

## **SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF TRADITIONAL FUNERAL RITES IN EZZALAND, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated socio-religious and economic implications of traditional burial and funeral rites, using Ezzaland (as its scope). The purpose of this dissertation was to find solution to the burden of socio-religious duty of sending the dead home to the world of the ancestors by bereaved family, impact on families, causes of joy and merriment instead of mourning and sympathy, justification for expensive burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland, Nigeria. Data for this work were collected using primary and secondary sources. The collected data were interpreted using the cultural and qualitative models. This work finally reveals the following: The practice of burial and funeral rites is culturally normative in Ezzaland, and it is a social reality. It discovers also, that the existence of burial and funeral rites in their cultural and religious forms grant their socio-legal acceptance in Ezzaland. Furthermore, it reveals that the structural framework of Ezza society permits burial and funeral rites as part of the institutions in Ezzaland to perform various functions which include: socialization, social control, symbol-media of communion and platform to remember the dead. The death of any member of the family leaves them with fear, sorrow and pain. Therefore, the duty owed to dead by the living is a befitting burial. However, the rites associated with burial and funeral rites are meant to send the dead home to the world of the ancestors. But in doing this, the process has rather become very expensive that people now wince under the burden of this socio-religious duty of sending their dead home. It reels that this problem has caused families a lot of socio-religious and economic problems such as poverty, indebtedness, prostitution, child labor, abortion, destitution, death, violation of human rights, environmental pollution and desecration of environmental sustainability.*

### **Introduction**

Funeral rites in Ezzaland are characterized with social, religious and economic crises which range from repudiation of social norms, disobedience to some Traditional and Christian religious principles to violations of environmental rights of man and rights to ordered community existence. These crises concomitantly breed vices with burdensome socio-religious and economic

implications in Ezzaland. These problems are manifest in poverty, school dropout, ostentatious culture of waste, hypocrisy, camouflage, class conflict, air pollution, noise pollution, epidemics predicated on open defecation, pollutions of the hydrosphere and the lithosphere, financial indebtedness and abject poverty.

In addition, these problems lead to unwholesome practices in the forms of dubious business practices, cheating, stealing, corruption, looting and armed robbery. The challenges also include emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from heavy vehicular traffic and generating plants for life musical band public address systems. More still, there exist conglomeration of noises from music life band and public address systems, traditional music instruments such as native talking drums *now* and metal gongs *ogene ndi Igbo*. At the same time, there is littering of the environment with waste cans, cellophane bags, plastic plates and spoons. Again, sexual assaults on women at wake keeps and unwanted pregnancies constitute some of the implications of expensive burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland.

Participants in the celebration of burial outing *Igba Osukwa* dress in war like attire in Ezzaland. Every one ties wrapper on his waist and palm leaf tendril (*Omu*) on his head. As they move in group. They sing war song:

*kweke kweke*

*Ebule bu isi eje ogu*

*Kweke ebule bu isi eje ogu.*

This song has no English translation rather, it has connotation of dominant and zealous spirit of an Ezza man to overcome the enemy, like the Spartans who never surrender. The song also has the connotation of Ezza's belief that any upright man or woman who dies at good old age lives after dead in the spirit world and may also reincarnates into the human world. The worry which necessitates this work is that in spite of modernity, the Ezza people still indulge in expensive burial and funeral rites which have negative socio-religious and economic implications on the people.

The scope of this work could be seen from two angles. The first is the content and the other is the area covered which is Ezzaland in Ebony state, Nigeria. It comprises of two local Government areas namely Ezza North and Ezza South local Government areas. The capital of Ezza North is Ebiaji while the capital of

Ezza South is Onueke, where the home of the founder of Ezza Ezekuna is domiciled. Ezza South is made up of twelve communities namely Amana, Amaezekwe, Amegu, Idembia, Nsokara, Amudo, Okoffia, Ezzama, Amuzu, Echara, Amaewula and Ameka. Ezza North comprises of the following Oriuzor, Umuogbara, Umuezeokoha, Nkomoro, Umuezeoka, Ogboji, Ezzagu and Eka. The territory mentioned above shares boundary with Ezzangbo, the Ntezi, the Okpoto and Agba to the West. In the north, it bounds with Izzi. To the east, Ezza People shares boundary principally with the Ikwo and Agbo clan of Cross River State, while to the south, it share boundary with the Akpoha and Amasiri, Afikpo, Ugwulangwu and the Oshiri communities bound them to the south

**Methodology** The research employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The data collected were analysed using phenomenological approach which enabled the researcher to observe the activities of the people during funeral rites ceremonies. Literature for the work was drawn from books, journals, newspaper, articles and magazines. In this qualitative research, the data indicate the compatibility of one finding with another. The use of the descriptive research technique was employed. The results of the descriptive research were used in discussing socio-religious and economic implications of elaborate and expensive traditional burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland, Nigeria.

### **Burial Rites *ili ozu***

Kanu (2019) observes that “one of the common rituals among the diverse African societies is the life circle rituals’ (p.26). Burial rites means first part of last rites of passage of man or woman in relation to physical burial or the act of committing a dead person’s body or corpse into the mother earth. Burial rites are distinct from funeral rites. While the former is the interment rites of a body of a deceased, funeral rites constitute the rites of passage and takes place after burial rites. In this work for the purpose of clarity burial and funeral are used interchangeably

### **Funeral rites *ikwa ozu***

Funeral rites constitute the last part of the last rites of passage of human being which represent rituals and practical measures taken to assist the dead to achieve his or her destiny, and sometimes to save the living from the dreaded molestation by the dead. They are carried out as second burial or proper burial for the dead in Ezzaland. Metuh (1999) concludes that, “The purpose of death rite is simply the interment of the corpse, whereas the purpose of funeral rite is to assure the deceased of entrance to

the spirit world" (p.174). His view is in tandem with Ezza belief and practices in relation to burial and funeral rites. Their belief involves a complex number of beliefs and practices, prayers and rituals used to remember the dead and usually undertaken in honour of the death. In this work, rites are understood and applied as entitlements that are preformed methodically according to a set pattern on behalf of the deceased during the first or second burial

## **Conceptual Framework**

### *Burial Rites ili uzu*

Burial rites are the rites of passage. The word rites of passage was coined and first used by the German anthropologist, A. V. Genep far back in 1909. He argues that in simple societies, every change that could be thought of as passage from one state to another was ritualized. Genep (1909) in his work observes that burial rites are group of ceremonies carried out in connection to the interment and inhumation of the death.

The functional role of rites of passage is important to the individuals, groups and society. In traditional Ezza society birth rites, puberty rites and death rites are rites of passages which are both obligatory and sacrosanct institutions in the socio-structural framework of Ezzaland. Parrinder (1969) concludes in his work that burial rites are connected with rites of passage. He identifies two burials; the first and the second or final burial rites. This contribution has taken decades and this idea is still relevant to the religious beliefs and practices. On the other hand, he fails to differentiate between the qualifications of the beneficiaries of the burial and the funeral rites.

Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) point to two important kinds of burial ceremonies for every adult who dies a good death in Igboland. The first ceremony is the physical burial of the body, while the second burial is intended to make the dead man secure his place in the company of the ancestors. They submit that, "Both burials are characterized by great feasts; singing, drumming, clapping, dancing and general rejoicing" (p.258). The above depends on the high social status of the deceased man or the relative's financial capability. However, this work does not consider socio-religious and economic implications of burial and funeral rites which have assumed the status of social narcotic in Ezzaland.

Madu (2003) writes on rites of passage in traditional and modern Igbo society. Human life from birth to death is ritually celebrated. He maintains that, "Rites of

passage celebrate transition from one phase to the other. It means that one's movement involves separating oneself from the former status and thus transiting into another status" (p.25). There is substance in articulating man's helplessness in the face of the mysteries surrounding him which is said to be responsible for his dependence on ritual actions. More still, burial rites are the first part of the last rites of separating the dead from the physical life to the ancestral world.

Ilogu (1979) points out that, after sometime of not performing these rites and rituals for the decease, the family will start experiencing some difficulties. Such bad visit could result to accident, barrenness, late marriages, hard lucks and premature death. This is often regarded as generational curses because it continues recurring in the family. This view is in tandem with occurrences in Ezzaland.

Metuh (1981) remarks that the aims of burial rituals are: "first to absolve the deceased of his transgression and to rid off all obstacles which could impede his entrance into the spirit land. And then pray for the deceased to-re-incarnate and bring greater blessing to the family" (p.117). During the ritual ceremony, the divinities are asked to receive the dead and keep him in peace and also the deceased not to obstruct the family on earth rather to send them more blessings. This shows that death rites and rituals are necessary for the dead to enter into the spirit land. Hence, in Ezzaland, funeral rites are meticulously and purposefully prosecuted to create wealth for the death in the ancestral world.

He remarks that happiness of the dead according to African beliefs, depend largely on the type of burial accorded him during and after death. To go home unhappy person means the wroth of his spirit to the departed family, his spirit would constantly visit the family members to torment them. There is no doubt that the coming of bad spirit is not a healthy visit to the living. He also observes that at burial rites and rituals the mourners and sympathizers from various clans or ethnic groups gather together, they feast, drink, dance and make new friends or renew their old friendship and induce a relation of crowd behaviour. In this way the individual lose their sense of individualism or separateness and isolation as a result of the inevitable excitement. Agha's definition of rituals as ways of performing religious acts is in tandem with the beliefs Ezza people. Consequently death rites and rituals are one important means our fore fathers used to promote good moral behaviour in the society in one hand and enhancing the passage of a deceased into the ancestral world on the other hand.

Refusal of any family to perform the traditional rituals for their deceased sometimes result to difficult times like failure in business, lack of promotion in areas of work and poor harvests in agricultural practices. Such family may not locate their problems, rather they accuse their neighbor and relatives as the source of their predicaments. The perspective of Nzomiwu (2012) on the concept of burial rites is that the body of the deceased is given a ritual bath, anointed with cam wood, dressed in his or her best regalia and laid in state. The work of Nzomiwu on the concept of burial rites is at one with Ezza cultural rite of passage in a way. In Ezzaland, wailing and prayer are essential components of rites of passage.

### **Funeral Rites *ime ekwa* or *igheye oku***

The idea of second burial is to ensure that no ritual element has been left unperformed, so that the danger of misfortune brought about by the displeasure of the deceased may be averted. Basden (1966) in his work affirms that funeral rites among the Igbo have differing customs and its practice has its own peculiar adaptation. He concludes that "Second burial is the name adopted by Europeans, from that time, to all intents and purpose, there are two burials the first real, the second by proxy" (p.124). He affirms that funeral rites among the Igbo have little differences among communities. From the Basden's idea, there exist the connotation of the fact that prior to the advent of the Europeans, death rites were not considered as real and proxy rituals in nature, rather, all were expressed as burial and funeral rites in concurrence nature but not in a day. The idea of interdependent relationship between the living and ancestral world in Igbo cosmology presents the living-dead as real member of the family in senior partner form. Funeral rites predicated on this platform seems to nullify the view of European missionaries view which holds that funeral rites are burial by proxy. However, in Ezzaland, the death rites are known by two names. The first is called burial rites *ili ozu* while the second is called funeral rites *imeekwa* or *ikwa ozu*. The categorizing of burial and funeral rites into numerical positions of first and second rites could be the impact of Christianity on Igbo traditional beliefs and practices in relation to burial and funeral rites as Basden pointed out. Yet, Basden's work failed to outline the qualifications for first burial and the second burial and their importance to Igbo society. Funeral rites are traditional ceremonies performed on behalf of the deceased by the living relatives during the second burial rites. Death rites will be incomplete without the performance of funeral rites in Ezza cultural milieu. In Ezza cultural setting funeral rites cannot be performed on the day of internment of the corpse. Njoku and Nworie (2010) affirm that, The date for these ceremonies is fixed by the eldest son or the closest

relatives of the deceased in consultation with the members of their kindred *Unwunnaji*. (P.164). The scholars elaborate on the activities of the four days. Okeke (2010) makes clarification between death rites and funeral rites thus:

Burial rites are distinct from funeral rites. While the former is the interment rites of the body of a deceased, funeral rites follow as ritual designated to ensure his or her safe arrival in the spirit land. Both can take place concurrently. (p.8).

The difference he makes between burial rites and funeral rites is clear but his view that burial rites and funeral rites may take place concurrently does not apply in Ezzaland. Burial and funeral rites are rites of passage performed one after the other at different intervals in traditional Ezza Society. After the burial rites, the first son of the deceased or the oldest man in the extended family in collaboration with the kindred *Umunna* will fix the funeral rites which will last for four days.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Conflict theory is used as a theoretical framework in this work. The relevance is found in Karl Marx's explanation of oppression of the poor by the rich (bourgeois). In this case the violations of human rights to life, human rights to freedom of movements and rights to ordered community existence by the bereaved wealthy members of Ezzaland.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

Reviewed works such as Ilogu (1979), Agha (2012) and Nzomiwu (2012) laid emphasis on elaborate and expensive burial and funeral rites in Igboland for aged man or woman who had children and also lived morally upright life. However, none of them addresses the socio-religious and economic implications of expensive burial and funeral rites which is the gap which this research work seeks to address.

Okeke (2010) work deals on implications of Igbo traditional burial rites in Awka Diocese and the content is conflict of culture between Igbo traditionalists and the Roman Catholic Christians in Awka in which the problem is predicated on performance of the rite of dust to dust by a woman in the Diocese. The geographical location and the content of the scope of the study is different from the scope of this research proposal which is socio-religious and economic implications of burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland in Ebonyi State.

Among the reviewed works on patterns of burial rites such as Okeke (2010) Nzomiwu (2012), Ezenweke (2012) and Alexander (2013) none addresses the dimension of the position of the head of man's corpse or the dimension of the position of the woman's corpse which have both denotative and connotative meaning with symbolic interpretations in burial rites in Ezzaland which this work is set to address. The reviewed literatures reveal that initially funeral rites were relatively expensive. This research work is poised to investigate and fill the yawning gap of socio-religious and economic implications of expensive, exorbitant and elaborate nature of burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland which are not available in the body of the related and reviewed literatures. Therefore, the wide and yawning gaps in the body of the existing and reviewed literatures which necessitates this research work proposal to be imperative and germane include the following, to explore the culture of waste, and extortionist practices to which the bereaved family is obliged to in order avoid shame; to investigate the violations of social norms and natural justice, air pollution, noise pollution and environmental degradations orchestrated by elaborate and expensive burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland, Ebonyi State, Nigeria that are glaringly missing in the reviewed related literatures.

## **Socio-religious and Economic Implications of Traditional Funeral rites in Ezzaland, Nigeria.**

### **1 (i) Social Implications**

Ezza people had flamboyant traditional burial and funeral rites from the beginning for rich, old and titled men. The advent of Christianity removed most costly aspect like burying rich and titled men with slaves. However, wealthy individuals with outrageous and irrational display of wealth during traditional burial and funeral rites make a shift from the cultural paradigm as they borrow some aspects of Western culture to make their practice of burial and funeral rites reference point in Ezzaland.

Sometimes, the people see it as a shame if they cannot accord their dead a befitting burial and the community frowns at the family that does not meet up with this social obligation. This has placed heavy burden on families that are less privileged since this socio-religious obligation requires so much money to accomplish. According to Jimoh (1985) most burials in Nigeria are characterized by elaborate funeral rites often lasting several days

or weeks during which there is much merry-making and free spraying of money on mourners, praise singers and hired musicians. A. Ujebe (personal communication, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019) observes that, “elaborate and expensive burial and funeral ceremonies gulps huge amount of money ranging from one million to five hundred million naira in the contemporary Ezza society.

It has become such entrenched practice that people break bank for a funeral while idlers sit around and grade various funerals that have occurred in the village within a particular time in terms of which was more grand. Families who are unable to meet up with the expectations are often treated with some level of scorn. Individuals who feel that they have attained a certain level or class in the community would want to show off in order to maintain their class consciousness. They feel that if they do not meet the standard of their class, they would be derided or scorned at by members of their class and the community in general. It is this group of people who alter the customs regarding burial rites by introducing aspects which lead to violations of human rights and ordered community existence like sewing special uniform, inviting live band, obituary announcement, printing of posters among others which make it very expensive.

### **1 (ii) Violation of the Rights of Freedom of Movement and Residence within the State.**

Bereaved families in their bid to practice ostentatious and elaborate funeral ceremonies are fond of barricading major and minor streets. This action infringes on fundamental human right of freedom of movement and residence within a state. Iwe (1994) avers that, “It is a right and a natural prerogative deriving ultimately from the author of human nature, proximately the nature and natural exigencies of man”(p.235). The barricade of major and minor streets lead to road diversion, thus causing hardship for road users including pedestrian and motorists. There is always a traffic hold-up as a result of such activities. Traffic hold-up as a result of funeral rites ceremonies lead to lateness to work or some to be absent from work completely at such periods. This can make some people to loose their jobs. Some people who get trapped in traffic hold-up can experience suffocation which can make them to die untimely. Masquerades obstruct free movement of traffic as they block major and minor streets. These happen when masquerades dance around

at elaborate and expensive burial funeral rites . The beat people indiscriminately. Their actions violate rights to human dignity. T. Igboji (personal communication, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2019) is of the view that, “if care is not taken quickly and if the development is not checked, it could generate to intra and inter communal conflicts since Nigeria is a pluralistic society where religion is always a volatile issue.”

### **1(iii) Violation of the Right to Life and Ordered Community Existence**

Firing of cannon shots and other explosives take place at elaborate and expensive burial ceremonies which should not happen in residential areas under normal circumstances. Such actions violate the right to life. According to Iwe (1994) “It is a right which springs directly and immediately from the very nature of man. It is a right which a man or human being enjoys in virtue of the fact that he is a human person.” (p.163). Right to life is the first of the fundamental rights of man deriving strictly from and based immediately on the disposition of the natural law.

Ezza people, like every other people of Igboland inhale at funeral ceremonies gaseous wastes in forms of fumes and smokes from combustion, carbon monoxide from automobiles and giant generators which alter the chemistry of the air on which man depends. These are dangerous to human life, and moreover increase the volume of green house effect which depletes the ozone layer that allows the sun to releases harmful radiation from the sun on the ecosystem. This has bearing with the view of Okecha (1999) that, “The accumulation of organic and inorganic pollutants in human blood, organs or the skeleton adversely impinge on the vital functions of the body such as the kidneys and liver. Such wastes cause brain disorders and degrade the nervous system” (p.20).

Furthermore, noise pollution emanates from the use of western and indigenous musical instruments which culminates into a pollution of the environment and vicinities where burial and funeral rites operate in Ezzaland. Ayantayo (2009) observes that;” Residents of villages and big cities are increasingly going through process of partial deafness. Their sensitive eardrums are daily being bombarded by a continuous barrage of environmental noise overflowing from ear shattering drum-size speakers of prosecutors of burial and funeral rites” (p.371). In the same, Abdu-Raheem (2016) affirms that “noise make some human beings to loose their sense of hearing, makes it difficult for some people to sleep, make people to experience stress, promotes high blood pressure and causes headache” (p.11).

Bereaved rich families litter the environment with bill boards and posters in not only public places like banks, post offices, motor parks and even residential houses and schools which degrade the natural environment with negative social implications in the society. As a result, broken bottles, cans, broken plastic chairs, foil papers. Cellophane bags are littered on the environment. In addition, biodegradable materials such as animal and vegetable decomposable residuals of the ceremony comprises of leaves, papers, carcasses and feces foul the air and water, though they can serve as manure.

## **2 Religious Implications**

The culture of second burial is a practice which is prevalent in Ezzaland. It is the act of organizing an elaborate burial for the deceased after the initial burial. This second burial or funeral is necessary because the dead may feel offended and begin to appear to the members of the family in dreams or as ghosts and spirits to register their grievances and to torment them. Again, if the funeral rites are not performed, the deceased may not reach the ancestral world to take up his ancestral responsibility of contributing to the welfare of the family. This can bring a family so low in the community and worse still the spirit of the dead will continue to rage and torment the family. And since reality is unified, people do what they can do to preserve and enhance life so as to be in harmony with other beings like the ancestors and other higher spirits. Funeral rites demonstrate the close bond between the visible and the invisible world in an essentially Igbo religious worldview.

In Ezzaland, if a man fails to perform the funeral rites for the dead father, his own funeral rites will not be performed when he dies until his father's funeral has been properly performed. If this lingers, it may bring about accumulation of funeral debts which may be too heavy for a family to bear. What this means is that a family may be banned by custom and tradition from honouring any other dead member of the family until then-grandfather is properly honoured. Otherwise, the ancestors will strike such a person dead during the funeral rites. A similar incident happened at Umuahia in 1983 when Dr, M. I. Okpara, a one-time Premier of the then Eastern region died while performing the burial rites of his late father.

This beliefs and practices are at one with the assertions of Eze (2001) who affirms that, "It is believed in Ezzaland that any debtor of this ceremony who for any reason participates in any of the forbidden activities catches fever and drops death thereafter, it is either instant, either on the road, home and after"(p.397). He provides illustration of mysterious deaths recently in Ezzaland, where a Christian belonging to one of the churches, said that he would not perform the funeral ceremony of the late father, because he was born again. According to him, "When the family members consulted a fortuneteller, the cause of the two brothers was blamed on performing Christian ritual ceremony without performing their late father's own"(p.407).

### **3 Economic Implications**

Elaborate and expensive funeral rites violate environmental sustainability in Ezzaland. During burial outing *igba osukwa* and funeral procession to market *ichofu afia* participants engage in indiscriminate cutting down of trees in the community which litter the environment with branches and leaves of trees and degrade the environment. Furthermore, Bennet (2008) affirms that, man "use of earthly resources for his benefit without conservation obliterates any possibilities of a meaningful life for the future generation" (p.50). The practice of elaborate and expensive traditional burial and funeral ceremonies have negatively impacted on the environment. Schenck (2013) observes that ,although ecosystems are resilient, they are not indestructible"(p.8). This has bearing with the view of Agha (2003),"that destroying our environment automatically meant destroying ourselves" (p.20). At times, a person may die due to lack of funds to secure prompt and effective medical care yet at death so much money is spent. Such are the families that weep more out of the financial scare than out of the loss. Most of such families go on borrowing, sell choice plots of family land, or even give their underage daughters out in marriage just to raise funds with all its attendant consequences. According to Thomas (2010), "there are different types of caskets ranging from N30,000 to N500,000 and even at prices higher than that"(p.25). One buys what his or her pocket can afford.

There are many people including parents, brothers and sisters who are suffering from one sickness or the other, some in the hospital,

some at home, some cannot feed or afford drugs but as soon as they are confirmed dead, family members kill cows and put on expensive *aso-ebi* to celebrate their death. They wait until the aged person dies before they think of a new house that will accommodate visitors in their compound. They imprison the corpse in the mortuary for more than one year, they also distribute series of uniforms to be used. All these with the cooking and feasting waste a lot of money.

### **Presentation of Analysis of Socio-religious and Economic Implications of Traditional Funeral Rites in Ezzaland, Nigeria.**

Exploring and analyzing data from questionnaire on socio-religious and economic implications of traditional burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland, Nigeria is needful. In doing this, the research descriptive approach in analyzing data corroborated by the responses of the respondents who strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed to socio-religious and economic implications of traditional burial and funeral rites in Ezzaland, Nigeria are analysed. Hence, 82 respondents (54.67%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 16 respondents (10.67%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that elaborate and expensive traditional burial and funeral rites burial has great negative social implications in Ezzaland. On religious implications, 50 respondents (33.33%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 39 respondent (26%) of respondents strongly disagreed with the opinion that funeral rites religion has great religious implication in Ezzaland 39 respondent (26%) of respondents strongly disagreed. Item 2: Shows responses to how elaborate and expensive traditional burial and funeral rites are causing poverty in Ezzaland, Nigeria.

53 respondents (35.33%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 19 respondents (12.67%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

55 respondents, (36.677%) of the respondents strongly agreed to sales of valuable property such as land, house and economic trees to prosecute elaborate and expensive while 20 respondents (13.33%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the opinion.

The practice of elaborate and expensive traditional burial and funeral rites causes indebtedness as expressed by 31 respondents (87.33%) of the respondents who strongly agreed and 4 respondents (2.67%) of the respondents agreed that traditional burial and funeral rites causes indebtedness in Ezzaland. Although, 5

respondents (3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed on the above assertion, the number cannot be ignored as insignificant. Their strong disagreement is unacceptable attitudes of Ezza people to the view that elaborate and much expenses for the death is unnecessary. Complimentary role of observation and interviews may be adopted for a deeper insight into their view points.

### **Summary**

The culture of expensive burial is on the increase and is fast changing the people's cosmology on burial. People now inculturate some aspects to prosecute elaborate and expensive burial and funeral rites with huge financial investment. It is rather a culture of extravagance. Ezza people do not see death as the end of life but as a transition from this earthly life to another life. This explains and tends to justify the heavy amount of money spent to send their dead home without taking cognizance of the socio-religious and economic implications. To them, a befitting burial is necessary for the dead to attain ancestorhood and to enable it reincarnate so that their fellowship would continue. It was discovered that there are violations of social norms. African traditional religion and Christian religious principles with regards to traditional burial and funeral rites. Human rights to life and rights to ordered community existence are violated.

### **6.2 Conclusion**

Ezza people see death as a transition to another life that is a life lived in the spirit world. To them, death is something to be celebrated if it occurred in good old age. Moreover, if the person has offspring and lived a good moral life. To send the dead home, the people believed that he must be buried properly since he continues to live after death. It is only necessary that they perform the funeral rites so that he will continue to contribute to the welfare of the family. This informs why every family strives to bury their dead at any cost just to ensure that he reaches home. In their bid to bury the dead in a dignified way, they take the ceremonies out of proportion by indulging in elaborate and expensive traditional funeral rites with negative socio-religious and economic implications on the people.

### 6.3 Recommendation

To achieve functional solutions, such measures as dialogue, tolerance, conflict resolution and integrated media platforms are recommended. In addition, justice are to be more accessible and stiffer penalties meted to culprits. Relevant authorities should promulgate laws against keeping late at night during wake keeps, open defecations, elaborate and expensive traditional burial and funeral rites.

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