nsamanwa” or “ghost cough”.

When the respondent was asked how the public gets to know when they can now eat the new yam, he answered that:

“After the ritual has been performed, a small festival is celebrated at the palace where the new yam is cooked and after the chief has been served to eat the yam, and everyone gathered there is served. This is done to inform the general public that they officially can now harvest the new yam for consumption. ”

The above analysis shows that in Akwamu traditional society, for health reasons, some foods are governed by strict taboo rules to discourage people from eating premature yam.

3. Rites of Passage: A Source of Indigenous Moral Education

This section examines how rites associated with *naming, puberty and marriage* contribute to indigenous moral education among the people of Akwamu traditional society. Apart from proverbs and taboos, one other source of indigenous moral education being practised by the people of Akwamu is rites of passage. Rites of passage are life cycle ceremonies that usually include religious transformations with a passage to the next stage of life. Such of these rites of passage comprise birth (naming), puberty (adolescent), marriage and death (funeral). Gyekye asserts that rites of passage are various means by which societies affect transitions in the life of an individual from one social identity to another [6].

3.1. Naming ceremony

A naming ceremony is an event at which a newborn child is officially assigned a name and welcomed into the family. Among the people of the Akwamu traditional area, an informant explained that a newborn baby within the first seven days after birth is regarded as a stranger. This is based on their belief that within these seven days, the child can die and be taken back to the ancestral world. This confirms Nkekia's assertion that the first few days after birth are critical, because during this period, the baby might stay or return to the ancestral world [13]. The informant however said that if the child survives within the first seven days of confinement, he or she is officially outdoors on the eighth day where a ritual separation from the spiritual world is affected as the baby is introduced to the world and to the human community of which she or he has become a part.

On the eighth day, a family name is added to the soul name associated with the day of birth. When relatives, friends, members from both religious and social groups and parents of the new-born baby have gathered for the ritual, libation prayer is offered to inform the gods and the ancestors about the outdooring of the child and to ask for their blessings upon the child, the parents and the family. During the ceremony, the child's father is asked to provide a name that should be given to the child. Two glasses, one filled with water and another, filled with wine are provided for the performance of the naming ceremony. The principal officiant, mainly the oldest member of the father's family acts by putting the child on his lap and announcing his name to the people gathered to witness the naming ceremony. He dips his right forefinger into the water and drops it onto the tongue of the child, saying, "If you say water, say water". In the same manner, he dips his right forefinger into the wine and drops it on the tongue of the child, saying, "If you say wine, say wine". When the informant was asked whether the child can be given any name at all, he explained that for children to live morally upright lives, the people of Akwamu give names to their children after ancestors who led good and exemplary lives while alive and also after a person of good character. Gyekye shares the same views with the people of Akwamu saying, "African parents in all other societies, want their children to develop good character traits, to grow and become worthy, respectful adults and responsible citizens" [4].

In explaining the symbolic significance of using water and wine during the celebration, the informant said that they were to teach the child to distinguish between truthfulness and falsehood, and also, using the forefinger is used to show the child the path to the acquisition of moral education. This is done to instil within the child a consciousness of morality and the necessity to live in harmony with the truth throughout his or her life. Other moral education associated with the naming ceremony according to the oral tradition is truthfulness and loyalty. Obedience to authority and godliness.

3.2. Puberty Rites

Among the people of Akwamu, special rites which are performed for girls when they reach adulthood are called puberty rites or 'bragro'. It is primarily to welcome or introduce the new adult into the adult world. Thus, in Akwamu traditional society, a girl is recognized as an adult and fit for marriage only after a successful puberty rite. According to the informant, in the olden days when a girl noticed that she had menstruated for the first time, she informed her mother and the mother also informed the queen's mother for her to be examined. According to the informant, this was done to find out whether the girl was pregnant. As the informant explained, in the early morning of the day of the ceremony, the girl would be asked to take a bath while her mother goes around beating a metal hoe to announce to people and invite women to come and sing "bra" songs and dance around the girl as she sits on the white stool with white cloth in front of the house in an open space, with her breast exposed. A brass basin called 'ayowa' containing leaves of the 'adwera' plant, an egg and okra fruit is placed in front of the girl. According to the informant, the exposure of the breast is meant to attract admirers. She also said that the white stool, the white cloth and the leaves of the 'adwewa' plant symbolize cleanliness. As for the egg and the okra seed, the informant said that they symbolize fertility and childbirth respectively.

As part of the ritual, the informant explained that the girl is confined in the house for six days during which she receives sex and family education. When the ceremony is over, the informant explains that the girl dresses beautifully in traditional clothes and being accompanied by her mother and other girls of her age, she goes around to thank all the wishers.

Oral tradition explains moral education which is based on the puberty rites, she said:

The puberty rites serve as an emulation to others because a girl who successfully goes through the rituals is likely to get a good husband because such a girl will be declared morally upright. Again, the rites serve as an incentive for the development of good manners, as girls who remain chaste and are respectful receive a lot of gifts from well-wishers. Also, puberty rites confirm one's obedience to traditional rules, because those who violate the rules are punished by being banished from the community.

3.3. Marriage Ceremony

The people of Akwamu consider marriage as a union between a man and woman from two different families to bring forth children. Nunkunya shares a similar view with the Akwamus, saying that marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that, children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate children of both parents [14]. According to oral tradition, in Akwamu Traditional society, "when a young man and a young woman from different families declare their intention to marry, the first thing they do is to seek the consent of their parents". To ascertain whether the families from both parties have good moral character, the parents begin to do an investigation about their backgrounds. When the investigation is over and both parties are satisfied with the families' records, the young man's father officially informs the girl's family about their son's intention to marry their daughter. A day is then fixed for the actual marriage rites to be performed.

On the day fixed for the marriage, the first ritual to be performed is called 'knocking fee' or 'open akyi bo' and a presentation of two bottles of schnapps by the father of the man to the girl's father. In the absence of the father, his paternal uncle can represent him. In addition to schnapps is an undisclosed amount of money. The next ritual after the knocking fee is the payment of the 'head drink' or 'tiri nsa'. It involves a presentation of drinks and two bottles of schnapps or gin and a specified but undisclosed amount. Another ritual that is performed is the payment of the bride's wealth or bride price or 'tiri

aseda'. According to the informant, the bride price and the specified but undisclosed amount varies from one family to another depending on the family status.

History revealed that the payment of bridewealth legalizes the contract. Besides, the ability of the husband to pay the bride price shows his ability to take care of a wife. Again, it enhances the status of the family of the groom in society, as it brings honour to them. Finally, some people were of the view that the payment of the bride price stabilizes the marriage, because the woman would have to return the bride's wealth or the dowry if she initiates divorce, and the refund may be difficult for her and her family.

Another rite which plays a prominent role in marriage among the Akwamus is the payment of a specified, but undisclosed amount to the brothers of the bride called 'akonta sikan'. The informant explained that the 'akonta sikan' empowers the bride's brothers to protect their sister against other men who may propose to their sister. According to the informant, after the rites have been performed, the opportunity is given to people present to advise the couple. The informant said that the advice includes how the couple should respect each other, respect their in-laws, be hardworking, avoid laziness, avoid adultery and other behaviour that may negatively affect the marriage.

From the foregoing, it is of interest to note that as parents, relatives, friends and children gather to witness the marriage ceremony, they unconsciously acquire some moral education embedded in the ceremony which helps them to behave well in society.

4. Indigenous Moral Education and Moral Lives among the People of Akwamu Traditional Society

According to Gyekye, the best thing a society can do is to impart moral knowledge to its members and this is fulfilled through moral education [4]. Based on this premise, this section examines how Akwamu society imparts moral knowledge to its members through proverbs, taboos, and naming, puberty and marriage ceremonies as sources of moral education. In the domain of oral tradition, it became clear that some of the moral knowledge embedded in proverbs is respect for authority, children, not taking on responsibilities that are beyond their limits and obeying traditional rules. This corroborates Sarpong's assertion that moral values which are embedded in tradition bind people together in Ghanaian society [12].

About the moral knowledge embedded in taboos and how they influence the moral lives of the people, it was discovered through the interview that taboos promote discipline among individuals in the community. Also, taboos help to regulate peoples' attitudes towards the conservation of the natural resources in the Akwamu traditional area. Again, through taboo laws, people in the Akwamu community are discouraged from eating foods that can endanger their health.

The study's findings also revealed that truthfulness, loyalty, obedience to authority, tolerance and godliness are some of the moral education embedded in a naming ceremony. This is evident in rituals associated with the dropping of water and wine on the tongue of the child. This affirms Asare-Danso's claim that the dropping of water and wine on the tongue of the child undergoing the naming ceremony signifies that the child should distinguish between truthfulness and falsehood [15].

Concerning puberty rites and how they promote morality among the people of Akwamu traditional society, the study revealed that puberty rites teach people, especially young girls to live upright lives so that they can get good husbands. This is because puberty rite is a traditional moral requirement before one can get married. Also, puberty rites teach people to live chaste lives in society. It was discovered that puberty rites teach people to obey traditional rules so that they are not banished from the community. The finding is in line with Ackah's assertion that through traditions and customs, people live morally upright lives [7].

Information revealed that the marriage ceremony among the Akwamus teaches how people should live responsible lives, faithfulness, and loyalty and how to love one another

as husband and wife. For example, during advice time, the couple is advised to love each other. Also, the background investigation that takes place by parents from both partners before marriage teaches that people should not only be economically viable but also, they should live morally upright lives. The 'akonta sikan' as part of the marriage ceremony teaches that the married woman should remain loyal to their husband.

In Akwamu traditional society, proverbs, taboos and rites of passage, particularly naming, puberty and marriage ceremonies are among the sources of indigenous moral education which are intended to enhance the well-being of every individual member of the society. It is for this reason that Gyekye maintains that the narratives embedded in proverbs and folktales which young people acquire are intended to habituate them to moral virtues [4]. Even though Gyekye did not make mention of rites of passage through which young people acquire moral values, they are crucial to the formation of moral character among the young people of Akwamu traditional society.

5. The Relevance of Indigenous Moral Education in Contemporary Akwamu Traditional Society

With the emphasis on Western education, people argue that indigenous moral education has outlived its usefulness in Ghana of which Akwamu traditional society is no exception. This section therefore seeks to analyze the relevance of indigenous moral education in the context of modernity where Western education reigns in recent times. Concerning whether taboos are a relevant source of moral education in contemporary Akwamu traditional society, my informants responded in the affirmative. History has it that due to the stiffest punishment associated with breaking taboos, people do not defecate along the water bodies and also, they do not eat new yam until a ritual has been performed. Primary information in Akwamu revealed that *children to stay away from eating new yam until the chief performs a ritual before they can eat it. Tradition has it that parents use taboos to educate their children on traditional laws.*

About the relevance of proverbs as a source of indigenous moral education in contemporary Akwamu traditional society, an informant explained that proverbs have outlived their usefulness in recent times in Akwamu society because the elders who have rich experience in crafting taboos are all dead and the youth of today do not have such experience and also the fact that they have been receiving moral education from school. Oral tradition noted that: *"in the past, people cited proverbs at all gatherings, but today, we rarely hear them because people do not have the experience to craft them"*.

The relevance of the naming ceremony in contemporary Akwamu as far as indigenous moral education is concerned, they explained that though the rituals associated with the naming ceremony have changed as a result of Christianity, they all teach moral values as far as the symbolic meanings are concerned. In Akwamu traditional society, puberty rites are no longer being practised as a result of Christianity. Primary sources revealed that:

"Nowadays, because of Christianity, when a girl reaches the adolescent stage, she undergoes confirmation rites to usher her into adulthood, and also, the demise of puberty rites has resulted in a high incidence rate of immorality such as teenage pregnancy, abortion, prostitution and adultery among the youth in contemporary times."

On the question of the relevance of marriage ceremonies as a source of indigenous moral education, the respondents admitted that marriage ceremonies are still useful in Akwamu traditional society because they inculcate moral education into the youth. They

explained that traditional and Christian marriage rites have some similarities that go a long way to enforce good moral values among the youth. They cited an example that in both Christian and traditional marriage ceremonies, the bride and the bridegroom are given advice which is of moral significance not only to the couple but also to the people present.

6. Conclusion

The sources of indigenous moral education among the people of Akwamu society are proverbs, taboos, naming, and puberty and marriage rites. The indigenous moral education provides moral values such as respect for authority, truthfulness, loyalty, obedience, tolerance, chastity and godliness to members of the Akwamu community.

Besides the foregoing, the indigenous moral education systems, such as proverbs and puberty rites have outlived their usefulness in recent times among the Akwamus as a result of modernity which has introduced an alternative means of initiating young girls into adulthood. It is also important to note that even though some of the indigenous moral education systems have outlived their usefulness in contemporary times, the surviving ones should be incorporated into the modern moral education system so that the cultural identity of the people is preserved.

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