

Anthropological study of burial ceremony in African development and harsening traditional knowledge among the Abagusii

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Abstract

The Abagusii like other tribes in Africa, burial ceremony, was the last respect given to the dead body. Burial (*Ogotindeka*) was anthropologically done according to Abagusii customs and traditions. When a married man or husband to more than two wives (*Omogaka bwo'omochie*) died was buried in the first wife's house in the homestead if he was a polygamist. The dead body was laid in the reception room at the left side of the room for the whole night. The dead body was removed from the house using the left door (*Omorangwa o'gesaku, or bweri*) when the grave was ready in the morning as the animals were off the manger for grazing. The problem nowadays, burial rituals and customs are not followed such as grave digger speaking or eating food inside the grave or drinking water while in the grave. This has been ascertaining to be an abomination and leading too many people losing lives and is seen as a sign of curses in the family. The objective of the study is to investigate the factors leading to erosion of burial rites and rituals among the Abagusii. Also to unearth the anthropological burial ceremony process for harsening traditional knowledge and sustainable African development in Kenya and Africa at large. The research adopts analytical method through the empirical primary data collected from the Abagusii elders. The results indicate that the modern Abagusii people do not value burial ritual and customs. The sons and daughters leave the homestead immediately after burial to go and attend the chorus of work in towns. There is no second day crying /respect (*Eburu*) for deceased. It is concluded that the un honored burial ceremonies lead to curses and as consequence more deaths. It is recommended for harsening the African traditional knowledge, the Abagusii should follow the burial rituals and customs to suppress more deaths to occur in families.

Key words: Anthropological, Burial ceremony, African development, Traditional knowledge.

Introduction

Anthropological studies indicate that death was a natural phenomenon in the human and animal society. In the African societies the ‘origin’ of death was not known to the Africans and many of them used myths and legends to explain but it cannot be explained to give a comprehensive knowledge and wisdom of reality. It was known to the Africans in whatever sense “All life here on earth has its end”(Dian and Diepen,1986),therefore, life began after conception, it is an accepted scientific fact that life begins at fertilization-the union of the father’s sperm carrying 23 chromosomes with the mother’s egg carrying 23 chromosomes. Fertilization then, the fertilized egg (Zygote) has the 46 chromosomes characteristic of the normal human being (Njai, 1982), and after birth through to and ends in death. Death made people to bury who are alive to bury their death person (dead body) according to the African customs and values, which varied from one tribe to another in the African continent. It was, and it is and it will be believed that “death comes to every man after which he is received into the world of spirits” (Dian and Diepen, 1986), after burial. Therefore burial was significant among the African societies, because they believed “if the death body was not buried in the right way, it will appear in form of spirits to disturb and perturb the extended family members in the kinship.

In this sense, Africans had a lot of tribes and sub-tribes with varying customs and values followed in the burial ceremony. This depended on attitude. The most widespread manifestations of this attitude are in the form of beliefs and rituals. The faithful dead who lived a life of virtue and sobriety are identified with Os-asar.In the (Egyptian), *Book of the Dead*, such rituals are still in vogue in all parts of africa at the burial of the initiated dead have recorded and preserved (Osabutey-Agueze, 1990).According to Madan and Majumdar (1993), ritual rituals consists in observance, according to a prescribed manner, of certain actions designed to establish liaison between the performing individual and the supernatural powers. Beliefs are charter for the rituals, as also a rationalization of the same. These beliefs ensure that the rituals will be observed. According to Johnson (1991), there are six characteristics which are identified as follows: *one,ritual* often involves the manipulation of tangible sacred objects and the action is meaningful within the frame of reference of the super-natural order. *Two*, the performance is part of the religious system for attaining salvation in some form. Sometimes, its effectiveness is presumed to depend upon the “will” of a supernatural being: In some ritual however, for example death, the performance is automatically effective provided that it is carried according to certain prescriptions, followed by the ethnic groups for instance Abagusii. *Three*, the ritual may be happy, even joyous, but it is not regarded by the faithful as primarily a form of entertainment; it is, as Durkheim says “part of serious life itself” *Four*, being goal oriented, ritual is a kind of instrumental action, but is also expressional-that is charged with symbolic content expressing, among other things, the *attitudes* of the participants and possibly of onlookers (passive

participants) who may be regarded as co-beneficiaries. As a consequence, ritual action admits of virtually infinite variety; attitudes may be expressed symbolically in many ways and supernatural world is not bound by the same laws as the world of nature. *Five*, any ritual tends to be bound to particular form over long periods of time. Just because symbols are arbitrary within broad limits, ritual action must be stereotyped if it is to retain its meaning for example in the Abagusii tribe (formal rigidity is thus a secondary aspect of ritual, but it is so prominent that in popular usage, the term “ritual” often refers to any action that is frequently repeated in the same pattern and that seems to have no “practical” result. *Six*, ritual must be distinguished from “moral action”-that is, from action in conformity with social norms valued for their own sake. The performance of a ritual often does involve the cooperation of several actors in more or less differentiated roles, but the role pattern as a whole, instead of being intrinsically valued, is valued because it is regarded as a necessary means to the attainment of good relations with the supernatural. Moral action on the other hand, is at least in part valued intrinsically.

According to Mugambi, (1989), Rituals are dramatic and symbolic expressions of the community’s comprehensive self understanding. Two significant features in rituals are identified as dramatic activity and the use of symbols. With regard to the first feature, a stranger observing a community in process of ritual would find the activity a rather curious spectacle. The stranger might accurately describe what he observed but might not interpret his observations correctly. This happened; for instance, with early foreign anthropologists and missionaries in Africa (Mugambi, 1989). That is what is happening with the young generations in the contemporary Abagusii community, where the family members do not observe the ritual of burial ceremony correctly. The second feature of rituals is the use of symbols, which convey general and comprehensive messages to these people with whom they are familiar. A natural object or situation may be accorded symbolic significance.

Anthropologically death among the Abagusii was regarded a social fact in people. Tribes in Africa, Abagusii observed the rites and rituals in the process of burial ceremony. Being a social fact, death led to “burial” and a social fact are characterized by their generality, their transmissibility, and their compulsion. All members of a society have, in general, the same habits and customs, language and morals and all live in the same common framework of legal, political and economic institutions (Prichard, 1994)..... Like other ethnic groups The Abagusii like other tribes in Africa, burial ceremony, was the last respect given to the dead body. Burial (*Ogotindeka*) was anthropologically done according to Abagusii customs and traditions. When a married man or husband to more than two wives (*Omogaka bwo’omochie*) died was buried in the first wife’s house in the homestead if he was a polygamist. The dead body was laid in the reception room at the left side of the room for the whole night. The dead body was removed from the house using the left door (*Omorangwa o’gesaku, or bweri*) when the grave was ready in the morning as the animals were off the manger for grazing.

The statement of the problem

The problem nowadays, burial rituals and customs are not followed such as grave digger speaking or eating food inside the grave or drinking water while in the grave. This has been ascertaining to be an abomination and leading too many people losing lives and is seen as a sign of curses in the family.

The objective of the study

The objective of the study is to investigate the factors leading to erosion of burial rites and rituals among the Abagusii. Also to unearth the anthropological burial ceremony process for harnessing traditional knowledge and sustainable African development in Kenya and Africa at large.

The general objective in this research context is to help the Abagusii and other ethnic tribes in Kenya and Africa restore the self-respect and re-establish their dignity as human beings who constitute a significant part of mankind. This objective is facilitated or motivated by the fact that through colonization, Christian missionary propaganda and neo-colonialist commercialization, Abagusii of the contemporary society have been lead through westernization and modernization to despise their own social heritage-of burial ceremony and praise European or American norms of life and thoughts- which lead to devastating effects of more deaths occurring in the society.

Justification of ceremony among the Abagusii

The Abagusii peoples practiced burial ceremony as a social fact in social structure in the society. Burial ceremony was justified and the process was conducted depending on dowry payment. The dowry payment was the starting point in burial ceremony. Any couple where dowry/bride wealth was not paid, the process of dowry payment was done first then burial arrangement to proceed. The payment of dowry in case the wife or husband died, was a prerequisite for burial ceremony. In this case, the members of consanguineous kinship pay dowry on behalf of the deceased. The payment of Dowry/bride wealth by the family of the man to the family of the woman is an essential part of a traditional marriage in most East African societies, though the amount and the manner of payment vary greatly (Sharkey and Welch, 1987).

The types of burial ceremony

Once the dowry/bride wealth payment was confirmed by the father in-law and in laws, the burial ceremony was arranged in three steps that death, burial and after burial ceremony in the traditional African societies classified into two: Normal burial ceremony and abnormal burial ceremony. Normal burial refers to the one conducted from the death which occurred to the individual naturally by way of illness and so on. Abnormal burial ceremony refers to the one conducted from the death which occurred through deliberate killing without illness such as

suicide, floods, thunder and lightning and so on. People are not supposed to mourn or weep in abnormal deaths. It was abnormal burial because, the person who died, the body was to be buried in the point of the incident occurred for instance, if a person was drowned in the river or swept by the river, where the dead body was thrown by the river into the bank or was seen first time and removed, that is the point the dead body was buried at the bank of the river. A sacrifice was offered to appease the spirits not to cause the similar calamity to the rest of the family members. If dead was through thunder and lightning, the dead body was buried in the same point of the scene and people were not supposed to mourn for the deceased .the dead body was not buried but covered by use of tillage from the soil (*Chintinde*).The sacrifice was done on the point of occurrence by the family members as officiated by the person who had a similar incident. It was difficult to get the person to officiate the sacrifice before burial, thus people went to open market days and announced to the people in business. If found, the sacrifice was made and tillage of soils was piled until the body was totally covered and no animal could be able to uproot. In this research, the research focused and discussed the normal burial ceremony. This is true in the Abaluyhia, if a person has died through unusual causes such as lightning or suicide, then people fear to dig the grave for him at this would infect them with impurities and his grave diggers must be paid a goat which they kill and wash the impurities with its blood(Mbiti,1992).

The framework on the anthropological process of the burial ceremony among the Abagusii

In the anthropological sense, Abagusii observed the process of burial ceremony of an adult married person in three steps with different beliefs and rituals practiced and their requirements. Ritual has been defined as an important form of religious action (Johnson, 1991; Bahahemuka, 1984). Thus, religious action, more narrowly defined is an action in which the supernatural order is appealed to or manipulated or worshipped. Such action may be simply an expression of relevant attitudes-worship in a narrow sense-or it may be directed toward some goal-for example, the goal of healing the sick or the goal of assuring the repose of the soul of some dead person (Johnson, 1991).

In some African traditional societies, rituals were believed to be rites of transition. For example in the current research paper reveals that the Abagusii believed that death was a social fact and rituals of burial were rites of passage from the world of living to the world of death. The term rites of passage refers to those various rituals which a community arranges, according to its traditions, to mark the transition of individual members from one stage to the next through life-from birth to death. Thus the “rites of passage” are connected with birth, puberty, marriage and death. The rites of passage are established and maintained in order to prepare, test, confirm and reinforce the positive values cherished by the community (Mugambi, 1989).Therefore, the rituals were to be conducted carefully not to offend the dead-as s/he leaves/departs into the world of spirits. According to Bahahemuka(1984),some spirits, first group ,it is believed were created at the beginning of time to serve the creator and human beings; the second group is made up of the ancestral sprits; while the third group are evil spirits who create trouble and go about punishing

human beings. In this sense, the Abagusii believed life will come back through the new borne who will be called the name of the deceased person. Mugambi (1989) observes that “when a person dies physically, this is not the end because a person is more than blood, flesh and bones. The life of one person is co-extensive with the lives of other people and those of other living and inanimate things within the environment”.

In the Abagusii has already been said, the rituals were rites of passage. Burial ceremony was a link between the living members in the kinship of the deceased and living dead members in the world of spirits. The process of burial ceremony took three steps or stages namely, death, burial and after burial.

The first step or stage involved “Death” which composed the days the dead body stayed in the world before burial. That is the time people started weeping or mourning to the burial through after burial. The kinship members or members of the extended family assembled and stayed in the homestead of the deceased until the burial ceremony was over. They also assisted the arrangement and preparations for burial. The staying in the homestead required foods to be eaten for the days the members stayed in the homestead. The longer the stay meant the more foods required. The main food prepared was *obokima* (food prepared from boiled water and mixed with flour) from sorghum (*Amaemba*) or finger millet (*Obori*) and used vegetables such as *Chinsaga*, *rinagu*, *enderema* or meat from the slaughtered animals depending on the wealth of the family members of the deceased person. Among the Abaluhya, since modern conditions send people to work in distant places, bodies of the dead are kept for two days, to allow the relatives to come from a far. Neighbors and relatives bring beer and food; some play musical instruments (*obokano* in Abagusii language) others sing dirges and dance. This signified in partly to please the spirit of the dead person and partly to comfort the bereaved family members (Mbiti, 1992).

Fire was lit in the house of the deceased and was kept lit until the last ritual after burial was done. The fire signified the posterity of the living members of the family. Thus members of the family kept the fire burning, thus, firewood was necessary. Members of the community ensured they brought firewood and foods and ensured there was no manual work done in the village in honor of the deceased and stop death occurring soon until burial was over. The kinship and community members played a significant role in condolences to the members of the deceased. Kinship refers to the bound together by various bonds-such as based on reproduction, an inherent human drive. The desire for reproduction gives raises to two kinds of bonds-one *affinal* kin bond between spouses and their relatives’ one either side. The members are not connected to each other through blood; two *consanguineous kin*-the bond between parents and children, and that between siblings, for example, children of the same parents. The members therefore are connected in their relationship based on blood-ties (Madan and Majumdar, 1994). Therefore, all the members in kinship drive were entitled to assist in one way or the other in the process of the burial ceremony in all days the “dead body” stayed before burial. The dead body was laid on the reception room (*Eeroo*), on the left hand side near the wall and near the door (*Omorangwa*

o'gesaku). The inspection and monitoring of the dead body was done by the brothers, sisters and cousins of the deceased, for the period through after burial. The sharp stick (*Ege'churia*) on top of the roof of the house of the first wife was broken to signify the owner of the homestead has gone to where the ancestors are.

The second step or stage was burial day. If the man (husband) was a polygamist, it was customary for the dead body to be buried in the house/hut (*Enyomba*) of the first wife. For the case of other wives when death, they were buried in their respective houses (*Chinyomba Chiabo*). Dowry/Bride wealth was necessary before burial, therefore preparation was done to pay dowry/bride wealth for the one who never paid in advanced or early.

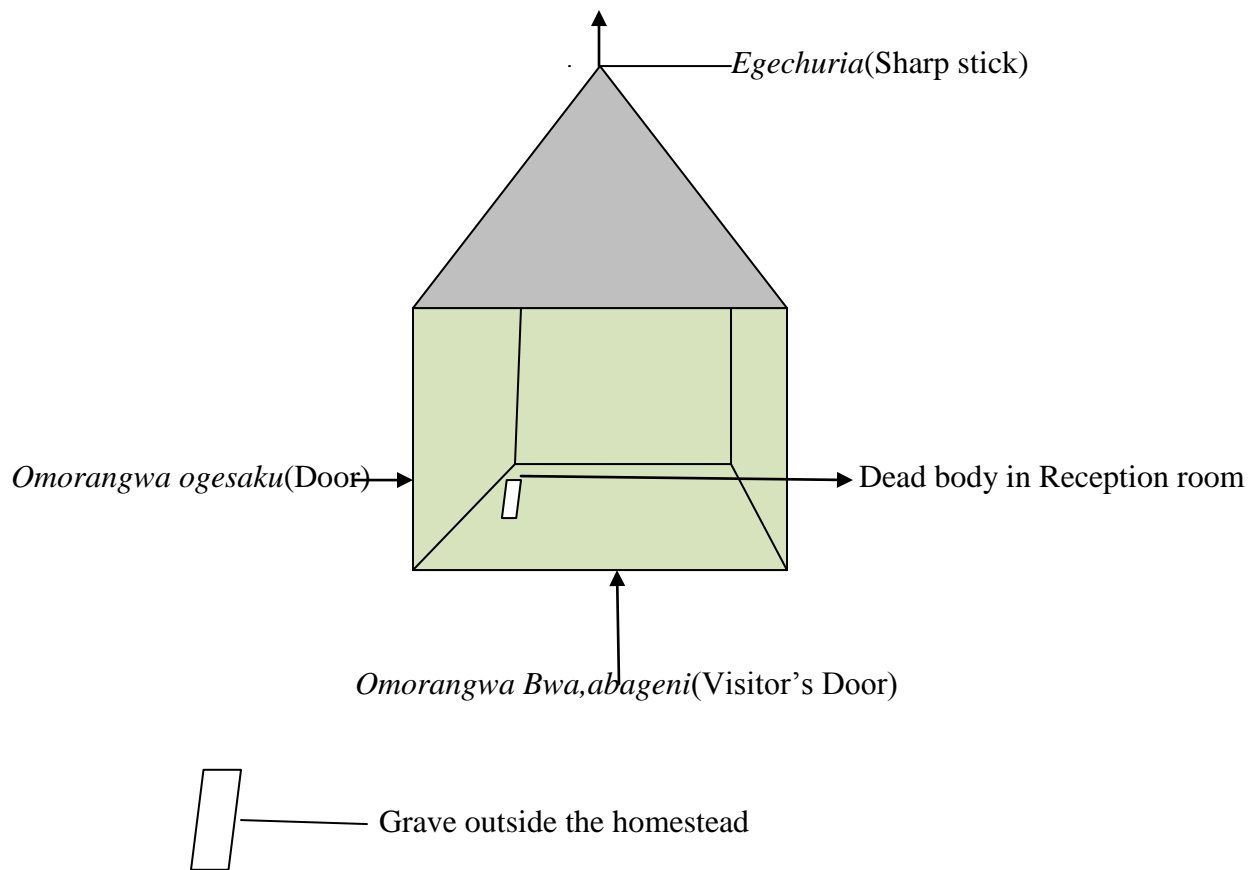


Fig.1. Anthropological illustrative Burial Model in the *Omogusii* homestead. Source, researcher, 2017

If the person died outside the homestead, probably in hospital or elsewhere, the body was brought and taken into the reception room through the visitor's door and placed/laid on the left hand side in case of husband and right in case of a wife, as illustrated in figure 1.

In the burial day, the following steps were followed in the process of burying a married man (*Omogaka Bw'omochie*). First, the bull was slaughtered for the visitors to eat in the evening of the burial in the next day. The ring (*Ebiting'e*), of the first wife were removed or cut from the legs before burial. Two Beer/alcohol was prepared by the wives of the brothers of the deceased (in-

laws), which was drunk in the third day after burial, when *Ege'churia* (sharp stick) and *Kogororokia omochie* (normalization of things in the homestead was done. Three, the wives wore clothes of the deceased husband inside-out (*Geonchorane*) to signify the loved one has left them and this ritual was known as *Ogokobania*. Four, the evening to the day of burial, all the flock/animals of the deceased which were given to the neighbors because of lack of pasture (*Sag'are*), were brought back to the homestead to sleep. The consequences of not being brought back were to die one by one. Five, in the burial day all the debts owed to deceased and the deceased owed people in the community were declared opening on the burial meeting ceremony where all people sat. Consequence was if not declared; a bad omen was to occur to a person who cheated.

Six, in the morning of the burial day there were rules or rituals followed in digging the grave as follows (a) the elders in the family kinship identified and showed the point where the grave was to be dug by grave diggers. The grave diggers were strictly the ones who had *Chisoni* (respect) to the deceased. (b) once the graveside identified, the first born boy/grandson (*omochokoro*) of the elder son of the deceased was the one to strike the first dig (*Goaka Egekamago*). before the first dig (*Goaka Egekamago*), the grandson was given cattle from the last born son of the deceased. if it was not there, a vow/promise was given, when and how to give in the witness of the community elders. In case the elder son of the deceased unfortunately did not have a son, the elder son of the second son of the deceased was eligible for the first strike of the dig of the grave (*Goaka Egekamago*). There were situations where all the sons of the deceased did not have sons, the last born son was eligible to make the first strike/dig (*Goaka Egekamago*), and was also to be given a "cow" from all the elder sons of the deceased. (c) When the first dig (*Goaka Egekamago*), was prepared to be done, all the daughters of the deceased were told to walk away from the homestead for some minutes and were called back as the grave diggers continued. (d) when the grave was being dug, the grave diggers were not supposed to talk the other grave diggers when inside the grave. They used symbolic interaction or signs in communication. The grave diggers were to enter the grave and dig alone and not two people inside digging. They were not supposed to eat, smoke or dance or drink inside the grave. (e) As the grave digging was in progress, the dead body was removed from the reception room using the door (*Omorangwa o'gesaku*) and placed outside for the people to view and give their last respect. The dead body was removed from the reception room by the brothers or cousins of the deceased alone. (f) The people were not required to mourn near where the grave was being dug. This signified that people were sad as regards the death of the deceased. Women and children were not allowed to loiter around the area where the grave was dug. (g) Once the grave was over, the old men came to inspect and confirm the depth which supposed to be 6-7 feet deep and the length and width depended on the corpse. The width and length was measured according to the deceased person and the yard stick was used at the beginning after the first strike/dig (*Goaka Egekamago*) (h). Once the elders confirmed the grave was over and reliable, the family members of the deceased (wife or wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters and other relatives) were called and the body was sent to grave to rest. In the grave, the dead body was laid to rest on the right hand side and all the clothes were thrown

inside. The soil was thrown by the wives followed by sons and daughters and immediate relatives and other community members who wished to throw. (i) a married woman and a cousin to the deceased was sent to fetch water from the river. And once water was fetched in the pot, she was not supposed to look behind or talk to anybody who met her until she reached the homestead and delivered the water to be used by the grave diggers. (J) Once the soil was thrown, the grave diggers were allowed to start filling the grave with the soil. When the filling of the soil in the grave was over, the grave diggers washed their feet and hands using the water fetched from the river. The tools which were used for digging the grave were assembled in one place without being taken for one week (k) The moment the grave was filled with soil and was over, all the mourners were called and surrounded the grave and they played and cried/weep/mourned at once (*Okoeerera*) and the sound was heard from everybody present as “*Obeee obeee...eee..eee..eee* x3 for at least five minutes. (l) After *Okoeerera* (all people crying/weeping/mourning) at once for three to five minutes was over, the mourners dispersed at their own to their respective homes. It should be noted, nobody was allowed to leave the burial ceremony before *Okoeerera* was over.

The third step or stage was “**After burial**”. This was the day of burial (*Ogotindika*) and second day of burial (*Eburu*). In the funeral (*Eburu*), the funeral songs were sung in praise of the deceased person. The songs that are analyzable as funeral songs revolve around the phenomenon of death and how it is perceived. The funeral songs express the pain of losing a close relative through death and the futility of mourning (Obote, 1997). This day was set aside for only weeping or mourning for the death and was known as “*Eburu*”. Funeral (*Eburu*) was to allow the people and relatives who were far apart and had no chance of attending the funeral to come and mourn for the deceased. Some people came from far and even from the neighboring tribes such as Luos, Kipsigis, Maasai and Kurias depending on the popularity of the deceased. The members of the immediate consanguineous kinship especially wife/wives and their children were not supposed to move out of the homestead, because people were coming for condolences. The animals especially cattle, goats, donkeys and sheep were brought to pass on the grave to mourn the death. According to Mbiti (1992), among the Abaluhya, the following the cattle drive, the hair-shaving ceremony is performed.

The third day after burial, there was a ceremony known as “*Amatitia*”-which was conducted through slaughtering a s/he goat if the death was a man/husband or woman/wife and the drinks were taken especially ‘*Amarwa*’ (*Busaa*) (alcohol), songs were sung marking the end of the story of the deceased was over. The elder oversees the ceremony and ensured every member was contented and was allowed to drink and eat. The fire which was lit in the first day when death occurred was left to go off but was not put-off by anybody. The sharp stick on-top of the roof of the house/hut which was broken was replaced by a new one and stuck. The glasses which were removed were returned to the roof. The properties of the kinship of the deceased such as clothes and other things were shared among the family members. All the family members of the deceased were shaved (*Kogingerwa*) the whole head to signify losing their beloved member. After shaving (*Kogingerwa*), the kinship members were set free or allowed to walk out of the

homestead, do all kinds of manual work and go to do their work activities in their houses especially the married sons and daughters of the deceased. They were also allowed to go back their places of work if they are employed.

Literature Review

The burial systems among the abagusii have undergone four phases of burial process systems. These include, evolutionary, revolutionary, pro-revolutionary and post revolutionary. The first phase was “**Evolutionary**”-a situation where the process of burial was simple where a dead body was buried immediately after death. The dead body was buried using the animal skin no coffin was used. The sin was spread inside the grave and the body was laid down and on the left or right hand facing the side depending sex differentiation. The man/husband was laid facing right and the woman/wife facing left side inside the grave. This was done in the 18th century and early 19th century. In this period, there were few people and the land was forested and there were a lot wild animals and disturbed people during the night so people preferred to burry immediately when death was confirmed. Too this period few people occupied the land and very few died because no major diseases were experienced except malaria and pneumonia.

The second phase was “**Revolutionary**”-when a person died, where the dead body could stay be kept for one to two days by use of indigenous methods of embalmment. In this phase people changed because of advanced ideas through the introduction of education by the missionaries. The phase experienced changes in the African societies where a lot of changes occurred through the Christian converts and the missionaries had constructed hospitals with mortuaries, where dead bodies were preserved for some day before burial. The changes in African societies were brought up by the agents of change such as Christian missionaries, explorers, education systems and so on.

The third phase was “**Prerevolutionary**”-man had advanced in the society and led to burial ceremony to be advanced. The coming of Christianity, converted Africans into Christianity and due to Christianity the Abagusii peoples changed their attitudes, values and behavior towards burial systems. The dead body was buried after a week and beyond, since the body was preserved and kept in the mortuary in hospitals. The early missionaries and explorers thought the African had no beliefs. But traditional African beliefs are based on the individual’s self awareness, his relationship with his environment and the world beyond. (Bahahemuka, 1984).Every traditional Abagusii were and became religious people to the extent that their actions were part of religious beliefs. This was done to appease “Mumbo” or “Nyamumbo” (God).The Abagusii had“Nyamumboism” religion (The religion of God) in Gusiiland, (Okebiro, 2016).

The fourth phase was **post-revolutionary**, where people have abandoned African traditional heritage which were analog to modern practices which are digital. Communication and technology has been improved and advanced making Abagusii abandoning some of the beliefs

and rituals practiced in the burial ceremony. The converts into Christianity changed the whole system of the burial but other beliefs and rituals were infused into Christian community. Till nowadays the burial ceremony in many families among the Abagusii in Gusiiland are intermingled and mixed with African beliefs and rituals and Christian beliefs and rituals. Many family members are Christians, but unfortunately during death and burial ceremony, some beliefs and rituals are done in connection with Christian beliefs and rituals.

Methodology

The research adopts analytical method through the empirical primary data collected from the Abagusii elders. The research is descriptive analytical design and interview technique was used to collect data from old man who knows the beliefs and rituals. The research was based on three major sources, oral, primary and secondary data. Kombo and Tromp (2006), noted, concerning descriptive design, that such studies are not only restricted to fact finding, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and providing solutions to significant problems.

The findings

The results indicate that in modern contemporary society, the Abagusii people do not value burial rituals and customs. The sons and daughters leave the homestead immediately after burial to go and attend the chorus of work in towns. There is no second day crying /respect (*Eburu*) for deceased. The process of burial ceremony has been eroded or forgotten, in either normal or abnormal deaths.

In the first step of the process of normal burial ceremony, the following findings were given in the primary source;(a) the members of the community and family members do not observe the rites of passage and rituals of burial for example do not lit fire and keep it burning until the burial day and after burial ceremony.(b)the members of the family and the community, after taking the dead body to mortuary, they come and continue to operate their business, go to work in farms until the day of taking the dead body from the mortuary to the homestead for burial.(C)The sharp stoic on- top of the grass thatched house(*Egechuria*) is not broken because nowadays people build houses using corrugated iron sheets. But on-top of the house one ridge is supposed to be removed to mark ritual,which is not done in the post revolutionary phase.(d)The wearing of the clothes inside-out(*Geonchorane*) or “*Ogokobania*” which was meant to retain a woman not to run away, is not practiced or observed by the wives or husbands respectively in the contemporary society. This concurs with Abaluhya,where the widow danced with spears in her hands, singing the dirges and if she has passed the child bearing age, she puts on the garment of her dead husband, something which young widow would not dare to do or else she would never bear more children(Mbiti,1992).(e)The flock of animals of the deceased which were on the neighbors homestead(*Sagare*) are not brought back on the evening of the day of burial as it was a custom to “mourn for their owner”.(f).All People with debts of the deceased do not declare the money they

owed the deceased. They keep silent as the members of the family did not know the transactions of the deceased.(g)Nowadays, the grave diggers talk, eat, dance, drink alcohol and mourn inside the grave.(h) when the deceased was to be removed from the reception, it is only the brothers or cousins who were supposed to do the work. But these days, the sons, daughters, even those who have respect (*Chinsoni*) to the deceased assist in carrying the dead body from the reception room outside.(i) There is no *Okoeerera* (all people crying/weeping/mourning)at once for three to five minutes was over, the mourners dispersed at their own to their respect homes.(j)Nowadays people including sons and daughters leave the burial ceremony before *Okoeerera* was over.

Conclusion

Basing the findings the it is concluded in the ancient time,Abagusii conducted the burial ceremony of the death honorably as compared to the modern society where members of the deceased bury their deceased person disgrace and un honorably by moving to their respect work immediately after burial day. It is concluded that the un honored burial ceremonies lead to curses and as consequence more deaths. In many African societies for instance the Akamba believe that death is a passage leading to the life beyond. The Mukamba, therefore does not die, but rather goes home (Bahahemuka, 1984).This means s/he has been called by the ancestors and s/he goes to join them in the spirit world. So the relationship between the living members, the spirits and the spirit-world is very important to us. That is why the Abagusii processed the burial ceremony of the deceased with honor. They believed that the spirits are beings who are neither human nor deities.

Recommendation

It is recommended for harssening the African traditional knowledge, the Abagusii should follow the burial rituals and customs to suppress more deaths to occur in families.Christianity, westernization and modernization should not interfere with beliefs and rituals of the Abagusii people, since an African in an African even though becomes Christianized or westernized.

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