
Christian Religious Education: A Pre – Requisite for Curtailing Depression in Women in this Recession Time for National Development

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Abstract

Development of human capital is very important to any country's growth and sustainable Development because human beings are the agents who exploit natural resources, build economic, political organization and carry forward National Development. The Nigerian women are part of these human agents. For any visible National Development to take place, the women must be significant because they constitute a greater percentage of the Nigerian populace. The devastating impact of Depression among Women in this Recession time is alarming in Nigeria. Some of the victims have resulted in committing suicide. Depression is a prolonged emotional tone dominating an individual's outlook and mood. Depression can be a very serious burden on both the families of Women and the entire society. For attainment of National Development therefore, is a compelling urgency to curtail this pandemic. The paper offers insights of how Christian Religious Education can help which include faith in God, positive thinking which is important for over-all health than anything else. And that Christianity teaches values that promote less anxiety, specifically because the beliefs in Christianity run directly counter to the issues that cause Depression. The paper made some recommendations which include Religious Leaders Learning to engage depressed women and allow them to share their experiences. Also attention should be paid by the Government on the health of Women.

Key Words: *National, Development, Recession, Depression, Women Christian, Religious, Education, Curtailing*

Introduction

Nigeria has become the major topic of discussion on the lips of major actors in Nigeria and beyond. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the central bank of Nigeria (CBN) has all agreed that Nigeria economy has plunged into recession. The absences of transparency, accountability and purposeful leadership have created the most fertile ground for recession to soar high. Nigeria deposit its rich endowment in resources is perpetually seeking for foreign assistance. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) defined a recession as 'a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, normally visible in a real gross domestic product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and whole sale - retail sales'. Furthermore, Noko (2017) defined economic recession as a negative real GDP growth rate for two consecutive quarters.

The effects of economic recession on women and families last longer than the duration of the recession. Job loss or unemployment is usually very high during recession as employers deploy rightsizing approach to cut overhead cost. Job loss destabilises women and her families which may trigger consequence like depression. (Omotoso (2017), observed that the Nigerian present economic recession has caused so much damage to the lives of people including women and our co-operate existence. According to him the rate of the depressed

state has become increasingly high that something has to be done to check - mate it. Depression usually has serious impact on individual wellbeing (Quilty, 2017).

Depression is a psychosocial problem which exists at individual. The current recession has made the situation to be worse. It has become a public health concern, and a major cause of suicide in women. The statistics released by World Health Organization (WHO), showed that 300million people are now living with depression an increase of more than 18percent between 2005 and 2015. Anwanta (2017) observed that the Nigeria of today is bedevilled with cases of people who are either depressed or in depressive states. Ebewebiru (2014) asserted that depression costs over one million losses of lives every year, corroborating this fact, Onyeoghani (2015) opined that depression within one year can take the lives of people which amount to about 10percent of the population of the Nigerian nation. **What is Depression?**

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defined depression as a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behaviour, feelings and sense of well-being. It is also an act of feeling very unhappy and without hope for the future. Anytime you feel depressed, your world stops working, you feel stucked, emotionless and empty. It is the worst enemy of destiny. This is buttressed by Mason (2004), who said that depression stops more people than all illnesses combined. According to Moroka (2015), depression is a psychological state of feeling permanently sad, anxious, empty, worthless, hopeless and helpless. For Anderson (2012), depression is characteristic of the depressed mood such as dysthymia. Generally, depression can be understood as a state of medical or psychological illness that causes lack of interest in life and affects one's feelings and actions negatively, whose end result is usually suicide. This is supported by Obinna (2017), when he said that depression can lead to suicide.

Consequences of Depression

Depression can be a very serious financial burden on women and the entire society. It makes life dull, uninteresting and worthless. Women who suffer from depression are said to have a disorder mind frame which affects their interest at work and their concomitant ability to function at work. It creates loss of focus and general boredom. On the level of politics and governance, depression can be the cause of institutionalized corruption, engagement in ritualistic and political greed which are detrimental to peace and national development.

The youths who are from homes with depressed mothers and who suffer financial crunches resulting from the burden of depressed are vulnerable to the unscrupulous and evil antics and manipulative political exploitation of politicians, temptation from fraudsters and moral exploitation. Onwugbonu (2017) observed that the mass exodus of the Nigeria youths to foreign lands (with the corresponding risks) could be consequence of the financial burden on them from their depressed parents.

On the seriousness of depression, the World Health Organization (2004), observed that by the year 2020, depression may be the world's second most debilitating condition. It also observed that in the USA, persons between the age brackets of 15 and 44 have depression as the leading cause of disability. This undoubtedly suggests that if not checked, depression could lead to the death of millions of people within the age brackets under review. This projection is corroborated by the recent experience in Nigeria, where some women were rescued from jumping into Lagos Lagoon because of depression.

How Christian Religion can help in curtailing depression in women.

Christianity is a religion based on the teachings and miracles of Jesus. It teaches that there is only one God in all existence, that God made the universe. He created man in His image,

which means the likeness of God's character, rationality and so on. And because we are made in the image of God, every person is worthy of respect and honour. Christianity in a nutshell is a relationship with the true and living God through the person of Jesus Christ by whom we are forgiven (Slick, 2017).

Christian religion has a very vital role to play in dealing with depression in this recession time because women who believe in God are able to cope with stress more effectively than those who do not. God is said to be All-powerful. This attribute of God suggests that He has power over all health or psychological state. As faith is the ingredient that sustains those who practise Christian religion, they equally teach that faith can surmount all problems. Therefore having faith in the Omnipotence of God can be a remedy to the problem of depression. Okobaya (2012), opined that faith in God makes the impossible to become possible.

According to Oyedepo (2011), faith is that spiritual force that opens humanity to a world of unlimited possibilities and that faith energizes us to take over situations. Christianity teaches that belief and strength are a great way to support your own mental health and it is your duty to take care of your emotions. Bechtle (2017), opined that trusting what God says rather than your feelings is certainly a more realistic approach to life. He went further to say that Christians base life on truth rather than feelings and this requires a lot of faith. The Bible teaches us to have faith in God. The core of believing in God is about trust over every uncertainty and fear in life.

Christian religious education teaches that positive thinking is more important for overall health than almost anything else. Negative thinking can destroy good done by correct diet and lifestyle (Shober, 2017). Certainly, there will always be things in this imperfect world that give us because to complain as women, often times we are helpless to personally do anything. However we can focus our minds on the enjoyable and wonderful things, this is scriptural and therapeutic.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Phil. 4:8 Revised Standard Version).

According to Merriam (2016), the mind is the part of a person that thinks, reasons, feels, and remembers. The ways we think definitely affect our attitudes and mood. Anyone full of negative thoughts will automatically be miserable. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Many women you see around with various degrees of challenges, their problems are rooted in their thinking patterns that resulted in the problems they are experiencing. The determination to always allow the positive to win the negative thoughts must come from you. As soon as the conscious awareness of unconstructive negative thoughts is realized, a positive thought must immediately replace it.

Christian religious education also teaches that people should be joyful

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I will say rejoice (Phil. 4:4 Revised Standard Version).

Joy is a huge part of biblical faith. joy is the antidote of depression. It is a state of bliss, the emotion of great delight. Greek word that transliterated for joy in the New Testament means "Calm delight". It is setting the soul upon the top of pinnacle. It is the secret of our superiority over Satan; it makes champions of men (Oyedepo, 1995). "A merry heart does good, like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Prov. 17:22). This goes to tell us that to be joyful is medicinal. According to Eneche (2014), joy is the doorway of excitement in life, a person who has refused to be happy is on his way out.

Christian religious education can also be tool in dealing with depression in women in this

recession time in the sense that it teaches the Adherents not to be worried and anxious. This word worry itself is derived from an Anglo - Saxom term meaning "to strangle" or "to choke off". it also means to afflict with mental distress agitation, to feel or experience anxiety (Okoh, 2016). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defined worry as the thoughts, images and emotions of negative nature in which mental attempts are made to avoid anticipated potential threats. Mason (2001) opines that worry is the triumph of fear over faith and misuse of God's creative imagination which He has placed within each of us.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Matt. 6:21 (Revised Standard Version).

God is committed to the well-being of His people. His life is of a high quality for His people. Human beings are more valuable than fowls of the air. Worry is useless, it does nothing good. Instead of being worried, Christian religious education teaches that the followers of Christ should be still. The word "be still" comes from the Hebrew term "raphah". This word is found in various forms in the Old Testament, with different shades of meaning. It refers to that which is slack or to let drop. The attitude of being still is becoming a serious challenge in a recessive world. The system of the world is asking us to be busy. God is asking us to be still in order that we will have peace. Hebrew word transliterated "Shalom" means "Peace" which refers to the complete well-being of an individual, a city and safety. The Greek word for "peace" is transliterated "eirene". The peace of God for us is like a compass for our souls. Mirriam-Webster's Learner Dictionary defined as a state of tranquility, also a freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions. The Bible teaches that Christ's followers can be at peace inspite of recession.

This peace supercedes all natural reasonings that bring about worry and anxiety.

The Lord of peace is Paul's name for the 'Prince of Peace' in Isaiah's Messianic reference (Isa. 9:6). Jesus assumed this role and passed it to his followers. Peace is a divine antidote to depression.

Job loss in recession time that leads to anger can trigger depression in women. It involves a strong uncomfortable and emotional response to a perceived provocation. Modern psychologists view anger as a primary, national and mature emotion experienced by virtually all humans. Furthermore, anger is a corrosive emotion that can run off with mental and physical health. Constantly operating at high levels of stress and tension is bad for health. It beclouds thinking. Without the ability to manage anger, it will eventually spin into confusion and isolation. One of the ingredients that can help to manage anger in order not to lead to depression in women is forgiveness which Christian religious education teaches. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defined forgiveness as the intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, lets off negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well. Piderman in Okoh (2009) defined forgiveness as the act of untying yourself from thoughts and feelings that bind you to the offence committed against you. Forgiveness is to set a prisoner free and to realize the prisoner was you".

Azike (2017) opines that forgiveness is a beauty secret. For her, negative emotions can undo efforts of ageing gracefully. She buttressed this by saying that where bitterness reigns, the body releases excess cortisol a hormone which slows down the production of collagen. Consciously expunge all bitterness, anger, hatred, resentment and other negative emotions we might be feeling towards people, situations and circumstances.

The lifestyle of living for someone other than oneself as a Christian is also taught by

Christian religious education as part of helping someone out of depression. Volunteering is a constant reminder of the values of humanity which will bring you closer to God. Find something you are passionate about and volunteer to it and see a real difference in the way you find happiness in the world. This is buttressed by Isichei (2017), who reported that Her Excellency, Dame Edith Okowa said she was passionate about the rehabilitation of the young ones in the society who have been caught in the web of drug addiction, adding that some of them got into the so-called lifestyle through peer influence.

Regular exercise and sleep are essential to combat depression. Exercise is taking care of your body and is actually ordered by God and it is known to cure anxiety, and it is not coincidence that God requires it. Get enough sleep. When you are well rested, you feel better, thoughts are cleared and emotions more stable (Azike, 2017).

Furthermore, Christian religious education teaches the adherents to praise God and this is a powerful key to living and antidote to depression. Praise is the joyful thanking and adoring God, the celebration of His goodness and grace (Okoh, 2016). Praising God makes every circumstance complete and eminently worthwhile. The Bible commands all living creatures to praise the Lord. The Hebrew transliterated word for "praise" is "Yadah", meaning "praise", "give thanks" or confess". A second word often transliterated "praise" in the Old Testament is "Zamar", "Sing Praise". A third word transliterated "praise" is "halal", the root of hallelujah, meaning "to praise, honour, or commend". All three terms convey the idea of giving thanks and honour to one who is worthy of praise. Praising God changes life. We live in a negative world, a fallen world where so much of what we hear is just negative. Women therefore have to make a deliberate effort to be positive and counter the culture. Praise is a great tool to achieve this.

Conclusion

As a way out of the economic recession currently plaguing the nation, many have advocated for a greater emphasis on human capital development. Because human beings are agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization. A healthy will be a healthy worker. The Christian religious education is a crucial tool in dealing with depression in this recession time. Religion permeates the life of every human being. It has norms, values and acceptable, standards. By inculcating in Adherents these norms and values, religion is expected to promote acceptable standards in the society.

Recommendations

The following Recommendations are hereby offered

- i. Christian religious leaders must learn to engage women and allow them to share their experiences.
- ii. There should be proper monitoring of behaviour of women with depression.
- iii. People should learn to be their brothers' keepers.
- iv. Christian worshippers in various places should have welfare packages for women in their congregations who are in need during economic recession.
- v. Women with depressive mood should avoid being alone. They should force themselves to be with people.
- vi. There should be collaboration between Christian religious leaders and psychotherapists in the work of attending to the depressed.
- vii. Faith clinics and counselling centres should be established for counselling
- viii. Depressed women should rest in God's presence.
- ix. Women should always learn to manage anger in order not to trigger depression.
- x. Attention should be paid by the Government on the health of women for national

development.

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