

**CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS: A
SOCIOLOGICAL ADVOCACY FOR TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION
IN THE CURRICULUM**

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Abstract

Previous works have been written on different areas of Christian religious education in Nigerian schools with little attention paid to its sociological advocacy for transformative education in the curriculum. This paper examines Christian religious education in Nigerian schools, with particular interest in integrating African moral values into its curriculum which we considered as transformative education. At this point in Nigeria's history, there is a moral crisis within the various strata of society. Over time, people became more and more indifferent to moral values than young people tend to think that the odd situation of moral decadence is common. The loss of positive African values in the lives of today's Nigerian citizens is a contributing factor. Some of these values are akin to the values of Jesus Christ which he taught in the scriptures. The methodology employed in this study is phenomenal-descriptive which means that the phenomenon of moral laxity as found to exist in Nigeria was studied over time and the remedy to embrace morality evidenced in uprightness of character through integration of African moral values in the school curriculum presented in the discourse. The findings of this paper revealed that the transformative education held as sacrosanct in the traditional society have been compromised. This work, therefore advocates for the transformative education in the school curriculum to help boost the morality status of Nigerians.

Keywords: Christian religion, Nigeria, Advocacy, Transformative education, Curriculum

Introduction

This paper focuses on the examination of the prospects of religious studies as a school subject in Nigeria. Based on the philosophy of Nigeria's education, the paper highlights the objectives of religious studies to be in tune with the development of a well-informed citizenry. It delves into the challenges militating against effective teaching and learning of religion in Nigerian schools (Odudele, 2006). The paper is of the view that a well-formulated and well-implemented curriculum is indispensable if the goals of religious studies is to be achieved.

Religion is a phenomenon that exists in the society. Man cannot live in isolation of religion. Man is a religious animal; every human being believes in certain values, entities or beings or simply 'God'. We are painfully aware that in spite of the long history of religion or the study of religion in general, it is historically difficult to produce a satisfactory description let alone a definition of religion. It is very difficult to come by the definition of religion. The obvious reason for this is that religion like other subjects or disciplines cannot be pinned down to only one definition. Thus, it has no single or generally acceptable definition. That is why everybody defines

religion in the way they look at it. "Religion" is a Latin word *relegere* meaning, "join or bind together". That is to say, certain people that are joined together by principles, values or covenant towards the ultimate reality. It could be said that religion is a relationship existing between man and God. Generally however, it could be seen as an attitude of self towards an object in which the self genuinely believes.

Nigeria is a country with multi-religious background. It has Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam as dominant faiths. These religions have contents of doctrines and methods of teaching their faiths and these features in their delivery of doctrines and morality awareness especially to their members and prospective converts. In spite of the presence of these folk and Abrahamic faiths, both adults and young people in Nigeria could be considered to be in an age of moral crisis. African Moral Awareness is a scarce commodity in the country, deriving from indigenous moral codes and values that are fundamental social indicators for young people. This paper advocates very strongly as an imperative to integrate transformative education which are akin to the Gospel values as critical, integral parts of the curriculum of Christian Religious Education in Nigeria.

In the old days, when morality was highly valued and indispensable in this country, in primary school, there was plenty of time for African folklore, in which narrative forms of stories from animal kingdoms were presented as parables with clear moral lessons. It could be the pains and losses from tortoise's wickedness or wisdom respectively, or the moral lessons to eschew craftiness, laziness, immorality, disobedience, greed, inordinate ambition, insatiability, materialism, etc. On this note, Ele (2006), wrote that: "The tortoise could speak in those didactic stories and the lessons from those calabashes of wisdom are learnt. Young people could learn to avoid selfishness, violence, pride, laziness, craftiness and egalitarianism through the lessons of this experience, brotherhood, friendliness, respect for elders, hospitality, peace, honesty, justice, humility, industry and love". He further averred that African traditional societies "have hundreds of thousands of moonlight stories, folklores and proverbs through which the young ones are given proper enculturation of moral values". In those times, moral instructions were strictly observed in secondary schools which gave furtherance to those moral lessons already imbibed in the primary school days; of course, primary education in Christian schools also had moral instructions based on biblical stories for children. But today these formative and essential aspects of the curriculum are no longer enjoying the pride of place. Part of the reasons for the unfortunate

fall in the education sector and its attendant moral decadence in Nigeria was the forceful takeover of schools from voluntary agencies by the government.

According to Lineamenta 2009, it is not difficult to estimate the many effects of this takeover, since anyone who has known about our Catholic Schools in primary and secondary education prior to their being taken over by the state will have no difficulty doing so. There's been a lot of decline in the level of education. Moral instruction was not getting much attention any more. This has led to a lack of discipline and recklessness in today's youth, which is prevalent in our society. This has made it imperative that our priests and other experienced lay men should give moral instruction a pride of place in our schools". The call is therefore for the state to fully return the schools to the Church and consequently boost morality in the society. Thus, the Catholic Church is called upon to welcome schools back into our curricula so that we can go back in time and take a vision of education which includes moral and religious instruction as part of its curriculum. People are longing for moral discipline to return to school curricula, according to reports from parishes and deaneries across the country (Instrumentum Laboris, 2010).

In those days, the popular moral guidance was given every Thursday while folk tales became essential schedules of school hours held on a table at other designated times of the school week and these were in addition to the Bible Knowledge or Christian Religious Knowledge/Christian Religious Studies as proper, specific discipline or subject with organized syllabus of study. Nwosu (2009), observed that moral instruction stresses the practice of good behaviour. And at this point in history, there were moral instructions in the schools. These contributed positive and effective influences to religious dispositions and affiliations, moral patterns of behaviour and ethical orientations of the young and growing minds.

There is need to urge the civil authorities with requisite competencies to bring these values back in the school curriculum both on paper and their pragmatic enforcements in vivid implementation. According to Amaele (2009), it is the responsibility of schools to teach a right value system because values may be experienced, taught and acquired of a multi-cultural, religious and ethnic society such as ours, to find common values and teach them to the youth. Such common values are found in abundant multiplicity in African moral values. The necessity of proper moral teachings is found in its function. According to Obasola (2015), morality serves a holistic function as it serves as the bedrock upon which the edifice of a truly righteous and

egalitarian society rests. In principle, each culture's moral foundations are a fundamental aspect of society in terms of its comprehensive codes of behavior and conduct for both individuals and the community. In Nigeria today, there is a widespread disregard of the ethical codes which guide decisions and actions in our ancient society.

Christian Religious Education (CRE) holds a significant place in the educational landscape of Nigeria, a country with a diverse cultural and religious heritage. Rooted in the nation's colonial history, CRE has been an integral part of the curriculum in Nigerian schools. However, in recent years, debates have emerged regarding its relevance and impact on students' holistic development. This article aims to explore the sociological implications of Christian Religious Education in Nigerian schools and advocate for a transformative approach to education within the curriculum.

Historically, the introduction of Christian Religious Education in Nigerian schools dates back to the colonial era when British missionaries established schools to propagate Christianity alongside formal education. Over time, CRE became institutionalized in the curriculum, reflecting the dominant religious identity of the colonial powers. Post-independence, Nigeria adopted a secular constitution, but CRE retained its place in schools, reflecting the country's religious diversity.

From a sociological standpoint, CRE plays a multifaceted role in Nigerian society. On one hand, it serves as a means of transmitting religious values, ethics, and moral principles to students, contributing to their spiritual and moral development. It also reinforces the cultural identity of the Christian population in Nigeria, providing a sense of belonging and community cohesion.

However, critics argue that the emphasis on CRE in schools may marginalize students from non-Christian backgrounds, perpetuating religious bias and exclusion. Moreover, in a pluralistic society like Nigeria, where Christianity coexists with Islam and traditional religions, the privileging of one faith in the educational system raises concerns about religious freedom and tolerance.

Explication of key Concepts

In this section, we shall strive to explicate some key concepts in the title topic to enable one understand their referent values and specific meanings as applied in the study. The key concepts are: Christian Religious Education, Transformative education and Curriculum.

Christian Religious Education

Christian Religious Education is the teaching-learning activity whereby the tenets and

values of Christianity are imparted and imbibed according to teacher-learner statuses. The contents of Christian Religious Education are enunciated by Jesus Christ and found in the Holy Scripture and Church's tradition. The teachers in context include parents at home, teachers in the school, pastors of souls in the Church, Christian members of the society as individuals and groups. The methodology used in this activity is Word or Witness or both. Christian Religious Education is also defined as "the process whereby Christian learning takes place. It is often accompanied by teaching, which allows practicing Christians to adopt and deepen their Christian beliefs, values and attitudes in order to experience and act in a Christian way. (Essays, UK November 2018). However, Christian Religious Education in this discourse refers to its specimen carried out through the formal school system. Okoro (1989) maintained that "In our search for an effective method in religious education, African traditional pedagogy must be considered. Story sayings and proverbs sum up the accumulated wisdom of a people. They are pictorial expressions of man's wisdom". Story telling technique and wise sayings such as proverbs and parables are methods that have been proven to be effective in African traditional pedagogy and have been the easiest means of teaching moral lessons in African traditional settings. The morality that characterizes this method can be overcome by transmitting these oral sources into written records for effective teaching and learning of African moral values.

Transformative Education (African Moral Values)

Transformative Education focuses on more than just acquiring knowledge; it aims to change perspectives, values, and behaviours. It encourages critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility, ultimately empowering individuals to make positive changes in themselves and society. Thus, transformative education which can be considered as African moral values refer to the sets of beliefs and principles, norms and customs that depict and direct the sense of right or wrong, good or bad human act in African traditional society. In other words, African moral values depict African Ethics which is used to refer to both the moral beliefs and presuppositions of the sub-Saharan African people and the philosophical clarification and interpretation of those beliefs and presuppositions. He continued that, Many writers have made the observation that despite the indisputable cultural diversity that arises from Africa's ethnic pluralism, there are underlying affinities in many areas of the African life; this is surely true in the African religious and moral outlook (Kwame, 2011). African moral values simply mean African

Morality or African Moral Awareness. The African moral values are characterized by religiosity, human welfare, societal approval and character based. Therefore, they are based on the religiosity of the African, the *Homo Africanus Religiosus*, whose cosmology and daily affairs are permeated with the sacred sense of religion; they are anthropocentric as they seek to activate and sustain the totality of human welfare and they are also society-oriented as the traditional African society has them as its positive and potent customs. In this right, they are essential components of African culture. They are character-based because they define in vivid terms the practical behavioural patterns of a person. In many African languages, character is a synonym of morality. Hence good character shows good morality and bad character shows bad morality (Kwame, 2011). African moral values include sacredness of human life, hospitality and care for the aged, patriotism and community spirit, honesty and sense of industry, sanctity of sex and of marriage, sense of religion and fear of God, social justice and love of neighbour, respect for authority and the elders, among others. African morality reflects the peculiar African experience on good or bad character but does not become an exclusivity of the African people. In other words, the African moral awareness could be found to be real, relevant and revered in other societies across the globe. This explains that morality is a shared value in more senses than one as a common good wish and responsibility of sane humanity.

Curriculum

Etymologically speaking, the concept of curriculum is derived from the Latin word *currus* which means “a race course” or “a race track”. *Currus* was the name for a run way or a course which competitors covered in order to win a prize or honour. She went further to write that, “Based on this, Curriculum can be defined as subject and subject matter to be taught by teachers and learned by students in order to achieve an attainable goal. It can be regarded as the subject matter to be taught to the learners. It contains everything a learner is expected to know for a course of study” (Ojobor, 2008). Onah (2011) agrees with original Latin derivative and meaning of curriculum as a course covered in a race competition in athletics; he however added that from the nineteenth century, it became figuratively applied to education to mean the standardized ground covered by students in their race to the finishing line. “Finishing line” in here means the end of an academic course or programme of study with the belief that the educational goal has been attained, new experiences have been acquired, behaviour has been modified and

epistemological awareness improved upon by construction or re-construction. Earlier scholars have defined curriculum thus: According to Tanner (1980), curriculum is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experiences under the auspices of the school, for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal social competence. For Grundy, 1987, curriculum is a programme of activities (by teachers and pupils) defined so that pupils will attain so far as possible certain educational and other schooling objectives. The advocacy of this paper is the inclusion of transformative education as a necessary component of curriculum in the Nigerian schools with obvious objective to improving the morality status of the present generation who are battling with moral crises.

Objectives of Teaching Christian Religion in Nigerian Schools

The Federal Ministry of Education (1985) gave the following as the objectives of teaching religions in schools.

- (a) To provide more opportunity for the Nigerian youths, to learn more about God and thereby develop their faith in him.
- (b) To enable the youths to accept Christ as saviour; or to make them understand Islam as a culture and civilization.
- (c) To acquaint the students with the broad outlines of Islam and Christianity.
- (d) To give the students adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education in Religious Studies.
- (e) To help the youths to understand the basic teachings of God/Allah and to apply these to their daily lives and work.
- (f) To develop in the youths moral values such as humility, respect, love, kindness, justice and fair play, spirit of forgiveness, obedience, devotion to duty, orderly behaviour and selfless service to God and humanity.
- (g) To prepare the youths for higher education and service within the community.
- (h) To develop in the students; a strong faith in their religion (Christianity or Islam)
- (i) To develop both the body as well as the soul in an individual.
- (j) To create the awareness of the existence of the creator in the individual.
- (k) To enable students to know their relationship and duties to their creator themselves and

other creatures, so that they would be able to carry out these duties accordingly.

Problems Facing the Teaching and Learning of Christian Religion in Nigerian Schools

There are many problems facing the teaching and learning of religious education in Nigerian schools. Some of these problems are analyzed in the following order:

(i) Poor Attendance in the Class: Odudele (2006) argues that the capitalist nature of Nigerian society has had an adverse effect on the students' attendance in class. Many students attach greater importance to writing an examination than coming to the class for lecture. In order to make students' attendance in the classes compulsory, some lecturers have resorted to taking attendance of the surprise test. The teaching of religion as a subject is not an exception.

There is no doubt that one of the major problems facing the teaching and learning of religion particularly in Nigerian schools is the poor attendance of students in the class. In a class of about fifty students, if only ten students are found in the class, any teacher who teaches ten out of fifty students must be ready to repeat whatever he teaches when the students' attendance improves.

(ii) Lack of Qualified Religious Education Teachers: It is an obvious fact that there are few qualified teachers of religion in Nigerian schools. In some schools, the teaching of the subject may be given to anybody who is a Christian or a Muslim with the hope that teaching of the religion is synonymous with either Bible or Quran. At times, anybody who studied art-related courses in the tertiary institution might also be given a Religious Studies to teach since this is also an arts-related course, In some secondary schools, there may be no one university graduate as a religious teacher, Since the present senior secondary syllabus, perhaps, replaces the former higher school certificate, it may be difficult for an N.C.E. religious teacher to handle the senior secondary students effectively.

(iii) Inadequate motivation for teachers of religious Education: The government on her part does little or nothing to motivate Religious Studies teachers unlike those of English Language, Mathematics, Sciences among others, who receive some allowances just to encourage them. At regular intervals, workshops, conferences, seminars, induction courses. but teachers of religions are hardly remembered when it comes to this kind of incentive. Needless to say, this is a problem for effective teaching and learning of religions because a happy teacher is likely to be a committed teacher.

(iv) Status of the Subject: By the National Policy on Education, the status of Religious education still remains elective while subject like Mathematics, English Language, Biology, Yoruba Language and others are compulsory directly or indirectly. the fact that Religious Education falls within the category of elective subjects makes it less attractive to the students The few students who always register for it in most cases, do so in order to have the required number of subjects for WASCE (West Africa Secondary Certificate Examination) registration.

(v) Inadequate Standard Textbooks on Religious Education: Perhaps the status of the subject or the government policy on religions has discouraged many people or scholars of religion from writing standard textbooks on religion. Apart from the status of the subject, Olunmo (2001) observe that the course is always offered by a few students and since nobody will like to venture into a business where he will not be able to record any profit. This has made it impossible for many experts in the area of religion to write standard textbooks. Thus, for both the teachers and the students to play their role very well, they need some standard textbooks to use.

(vi) The Societal Attitudes Towards the Subject: The attitude of Nigerian society to-wards the teaching and learning of religions is nothing to write home about. Since Nigeria is a capitalist society where greater respect is given to rich people at the expense of the poor, therefore any job which brings quick money, or a course which can make a person to be rich in time is always preferred to other courses which do not have the same advantages. Perhaps, this is the reason why subjects or courses like Medicine, Accountancy, Pharmacy, Law and Business Administration are held in high esteem by the Nigerian society. People are not happy when offered an admission to study religion and a few who offered it do so unwillingly in the absence of an alternative or with the hope of changing it later.

(vii) Attitudes of Teachers Towards the Subject: According to Lawal (2003), Inferiority complex is the problem of many teachers of religion. Teachers of subjects like Mathematics, English, Science subjects are held in highly esteem by both the teachers and the students. On the other hand, little or no respect is accorded to teachers of elective subjects such as Bible Knowledge, Islamic Studies, Music, History, Theatre Arts among others. When teachers of religions find themselves in the midst of other subject teachers, some find it difficult to call themselves teachers of religion simply because they do not see themselves as being important as other subject teachers. This attitude no doubt will affect their teaching in the classroom.

(viii) Attitude of Some School Administrators Towards Teaching of Religions: Some school administrators find it very difficult to distinguish between teaching of religion from Christianity, Islam or Traditional religion. To them, teaching of religion does not require the service of a specialist. They feel that Christian religious studies could be handled by any Christian, Islamic religious knowledge could be taught by anybody who is a Moslem while traditional religion could be handled by anybody who is a traditionalist. It is as a result of this that no serious encouragement is being given to the teaching of the subject in their schools.

(ix) Attitudes of Parents Toward Teaching of Religions: Some parents' attitude towards the teaching and learning of religions contribute, in no small way, to the problem. There are some parents who feel that religion is for lazy students. To them, anybody who goes to a higher institution to study it will eventually become a pastor or a mallam.

Some parents hate the subject to the extent that they will rather advice their children to go and learn one trade or another instead of studying religion.

(x) Lack of Instructional Materials: One of the problems facing the teaching and learning of religions in Nigerian schools generally is that of inadequate instructional materials. Unlike the compulsory subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Biology and other instructional materials on religions are grossly inadequate.

(xi)The Subject Methodology: For Olubummo (2001), methodology refers to ways through which teachers of religion education teach the subject to the students. In those days, rote learning method was very common among the teachers of religions. This is a method whereby a learner would be expected to recite what he has been taught without looking at the Bible or Quran. Any learner, who could not recite the passage given to him, correctly would be severely dealt with. No doubt, this method and some similar methods are enough to kill the interest of the students in the subject. However, things have started to improve with the use of some better approaches to the teaching of the subject.

Challenges of Christian Religious Education in Nigeria

The Nigerian society in itself raises questions against Christian values by its aggressive pursuant of contradictions of Christian culture. The incessantcollapse of moral values in the society at large has negative influences on the Nigerian child. All Nigerians at home share the same societal milieu; soChristians do not have separate communities where they dwell. Both

Christians and non-Christians enjoy the same buses and other means of transport in the commercial sphere, public squares of entertainment, sports and social interactive fora, market places, hospitals, parliaments and parastatals, state ministries and farms, security outfits and the spatial continuum of neighbourhood. So, Nigerian peoples come from different backgrounds, visions and orientations. Therefore what is taught by way of Christian religious education may suffer the challenges of suffocations when they are not imbibed properly and could consequently be vacated from the naïve and nascent minds of the young and the inadequately informed by these surrounding contradictory forces.

Due to societal influences of mediocrity against meritocracy some students opt for change of schools during the pre-external examination year from mission schools to elsewhere where there could be possible windows for malpractices. In some cases, family members, sponsors and friends encourage their migrations. The background to this immoral vice is the wrong philosophy of “the end justifies the means” where brilliant results on paper as certificates without a correlation to intelligence and knowledge count regrettably as better options. Materialism instead of honest and transparent acquisition of wealth through hard work hold sway and many through the route to the negative bias of those undergoing the lessons of Christian religious education. There is a common ground shared by what can be offered by folk lessons which are these African senses of morality and worthy ethical life. When these are taught at the cradle by parents in the family, the children would be pre-disposed to getting them faster when they are repeated in schools by their teachers. They will then grow with them into adult life.

The Church authorities have to continue to speak to power in incessant persuasions to ensure that the Nigerian led Federal government currently in the hands of Muslim leaders does not implement goals and nursetendencies that tend to Islamize the spirit and structures of the country’s school system. Nigeria has National Policy on Education that breathes on the supposed secularity of the Nigerian constitution. As a result of this level playing ground, religious freedom which includes but not limited to freedom of worship, choice of religious education and affiliation should be respected at all levels. Therefore, the legislation in favour of Arabic/Islamic Studies against Christian religious studies whose columns are being shrunk every other year should be stopped completely according to constitutional provisions. It is not administratively healthy for the Federal Ministry of Education to be placed over time in the hands of a Muslim who sees his other portfolio as an opportunity to advance the course of his or her faith and enlarge

its coasts to the detriment of other religions.

Christian religious education has the legitimacy to contribute its quota to the sustainable development goals of the country. During the expatriate missionary epoch, the colonial masters gave financial assistance to the mission schools through its scheme of *grants-in-aide*. Today, no such help exists anymore. The government at all levels should help ameliorate the financial challenges which the Church has in the provisions of quality education. This is because it will help bring down cost so that the children of the poor can access quality education and most importantly, the government should appreciate the fact that the children being educated in sound character and excellent learning in mission schools are Nigerian citizens and whose responsibilities they are. Nigeria from its wealth that is enormous and vast can offer scholarship to every Nigerian child and see it done because it can afford it. The Christian schools should not be discouraged by the moral crises in Nigerian contemporary history but should rather be encouraged by these ethical challenges so that through their efforts Nigeria could grow out of this unwanted moral quagmire. And one of such routes to morality is the teaching of African moral values in schools as essential part of the curriculum in Christian religious education.

Advocating for Transformative Education in the Curriculum

To address these sociological challenges, there is a need for a paradigm shift towards transformative education within the CRE curriculum. Transformative education goes beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to foster critical thinking, empathy, and social consciousness among students.

Firstly, the curriculum should incorporate a comparative study of world religions, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous African religions. This approach promotes religious literacy and understanding, fostering respect for diverse beliefs and practices.

Secondly, CRE should integrate socio-cultural issues relevant to contemporary Nigerian society, such as social justice, gender equality, human rights, and environmental stewardship. By contextualizing religious teachings within social realities, students can develop a deeper appreciation of their role as agents of positive change in their communities.

Thirdly, pedagogical methods should emphasize experiential learning, dialogue, and critical reflection. Students should be encouraged to engage in discussions, debates, and projects that address real-world challenges from a Christian ethical perspective.

Attendance in classes is one of the conditions to be met by students in tertiary institutions before they can be allowed to participate in an examination, the same thing should be extended to both primary and secondary schools. Again, constant assessment test by the teacher will reduce irregular attendance and absenteeism on the part of the students

Moreover, efforts should be made by the government to employ more qualified teachers of religious education as to alleviate the problem of shortage of qualified teachers. Also, the various incentives being enjoyed by teachers of English Language, Mathematics and Sciences should also be extended to teachers of religious education. In addition to that, seminar, conferences as well as workshops should be organized regularly for teachers of religious education by the government and well-to-do people in Nigeria. Besides, in order to enhance the status of the course, if not for any other reason apart from its moral advantages, the course should be made compulsory. If this is done, students offering the subject will not only increase but they will take the course more seriously. Apart from this, experts or specialists in the area of religious education should be encouraged by the government to write standard books on the subject. This can be done by subsidising the cost of publishing.

Furthermore, to Akinrowo (2005) there is need for Nigerians to be educated on the importance of all school subjects' especially religious education. The societal attitude towards the subject should be changed and parents should not impose any course or subject on their children.

The society should also be made to understand that no course is superior or inferior to the other. Teachers' attitude towards the subject should also change for better. They should hold themselves in high esteem because people will call you what you call yourself or see you the way you see yourself. Thus, the idea of giving preference or priority to some subjects at the expense of other subjects by the school heads should be stopped forthwith. Religious studies should also be included in the list of subjects that will receive the attention of government concerning provision of instructional materials. Again, since the world is changing, teachers of religious education must also be ready to change their teaching methods.

Prospects of Transformative Education in Contemporary Nigeria

In the first instance, religious education serves as a guidance not only for the people involved in the religion but also for the students. It assists people in recognizing what is right and wrong. Since people will recognize what is good and bad, they will be guided to choose the right thing by

religion.

Another thing about religious education is that since it is stated in the Bible that anybody who does not work must not eat, therefore, religion encourages people to be hardworking after which they will pray for God's blessing on whatever they may be doing.

For Dzurgba (2002), while some school subjects such as Science, Arts, Social Sciences including Mathematics take care of man's physical elements, religious education on the other hand takes care of man's spiritual nature. Human being are materials conscious but religion will remind man of his spiritual responsibilities as a result of which man's inner mind will be consulted and consequently, the right decision will be taken.

Moreover, like other school subjects such as History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics among others, religious studies serves as an academic subject. By implication, it is a subject that can be offered by pupils at the primary school level and students at both secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Another considerable prospect of religious education according to Jayeola (2005) is that it promotes morality not only in adults but also in children as well. Children right from youth are expected to be shown the way of the Lord so that they may worship and obey him throughout their days. It is believed by many people that children brought up in a religious way may hardly misbehave or involve themselves in things that are ungodly.

The teaching of religious education enhances the level of discipline among the learners. When students are exposed to religious education, they will realize that to obey is better than sacrifice and there is reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience. The students will also know that they must be obedient to constituted authorities, to their parents and people who are older than they are.

Teaching of religion makes man to become more humane in dealing with his fellow beings. The reason for this is that of all subjects, it is religious studies that reminds man of his duties not only to his neighbours and God, but also to himself and his family. Thus, the teaching of religious education helps students to see themselves as children of the same family or parents. Therefore, whatever ways such Christians may see themselves, the problem of tribalism may not exist. Also, as members of the same family, the spirit of love will be existing among them regardless of where they may come from.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, Christian Religious Education in Nigerian schools holds immense potential to contribute to students' holistic development and societal transformation. By adopting a sociological perspective and advocating for a transformative approach to the curriculum, educators can ensure that CRE promotes religious pluralism, social cohesion, and ethical citizenship. Ultimately, a reimagined CRE curriculum can empower future generations to become compassionate, informed, and responsible global citizens in Nigeria's diverse and dynamic society.

Education of the Christian child should be seen as a top priority in the scale of preference by parents and the government, the Church and the society at large. The Nigerian child should be educated on his or her Christian religion to know God and love him, to love his or her neighbour and respect the inalienable human rights. Added to this are patriotism and service to the country. It is a lopsided formation to educate the child on worldly affairs without proper critique of values and rational balances through Christian religious education and those African morality indices that would help towards the unfolding and constructions of character, competencies and capabilities. In order to have citizens who are to be integrally formed, morality should be given its pride of place in the school curriculum. Moral instructions should not be compromised any longer in schools and African moral values should constitute major components of this *new* curriculum for Nigerian schools.

In order to have a remarkable success in the implementation of primary and secondary education, the National Policy on Education states that: For improving the teaching of moral and religious education, government will ensure, through the various state Ministries of education, the production of a suitable curriculum and the training of teachers for the subjects. From the above, one can conclude that the federal government is committed to the teaching and learning of religious education in the Nigerian schools. Though, the National Policy on Education is silent on the teaching and learning of religious education in the higher institutions of learning, it is obvious that religions are being offered not only in the colleges of education but also in the Nigerian universities up to the doctoral degree level. Here are some recommendations for incorporating Christian Religious Education into Nigerian schools:

1. **Inclusive Approach:** Ensure that the curriculum is inclusive of diverse Christian denominations present in Nigeria, avoiding favoritism towards any particular sect.
2. **Historical Context:** Provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical development

of Christianity in Nigeria, including its introduction by missionaries and its impact on society.

3. **Ethical and Moral Values:** Emphasize the teachings of Christianity on ethical and moral values such as love, compassion, justice, and forgiveness, promoting their application in students' daily lives.
4. **Critical Thinking:** Encourage critical thinking and reflection on Christian teachings, allowing students to question and engage with the content in a meaningful way.
5. **Interfaith Dialogue:** Foster interfaith dialogue and understanding by promoting respect for other religious beliefs while affirming the unique tenets of Christianity.
6. **Community Engagement:** Encourage community engagement and service projects based on Christian principles of charity and social justice, fostering a sense of responsibility towards the less privileged.
7. **Cultural Relevance:** Incorporate elements of Nigerian culture and tradition into the curriculum to demonstrate the intersection between Christianity and indigenous beliefs, promoting cultural appreciation and understanding.
8. **Teacher Training:** Provide adequate training and support for teachers to effectively deliver the curriculum, ensuring they are knowledgeable about both the subject matter and pedagogical strategies for teaching it.
9. **Assessment Methods:** Develop assessment methods that go beyond rote memorization and encourage critical analysis and application of Christian principles in real-life situations.
10. **Continuous Evaluation:** Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum through feedback from students, teachers, and stakeholders, making adjustments as needed to ensure its relevance and impact.

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