

THE POSITION OF THE MOON, SUN, STARS AND SPACE SCIENCES IN AFRICA: OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIALS

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Abstract

The Moon, the Stars and the Sun in some extent even the Clouds in the Sky are regarded as sacred or gods by some African traditional religions which are at present in control of approximately 25% of the entire African population of approximately 900 million as at 2009. In this respect the followers of these traditional religions are therefore restricted from studying the Moon, Sun, Stars or any other object above the atmosphere or the astronomy. However the religion of Islam and Christianity which are collectively in control of 70% of the African population have not restricted their followers from studying the Moon, Sun, Stars or the Astronomy, but however due to the presence of elements of astrology in the space sciences generally, which is a branch of studies many Africans use locally through studying the movements of Stars in the prediction of future events or in fortune telling businesses made the Space Sciences generally to be less attractive to both the Muslims and the Christians in Africa, hence this situation is making many young promising potential future astronomers, aerospace engineers, climatologist, metrologies or the astrologists in their early education (primary or secondary/highschools) end up studying nonspace sciences related courses in their University levels. Hence this situation has lead to the underdevelopment of the space sciences generally in Africa and which also has the potential of under developing the future of space sciences at the global level too over time.

In view of the above and in order to expand the development of space sciences as a whole the under listed suggestions/recommendations were proffered which if adopted and implemented it will enhance the development of the space sciences at all levels;

1. Major stake holders in the space sciences like the United Nations Organization of the Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), National Aeronautic Space Agency (NASA), European Space Agency (ESA) and many others should be helping in sponsoring and organizing Public enlightenment conferences, workshops, seminars or capacity building programs in Africa with the aim of developing the space sciences on the continent.
2. Religious scholars specially the Muslim, Christian and the African traditional religious scholars should be included in the capacity development programs towards developing the space sciences in Africa.
3. The international Space Organizations, especially those organizations that have excel or at the peak of the modern space sciences like the NASA, ESA and others should open their offices and possibly training institutes in Africa.
4. The international space organizations like the NASA, ESA and even the UNOOSA should be given scholarships to identified future space scientists in Africa that may not likely get the financial support to study the space sciences at the University level.
5. Papers and Abstracts coming from Africa should be given priority by organizers of conferences, workshops or seminars on the ground that many papers coming from Africa are towards developing the space sciences instead of being highly technical papers in this field of science, because the space sciences itself is not yet developed or recognized on the continent.

In conclusion the author thinks that religious believes will continue to underdevelop or even restrict the studies of space sciences in Africa or even globally over time, unless if the above listed suggestions/recommendations are adopted and implemented otherwise the rate at which the space sciences will continue to under develop will ever be on the increase.