



# CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Volume: 02 Issue: 03 | March 2021

## Administration of Christian Religious Studies in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Problems and Way Forward

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*Received 22nd February 2020, Accepted 12th March 2021, Online 31th March 2021*

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**Abstract:** The article discussed the problems facing the administration of Christian religious programme in Nigerian secondary schools. Secondary data was used to support the points raised in the article. The secondary data were sourced from printed material and online publication by recognized institutions and individual author. There are many problems facing the administration of Christian Religious programme in Nigerian secondary schools. Some of the challenges include; inadequate funding of Christian Religious programme, inadequate Christian Religious studies teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of Christian Religious studies instructional materials, poor capacity development programme for Christian Religious studies teachers and negative attitude of students towards the study of Christian Religious programme. To solve these challenges, this article recommends the following: government and well-meaning Christian philanthropists and

Institutions should increase the funding of Christian Religious programme, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more Christian Religious studies professional teachers and motivate Christian Religious studies teachers by increasing their salaries and ensure effective staff development.

**Keywords:** Administration, Challenges, Christian Religious programme, Secondary school

### 1.0 Introduction

Secondary Education is the education that children receive after primary education and before the tertiary education. Based on the 6-3-3-4 system of education, secondary education comprises six years duration, but given in two stages: a junior secondary school stage and a senior secondary school stage, each to run for three years duration. The broad goals of Secondary Education according



to the National Policy on Education (2004) include the preparation of the individual for: useful living within the society and Higher education. In specific terms, the objectives are to: to provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic affiliations, offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage; to inspire its students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; and to foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.

NEEDS, (2014) submitted that the broad aim of secondary education within the overall national objectives is to prepare the students for higher education and for living a responsible life in society. Upon completion of nine years of basic education, most students proceed to the post-basic level, known as senior secondary education, for a period of three years. Senior secondary education has a diversified curriculum, with subjects designed to broaden students' knowledge and outlook in life. The language of instruction is English for all secondary school grades, except for special courses that require another language. Every student takes six core subjects, plus a minimum of two and a maximum of three from the list of elective subjects. In summary, they have to take a minimum of eight subjects but not more than nine. The core subjects are English; mathematics; one major Nigerian language; one elective out of biology, chemistry, physics or integrated science; one elective out of English literature, history, geography or Christian religious programme; and agricultural science or a vocational subject.

Christian religious programme is one of the most important programme offering in the Nigerian secondary schools because it deals with molding of character and society building. To Okafor (1992), Christian Religious Knowledge helps to inject sanity into society and minimize the turning of a nation into a police state by cultivating citizens who acknowledge metaphysical sanctions, whose acceptable behaviors are often determined not just by external constraints but by spiritual consideration.

The teaching and learning of Christian religious programme is faced with problems in the Nigerian secondary schools. Orji (2017) submitted that there are many problems have been confronting the traditional method of teaching and learning of Christian Religious studies in our secondary schools. Ntamu,, Owulu, & Monity, (2016) observed that there has been a fall in students' academic performance in CRK over the years as compared to other subjects in the school system. Despite the above relevance of Christian Religious Knowledge, observation reveals that students have not shown interest in the subject as well as performed credibly well in examinations administered to measure learning outcome. On the whole, more worrisome is the performance of students in external examinations on the subject. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) in the last three year (2012- 2014) results in seventeen popular subjects indicates that only 35.26%, 23.58% and 33.45% respectively passed CRK with credit passes. This submission is also confirmed by Lawal, (2002) and Lawal, (2010) who concluded that poor performance occurs yearly and more students are running away from the subject of CRK. This alarming rate of poor performance in Christian Religious Knowledge has generated growing concern from various quarters, the parents, teachers, schools and the government.



The administration of Christian religious programme have been identified as one of the major problem facing the teaching and learning of Christian religious programme in Nigerian secondary schools. To this end, this article is aimed to discuss the problems facing the administration of Christian religious programme in the Nigerian secondary schools.

## **2.0 Concept of Christian Religious programme**

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is one of the major subjects missionaries bequeathed to Nigerian education system on the establishment of schools by the 19th century missionaries. The aim was to train people who will be of immense help to the colonial trinity goals (God/Christianity, government/colonization and Gold/commerce). In order to achieve the above, the major curriculum contents of their educational system were Bible knowledge, Arithmetic and English language for communication. To implement fully the contents, adequate attention was given to the understanding of the place of God in man's life (Nsongo, 2001). During the missionary era, bible knowledge otherwise known as CRS was the core subject. Subsequently, after independence, government took over schools; there was a clarion call for review of curriculum in 1983. The call was as a result of criticisms leveled against colonial education, which some scholars viewed as being too arts oriented and as such lacked relevance to Nigeria upliftment, political emancipation and infrastructural development (Ocho, 2005). Ocho further explained that the situation led to the modification of the curriculum with greater emphasis on sciences and technological subjects.

Christian religious studies are a compulsory subject for students in primary and junior secondary schools. The subject is also taught at the senior secondary school level. Falade (2015) cited

Adeyinka, Okeke, and Orebanjo (1991) that identified the objectives of CRK as: to provide an opportunity for the students to learn more about God and further grow in faith in God; to enable students to accept Christ as their Saviour; to enable students to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their daily activities; to enable students to accept Christ as the founder and sustainer of the Christian church; to help students understand the basic teachings of Christ and to apply these to their daily lives and work; to develop and foster in the lives of the students' values such as humility, respect, love, kindness, justice, fair-play, the spirit of forgiveness, obedience, devotion to duty, orderly behavior and selfless service to God and humanity; to prepare the youth for higher education and for service within the community.

The Junior Secondary CRK syllabus has been designed to enable learners to acquire the values state above. Some of the contents in the syllabus through which the expected values can be acquired are:

- i. Important values in human relationships. This concept defines the meaning of values and identifies some important values in human relationship i.e. love, unity, forgiveness, endurance, peace, patience, cooperation, etc.
- ii. Sharing of hope, interest, and fear. The concept teaches open-mindedness and friendliness. It encourages students to share their hope, interest, and fear with others rather than living a solitary life.
- iii. A parable about our attitude to possessions. The parable of the rich fool, the rich man and Lazarus are related to learners. This is to teach about the danger of craze for wealth and the need for them to assist others with their possessions.
- iv. The unfaithfulness of Ananias and Sapphira. Students are to learn this story and bring out the moral lessons which include: danger of



unfaithfulness, repercussion of lying, and the need for truthfulness.

v. Unity and charity in the early church. This concept teaches the importance of unity among Christians. It also encourages learners to be hospitable by sharing whatever they have with others (Falade 2015).

Ocheoha (2005) agrees that Christian Religious Knowledge has also as its duty the formation of personality and character in the students. Ocheoha (2005) went further to stressed that its curriculum has been designed with intent that students should be given a complete theory of life; a philosophy which emphasizes that God should be the joy of their youth, the strength of their age and the life of their immortality. Ikechukwu (2014) asserted that Christian Religious Knowledge has been one of the most important subjects being taught in the Secondary Schools in Nigeria. This is because the subject helps to streamline the thought, character, moral and aspiration of the students. It also offers hope for the future, integrate, discipline, harmonious and progressive society. Akubue (1992) concluded that Christian Religious Knowledge is expected to fulfill the student's great solemn mission of making spiritual values in this world of change; the wellspring of sanctity in the midst of evil, the beacon of idealism in age of cynicism and a ground hope in the face of discouragement and mounting fear by strengthening the student's awareness of moral realities. Okonkwo (2007), Christian Religious studies teach the necessity and duty of participation in government and encourage the cultivation of better relations, socially, professionally, industrially and commercially with others irrespective of their religious inclinations.

### **Concept of Administration**

Ogunode (2021) defined educational administration is the systematic way of arranging educational resources to actualize the objectives of

educational institutions. Nwankwoala (2016), sees educational administration as a broad umbrella encompassing a number of processes such as: planning, coordinating, controlling and being involved in other management processes and contribute to formulation of policies. In order to achieve these goals, the head of the educational organization plans carefully various programmes and activities. The educational organization may be a school, college or university. The head organizes these programmes and activities with co-operation from other teachers, parents and students, motivating them and co-ordinating the efforts of staff members as well as directing and exercising control over them. The head evaluates the performance and progress of staff in achieving the purpose of the educational programme, provides feedback to them and brings modification in the plans and programmes of the institution when required. The totality of these processes which are directed towards realizing or achieving the purposes of the school is called educational administration. Kalagbor (2017), defined educational administration as the process of identifying, mobilizing and utilizing scarce human and material resources relevant in education for the purpose of achieving specific educational goals efficiently and effectively. Gift (2018) sees educational Administration is concerned with integrating the appropriate human and material resources that are made available and made effective for achieving the purposes of a programme of an educational institution According to Kalagbor (2017), the following activities and programmes come under the scope of educational administration at the institutional level: (a) Deciding the purposes of the institution or school, (b) Planning for academic or curricular and cocurricular activities, (c) Preparing the time table and the time schedules for various activities, (d) Assigning duties and responsibilities to the staff members, (e) Organizing curricular and co-



curricular programmes, (f) Directing and motivating the staff of the institution, (g) Coordinating by efforts of people to achieve the purpose. h. Exercising control over the staff, (i) Conducting periodical reviews about the progress, achievements and failures of the institution, (j) Taking measures for staff development, (k) Maintaining order and discipline, (l) Management of materials, (m) Management of finance, (n) Maintaining records and registers up to date, (o) Maintaining human relationships, (p) Supervision of the work of teachers and other employees, (q) Giving feedback to the teachers performing well and taking remedial measures for teachers not performing well. School administration takes two forms. The external and internal administration. The external is handled by the ministries, agencies and parastates of the federal or states government in terms of formulating policies, planning and making laws while the internal is handled by the school administrators appointed by the government to manage the institutions (Ogunode, 2021).

#### **4.0 Problem facing the Administration of Christian Religious Studies in Nigerian Secondary Schools**

The following have been identified; inadequate funding of Christian Religious programme, inadequate Christian Religious studies teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of Christian Religious studies instructional materials, poor capacity development programme for the Christian Religious studies teachers and negative attitude of students towards the study of Christian Religious programme as problems facing the administration of Christian religious programme in the Nigerian secondary schools..

##### **4.1 Inadequate Funding Of Christian Religious Programme**

Inadequate funding is another major problem facing the administration of Christian religious

studies in the Nigerian secondary schools. The funding of secondary school education in Nigeria is poor and this is because the Nigerian government failed to implement the 26% of UNESCO recommendation for the development of education by developing countries like Nigeria. Onovughe & Mordi (2017) wrote a paper that examined the challenges of the implementation of the Christian Religious Education in Nigeria schools in the 21st Century. Christian Religious Education is one of the earliest subjects in the Nigerian school curriculum. It has made a positive impact on the national education system at all level but in spite of this achievement, the teaching of the subject is still faced with challenges in the implementation. These include inadequate funding, inadequate facilities/infrastructure, use of auxiliary teachers, and students' attitude among others. The paper uses a research approach that relies on argumentation that adheres to the rule of a logical syllogism. The paper posits that in view of the importance attached to the subject in the school curriculum, there is a need to address these challenges so as to achieve the positive goals. The inadequate funding of Christian religious programme at the secondary schools is responsible for shortage of teachers, inadequate instructional materials, poor supervision and poor quality of teaching and learning of Christian religious programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

##### **4.2 Inadequate Christian Religious Studies Teachers**

Charles, & Harriet (2013) study on whether qualified teachers are employed to teach the subject, the researchers took time to conduct oral interview with some teachers in the six sampled schools. In each of these schools, one teacher spoke on behalf of other colleagues. The responses of the teachers were at times similar to those of the students, but at times varied. At Ado Girls secondary school, one respondent, a teacher submitted that there was total



lack of qualified teachers in the subjects. According to her, she was not trained for the subject but was drafted from English language to teach religious education. She complained of her inability to teach the subject as she was not trained in the methodology of the subject. At Urban Boys secondary school, Fegge-Onitsha, a respondent confirmed that there was only one teacher for religious education for the entire school, and she was the one. She regretted that she has commenced her retirement leave, and meanwhile no replacement has been made by the Ministry of Education. At Urban Boys secondary school, Fegge-Onitsha, a respondent confirmed that there was only one teacher for religious education for the entire school, and she was the one. She regretted that she has commenced her retirement leave, and meanwhile no replacement has been made by the Ministry of Education. At Comprehensive secondary school, the teachers spoken with complained of over-work load. According to them, three teachers are teaching the subject but one was not an expert (Charles, & Harriet (2013).

Eze (2015) submitted in his paper that the teacher is the actual implementer of the curriculum. He defines and reinterprets the curriculum. A teacher has the potential for enhancing the quality of education by bringing life to curriculum and inspiring students to curiosity and self-directed learning. He is an important agent to achieve the set of educational goals. Christian Religious Knowledge is the understanding of Christians about their belief and religious practices. The new Christian Religious Knowledge teacher must be professionally trained, innovative, democratic, resourceful, business-oriented, a modeler, knowledgeable of the subject matter to achieve meaningful learning, high moral and academic standards. Onovughe & Mordi (2017) submitted that lack of sufficient professionally trained teachers is another problem affecting the teaching CRK in schools. Onovughe & Mordi (2017)

and Lekwat (1984), “observed that in every paper or in every meeting, the problem of lack of sufficient professionally trained teachers is being raised. The causes of the shortage are, numerous and one major cause is the problem of policy implementation by the appropriate government” (Onovughe & Mordi 2017). This is true and supported by Akinpelu (1975) on the quality of teacher intakes.

### **4.3 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities**

Jegede (2020) did a study that investigated the challenges facing Christian Religious Studies teachers in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Result collected revealed that majorities of the respondents agreed that Christian Religious Studies teachers are not been provided with adequate infrastructural facilities like staff offices, staff rooms, and labs, Christian Religious Studies teachers are not well motivated, Christian Religious Studies teachers are not adequately been provided with instructional materials, Christian Religious Studies teachers are not properly been supervised, Christian Religious Studies teachers are teaching larges classes, and Christian Religious Studies teachers in FCT, Abuja are been given opportunities to attend workshop, seminar and in-service program. Based on these findings, the study recommends the following: more professional Christian Religious Studies teachers should be employed and posted to secondary schools across FCT.

### **4.4 Shortage of Christian Religious Studies Instructional Materials**

Lack of sufficient instructional materials is a very big problem facing the administration of Christian religious studies in the Nigerian secondary schools. Many secondary school administrators do not have adequate instructional materials in their respective schools to give to CRK teachers to teach the programme. Christian religious studies instructional materials are very important in the presentation of lesson. It makes the students learn



fast and understand abreast better. It is unfortunate that many CRK teachers do not have adequate instructional materials to deliver their lessons. Charles, & Harriet (2013) did a study on challenges facing the effective teaching and learning of religious/moral education in secondary schools in onitsha urban. In the study majorities of respondents strongly agreed that in their various schools the challenges they are facing include lack of adequate teaching materials such as charts, visual, audio materials, among others, and teachers do not even encourage the students to provide local materials as teachers themselves could not do this and lack of interest in the subject by the students. They also complained of lack of adequate text books and instructional materials and their library was not adequately equipped with corresponding text books for the use of the staff and students. Their views were collaborated by about 80% of other respondents in other schools sampled

#### **4.5 Poor Capacity Development Programme for the Christian Religious Studies Teachers**

Poor capacity development programme of CRK teachers is another big problem facing the teaching and learning of Christian Religious studies in the Nigerian secondary schools. Many CRK teachers since joining the services of the federal ministry, state ministries of education and the local government authority have not gone for training. Capacity development is vital for teacher capacity development. CRK teachers that go for constant training and retraining programme perform better than those CRK teachers who are not going for training and retraining programme. According to Eze (2015) Christian religious knowledge teachers inclusive must be re-trained through seminars, workshops, conferences, and acquiring higher professional qualification to be in line with the new skills, concepts, principles, values and trends of life. Eze (2015) further disclosed that to achieve

functional and qualitative educational system worldwide, teachers must be trained and re-trained. To be a teacher therefore, no matter the level of education, you must be trained and certificated by any teacher education programme to teach, how to teach, where to teach, with what to teach, when to teach and whom to teach. On this note, it is obvious that for one to educate others, he must first of all be educated, to train, he must be trained for one cannot give what he does not have.

#### **4.6 Negative Attitude of Students towards the Study of Christian Religious Programme**

Another challenge facing the teaching and learning of Christian religious studies in the Nigerian secondary schools is the negative attitudes of students towards the programme. Many students offering the programme do not take the programme serious and this negative attitude is among the factors responsible for poor performance in the programme. This submission is in agreement with Ntamu, Owulu, & Monity, (2016), Butler and Uren (1997); Simonton (2001); Lawal (2010) which shows that lack of interest on the part of students make them to perform low in school subjects. The data analysis however revealed that students' gender significantly influences academic performance in CRS, whereby female students performed better than male students. Kasomo (2011) carried out a similar study on students' attitudes and the teaching of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Secondary Schools in Kenya. Using both closed and open-ended questionnaires administered to participants in nine secondary schools. Based on the analysis, the paper concluded that there are no significant differences among respondents of different backgrounds in their attitudes towards CRE. The respondents' conception of the nature of CRE falls into two groups: a positive oriented group which holds that CRE has utilitarian value and the other group that view CRE as the non-functional subject. Charles, & Harriet (2013)



observed that most often, teachers tend to present the facts of the subject to their students as something more or less sacred to be memorized without questioning. As a result, students fear the subject not because it is difficult but because it is not well taught. Most of these problems are as a result of lack of adequate orientation for teachers of religion. The use of instructional materials to teach the subject by the teachers has not received the attention it deserves, thereby making the subject boring. The fact remains that teachers stick to traditional method of teaching whereby the students are made passive listeners than active participants.

### 5.0 Way Forward

To solve these challenges, this article recommends the following: government and well-meaning Christian philanthropists and Institutions should increase the funding of Christian Religious programme, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more Christian Religious studies professional teachers and motivate the Christian Religious studies teachers by increasing their salaries alongside will enhance effective staff development.

a) The government should increase the funding of secondary school education and priorities should be given to Christian religious programme;

b) The government should provide infrastructural facilities in all the secondary schools across the country;

c) The government should employ more Christian religious studies professional teachers and deploy to the secondary schools across the country;

d) The government should provide more Christian religious studies instructional materials and distribute to all secondary schools across the country;

e) The government should ensure effective staff development programme for Christian religious teachers to increase their capacity and effectiveness.

### Conclusion

Secondary school education is the post-primary school education. It is aimed to prepare the students for higher education. Christian religious programme is one of the few programme offer in the Nigerian secondary schools with the objectives of providing an opportunity for the students to learn more about God and further grow in faith in God. There are many problems facing the teaching and learning Christian religious programme in the Nigerian secondary schools. This article discussed the problems facing the administration of Christian religious programme in the Nigerian secondary schools. The following problem were include; inadequate funding of Christian Religious programme, inadequate Christian Religious studies teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of Christian Religious studies instructional materials, poor capacity development programme for the Christian Religious studies teachers and negative attitude of students towards the study of Christian Religious programme. To address these challenges, this article recommends the following: government should increase the funding of Christian Religious programme, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more Christian Religious studies professional teachers and motivate the Christian Religious studies teachers by increase their salaries and ensure effective staff development.



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