

Christian Religious Studies and Challenges of Moral Decadence in the Society of Nigeria. The Way Forward

Inusa Ada PhD¹, Haruna Godwin Ojonemi² & Asabe Akhaine Duna³

^{1,2&3}Christian Religious Studies Section, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Federal University of Education, Kontagora, Niger State.

¹adainusa20@gmail.com, ²ojonemigodwin@gmail.com, ³asabeakhaine@gmail.com

¹08069426915, ²08035273218, ³08072606117

DOI: [10.56201/ijrcp.vol.10.no3.2025.pg14.19](https://doi.org/10.56201/ijrcp.vol.10.no3.2025.pg14.19)

Abstract

The decay in the Nigerian society has affected the standard of values and moral character formation. The society is bedeviled with various moral ills such as; kidnapping, child and women trafficking, drug trafficking and abuse, child abuse, banditry, money rituals, terrorism, Ethno-Religious motivated violence, prostitution, examination malpractice, armed robbery, sexual harassment, indecent dressing to mention but a few. The trust of this paper, is to examine how Christian religious studies can curb the challenge of moral decadence in the society of Nigeria. This paper adopted the analytical and review method, while the dynamic religion and morality theory, were used as the theoretical foundation for the study. The paper explores the concept of moral decadence and examined the Nigerian core moral values. It also discusses the factors responsible for moral decadence in Nigeria society and the role played by Christian religious studies in instilling good moral behaviour. Conclusion was drawn and recommendations made for way forward.

Keywords: *Christian Religious Studies, Moral Decadence, Society Nigeria and way Forward*

Introduction

In recent times, the decadence in our moral and value system in the society cannot be undermined. This decay in the Nigeria society according to Usara and Dodo (2015), manifested in so many anti- social vices which are currently seen in every facet of life in Nigeria as; corruption, violent crime, terrorism dishonesty, greed, lack of accountability, in discipline among many others. All these have contributed to serious ethical and moral problems for Nigeria as a state have constrained all sincere effort aimed at achieving sustainable national development.

The phenomenon of moral decadence as opined by Jimoh (2015) among youths in the society in Nigeria has reached unbearable state. Jimoh saw the youths, as the pillars and future leaders and professionals of any nation, unfortunately immorality has gone far in destroying them. To Jimoh, moral decadence is synonymous to corruption, dishonesty and illegality. Buzaije and Haruna (2018), in the same vein, sees moral decadence as becoming a norm and mores in Nigeria where people see corruption, nepotism, immoral act as a normal life and a way out of poverty, subjection, rejection and inferiority complex or low self-esteem. Egan (2021) disclosed that, the good moral principles that had been guiding Nigeria began to decline and the dream of the founding fathers has been thrown away. Each Nigeria starting from the leadership to the followers or the led, is struggling for a personal and selfish gain. Thereby, leading to the present level of corruption, indiscipline and nepotism (moral decadence).

Researchers such as Mezieobi, Nwaubani, and Anyanwu, (2012), Yusuf and Ekpoto (2021) pointed out that moral failures manifest in violent demonstrations, looting, stealing and robbery

attacks, intra and inter-tribal fighting, destruction and vandalization of public properties; rudeness; hyperactivity; ego centricity; vandalism; drug abuse; acts of violence and lawlessness; hostage taking; oil bunkering; arms insurgence; truancy; drug abuse; examination malpractice, cultism and more recently, the increase in banditry and kidnapping.

The above scenario is as a result of decay in core moral values. Egan (2021) viewed the moral problems in schools and the society as deteriorated and leadership role in moral training of schools appears to have disappeared. Parents to some extent contribute to the lack of moral values of their children which has resulted to the increasing moral failures in the country. This ugly trend can only be curbed through functional Social Studies curriculum because it serves as a tool for societal transformation, international connectivity and a vital instrument for social and economic mobility at all levels. This paper therefore, explored the concept of moral decadence, the core moral values in Nigeria society, the factors responsible for moral decadence in our society, the role of Christian religious studies in curbing the challenges of moral decadence and the way forward.

Clarification of Concept

Moral Decadence

Morality are code of conduct, principles as to how people in the society behaves. Gila (2006) sees morality as the identification of the distinction between right and wrong or good and evil. He further said that it is the accepted standard of human behavior, a social enterprise belonging to the society and not to an individual. Like one's language, state or religion. To him, morality existed before the individual who is only inducted into it and becomes more or less a participant in it. And it goes on existing in him.

Decadence on the other hand is an attitude or behavior which shows a fall in standard. Egan (2021) saw decadence as decline or decay in societal values, norms and principles. Therefore, Moral decadence is the decline or fall in the moral and ethical norms and values that govern the behavioral conduct of individuals in the society. Moral decadence according to Buzaije and Haruna (2018) is seen by most people in Nigeria as normal life and a way out of poverty through imbibing into various societal ills like corruption ritual, kidnapping, armed robbery, hired assassin, prostitution among others. Gila (2006) described moral decadence as a social institution in which societal values and ethics are readily violated. To this end, nothing is detrimental to nation building like immorality. It is disastrous, relegate an individual's worth and destroy respect, trust and integrity.

Nigeria Core Moral Values

It is quite important to understand the concept of values before identifying and establishing the Nigeria core moral values. Moral values are the basic belief and attitude in a society, weather of individual or group which are considered worthwhile and which serve as guide to choices and behavior in daily life (Yusuf & Ekpoto, 2021). In a broader consideration of moral values, it is a trait, practice, acts, ideas, beliefs, attitude and principles that a group or society considers to be of merit, worthwhile, dear, acceptable and right (Enu & Esu, 2011). From the above, Nigerian core moral values have been weaken over the years and need to be strengthen for better national development NEEDS (2004) described Nigeria as a multi ethnic and pluralistic society with diverse religion and value system that has been weaken that is derived from the diversity of its people, religion and culture. These core values identified by NEEDS includes; respect for elders, honesty; accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence, integrity, posterity and moral courage.

Usara and Dodo (2015) revealed that the core Nigerian values are grossly compromised in present Nigeria socio- economic and political contest to the extent that it has constituted a

serious moral problem. This excessive compromise has resulted in greed, corruption, dishonesty, lack of accountability, violent crime, terrorism, political killings, drug peddling and abuse, child trafficking, prostitution, money ritual, kidnapping and so many other anti-social behaviors capable of jeopardizing all sincere effort directed at stimulating sustainable national development. Dike (2005) disclosed that the above weak background called for strengthening for valued moral education in schools as corruption drives and shape social values in Nigeria. He said;

For positive formation and good moral values lied in good value education. This implies the teaching of respect and responsible adult life to the citizens. It is for good character and moral development which will lead to sustainable national development.

Buzaije and Haruna exacerbate that, the basic fundamental values every responsible nation should teach its citizens includes; respect for constituted authority, sanctity of life, responsibility, values of honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, selflessness, cooperation and courage.

Aderinwale (2003) revealed that the cherished values have apparently continued eroding. He said the paradigm has shifted and Nigeria have generally slipped away from those cherished values and embraced a new culture, a new way of life, a new world view. The consequences is that, the cherished moral values have been diluted by the prevailing social vices. The core moral values of the society were the primary content of education and philosophy which Christian religious studies inculcated, that constituted child – upbringing as expressly dictated by the Holy book; “bring up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it”.

Factors Responsible for Moral Decadence

There are many factors responsible for moral decadence in the society, some of which are

The Home

Gila (2006) revealed that some homes are liberal and allowed children unlimited freedom, some don't have time for their children or the over punish them. Hence the society seems as an opportunity to enjoy all rights and privileges denied by the home or the freedom shackled by parents. The children therefore, participate or engage in all sort of immoral behavior such as abnormal dressing style, tight skin dress, harlotry hair do, and hooligan haircut.

Extravagant and Luxurious Life Style of Leaders

The craze for wealth accumulation through corruption has been come modern exemplified by Nigeria leaders. The youth and younger generation see arm robbery, cultism, kidnapping and money rituals as ways of getting rich quickly. Thereby rendering the society unsecured place to live.

Peer Pressure/Influence

Desirable and undesirable behaviors are learnt from peers either in school or in the community. In the school, inadequate teaching and learning facilities contribute to the causes of moral decadence among students. Inadequate facilities hinder teaching, learning and coverage of content. This will give room for students to engage in examination malpractice to achieve success (Omonijo, Uche, Rotimi & Nwadiakor 2014).

Indiscipline

The Cambridge dictionary of English language described indiscipline as a situation in which people do not control their behaviors or obey laws. Indiscipline is seen as any act that doesn't

conform to societal values and norms. Indiscipline takes many forms and shapes depending on how it been carried out.

Dittaniya (1996), viewed indiscipline as distinctive and deserving element to progress training or mode of life in accordance with rules. Consequently, indiscipline relates to behavior in any form. An act of indiscipline is a show of moral decadence where persons put aside rules and regulations and do what they like and leaves undone what is expected to be done. It is also describing as any act that is inconsistent with the laid down rules and regulations governing a particular community, state or nation.

Ochula (2012) saw indiscipline as absence of discipline. this means, that while indiscipline reigns, discipline is lacking there. The stability and continued existence in that society are in danger, life and property becomes insecure and the continued existence in that the society becomes precarious. Dittiniya (1996) added that indiscipline is quite obvious that it is a disgraceful and unfortunate incident of indiscipline to happen. He concluded that, nowadays, indiscipline is the order of the day, both in schools and the society at large where students beat their teachers and children beats their parents.

The Dynamic Theory of Religion and morality.

The dynamic theory of religion and morality according to Jonathan fox (1999:443) is more coherent and scientifically testable. He states that when a religious moral framework is challenged, the response will be the defensive action that is prone to conflict and insecurity. This is due to the standard and norms, build cohesiveness among its followers and the legitimate actors. Fox posits four roles religion can play in making sure, right moral values are inculcated. First, religion provides an ideological framework for understanding the world. Secondly, religion defines codes of behavior that link the faithful and their activities to that framework. Thirdly, religion leads individuals to an all-encompassing story and at times, creates the institutions that organize and recruit's individuals towards realization of these goals. Finally, religion provides legitimacy for activities and institutions in pursuit of these goals of fostering good religious and moral values that will lead to success. But in situation of moral bankruptcy or decadence insanity will be the order of the society.

Christian Religious Studies and Moral Education

Christian Religious Studies concern itself with the inculcation of positive spiritual, moral and intellectual attitudes design to make an individual a functional member of the society. Thus, the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (ABU) students hand book (2019) stated that Christian Religious Studies aimed at helping the students to acquire spiritual and moral values needed for interpersonal relationship, so as to improve their attitude for peaceful coexistence between people of different faith towards the survival of the individual and the society.

Christian religious studies and moral education also help in producing teachers with professional competence and people with sound moral capacity who will impart Christian religious education in both primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. More so, Christian religious education provides Christian with an opportunity for fuller intellectual appraisal of their faith, biblically, historically and doctrinally with a view of equipping them to be able to take seriously the inevitable challenge of healthy practical Christian living and mission in context.

Consequently, Christian religious studies content is blended in such a way as to make provision within the programme for the training of potential theologians and scholars in the field for ministry of the church in Nigeria and worldwide (Onuegbu, 2011). Attempt is also made to enable Christians to have such a sound and balance grasp of their own faith as to be able to respect the religious of others without compromise on their essential tenet of their own.

Therefore, provision is made with a view to the development of attitude of healthy tolerance and mutual understanding. This is the reason for the course in dialogue, sociology, phenomenology of religion, introduction to Islam and world religions.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Going by the above discussion, it is evident that the decay of moral values and virtues in the Nigeria society resulted into the worrisome state of the nation in all aspect. Due to the diminished and delinquent moral values and standard, the Nigeria society is faced with the security challenges, economic challenges, and breakdown in educational system. Moral decadence is a product of various factors ranging from home to government, when not handle properly, it increases to the state of insecurity of the nation as we have today where kidnapping, banditry, sexual harassment, rape, prostitution, corruption, armed robbery and money ritual are all the order of the day. But when adequate measures are put in place to handle situation of moral laxity, the nation will witness peace, unity and tranquility. The challenges of attaining development in any nation is said to be attitudinal both in character and in form and the Nigeria society is not exception. The absent of the core moral values in Nigeria has gone a long way to fertilize social vices such as; corruption, greed, dishonesty, ethno- religious conflict, terrorism among others. Having observed Christian religious studies and the challenges of moral decadence in the society of Nigeria, this paper suggests the following for a way forward;

- Christian religious studies and moral education be taught at all levels in our educational institutions.
- The national orientation agency in collaboration with the state and local government should organize constant sensitization programmes on the principles of ethical standard of behavior to the public.
- Parents should not compromise in remaining firm in correcting immoral behavior found among their children.
- Government through the security agents should ensure arrest and prosecute anyone who run low of the law notwithstanding his status and position
- The clergy should continue to use their pulpit in assuring and reassuring their adherents on the need to live a moral life for a better society

Reference

- Buzaije, A. & Haruna, G.O (2018). Morality, corruption and Indiscipline in Nigeria: A Socio Philosophical Analysis. An Article Published in the Journal of Languages Vol 9 No1 Pp89- 98
- Dike, V.E. (2005). Value education and national development. File 11c Document and National Development htm 25th/2/2010.
- Dittiniya, A.K. (1996). *Introduction to educational administration and planning*. Lagos: Nigeria Putting Press.
- Egan, H. E. (2021). Conceptual framework of social studies moral values and potentials of addressing moral failure in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, 24(2), 313-324
- Enu, D. B. & Esu, A.E.O. (2011). Re engineering values education in Nigeria; schools as catalyst for national development. International Education Studies.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National economic empowerment and development strategies (NEEDS) Abuja Perfect Printers Limited.
- Gila, B. (2006). Moral education in Nigeria the role of teacher and the school. *The Belt Journal of Education in Nigeria*, 1(1), 291-301
- Jimoh, Y.A. (2015). Moral decadence in Nigeria higher institution of learning the need for counselling. *Nigeria Journal of Research in Education*, 8 (1), 13-20.
- Mezieobi, D. I. Nwaubani, O., & Anyanwu, J. (2012). Moral failures implications for achieving sustainable nation building in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Science and Research*, 2(2), 31-42.
- Ochula, M. (2012). *Character and moral education a tool in the fight against corruption*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Onuegbu, K. (2011). Curbing moral decadence in the educational sector: Youth involvement retrieved July 15th 2013. <http://www.articlebase.com/college-and-university-article/curbing-moral-decadence-in-our-sector-46923.html>.
- Usara, D. S. & Dodo, J.G. (2015). Valued Education and Sustainable National Development Nigeria: The role of Social Studies. *Nigeria Journal of Research in Education*, 8(1), 87- 96.
- Yusuf, M. M. & Ekpoto, E. A. (2021). Socio-cultural factors impinging national security in Kaduna State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Social Science Education*, 3(1), 86-92