Research Article

The Study of African Traditional Religion in Schools in Ghana: A Historical Perspective

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Abstract: African Traditional Religion (ATR) exists with a wide variety of beliefs and customs. Sadly, these beliefs and customs are not exhaustively documented to be used as references. People only adopt the religious beliefs and customs that are upheld or followed in their families and communities. These customs have been passed on by ancestors, and each generation adopts them with adjustments appropriate to its own needs and historical circumstances. As a result, the conscious study of the religion has received academic attention over centuries. The intent of this paper is to look at how the academic study of ATR evolved. The paper also sheds light on the various approaches that have been developed over the years for the study of the subject. Critical attention is as well drawn to the implication for students' interests in the study of the subject and its relevance to both tutors and student-teachers of 'Religious and Moral Education' in Colleges of Education in Ghana. To achieve this goal, secondary data was gathered through library research approach that furnished this study with rich information. The findings of this study revealed that ATR became a legitimate academic subject due to the combined efforts of teachers in schools and writers. It is one of the key courses provided by religious studies departments in universities, colleges, and research institutions. In higher institutions in Ghana, for example, at the diploma, bachelor, master's, and doctoral levels, students are free to major in ATR.

Keywords: Ancestors, Beliefs, Customs, ATR, Ethnographers, Anthropologists.

INTRODUCTION

According to John Mbiti Africans are notoriously religious and each people has its own religious system with its own sets of beliefs and practices (Mbiti, 1990:1). This assertion can be grounded in the fact that Africans' religion permeates every facet of life such that it is always impossible to separate the Africans' way of life and the religion (Fitzgerald, 2000). African Traditional Religion, hereafter referred to as ATR indispensably serves the community of which each person is a part, rather than the individual. The way the community handles issues settles down with time. ATR is widely practiced in African communities, and none are regarded as non-religious among the indigenous population (Gyekye, 1998). This is true since the community member partakes in the customs, holidays and religious rites of that society. ATR at insertion was not recorded on paper, but rather in people's hearts, minds, oral histories, ceremonies, and the writings of religious authorities like chiefs and priests, among others. The religion is restricted to the population in which it originated. In other words, the religion is tribal. However, through migration or marriage, religious ideas spread haphazardly from one group of people to another. This does not imply that the faith has been spread by missionaries. It is an evolved religion.

Many African societies have a wide variety of beliefs and customs. Sadly, these are not exhaustively documented to be used as references. People only adopt the religious beliefs and customs that are upheld or followed in their families and communities. These customs have been passed down from ancestors (Idowu, 1973), and each generation adopts them with adjustments appropriate to its own needs and historical circumstances. Therefore, the conscious study of religion has received attention.

The intent of this paper is to look at how the study of ATR evolved over the decades in academic institutions. The paper also sheds light on the various approaches that have been developed over the years for the study of the subject. Critical attention is as well drawn to the implication for students' interests in the study of the subject and its relevance to both teachers and learners of religious and moral education in colleges of education in Ghana.

The History of the Study of ATR

The evolution of the study of ATR dated back to the western merchants who explored the African continent (Asante, 2018). It started with a passing mention in dairies of early explorers who travelled to different parts of Africa. Some aspects of the native culture of the African peoples profoundly triggered the desire in most of these early explorers to know much about indigenous Africans. These explorers and traders like Ibn Battuta as well as European travelers were the first to step their feet on the coastal regions of the Atlantic seaboard (Hamon, 2016). They were curious about their hosts and the new environment. Indigenous

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religious elements such as ritual artifacts and symbol forms particularly captured their attention and appeared more frequently than other features in their private and public discussions about African peoples. They appeared to be considerably different from the religious practices they were accustomed to in their individual home countries. They had never seen places of worship like a mosque and a church in Africa (Bowen, 2017). In light of this, they began to seriously question whether native Africans practiced any sort of religion at all. Hassan (2015), observed that some people used negative or derogatory words to describe what they had seen because they perceived in their minds that they had discovered components of either a primitive or non-existing religious system.

Some Africans were not delighted about the assertions of these whites. The explorers and pioneer authors came under fire for spreading false information and misconceptions about Africans and their traditional religious culture. Meanwhile, these explorers served as pioneers to the study of ATR and as such made important contribution which frequently goes unnoticed. People who later became interested in the African indigenous religious tradition were whetted by the references and observations they published. Since then, the interest has developed and grown, reaching a zenith during the height of the colonial activities in Africa. This is in contrast to the perception some people held that the extraordinary toll on followers of the indigenous faiths might result in an interesting decline in the study of ATR.

The first serious attempts to study ATR and culture are attributed to early European Christian missionaries as well as colonial troops and officials who served in Africa (Viera, 2007; & Shaw, 1990). They were mostly driven by curiosity, individual interest, and the pragmatic goals of learning something about Africans in order to cooperate and interact with their host groups. Christian missionaries in particular were required to understand, speak and write the indigenous languages in order to proclaim and preach the Gospel and so convert the African peoples. They were also required to comprehend the fundamental beliefs and conceptions of their host groups. In an effort to gain a basic understanding of the culture, a few of them, particularly those of British and North America, spent considerable time with some freed African slaves (Killingray, 2003; & Maxwell, 2013). With the help of local interpreters and those who assisted the whites in their missionary activities, they were able to translate liturgy materials, hymnbooks and catechism texts into indigenous African languages among whom they worked.

The Roles of Ethnographers and Anthropologists

Ethnographers and social anthropologists have made some significant contributions to the study of ATR. They have first made many findings regarding the characteristics of the religion and have presented the same to their readers. This has generated a great deal of interest for research in the study of ATR. Apparently, managing their colonies in Africa proved to be challenging for the colonial authorities (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). They needed the help of anthropologists and ethnographers who offered significant knowledge about the peoples' beliefs, customs, values, and traditional institutions such as chieftaincy. The information that the ethnographers provided helped the colonial authorities to create and implement effective policies. Consequently, a number of ethnographers paid close attention to certain facets of the African indigenous faith (Boyer & Pascal, 1990).

Second, new approaches to the study of religion were quickly developed as a result of the discoveries about ATR. For the anthropologists and ethnographers, the methodology was of utmost importance. For instance, some foreign missionaries who had lived in Africa for a long time published their research on the African religio-cultural practices and beliefs of their various homes, occupations, and organizations. According to C.I. Ejizu, it is interesting to note that the majority of these missionaries used the same research techniques as ethnographers and anthropologists who were interested in studying religion (Ejizu, 2011). A certain level of academic acceptance for the methodical study of ATR has been attained. As a result, many universities in Africa and other regions of the world now include ATR in their curricula. The subject has been thriving successfully on the methodological foundations laid during the colonial and post-colonial periods by ethnographers and anthropologists. These approaches are mostly revised over time to suit the needs of both teachers and students.

Third, they gave factual information about the religion, which enabled some early missionaries to have better attitudes towards the indigenous religious faith. This is demonstrated by the missionaries' increased understanding of the religious rituals and beliefs of the people. As already noted, missionaries from both Francophone and Anglophone backgrounds examined the cosmologies and worldviews of the many ethnic groups among which they worked. According to Ejizu (2011), they made an effort to present the conventional worldview in a manner that would be consistent with scholarly philosophy. It cannot be asserted that all of the missionaries had studied ATR. In an effort to make the religion uninteresting and irrelevant in order to attract no attention others were even antagonistic toward it and labeled it as a fetish and other pejorative terms (Utsu, 2021). Unfortunately, some African Christians still subscribe to this falsehood. They describe the religion as demonic, satanic, paganism among others (Nmah, 2009).

TRAINED AND GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ETHNOGRAPHERS

Several local colonial administrators had sought the advice of qualified ethnographers and anthropologists to assist to resolve the difficulties they face in governance. They were required to offer crucial information regarding indigenous people's institutions, cultural practices, and beliefs in order to facilitate their administration works. This assistance yielded significant results for the colonial administrator.

The Colonial Office hired or financially supported a number of qualified ethnographers and anthropologists to supply reliable information to support the efforts of regional colonial governments (Schumaker, 2001). The advancement was very helpful to the study of traditional African peoples' religion. Some ethnographers focused exclusively on some elements of the indigenous religion. Some scholars, for example, confound their findings on the origin of certain African traditional beliefs and symbols, as well as the debate on the belief in God. Some others discussed issues like witchcraft, the belief in ancestors, among others.

Christian missionaries were impacted by the anthropologists' work in several ways. First, it helped to change their perspective on ATR in general. The early attempts made to adapt specific local aspects by a number of missionary church groups were a blatant indication of a better appreciation of indigenous beliefs and practices. More importantly, a number of foreign missionaries who had spent a significant amount of time in Africa, such as Rev. George T. Basden who spent roughly forty years in Igboland (Bastian, 2000; & Okwu, 2010), were urged to publish their research on the beliefs and practices of the various groups and regions where they had lived. It's interesting to note how closely the research methods of the majority of these missionary writers mirrored same the approaches adopted by the anthropologists and ethnographers. There are a number of works by the missionaries that contain writings on traditional African ideas and beliefs about God. Some of these researches have been helpful to the preservation and academic study of ATR in schools.

Contributions of Early African Scholars and Writers

An important advancement in the subject's development was the inclusion of native African writers and academics in the study of ATR. The group comprises pre-independence African authors and academics as well as ordained clergy with Christian theological training from both the Francophone and Anglophone traditions. Given the importance of religion in traditional African life and culture, it was not surprising that many early Africans with western education discussed and included religious themes in their writings. They were determined to dispel Europeans' misconceptions about the black race's supposed inferiority and the cultural exaggerations in the writings of colonial writers and some Christian missionary authors. Particularly, Danquah (1944) was indignant with those European writers who strove to discriminate against the faith of native Africans in God. He vehemently argued that Africans have the same level of sincere religious belief in God as Europeans. The first and second generations of African clerics with academic degrees in theology from Christian schools may have more religious than political goals. However, like nationalists, they also sought to clarify misunderstandings of indigenous culture in the western study and demonstrate that Christianity could be fitted to Africa's ancient religious beliefs, rituals, institutions, and values.

The study of Bantu cosmology for instance was continued by Belgian missionary author Placide Temples (Tempels *et al.,* 1959), including others were among the first group of ordained African cleric-scholars with a Francophone background. They made an effort to present the conventional worldview in the manner of scholarly thought. The traditional religious practices of the people of Central Africa served as the fundamental inspiration for their theories of vital force and order of being (Horton, 1967). Kanu (2019), for instance, suggested that in most African societies traditional religion is based on the belief in two worlds, one visible and the other invisible. Others include the belief in the communitarian and hierarchical character of these two worlds, the interaction between the two worlds, and the belief in a Supreme Being who is the Creator and Father of everything that exists. In addition, African Anglophone cleric-scholars also took a stronger theological than philosophical stance. Between the late 1950s and early 1970s, a number of these scholars including, Harry Sawyerr, Arinze, Ezeanya investigated important aspects of the subject like the belief in ancestors, ritual sacrifice, traditional morality, among others.

Many of these early African cleric-scholars played significant roles in advancing the study of ATR in higher educational institutions. They did this by following in the footsteps of a small number of pioneering European scholars like E.G. Parrinder. In theological schools and departments of religious studies in some higher institutions, Idowu, Mbiti, Ezeanya, (Ndubuisi-Nwuzor, 1997; & Gathogo, 2007), and others created and taught courses on African religions. They contributed to scholarly discourse on ATR. They educated successive batches of academics and graduates to continue their studies in various facets of traditional religion. Anthropologists and sociologists' interest in their efforts to research African religion has not entirely subsided. Instead, a number of western academics (Africanists) shifted their focus to the study of religious changes and conversions as well as new religious

movements in Africa due to the missionary faiths' steadily increasing popularity, particularly Christianity and Islam in many parts of Africa (Meagher, 2009). Interestingly, these Christian or Muslim scholars researched into the origins, progression and effects of religious change bringing them into contact with the traditional religious practices of the people. Therefore, their works integrated a lot of material from ATR.

It is obvious that academic acceptance has been attained by the methodical study of ATR. The study's overarching goal is to systematically illustrate how sub-Saharan Africans (both on the continent and in the Diaspora) actually experience the sacred, given their various socio-historical contexts and upbringings. Traditional African religion is primarily oral and folk religion. Scholars of various ideological persuasions and backgrounds are currently working tirelessly to advance the boundaries of the subject by taking a critical eye to a few key concerns with the methodology and conceptual framework used for the study.

ISSUES OF METHODOLOGY

A lack of significant attention was given to the issues of methodology, in part because of the types of topics that predominated academia in the past. The remaining remnants of the primitive cultures were seen as more important to preserve for future generations by ethnographers and social anthropologists during both the colonial and post-colonial periods. Some of them were able to learn the many religious languages of the various African ethnic groups. Despite their admirable efforts, they were overly particular in their approach. Additionally, they gave synchronic stories, giving the appearance that ATR is permanent and static (Opoku, 1993). The social anthropologists were not really interested in the issues of methodology towards the development of the systematic study of ATR. However, because they are linked to the caliber of the work and outcomes one wishes to attain, they became aware that methodology-related issues are crucial to the scientific study of the religion. They relate to the acquisition and viability of the data that underpin analysis. Also, the nature and distinguishing characteristics of the subject are also strongly related to and determinants of the approaches.

The significance of oral sources in the discovery of data for the study is the first of these crucial methodological difficulties that we explore. Traditional African religious practices are primarily oral and widespread. It permeates all areas of existence. And it gives purpose and value to every aspect of existence among Africans. The social, economic, and political facets of the people's existence are protected by sanctity and supernatural laws, where rituals are performed in connection with significant interests and periods of the natural cycle. Spiritual entities and super sensible cosmic forces interfere with and have an impact on human events. The supernatural sheds into the natural.

So, the unseen becomes visible. African indigenous religion was mostly an oral tradition that was preserved and passed down from one generation to the next via a range of language-related techniques. Since there are no such things as "holy writings," it can only be found in the weave and tatter of people's lives.

ATR is folk and regionally based religion. People merely adopt their ancestors' religion. Almost no attempt is made to spread it across ethnic and linguistic communities. In ATR, worship is strongly related to regional shrines and oracles. Cultural experiences can be compared, especially between different language groups. However, there are instances when the variations in values, organizations, and customs between communities might become important (Ioannis, 2012). We can now concentrate on some of the methods used in schools to study ATR.

Phenomenological Approach

A Phenomenological study of religion can be defined as the personal participation of a scholar in the religion he seeks to study in order to understand the essence and the manifestation of the religious phenomena a particular religion (Ekeke & Ekeopara, 2010). From the above definition it is obvious that before any scholar would be able to study a particular religious phenomenon such as ATR, there is the need for the scholar or the researcher to involve him or herself in the religious practices that the religious adherents perform. Investigating the details around religious practices and beliefs is one way to try to understand the nature of ATR religious beliefs and practices. This approach focuses on investigating what religious individuals' real beliefs or practices are. The method places greater emphasis on what can be seen happening than on the reality underlying that observation.

Ekeke & Ekeopara (2010) argued that grouping religious occurrences, suspending prior value judgments about the religion being studied, and adopting a neutral stance are all necessary to study a particular religion phenomenological and gain an understanding of it. This assumes that the researcher will approach the religion under study in a more scientific manner and that the religion will be examined impartially without consideration of personal prejudice. Using phenomenological approach to the study of ATR does not stress the acceptance of that faith or belief system, which is privilege of some religious bodies to do, nor does it press for the conversion of learners (Acquah, 2017). This approach is concerned about providing information about the beliefs and practices of not only one particular religion but other religions as well.

The Historical Approach

This method of inquiry is grounded in the idea that history is the handmaid of providence, the priestess

of truth, and the mother or authentic source of knowledge (Handlin, 2018). Humans beings have always looked to their past as a guide for their aspirations for the future. This implies that in order to fully comprehend any phenomena, its origin must be examined first. This makes the historical approach to studying religion an essential tool. The historical approach to studying ATR is using African history as a tool to study and comprehend African religious beliefs, practices, customs, traditions, and institutions. That is to say, the historical approach is centered on using history to explain the evolution of religious beliefs, thoughts and practices, values, philosophy, and so on in the many African societies or ethnic groups. For instance, if the historical technique is used properly, teachers and learners would appreciate why some ethnic groups are patriarchal and others are matrilineal in Africa.

The historical approach can also demonstrate or clarify the parallels and discrepancies across African societies. It would become apparent that the commonalities could be the result of extensive interaction between many ethnic groups. This is the outcome of gradual, cross-continental movement of small groups of people (migration).The rise of powerful cults at different parts and at different times may have played a part.

Advantages
- It can show how and why different religious practices and beliefs have evolved over time. For example, using this method may help to discover the origins of festivals and how they came to be celebrated.
- Additionally, it offers some crucial data regarding the evolution of a people's religious beliefs.
- This approach to studying ATR also aids in gaining a deeper grasp of a society's religious values and customs.

Disadvantages
- The lack of adequate written documentation on African traditional religion makes it difficult to find trustworthy sources from which information can be gained.
- Most of the facts are taken from oral sources and oral facts are inherent with a lot of problems, which often lead to unreliable facts. Because authenticity of facts lose weight as they are transferred from generation to generation.
- The linguistic barrier issue. The challenge here is that teachers and learners must learn or be familiar with the language of the people being studied. At worst, the learner will have to rely on an interpreter, since language usually loses meaning as it is transferred.

The Enumerative Approach
This method insists on listing and categorizing traditional beliefs and practices, including sacrifice,

prayer, divination, libation, and ancestor worship, the Supreme Being, priesthood, etc. from individuals with various racial and philosophical backgrounds. Geoffrey Parrinder and Sir James Frazer are proponents of the approach. Sir James Frazer wrote about the approach in his book The Golden Bough and provided an endless array of statistics gathered from every generation, nation, and socioeconomic class.

His method has been adopted by academics and authors because they believe that a strict comparative investigation of African religions is either impractical or not valuable. Particularly Parrinder contends that the following reasons make it difficult to research ancient traditional African religious beliefs: There is the great variety and multiplicity of people as well as the absence of a central tradition, especially in the southern-Saharan Africa. There is also the complete lack of written documents from within African Traditional religion.

In view of the above, Parrinder suggested that these setbacks may be somehow overcome by selecting or enumerating the beliefs of outstanding importance and shared by different peoples while noting the regional differences. The advocates of the enumerative approach suggest that when using this approach, the collection of the data must be based on age, social groupings, the origin of the social set up etc. for this will enable the researcher to carry out an in-depth investigation of the facts and weigh them in order to present a comprehensive report.

Advantages
- This approach offers both teachers and learners the opportunity to know more about the ethnic group selected in terms of its history, philosophy, beliefs and practices.
- It also helps the teachers and learners to some extent authenticate findings for instance in a situation where selected groups provide similar answers and contributions to questions.

Disadvantages
- There is the problem of identifying common cultures of the societies for most people may be reluctant to bring out the spirit of sharing a common culture, beliefs and common practices.
- Also in most cases, the facts enumerated are not substantiated. The reason may be that there is the possibility for the informants to exaggerate information for reason best known to themselves.
- There is the tendency for the teachers and learners to make hasty generalizations. This will, obviously affect the quality of the content and methodology.

Comparative Approach
This methodology focuses on comparing the social structures, values, and customs of many civilizations that are geographically close to one another

and share a common culture, such as the Akan-Fanti, Ashanti, Bono, Akuapim, and Kwahu. In other words, teachers and learners must pick societies that have many cultural, structural, and environmental characteristics. For instance, the Ashanti and Bono, and the Krobo. These tribes can be studied together by comparing them on topics including the concept of God, ancestral cults, life after death, birth, marriage, and death rites, etc. The comparative approach tries to use comparison to understand the variations and commonalities religious structures among ethnic groups.

Advantages

It allows the researcher to understand the similarities and contrasts of the beliefs and practices of the many ethnic groups. This serves as a useful source of knowledge on ATR. This approach enables teachers and learners to have a wide range of knowledge on the subject matter such as the concept of God, Ancestral cult, Cult of divinities etc. The learner may also learn the language of the ethnic groups including their philosophical expressions and their interpretation for a better understanding of the people's religion.

Disadvantages

Using a single geographic area as a benchmark for comparison is not very realistic. Historical interaction must be considered because ideas, practices, beliefs can travel far and wide. It is also true that some societies, despite their great geographic distance, have strong cultural and structural affinities as a result of their shared history.

Thematic Approach

Teachers and learners may choose a broad theme from the religion and examine it in many contexts or scenarios using the thematic method to the study of ATR. In other words, it describes picking a broad topic with the intention of studying it in multiple settings while paying attention to its relative positions and functions as well as its numerous interpretations and uses. A general theme, such as the conception of God, the veneration of ancestors, the worship of divinities, the concept of reincarnation, etc., may be chosen and carefully examined in order to determine its position and roles in the religion with the aim of drawing comparisons with other communities. Although one could be tempted to interpret the thematic method in this context as a form of comparison, in actuality, its essence is to enable teachers and learners understand the numerous facets of the concepts under consideration.

One of the primary proponents of the thematic method is Canon Harry Sawyerr (1970) of Fourah Bay College. In his book "God: Ancestors or Creator," he examined how three important West African societies, including the Akan of Ghana, the Yoruba of Nigeria and the Mendes in Sierra Leone viewed God. According to what he discovered, all three Societies blend the idea of the Supreme Being with a focus on deities and ancestors. He emphasized the relative significance of the two Supreme Being guiding images that are evident in each instance. The Supreme Being is viewed in the first image as the first and greatest ancestor of all, and the creator and expert craftsman in the second image. He continued to research the idea of reincarnation in these same civilizations and discovered that it was somewhat important to the Akan and Yoruba while being relatively less important to the Mendes.

Advantages

- It offers the teachers and the learners the chance to develop a broader or deeper understanding of the topic or theme under consideration.
- It enables the teachers and the learners to understand both the topic the commonalities and distinctions.
- The theme technique offers the teachers and the learners the opportunity to combine several approaches, such as historical, comparative, and others.

Disadvantages

- Studying the language, literature, social life, and numerous institutions of the societies chosen for study is typically difficult for researchers using a thematic approach.
- The teachers and the learners may also be tempted to contrast the topic in the communities being studied.

Particularist Approach

This method involves a thorough examination of the religious institutions, customs, and beliefs of each and every ethnic group without necessarily making comparisons to other groups. In spite of the existence of religious commonalities, it must be noted that each religious system is limited to the people from whom that particular system emerged and who practice that system from generation to generation (Gyekye, 1998). Early writers, including sociologists and anthropologists like R.S. Rattray (1929), employed this approach to study ATR. Idowu and Gaba are two more academics that support this methodology. In their view, scholars in the field should not lose sight of the fact that the numerous ethnic groups of Africa were autonomous or independent of one another in terms of religion, culture, and language throughout the pre-colonial era. The proponents of this approach maintained that in order to use this approach, the teacher and the learner must come from the ethnic group in question and must have some knowledge of what is being studied.

Advantages

- Since the teacher and the learner are assumed to be members of the relevant ethic group, the terms and expressions used will be familiar which shall invariably facilitates understanding.

- It broadens the teachers and the learners' understanding of the topic.

Disadvantages
- It is challenging to find enough highly trained indigenous experts for each ethnic group for a successful study of a particular topic
- Self-interest, biases, and prejudices cannot be completely eliminated. Thus, the propensity for people to exaggerate in order to highly stereotype their ethnic group would be high.

UNITY APPROACH
The unity approach to teaching and learning ATR is predicated on the idea that there is fundamental cultural unity in Africa south of the Sahara. What it means is that one cultural group can be chosen and studied with the possibility that the concepts under study will apply to other cultural groups in Africa south of the Sahara. Most African cultures share similarities in mind and philosophy. Thus, African civilizations, religious beliefs and customs have a sense of Africanism or family resemblance. It is acknowledged that there is undoubtedly more than one distinct religious philosophy practiced by Africans, despite this, they adhere to a single fundamental theological tenet. In spite of these distinctions, there are a surprising number of characteristics and a fundamental worldview that are shared by all of Africa.

Advantages
- It gives the teachers and the learners access to information on every facet of the culture of the particular group that is chosen to explore.
- It also gives students the chance to understand that despite their differences, African culture as a whole is united by a shared Africanness, or unity in variety.

Disadvantages
A number of things have been taken for granted in this approach. For instance, the many cultural groupings in Africa have genuinely different worldview systems. Even in cases where thoughts and practices are seen as parallel, the focus or essence of such practices and beliefs can change. For instance, some people may choose to prioritize divinities over ancestors and vice versa. This is why the unity approach may not be applicable in its entirety for the study of ATR.

CONCLUSION
ATR became a legitimate academic subject due to the combined efforts of teachers in schools and writers. So, its study has spread across the globe. It is one of the key courses provided by religious studies departments in universities, colleges, and research institutions. In higher institutions in Ghana, at the diploma, bachelor, master's, and doctoral levels, students are free to major in ATR. In this vein student

teachers in colleges of education in Ghana take ATR courses with the primary goal to get themselves acquainted with the roots of ATR through interactive pedagogies, where it is expected that the student teachers would be exposed to the originality and uniqueness of the religion as well as showcase how the religion has been preserved from one generation to another. The interactive approaches to the study of the subject in colleges is also an attempt to free students from holding any misconceptions about the religion that might have influenced their negative attitude towards the religion. It is also believed that the concerns of some student teachers regarding the historical antecedents to the teaching and learning of ATR in schools has been addressed in this paper. That notwithstanding, the outline of historical survey of the study of religion provides essential methodological implications for the teaching and learning of ATR in schools. Various approaches to the study of the religion have been espoused. Even though ATR is not a revealed religion in the thoughts of many religious scholars, works of early writers and scholars have preserved the unique identity of the religion.

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