



JJEOSHS

ISSN: 2618-1517

Jumuga Journal of Education,
Oral Studies, and Human Sciences (JJEOSHS)

editor@jumugajournal.org

<http://www.jumugajournal.org>

Volume 3, No. 1, 2020

African Indigenous Guidance and Counselling & Child Socialization Agents:
Evaluating Aembu peoples' Perception in the Redeemed Gospel Church, Embu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to evaluate the perception of Pentecostal Christians in regard to the importance of the indigenous guidance and counselling among the Aembu indigenous society. In the latter, they socialized their children from birth to puberty. In a nutshell, emphasis is given to transitional rites of passage. Transitional rites of passage served as important tools of child socialization which was meant to instil moral values among the Aembu youths. In our contemporary society, many adolescents face moral issues which often call for intensive child socialization from home and church circles. In its theoretical framework, the article used the structural functional theory. Qualitative approach was applied as the determinant design. The article reveals that there are moral issues among the youth and that there are useful Aembu teachings and practices which were used in the Aembu indigenous society as socialization tools in order to instil moral values among youths to solve morality issues. The article concludes that there is an urgent need to put in place alternative rites of passage with the sole aim of coming up with effective child socialization programs.

Key words: alternative rites of passage, counselling. Moral issues, socialization, Transitional initiation rites.

Introduction

Prior to the introduction of Christianity, African domestic life was full of special ritualistic observances which were characterised by solemn ceremonies. These ritualistic ceremonies pointed out the progression of individuals from the rite of birth through weaning rites, puberty, to maturity and old age (Max 1968: 54). These served as child socialization tools. Socialization in the African indigenous society was also observed as a measure of shaping up individuals so as to make them fit

into the communalistic society. As responsible members of the community, they were now expected to build adequate survival skills through socialisation and/or through informal education (Mwaniki 1974, Gathogo 2007 & Mbiti (1992). In African traditional life, Mugambi (1989:151) argues that the education and training, which was given at the stage of initiation, was vital for the community's maintenance of its self-understanding and for providing all individuals with the opportunity to learn what the community expected of them. Initiation provided the social development of an individual. Through initiation, a social identity, a sense of social emotional anchorage for the growing child was formed. Mwaniki (1998:51) posits that moral education in traditional African society aimed at helping every individual to grow towards responsible maturity within his/her community.

Parents and elderly persons in both nuclear and extended families have a responsibility to form solid foundations for physical, emotional, moral and intellectual education for the growing children. Since the family, as an institution, is charged with the responsibility of socializing its children well, this article sought to find out if among Redeemed Gospel Church members Aembu traditional teachings and practices were useful during the socialization of children that was aimed at instilling moral values, as in the case of addressing morality related issues among the adolescents. A youth conference held at St. Teresa Girls Secondary School, from 14th Dec to 18th Dec 2015, indicated that the youth, at the age of 8 to 12 years, were tutored on the following topics: salvation, obedience, supporting parents, commitment and discipline. Those who were at the age brackets of 13 to 17 years were taught holiness, youth and finances, gifts of the Holy Spirit, obedience, giving and cults and occultism. The ones who were eighteen years and above were tutored on the following topics: courtship and marriage, youth and the ministry, youth and money, holiness, gifts of the Holy Spirit, youth and the dark side of life and cults and occultism. During one of the area rallies at Runyenjes, the following topics were taught: Pastors' children and the ministry, self-control, dating and marriage, power of prayer and disadvantages of FGM. However, child socialization was still wanting.

It was of paramount importance to find out how the Redeemed Gospel Church members view the usefulness of Aembu traditional teachings and practices while socializing children because studies carried out on child socialization show that there were useful transitional rites of passage used by different African communities to socialize children who were eventually able to fit in the society as responsible sons and daughters. Of importance to note is Lancaster & Leonardo's (1997:310) explanation that the Hofriyat of Northern Sudan had some rites of passage that were observed by the family and the society. They included birth, adolescents' puberty rituals, marriage and death rituals while Ruggyema 1983:82) observes that the social life among the Bakiga of Southwest Uganda were governed by rites, taboos and regulations. In Kenya, the Akamba had rites of passage which were used to socialize children. They included birth, puberty, marriage and death rituals according to Mbiti (1992:132).

On the other hand, Kenyatta (1938:99) posits that socialization began at birth and ended at death among the Agikuyu, anglicized Kikuyu. Indeed, he contends that a child passed through various stages of age-groupings that were tagged with their appropriate tools of socialization. Since *wega umaga na mucii* (every good tiding is bestowed by one's kindred), there was teaching of children in the family and clan traditions (*kirira kia mucii*) among the Agikuyu. Mwaniki (1988:4) avers that there were rites of passage which were used to socialize children among the Aembu. These rites of passage included birth, naming, puberty, marriage and death rituals Initiation into adulthood provided special opportunities for focused teaching on matters of family life. Karanja (1999:6) is of the opinion that the rites of passage which were used to socialize children helped to uphold morality in the society

Studies carried out by scholars such as Nandwa & Bukenya (1983:9), Gecaga (2004), Mweru (2005:37) & Gitome (2011:114) on African child socialization indicate that as children grew up, they were socialized into the society using lullabies, narratives, proverbs, songs, dances, legends, myths and tongue twisters as teaching media. Wandibba (2003) observes that moral values formed the bedrock of the socialization which was given to children as they grew up. Karanja (2003:83) avers that songs were used to admonish wayward behavior proverbs taught about tolerance, obedience, kindness and diligence while stories, dances, songs, rituals and feasts were the roots and pillars of people's way of life.

According to Mbiti (1990:92), birth and childhood are a religious process in which the child is constantly flooded with religious activities and an attitude starting long before it is born. On the other hand, Mugambi and Kirima (1976:26) contend that one of the ways of keeping the dead immortal or in living memory was through naming children after the departed members of the family. As part of child socialization, Mweru (2005:37) explains that when children began to talk, they were taught the correct manner of speech through mimicking, repetition and practicing. They also learnt important names in the family's past and present and when they started walking, they were taught how to walk and sit properly by observing and practicing. They were also taught how to use their hands.

Gitome (2011:120) argues that most of the African peoples had initiation rituals and ceremonies which signalled the psychological messages of change from childhood to adulthood. She notes initiation rituals are varied from one group to another but the moral, psychological and psychosocial training given is essentially the same. Gitome (2011) strengthens her argument by positing that after the physical operation, the initiates went through a period of seclusion from the society. During this absence from home, the candidates received secret instruction in matters of sexual life, marriage and family responsibilities. Mbiti (1990:131) is of the opinion that initiation rites introduce the candidates to adult life in which they are allowed to share in full privileges and duties of the community and that initiation rites prepare young people in matters of sexual life, marriage, and procreation and family responsibilities.

Like in most African traditional societies, Mwaniki (1985:74) notes the Aembu practiced initiation for both boys and girls. He contends that they were introduced to the custom of initiation by the Maasai. Circumcision of boys and clitoridectomy of girls were carried out in order to prepare them for marriage and teach them how they were supposed to carry themselves as young adults. It was time to give lessons on moral issues in the community. On the other hand, Mwaniki (1974:135) avers that a circumcision ceremony was the most crucial in a person's life and it apparently marked the initiation of the young to maturity. He posits that for anyone to be considered as an adult, he or she had to undergo the rite of circumcision. After undergoing that rite, a person was subsequently now ready to marry, give counsel and make decisions.

In his contribution towards the Aembu transitional rituals, Saberwal (1970:12) contends that the circumciser, always a Muembu was a part-time, non-hereditary specialist, learning the skill from older circumcisers and that in order to be allowed to participate in initiation rituals a boy had to pay some fees among the Wa-Embu in form of goats. To this end, the first fee paid was a goat called *mburi ya nduo* (the goat of circumcision). This was at a very early age. An initiate had to pay another goat during the time of circumcision. Saberwal (1970:13) notes that the ears of boys and girls would be pierced, as a sign that they were circumcised and this implied that their heads had "attained maturity."

Mwaniki (1974:138) posits that females were circumcised with a knife called *kienji* (a wedge shaped instrument) while boys were circumcised with a knife (*kaviu*). The circumciser of girls was

an old woman who had reached menopause or a woman who had never married. On the other hand, Mwaniki (1985:96) avers that boys were circumcised by men who were specialists in the art of circumcising and that the healing process for both boys and girls took five to seven days. Mwaniki further posits that boys and girls circumcised at the same time were considered *andu a rika* (age-mates). Subsequently, age mates circumcised during the same season constituted an age set (*irika*). Gecaga (2004) notes that during the African transitional ritual of initiation, each of the initiates had a *mutiri* or sponsor. The *mutiri* acted as a personal nurse during the process of convalescence and also as a 'teacher.' The *mutiri* taught and psychologically prepared the initiate for the rigorous exercise of circumcision. The *atiri* (plural) taught the initiates all they needed to know about duties and rights of adulthood. The *mutiri* became the personal confidante and consultant of the initiate especially during the time of crisis throughout his or her life.

According to Gachiri (2001:98), sponsors of both boys and girls spent convalescence time educating the initiates in all aspects of culture. They were taught to separate themselves and not to mix with uncircumcised ones from that time onwards. The girls in particular were told the regulations that governed relationships with co-wives, step-mothers, step-children and the consequences of gossip. Gachiri (2001) further states that a girl was taught never to tell anybody about her husband or speak about him and her relationship with him, how to take care of family property and other people's property, how to take care of borrowed goods, the meaning of womanhood, proverbs, secrets of the tribe and so forth.

Mwaniki (1974:99) avers that during the socialization at puberty, many taboos were taught to young people that forbade sexual intercourse. Insult and even ostracism were served to sexual offenders. A young man who meddled about sexually with a married woman was ostracized by his age mates and would find himself without friends. One had to watch over himself because even rumors mattered. Kenyatta (1938:125) on the other hand contends that the stigma attached to ostracism was far greater and much worse than that attached to the European form of imprisonment and many people would prefer to go to jail than be ostracized.

Mwaniki (1985:74) argues that maintenance of morality among the Aembu helped the youth to avoid unwanted pregnancies and illegitimate children. It also helped people to get rid of irresponsible sexual behaviour.

According to Mwaniki's school of thought, nobody was allowed to meddle about with anybody's daughter. If a boy was caught talking with a girl and the family of that girl was not interested in having him as their son-in-law, he was warned. If he was seen a second time, he was caught by the young warriors from the girl's family and was severely punished (Mwaniki 1974:99). Saberwal (1970:27) explains that sexual morality was taught and emphasized and that young adults were expected to completely abstain from sexual immorality. Circumcised boys were closely watched and maintained this morality. Even when they went to dance with girls, their aim was to dance and court if possible but not to have sexual relationships.

Rander (1991:36) notes that in the 19th century, Christianity was introduced in Africa and that the western missionaries were convinced that the African way of life was deprived and had to give way to that of western minded missionaries. Mwaniki (1985:74) on the other hand contends that the African way of life was replaced with dynamic ideas and a new way of life exerting influence on the static tribal life which in turn established a foreign culture quite different from the traditional culture of African people. Consequently, the strong pattern of family life education (FLE) which was normal in traditional society got lost.

Muraya (2009) is of the opinion that those who were initiated during the state of emergency were not given extensive instructions on the expected roles, values and relations. This is because

there was no time set aside for the rite and after all, these rites had been prohibited. A shift from this rite of passage had far reaching effects because it resulted in cases of young men and women indulging in premarital sex. This reveals the deficiency nature of individualistic modernized Christian circumcision which was adopted during the colonial period. Apparently, with the absence of the extensive circumcision preparations, circumcised boys and girls became very irresponsible.

A study carried out by Gecaga (2004) on child socialization observes that the family life education that accompanied the initiation rite of circumcision was very precious because it adequately prepared the youth for future responsibility while Gitome(2011:217) concludes that the absence of the African indigenous guidance and counselling that used to be in the traditional initiation school has created a crack in the social fabric and that most of the moral issues which are being experienced may subsequently be attributed to lack of rites of passage which created learning forums for both boys and girls as they grew. This calls for adoption of alternative transitional rites.

Theoretical frame work

This article used structural functional theory in its theoretical framework. Structural functional theory emerges from a combination of two related theories namely: Structuralism and functionalism, which were developed by Durkheim (1938) and Srauss (1972) respectively. Structural functional theory examines the relationship between the family and the larger society. When social scientists study family structure, they examine how the parts work together to fulfill the functions or tasks necessary for the survival of the family. The structural-functional approach is a perspective in sociology that sees society as a complex system parts working together to promote solidarity and stability. Durkheim's theory of religion exemplifies how functionalists examine sociological phenomena. To him; religion is seen by people as contributing to the health and continuation of society in general.

2.1 Methodology

The researcher used descriptive Research Design to gather information on the perception of RGC Christians in Embu County on the importance of the indigenous guidance and counselling during child socialization among the Aembu and pastoral interventions on child socialization. Descriptive survey was suitable because it involved carrying out interviews and administering questionnaires to a sample population to obtain relevant information which the researcher used to answer the questions needed for the article's data. Through descriptive survey, it was possible to get information for persons, situations and phenomena that is factual and is accurate as possible as observed by Borg and Gall (1989).

2.2 Site of the Study

This article's findings were got after collecting data in Embu East Sub-County of Embu County. This area was selected because of its cosmopolitan nature hence was able to form a sample that was representative of other areas. Embu East is made up of Runyenjes and Kyeni Sub Counties. Runyenjes has six wards while Kyeni has five according to Kenya Information Guide (2015). The study was restricted to Christians who were in RGC. Embu County lies some 120 kilometres north east of Nairobi; on South-Eastern side of Mount Kenya. The County covers an area of 2,818 square kilometres.

2.3 Article's data Population

This article's data was got from a population of people who were mainly Christians from RGC in Embu County. They included 48 married men and 84 married women, 30 children from families of married men and women respondents (between 8-17 years), 6 church elders, one bishop and two pastors. RGC Kianjokoma and RGC Runyenjes were used in the study. Both congregations had one bishop, two pastors and 1,464 members who were to be used as the total population.

3.0 The articles findings

3.1 Child socialization

This article wanted to find out whether the issue of child socialization posed any challenges among members of RGC in Embu East sub-county. 67.4% said it did not pose any challenges. However, 32.6% of the respondents were of the view that it was very true that children's socialization posed challenges. 14% of the respondents said the youths have problems which need to be addressed. Gakono (O.I.29th.5.2016) said that in some families the disciplining of children is impossible because some women do not allow their husbands to do so. One-man respondent said he had been told by his wife to stop "bartering her son". After all, he had not experienced the pain of child birth. This boy had stolen one thousand shillings from his father. The woman complained that her husband used to misused family funds by buying beer for other men, but when her son asked for any money from him, he would be told to get it from his mother. In such a family, the mother teams up with the children against her husband. This makes the husband to lose authority as the head of the family.

Concerning disciplining of children, Gatavi (O.I.29th.5.2016) during the FGD with married men and women said some parents are fond of telling the children that they would report them to either their father or mother. This happens when the children make mistakes. This reference makes the children to feel that only one parent is their disciplinarian. This leads to having a low opinion of that parent who waits to report them to the other. Both parents should punish the child on the spot if he/she makes a mistake. The church elders suggested that collective disciplining should be reconsidered in order to alleviate the challenge of child socialization.

The findings of this article collaborates a study carried out by Gecaga (2004) on child socialization. It found out that, young people would visit cinema halls, clubs, theatres and other entertainment joints away from their elders and in turn would consequently end up engaging in sex orgies, taking alcohol and sometimes abusing hard drugs. Another study by Kyomo, and Selvan (2004:98), state that the claim by many parents that the young people are unruly and untrustworthy is not baseless. Filled with false hopes and unrealistic ambitions, many young people cheat, lie, steal, rob and kill in order to get quick money. In many cases, deceit begins at home. When this happens, the stress on parents is unbearable. It may lead to family quarrels, family break-downs or complete alienation of the child concerned. If alienated, a young person is left to survive on his or her own. Such may end up being street children and become vulnerable to drugs, prostitution and HIV and AIDS.

In their contribution towards child socialization, Kalu and Hafmeyr (2005) note that it has been argued that African Christians have continued to appreciate the importance of preparing their children for responsible and mature adulthood. However, social change and development of modern education in which parents can be with their school children for only a quarter of a year during the school holidays are factors that make the socialization of adolescence both at school and

subsequently at home a great challenge. Therefore, the Church should put in place effective child socialization programmes.

3.2 Usefulness of Aembu traditional teachings and practices while socializing children

This article investigated the usefulness of Aembu traditional teachings and practices while socializing children.

Table 3.1 Usefulness of Traditional Teachings and Practices on child socialization

Aspect	Rating	Men		women		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
There are some useful traditional teachings and practices among the Aembu which can be used to socialize adolescents to handle moral issues in our contemporary society.	Strongly agree	20	15.2	30	22.7	50	37.9
	Agree	20	15.2	35	26.5	55	41.7
	Neutral	5	3.5	15	11.4	20	15.2
	disagree	2	1.5	4	3.0	6	4.5
	Strongly disagree	1	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.8
	Totals		48	36.4	84	63.6	132

The following were the article’s findings: 37.9 % of the study respondents said they strongly agreed there are some useful traditional teachings and practices among the Aembu which can be used to socialize adolescents to handle moral issues, 41.7 % said they agreed, 15.2 % were neutral, and 4.5% said they disagreed while 0.8 % said they strongly disagreed.

Ireri, one of the church elders, (O.I.19th.6.2016) said one of the things that used to be done in the Aembu traditional society that can be useful in child socialization is use of the extended family to assist like it used to do in the past. This study supports an earlier study by Muriithi (2018) which observes that parents and older relatives were actively involved in child socialization. Socialization of children was carried out by the family, clan members both men and women but not parents alone hence the Aembu proverb, “*mwana ti wa mundu umwe*” (a child does not belong to one person).

In the FGD with church elders, Njue (O.I.19th.6.2016) while responding to Aembu traditional teachings and practices which can be helpful in child socialization among RGC Christian families noted that the youth should be counselled thoroughly like they used to be during the time of initiation in order to prepare them well for their future roles as responsible husbands and wives. This can help them to face the future with confidence and with the ability to take care of their families. Muthoni, one of the women respondents (O.I.29th.5.2016) informed the researcher that parents should not try to bring their children up the way they were brought up. Times have changed and children are not growing up in the same generation and environment like the one their parents grew up in. She also said that it is good to understand children as individuals. They should not be misjudged. There should be dialogue between parents and children.

During the FGD with married men and women Kithaka (O.I.26.5.2016) told the researcher that the initiation rites which were being carried out among the Aembu young people had social significance and should consequently be replaced with different rituals which will have the same social significance. He noted that in the contemporary society, girls are disadvantaged because unlike boys who are circumcised and have sponsors, girls do not have such people to guide them.

This is because clitoridectomy is outlawed in Kenya for it is a form of gender based discrimination. It may also have negative effects on the health and sex life of the girls who undergo it.

Njeri, one of the women respondents, (O.I 29th.5.2016) said that upholding high standards of morality should be carried out. She explained that among the Aembu, young people used to sanction any of their age mates who were promiscuous. She noted that when there was teenage pregnancy, the victim would suffer stigmatization and that some young men also involve themselves sexually with elderly women in exchange for money which in turn exposes them to the likelihood of getting infected with HIV and AIDS and other UTI. This article’s findings corroborate an earlier study by Gecaga (2004) in which she argues that the church should develop pastoral programmes to deal with moral issues because the church as a centre for moral development needs to counsel those youths who are already in difficult circumstances instead of alienating them.

3.4 effectiveness of Aembu Indigenous guidance and counselling

This article sought to find out how effective the Aembu indigenous guidance and counselling was during child socialization in Redeemed Gospel Church Embu County. The findings are shown on table 3.2.

Table 3.2 effectiveness of Aembu Indigenous guidance and counselling

Rating	Men		Women		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very high	4	3.0	19	14.4	23	17.4
High	13	9.8	15	11.3	28	21.1
Average	27	20.6	36	27.3	63	47.9
Low	4	3.0	6	4.5	10	7.5
Very low	0	0.0	8	6.1	8	6.1
Total	48	36.4	84	63.6	132	100.0

The following were the article’s findings; 17.4% of the study respondents felt it was very high, 21.1% said it was high, majority who formed 47.9% said it was average, 7.5% said it was low while 6.1% said it was very low.38% rated the effectiveness of Aembu indigenous guidance and counselling as high after considering its positive aspects. The 47% who rated them as average considered both the positive and the negative aspects while the 13.6% who said the effectiveness of Aembu indigenous guidance and counselling in child socialization was low may have considered the negative aspects only. The respondents in this article may have considered the availability of man power, the willingness of the learners, the medium of socialization as well as moral issues among the youth in the contemporary society.

3.5.1 Sunday School Children and Teens programmes

This article sought to establish whether in RGC there were rallies and camps for Sunday school children and teens.

Table 3.3 Sunday School Children and Teens programmes

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	86.4
No	3	13.6
Total	22	100.0

The findings were as follows: 86.4% of the teen respondents indicated there were rallies and camps for Sunday school children, while 13.6% said they did not have. Those who said they did not have rallies and camps for Sunday school and teens in their churches may have been members who were perhaps absent from the church during such activities. This absenteeism is likely to have made them unaware of the programmes that go on in their churches. Others could have been new members who were not yet familiar with their churches’ programmes.

When asked who teaches during the pastoral programmes, teen respondents gave the following feedback: 40.8% teens stated that they were taught by the pastor, 31.7% teachers invited by the pastor while 13.7% stated church elders, 9.2% said they were taught by departmental leaders in the church and 4.6% said they were taught by professionals from the church. The findings lead to the conclusion that the Church should involve more knowledgeable people to teach in her child socialization programmes.

3.5.2 Frequency of Attendance to Rallies and Camps

This article intended to establish how frequent the attendance of rallies and camps was in RGC, Embu County when they were organized for Sunday school children and teens.

Table 3.4 Frequency of Attendance to Rallies and Camps

Category	Boys		Girls		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1 to 2 times	3	13.6	5	22.6	8	36.2
3 to 4 times	3	13.6	4	18.2	7	31.8
5 to 6 times	1	4.6	2	9.1	3	13.7
7 and above	2	9.1	1	4.6	3	13.7
None	1	4.6	0	0	1	4.6
Total	10	45.5	12	54.5	22	100.0

The teen respondents gave this article the following findings: 4.6% said they had never attended any rally or camp, 36.2% said they had attended between one to two times, 31.8% said they had attended between three to four times. Those who had attended between five and six times and between seven times and above were 13.7% respectively. The findings indicate the youth and teens need to be encouraged by their parents and spiritual leaders to attend child socialization programmes more.

3.5.3 Subjects Taught During Rallies and Camps

According to the findings of this article, it was revealed that during the rallies and seminars for teens, 18% attested to have been taught parental respect, 14 % said they had been taught church doctrines while 9%indicated spiritual growth. The teens also said they were taught prayers; 23 % supported that view. Sexual purity was taught and this view was supported by 14 % of the teen respondents. Helping the needy was mentioned and supported by 9 %. Communication skills was mentioned as having been taught by 4 % of the teens who were interviewed while 9% indicated drug abuse had been covered.

This article has shown that RGC Embu County makes efforts of child socialization. In deed obedience, respect for parents, being godly and sexual purity is taught to the youth. Nonetheless, we still have moral issues among them sexual immorality which have consequences. This leads to the conclusion that young people should be taught the dangers of premarital sex and the benefits of abstinence. In Genesis 39: 7 -12, Joseph said he could not commit adultery with Potiphar’s wife. He asked; “How then can I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” Apparently, young people should avoid sexual immorality like Joseph. This will reduce teenage pregnancies, spread of HIV and UTIs which may be caused by premarital sexual irresponsible behaviour.

3.6 Premarital counselling

This article intended to find out whether RGC in Embu East sub-county had given premarital counselling during its socialization programmes.

Table 3.5 Premarital Counseling

Aspect	Rating	Men		Women		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Before marriage I was given premarital counselling	Strongly agree	16	12.1	22	16.7	38	28.8
	Agree	4	3.0	8	6.1	12	9.1
	Neutral	2	1.5	13	9.8	15	11.3
	Disagree	18	13.7	17	12.8	35	26.5
	Strongly disagree	8	6.1	24	18.2	32	24.3
Totals		48	36.4	84	63.6	132	100

The article got the following feedback: Those who said they strongly agreed were given premarital counselling were 28.8%, those who said they agreed were 9.1%; the neutral ones were 11.3% while those who disagreed were 26.5% and those who strongly disagreed were 24.3%. The findings indicated much needs to be done in order to ensure all the adolescents are given premarital counselling aimed at equipping them for their future roles as adults. It can be concluded that unlike among the Aembu indigenous society in which care was taken to ensure nobody entered marriage without getting the necessary premarital counselling, some members of RGC Embu County do not get the teachings aimed at helping them cope as adults in their marital life. This may make them poor parents who may consequently be unable to socialize their growing children effectively. This leads to the conclusion that much needs to be done by the Church to socialize the growing children effectively to avoid teenage related challenges among them.

The decline of African indigenous method of instilling knowledge as observed by Gitome (2011:114) has left many communities without effective training and socialization processes for their children. Institutions that have taken up the socialization process of the adolescents in the place of the African indigenous pubertal rituals tend to be ill-equipped in helping adolescents acquire the relevant social skills expected of them. As a result, Gitome strengthens her argument by adding that children are left on their own because their parents are too busy to get time to socialize them. In the long run, the society ends up with children who are not well socialized. She feels that adolescents need to be helped to take an active position in development of their own relationship and values so as to grow up as a strong stable, confident and secure people. Adolescents in most churches who are a replica of most adolescents in the rest of Africa go through uncertainties and pressures from peers and conflicting messages from the electronic media. She concludes by stating that these messages cause them to develop anxiety about bodily changes. They get misguided about their sexuality and issues to do with boy/girl relationships and that they may also result to drug and alcohol abuse; go through a poor search of identity and spiritual enrichment. All these problems are further enhanced by peer pressure.

Haselbarth (2008:67) posits guidance and counselling can be offered to groups or individuals and that part of it has to happen in schools, in youth-work and in lay-training. Gecaga (2004) argues that the churches parallel the African indigenous community structure that previously gave support to adolescents as they moved from one stage to the other in the course of their social and psychological development. She strengthens her argument by contending that the church as a societal watchdog has a task of establishing a position that safeguards Christian uprightness in an African setting whose base values are deeply rooted in the indigenous initiation teaching.

4.1 Conclusions

The article found out that in RGC Embu County, there was socialization of children which needed to be improved in order to effectively instill in children moral values aimed at making them morally upright African Christians. The research concludes that RGC Embu County should integrate compatible Aembu teachings and practices on child socialization to be able to alleviate morality issues in the society. The loss of African culture that upheld morality has contributed much in increased moral issues among the youth in the contemporary society. This is because in the past, children were taught by their parents and then afterwards, they were handed over to the community. This changed with the introduction of formal education. The parents entrusted their children to the teachers and they hoped they would be taught everything including FLE. This has not been the case. Therefore, the government, parents and the church should restructure the teaching of children and the youth in order to equip them with FLE like they used to be equipped in the African traditional society.

As the proverb goes, “*Njokoma mbaro yumaga ikuriro*” meaning that a good club is gotten from the bottom trunk of a tree. Thus, if the church and the entire society would like to have a morally upright society, it has to socialize the youth effectively as they grow up. Socialization of children through guidance and counselling will make the youth to know what is acceptable and unacceptable in the society. In view of this, the African church should revisit the African system of initiation rites where the youth were prepared for a holistic and progressive life cycle. These initiation rites should be revisited, reintroduced but modified to suit the government regulations on educational the system. Alternative rites of passage for both boys and girls should be introduced since the traditional ones can impact negatively on the girls’ health and does not have its former wealth of knowledge in which moral teachings were given which brought about social cohesion. In

our view, based on the findings, alternative rites of passage will forge an effective and powerful tool which will prepare boys and girls to fit in the society and address moral issues. Certainly, it may offer as an effective child socialization tool in our contemporary society.

5.1 Acknowledgement

Redeemed Gospel Church administration and the National Science and Technology Council (Nacosti) of Kenya have been acknowledged by the authors for giving them permission to carry out the research.

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