# Religion and Sustainable Development of Rongmei Tribe in Manipur

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**Abstract**

Religions role in development has generally been seen with doubtful, if there is no difference, in scholarly and institutional and concerns with development planning and policy. In this paper, I focus the religion-sustainable development which specifically, and analyses in quantitative and be considered in the sustainable development goal. In view of its vast and different adherents and its common belief in the dignity of the human person under God, religion is committed to the promotion of the human good so as to provide basic needs, guarantee protection of human rights and promote integral development of the society. Religion gives a unique influence on all societies and many of the world's peoples. Throughout history, it has given to be the primary force for social progress, motivating individuals to develop spiritual qualities, and empowering them to sacrifice for their fellow human beings and to contribute to the betterment of their communities. In this paper, 162 individual comprising of 108 male 54 female were collected randomly. Age group is 36 from 35 to 45 age and 126 from age group of above 45. Out of this, 72 individuals were from "leadership in society or organization" and 126 from "none" category. The paper analyse through spss software using descriptive statistics and bivariate. The cut off value of cronbachs alpha is 0.5 mean is compared to cronbachs alpha. It is significant in study as mean cross the cut off value of alpha.

**Keywords:** Religion, sustainable, Traditional, Christian, Rongmei

**Introduction**

Religion is a major cultural, social, political, and economic factor in much official development assistance and understanding religious dynamics and the role of faith communities and actors is crucial for sustainable development. While faith communities have endured and drive the world over, a wave of modernist, secular social change dominated development practice and discourse from the second half of the 20th century. It was assumed that religion had become outdated and would eventually disappear. However, faith communities, actors, and assets continue to occupy a critical space. Accordingly, global development discourse and practice has seen a new wave indicating a turn to recognizing the significant role of religion. Greater portions of development aid are now channeled via faith-based initiatives or organizations, and religion is increasingly recognized as a human resource rather than an obstacle to development.

Many faith actors have also been involved in development policy, initially by adopting and heralding the Development Goals, and more recently through a commitment to join the global collaboration around achieving the new Sustainable Development Goals.

This paper explores the role of religion and its sustainable actors in the sustainable development process to date, including the consultations to set the religion sustainableas well as the implementation phase. It is based upon findings from a primary source and collected randomly on the Rongmei community. It includes leader and none leaders in the community.

Religious traditions have always played a central role in supporting those experiencing poverty and marginalization, through service delivery as well as the provision of spiritual resources that provide mechanisms for resilience at both the individual and community level. Sometimes these interventions were limited to those within one's own religion, but often people extended support to those from other religions or understood it as an essential part of their religious commitment to combine their religious outreach with relief and development efforts. This was a particularly marked phenomenon within the Christian missionary movement which accompanied European colonialism from the nineteenth century onward, from early abolitionist activism and the slogan of "Christianity and commerce" to the "civilising" ideology and the provision of essential services in health and education as colonialism took root.4 Colonial and missionary interests did not always align and were at times even marked by conflict, but the Christian "civilizing mission" formed a pathway for colonialism and provided it with an important ideological justification in Europe by casting colonial efforts as a service in development.

In this way, Christian mission and abolitionism were at the root of modern ideas of global development, and other religions in the colonies were judged on their compatibility with this "civilizing" project (Haustein and Tomalin 2017). This sparked "modernizing" movements within some religions, where some reformers asserted their compliance with European social and economic visions, while others used the process of reform to resist and critique colonization (Haustein and Tomalin 2017, 81). Moreover, religious institutions became key providers of the welfare services which functioned as crucial indicators of the "civilizing" project, providing health care, education, vocational training, as well as local information and advocacy. Complementing the failures and needs of the colonial economy in rapidly transitioning contexts, they in many ways occupied the same structural position that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have today (Manji and O'Coill 2002). This was not only limited to Christian actors, local religious institutions occupied similar spaces in their engagement with the colonial state and the wider public (Haustein and Tomalin 2017, 82).

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this research article is to explore religious belief as a source of motivation for behavior change in the context of the religion sustainability. It establishes the current reality of sustainability awareness within religious communities and aims to help potential change agents to adapt to the religious context.

Humanity is currently facing many environmental and social challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, pollution (IPCC 2007), diseases (Stevenson 2005), poverty, and inequality (Zheng and Bishop 2009). These challenges are all related to sustainability and as such the current state of the world can be defined as the sustainability challenge.

It must be acknowledged that there is very robust scientific evidence that society has a significant negative impact on the natural environment (IPCC 2007). This indicates that a significant change in behavior is required urgently of a large portion of society to move towards sustainability. Why have we not seen such efforts succeed?

## Practical applications

Basic awareness of the sustainability challenge, in particular climate change, is now common in most parts of the world (Gore 2006). Nevertheless, the intended large-scale behavior change has been largely outstanding (Godemann 2011).

Psychologist Doug McKenzie-Mohr (2000) has developed "community based social marketing", a tried and tested methodology for making behavior change campaigns more effective. He argues that the many behavior change initiatives fail because they disregard the first step of CBSM: selecting specific desirable behaviors and uncovering barriers. In addition to McKenzie-Mohr's model, John P. Kotter found that "creating a sense of urgency" is the biggest stumbling block for most organizations. Having a sense of urgency is a key component to build motivation for successful behavior change because all further steps build on it. Kotter (2008, 35) explains that to bring about change a "broader effort aimed at not just what people are thinking, but how they feel" is necessary.

It is important to study practically among the Rongmei community of Manipur.

## Religious Communities

Religions have significantly changed the behavior of their adherents throughout history. However, religions were not only powerful influences in history, they also have a track record of transforming societies and influencing behavior today (Palmer and Finlay 2003). Arguably, religious communities are amongst the largest organized worldwide networks.

The concept of sustainability is found in the scriptures of all world religions though there is no universal name for it. Instead, each religion has a different teaching, sometimes in the form of a story that offers guidance on how to live a life that is in accordance with the religious principles. Sustainability is becoming a major concern in religious circles. While societal issues such as peace and social justice have been a central theme in religions for a long time, they have been slower in taking up the environmental agenda.

## Religious Worldviews

The worldview of religious people is profoundly shaped by their belief. Two concepts that are particularly important with regards to sustainability: the place of humanity within nature and the perception of time. In Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) the concept of stewardship or creation care creates a sense of duty. Eastern religions

(including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism) subscribe to the principle of non-harm while each worldview described here can be tapped into to promote action towards sustainability. The approaches used may need to be very different. A universal concept embodying the importance of relationship and a purpose greater than oneself is the Golden Rule.

Religious institutions and leaders enjoy a high level of trust from their communities. They have the "power, agency and mandate to be an important force in tackling today's global challenge" (Naberhaus 2011). It is thus crucial that trusted ambassadors of religions communities (such as leaders) develop a solid understanding of the sustainability challenge.

**Research Question**

RQ: What does religious belief contribute to moving society towards sustainability?

Secondary Research Questions:

SRQ1: How do leaders and members of religious communities define sustainability?

SRQ2: What motivators for moving toward sustainability can be identified in leaders and members of religious communities?

SRQ3: What actions for moving towards sustainability can be identified in leaders and members of religious communities?

**Methods**

Our research consists of three main phases: (1) literature review and correspondence with experts, (2) interviews with religious leaders with open-ended questions, and (3) offline surveys of the religious public.

The survey and interviews were based on three themes: (1) definition of sustainability, (2) the religious motivations for sustainability, and (3) sustainability related actions motivated by religion.

All data was coded based on categories developed around the likert scale and calculated on SPSS software using descriptive and bivariate.

**Expected results**

We expected that religion sustainability is a strong motivator and that this paper show that it can play a key role in fostering behavior change to move society towards sustainability. We expected that the religious community lacks a rigorous definition of sustainability and that the concepts of stewardship and non-harm are central motivators.

**Outcomes**

Our interviews and surveys outcome in data that was largely based on Christian word views on interviews. Thus, the analysis made is only relevant to Christian communities. The concept of sustainability is recognized by all religious leaders. However, the level of understanding varies significantly. All leaders identified social and ecological aspects of sustainability, but sometimes they did not think of social aspects of sustainability at all until we prompted them. Survey responses showed a much lower level of understanding. Social aspect of sustainability was mentioned in about one third of replies. The same was true for environmental aspects. Unexpectedly, the economic aspect of sustainability surfaced several times.

## Result and Discussion

Altogether 162 individual were collected. This was in random. It is 108 male and 54 female on total. In age group, it categorized to 25-35, 35-45 and above 45. Here, 36 individual from age group 35-45 and 126 individual from above 45 group. Status recorded to 72 individual in group of leader in society or organization and 90 individual recorded none.

The data were analyses in table wise

### Table 1: Goal for sustainable descriptive

| Sl. No | Label | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | End poverty in all its forms everywhere. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.3333 |
| 2 | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5556 |
| 3 | Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being foe all ages. | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| 4 | Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| 5 | Ensure access to water and sanitation for all. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5556 |
| 6 | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5556 |
| 7 | Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| 8 | Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5556 |

| 9 | Reduce inequality within and among society. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.5556 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| 11 | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.0000 |
| 12 | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.0000 |
| 13 | Conserve and sustainably use the natural resources. | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| 14 | Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.4444 |

(Note: alpha is significant as maximum, minimum and mean cross the 0.5 alpha values)

The above table explore on goal for sustainable descriptive. Sl. No indicate the question number or label number. In label 1 and 2, minimum, maximum is 1.00 and 2.00 each and mean is 1.3333 and 1.5556 respectively. In label 3, 4, 7, 10 and 13, minimum, maximum and mean is 1.00, 1.00 and 1.0000 respectively. In label 5, 6, 8 and 9, minimum, maximum and mean is 1.00, 2.00 and 1.5556 respectively. In label 11 and 12, minimum, maximum and mean is 2.00, 2.00 and 2.0000 respectively. In label 14, minimum, maximum and mean is 1.00, 2.00 and 1.4444 respectively. This shows a significant of the study as it cross the cut off value of cronbachs alpha.
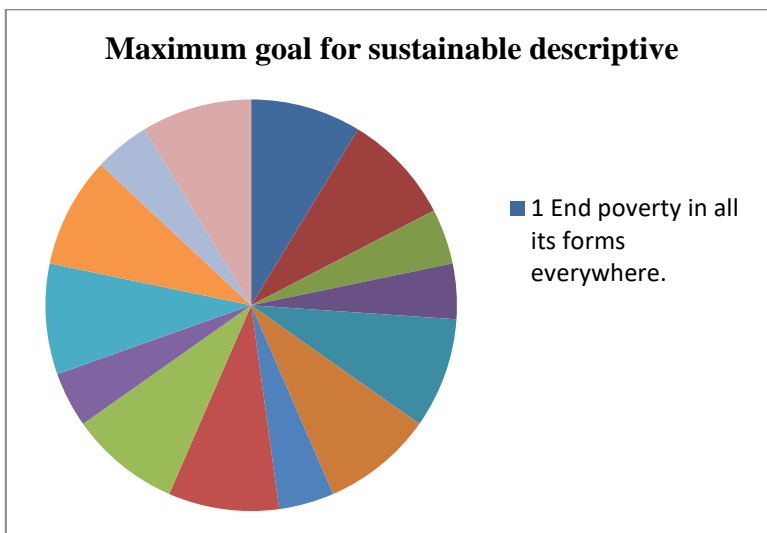


Maximum goal for sustainable descriptive

■ 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Fig: (a) Goal for sustainable descriptive (maximum)

The figure indicates a significant level. It distributes equally.



**minimum goal for sustainable descriptive**

- 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being foe all ages.
- 4 Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
- 5 Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.
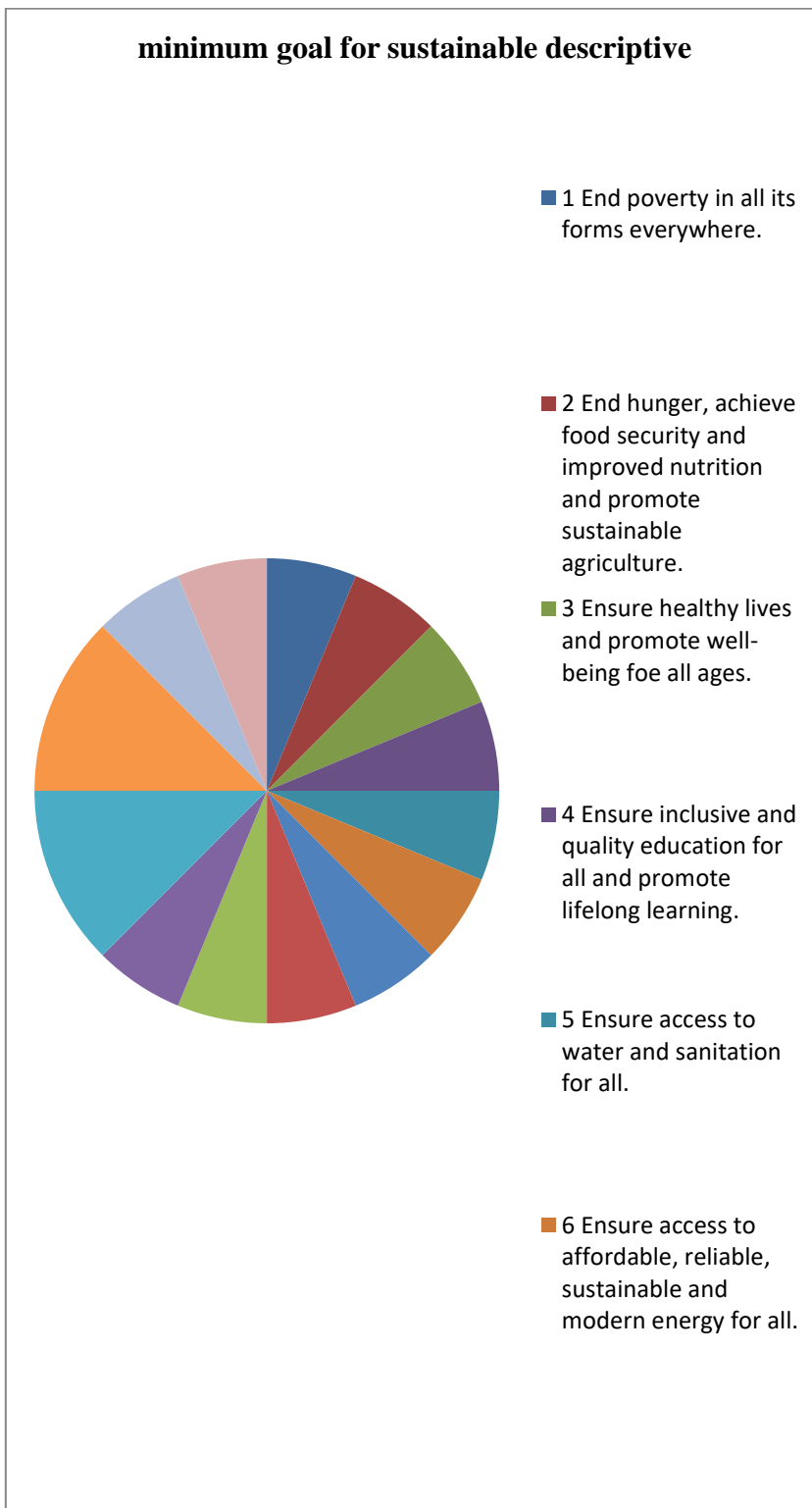- 6 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Fig: (b) Goal for sustainable descriptive (minimum)

The figure indicates a significant level. It distributes equally.

Table: 2. Religious sustainable descriptive

| Sl. No | Label | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Do you carry responsibility for moving towards sustainability because of your religious belief? Why? | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| B | Based on your religious beliefs what are your motivations for moving towards sustainability? | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.0000 |
| C | Would you like to add anything else? | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.0000 |
| D | Can you give examples of what you are doing due to your faith to make your personal life and religious community more sustainable? We are interested in both your successful and less successful actions. | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.7778 |

(Note: alpha is significant as maximum, minimum and mean cross the 0.5 alpha values)

The above table explore on religious sustainable descriptive of the study. The A, B, C and D indicate the label number or question number. In label A and B, minimum, maximum and mean is 1.00, 1.00 and 1.0000 respectively. In label C, minimum is 3.00, maximum is 3.00 and mean is 3.0000. In label D, minimum is 1.00, maximum is 6.00 and mean is 2.7778. When compared to cut off value of cronbachs alpha, it cross the value and significant.
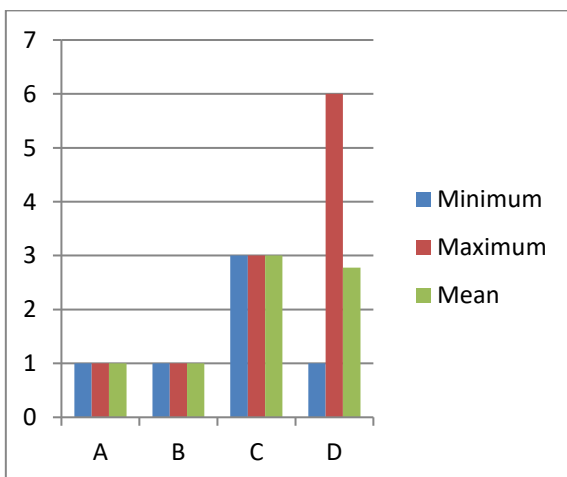


Fig: (c) Religious sustainable descriptive

The figure indicates significant level. In A, B and C it is equal in distribution pattern. In D, it is curve as it is pointed in the middle.

Table: 3. Goal for sustainable descriptive on bivariate analysis

| Sl. No | Label | Mean |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | End poverty in all its forms everywhere. | 1.3333 |
| 2 | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. | 1.5556 |
| 3 | Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being foe all ages. | 1.0000 |
| 4 | Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. | 1.0000 |
| 5 | Ensure access to water and sanitation for all. | 1.5556 |
| 6 | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. | 1.5556 |
| 7 | Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all | 1.0000 |
| 8 | Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. | 1.5556 |
| 9 | Reduce inequality within and among society. | 1.5556 |
| 10 | Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. | 1.0000 |
| 11 | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. | 2.0000 |
| 12 | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. | 2.0000 |
| 13 | Conserve and sustainably use the natural resources. | 1.0000 |
| 14 | Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. | 1.4444 |

(Note: alpha is significant as mean cross the 0.5 alpha values)

The above table explore on goal for sustainable descriptive on bivariate analysis. In label 1, mean is 1.3333. In label 2, mean is 1.5556. In label 3, 4, 7, 10 and 13 mean is 1.0000. In label 5, 6, 8 and 9, mean is 1.5556. In label 11 and 12, mean is 2.0000 whereas in label 14, mean is 1.4444. It is significant.

**Mean goal for sustainable bivariate**

- 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being foe all ages.
- 4 Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
- 5 Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.
- 6 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
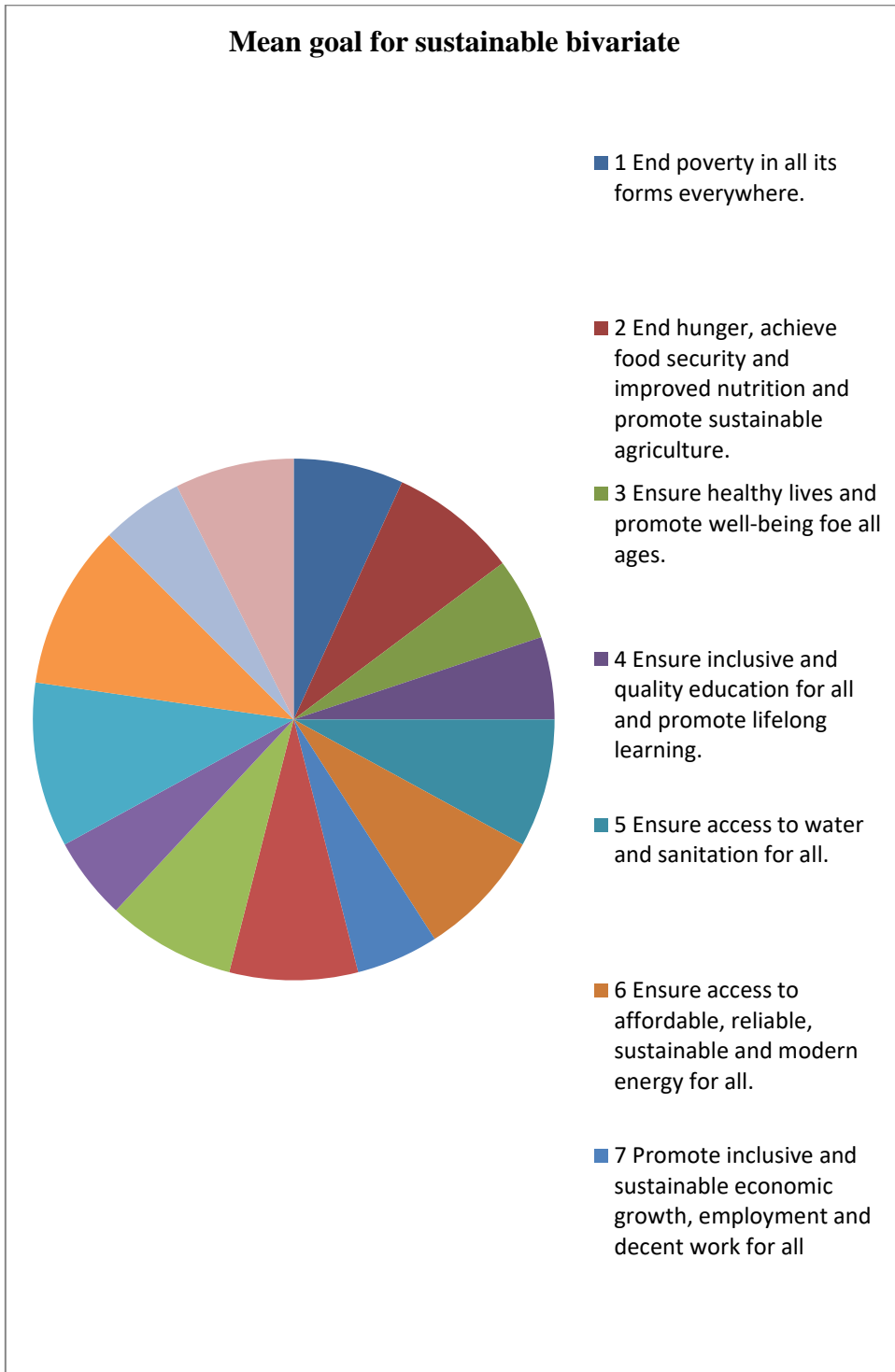- 7 Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Fig: (d) Goal for sustainable descriptive on bivariate analysis

The figure indicates significant level. It cross 0.5 level and cross the cut off value of cronbachs alpha.

Table: 4. Religious sustainable bivariate analysis

| Sl. No | Label | Mean |
|--------|-------|------|
| A | Do you carry responsibility for moving towards sustainability because of your religious belief? Why? | 1.0000 |
| B | Based on your religious beliefs what are your motivations for moving towards sustainability? | 1.0000 |
| C | Would you like to add anything else? | 3.0000 |
| D | Can you give examples of what you are doing due to your faith to make your personal life and religious community more sustainable? We are interested in both your successful and less successful actions. | 2.7778 |

The above table explore on religious sustainable descriptive of the study on bivariate analysis. The A, B, C and D indicate the label number or question number. In label A and B, mean is 1.0000. In label C, mean is 3.0000. In label D, mean is 2.7778. When compared to cut off value of cronbachs alpha, it cross the value and significant.
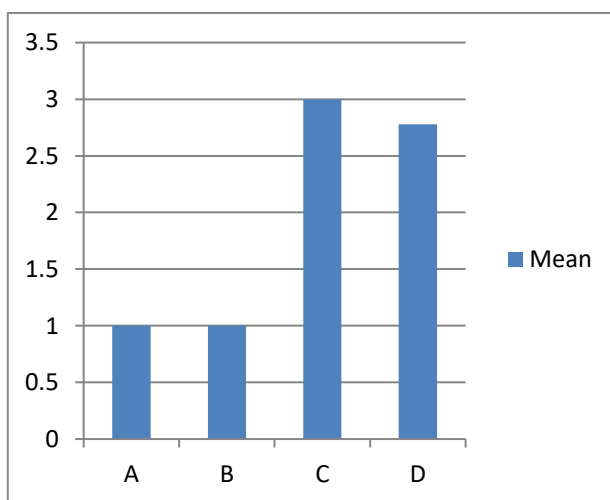


Fig: (e) Religious sustainable bivariate analysis

The figure indicates significant level. In A and B, it is equal in distribution pattern. In C, it is taller as it is pointed in the middle. Whereas, D is slightly lower than C. It cross the level of 0.5.

**Implications for study area**

In general, the external validity of the study is very good, because a well-planned stratified sampling was used when gathering the data. When developing the questionnaire, the internal validity was confirmed by using the practices and research-based documents that describe the characteristics of religion sustainable. Thus, the implications of its religion effectiveness are challenging to study. For instance, in this study the variation within the individuals among the participants was so large. Likert-scale items may be a rather rough measure of the complexity of religion sustainable. The comparative results between the participants should be interpreted with caution and the sources of variation. The differences between the participants had a quite large to be appearing in religion and sustainable development' average responses to Likert scales. Thus, although the statistical significance of differences between the participants may be small, these differences can be important. The results also reflect the methodological approach of the sustainability issues in various sustainable ideas.

## Conclusions

Society is driven a sustainability challenge and all organisations and communities have an important strategy to motivate in driving society towards sustainability. Religious communities are large important factors networks and religious belief has a markedly positive effect on their motivation to move society towards sustainability. With the help of strategic sustainable development, the positive of religion sustainability will and efforts already flowing into more sustainable living of religious people can be made enhance. With the large numbers of religious people in society, the transformational strategy of more sustainable religious communities is vast. An example of such a transformation is the idea of a organizing that spread from a single mind-set to many individuals. Our research identified the current reality of Christianity and sustainability based on a small sample of rongmei community. And while it gives compelling reasons for sustainability to be a stronger theme within Christian communities, there is much research left to test how best to bring sustainability to the forefront in Christian and more generally in religious communities.

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