The Role and Status of Christian Religious Education in the School Curriculum in Kenya

Wilfrida Arnodah Itolondo

Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, Kenyatta University; P. O. Box 43844 – 00100, Nairobi, Kenya.

Abstract
The main purpose of this study was to determine views about the role and status of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in the school curriculum in Kenya in relation to the prevailing social and moral issues in the country. A survey was conducted in eight schools from one educational zone of Nairobi District. Two hundred and eighty-seven form three CRE students and 14 CRE teachers from the eight schools were used to provide the information using questionnaires. The schools and respondents were selected using stratified and convenience sampling procedures. It was found that the majority of the students chose to take the subject for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination mainly because it could boost their performance in KCSE. Though the majority have a positive attitude towards CRE, most of them were not ready to continue learning it in case they qualified for university mainly because it does not guarantee employment. Most of the CRE teachers were found to be demoralized because they do not receive recognition from the government like the Mathematics, Science and Language teachers. The Majority of the teachers blamed the government for undermining the implementation of CRE again by failing to motivate the CRE teachers through recognition. The government was blamed for being responsible for the decline in the number of students studying CRE at the university because of the emphasis it puts on Mathematics and Science subjects.

Keywords: Status, Role, Social and Moral Issues, CRE, Performance in KCSE.

INTRODUCTION
Overview of Religious Education in Kenya
Kenya has three main religious traditions, some of which have had a lot of bearing on the education system in the country. Ochieng (1990) identifies them as Indigenous ethnic religious traditions, Foreign ethnic religious traditions and Foreign extended religious traditions. Indigenous ethnic religious traditions were as diverse as the ethnic groups in Kenya (Sifuna, 1990). Like in many traditional African societies, religion and education in Kenya were inseparable. Each ethnic community had its own religious beliefs and practices like initiation ceremonies, removal of some teeth, tattooing among others. Indigenous ethnic religious education is not handled as an independent subject of the primary and secondary schools’ curriculum in Kenya. Some of its content is integrated with subjects like Christian Religious Education (CRE), History and Literature.

Christianity, which is the pre-dominant missionary religion in Kenya, first came to Kenya through Portuguese traders in the early sixteenth century. Despite their stay at the coast for nearly three centuries, their missionary efforts were not successful (Ochieng, 1990). The second phase of missionaries came towards the end of the first half of the nineteenth century following the arrival of Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebmann, both of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (Sifuna, 1990). Christian missionaries, initially, came to evangelize Africans. However, they came to realize that this was not possible without teaching Africans how to read and write. They therefore set up schools which they used as vehicles for evangelization and the spread of Western civilization (Ochieng, 1990). This was the beginning of Christianity and formal education in Kenya. Christian Religious Education was known by different names at that time became one of the key subjects in the school curriculum. To ensure its success in achieving the intended objective of evangelization, it was taught by identified persons with good morals and practising Christians.

Christian Religious Education, before and after the immediate post-independence years, was known by different names such as Religious Instruction (RI), Bible Knowledge (BK), Bible Study (BS) and Divinity among others. It was provided by two major Christian denominations in Kenya, namely Protestant and Catholic groups. The Protestant groups comprised of the: Anglican Church; Church of God; Seventh Day Adventist (SDA); Friends Mission; African Inland Church and Presbyterian Church. Some of the Catholic Missionaries were the: Holy Ghost Fathers; Consolata and Mill Hill Fathers. In Kenya, CRE is an option alongside HRE, IRE and...
elective with Geography and History (Burgman, 1990).

The Role of Religious Education

Historically, there has always been a close link between religion and education. For example, the Roman education was rooted in the ideals of the Roman people. It endeavoured to shape the youth in such a way that he/she was able to fit in the Roman society (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). In traditional African communities, initiation ceremonies (like the removal of some teeth, tattooing etc), rituals, beliefs, habits and practices, among others, were both religious and educative in nature. For example, during initiation, blood was left to flow into the soil which was believed to unite the initiate with the ancestors. The pain an initiate experienced during the initiation ceremony and the subsequent instructions during the seclusion period after the initiation were to instil, in the prospective adult, the virtue of endurance during times of hardship while the instructions were to prepare him/her for the adult life. Regarding the Kenyan situation, Sifuna (1990) says that although indigenous education in Kenya varied from one community to another, the goals were almost the same. Indigenous African Education was for living. It was concerned with the systematic socialization of the young generation into norms, beliefs, collective opinions of the wider society, practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge which was useful to the individual and the society as a whole. Sifuna’s (1990) description of the role of Indigenous African Education has a lot of religious connotation and that is why religion and education could not be separated. The description is a reflection of Mbiti (1969) who, in his book African Religions and Philosophy, expresses the difficulty in trying to define religion in the African context. He says:

A man carries his religion everywhere: to the fields when planting seeds; into a funeral ceremony; into a beer party; and if he [she] is a student, into the examination room; or into the House of Parliament. Religion, therefore, indicates total view of life and separation would mean overlooking the dynamics of life. Thus in the African context, religion may be defined as a way of looking at life (p. 187).

Many countries are trying to maintain religious ideals under the umbrella of what is known as Religious Education (RE). For example, Bastide (1996) observes that when the Butler Education Act of 1944 made Religious Instruction (RI) compulsory in all state-funded schools in Britain, it was only making mandatory what was a universal practice. The Education Act was re-addressed by the Education Reform Act of 1988 which changed RI to RE to make it an inclusive subject of most religious faiths in Britain and, at the same time, enable learners to eventually make personal decisions on the faith they would like to belong to. According to the act, the National Curriculum would consist of RE and foundation subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, History, Geography, Music, Art and Physical Education). The content of RE consists of the study of different religions, religious leaders, other religions and moral themes. However, the curriculum is required to reflect the predominant place of Christianity in religious life and hence Christianity forms most of the RE content. Additionally, all schools are required, by law, to provide a daily act of collective worship of which at least 51% must be Christian in basis over the course of the academic year (http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/ukga). With that arrangement, therefore, RE is treated as a unique subject because it is accorded a special status in the basic National Curriculum of Britain. Though RE has been given equal standing with the core subjects of the curriculum (English, Mathematics and Science), there were feelings that it would be stronger as a subject with its own statutory status rather than it being part of the National Curriculum.

Religious Education has been viewed as one of the means to restore moral and social order in the society. For example, after a lengthy description of the moral decay in Nigeria which is portrayed in rampant fraud, evidence of corruption in high and low places, bribery, stealing and robbery with violence, scandalous nepotism and political patronage and abuse of power, excessive materials and general indiscipline, Iheomia (1995) concludes by saying:

…in the final analysis what matters most to a nation’s well-being is its spiritual and moral health. Everything else which a nation strives for depends on this…whether it is national integration, political stability, economic development or educational, scientific and technological progress. Nigeria is a nation morally and spiritually sick. A basic aim of moral education in Nigeria schools must be to restore sanity to the nations way of life through the entrenchment in peoples’ psyche such values as honesty, discipline, respect and concern for others, justice and devotion to duty. If formal and direct moral education were to become a regular feature in the curriculum at all levels of educational institutions, it could enable our schools, colleges and universities contribute significantly to the moral health of a nation (p.1).

Efforts to de-link RE and Moral Education (ME) by many education systems have remained fruitless. This is because RE and ME are so interwoven that it is difficult to separate the two. For example, Iheomia
(1995) reports that, at a national conference on ME that was organized by the Faculty of Education, University of Harcourt in Nigeria, the chairman of the organizing committee, at one point, had to remind the delegates that the conference was about moral education and not RE. This was because much of the discussions in the plenary sessions, no matter what paper was read, revolved around the issue of the role of religion in moral education.

In Kenya, the Report on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training chaired by Koech (Republic of Kenya, 1999) devoted a whole chapter to discussing the secular, religious and ethical concerns of the society. The commission agrees with Mbiti (1969) by referring to religion as a way of life. It recommended that RE and SEE continue to be taught and emphasized as part of the Basic Education Cycle and Teacher Training Curricula. According to the commission, RE and SEE would contribute to the inculcation of religious, social and ethical values to the youth. The programmes would be aimed at equipping the youth with the necessary tools for dealing with anti-social activities such as drug abuse, addiction, irresponsible sexual behaviour and indulgence in various cults that cherish anti-social activities such as devil worship. Incidentally, SEE is one of the subjects that were axed from the secondary school curriculum in Kenya following the major recent changes in the school curriculum leaving RE with almost the exclusive responsibility of promoting moral development among the youth.

Christian Religious Education in the School Curriculum in Kenya
Christian Religious Education, according to the revised curriculum of 2002 (Republic of Kenya, 2002), is an integrated subject with Geography, History and Government under Social studies at the primary level of education in Kenya though it is taught separately. At the secondary level of education, it is an independent subject but an option along HRE and IRE. It falls under the humanities department that comprises of RE, Geography and History and Government. It is compulsory at forms one and two but elective at Forms Three and Four. A student taking CRE for KCSE cannot take HRE and IRE but can also study Geography and/or History or just CRE alone. The CRE secondary school curriculum in Kenya stipulates that learners who interact with the CRE content are expected to:

1) Gain insights into the unfolding of God’s self-revelation to human kind through:
   - Their personal experience.
   - The African religious heritage.
   - The Biblical revelation as a whole and, specifically, in Jesus Christ.
   - The Christian Community.

2) Use the acquired social, spiritual and moral insights to think critically and make appropriate moral decisions in a rapidly changing society.

3) Appreciate and respect their own and other people’s cultural and Christian beliefs and practices.

4) Acquire the basic principle of Christian Living and develop a sense of self-respect and respect for others.

5) Promote international consciousness through the understanding of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

6) Contribute positively to the transformation of self and the society as whole.

7) Acquire knowledge for further studies in various career fields. ([http://www.elimu.net/Secondary/Kenya/KCSE](http://www.elimu.net/Secondary/Kenya/KCSE))

Statistics reveal that the number of students choosing CRE for KCSE at forms three and four has been on a slow but steady increase since the year 2000 apart from 2001 and 2003 (KNEC, 2005; 2006; 2007). The steady increase in the number of students opting for CRE at forms three and four may be attributed to the steady improvement and good performance in the subject in KCSE. Since 2002, CRE has registered a mean score of 55% and above. Apart from the years 2000 and 2002 when it was overtaken by History and Government, it has continued to lead among the humanities. The good performance is further reflected in the national ranking. Nationally, it was ranked number six and two out of the 22 subjects offered at KCSE in 2006 and 2007 respectively (Kenya National Examination Council, 2007).

Concerns about the Role of Christian Religious Education in Kenya
Christian Religious Education, though a predominant RE subject in the school curriculum in Kenya, has had its shortcomings since its inception. During the colonial period, CRE had as many objectives, content and practices as the many varied Christian groups because it was used as tool to propagate the faith of the various groups (Ochieng, 1990; Sifuna, 1990). Like indigenous African religions, Christianity and education were inseparable. At the height of colonialism in Kenya, Christianity was viewed as a pacifying tool for the colonial masters, a situation that came to haunt the CRE curriculum, even after independence.

With the dawn of independence in Kenya, the first independence education commission, known as the Kenya Education Commission of 1964 chaired by Ominde (Republic of Kenya, 1964), while taking note of the divisive nature of RE (and particularly Christianity), recommended that RE should be taught as an academic subject that has a body of knowledge. Religious Education was to be handled as a joint curriculum and not according to the various religious groups. The recommendation was only effected in 1968 when the Education Act became a law.
Religious groups were given sponsorship of schools that were formally theirs though some of the groups were unease with the arrangement. Catholic bishops, in particular, were uneasy about some points in the Education Act. On 2nd March, 1968: in a statement on the Education Act, they raised concerns that: the responsibility of preparation of the syllabus, books and other curricula materials for religious instruction were taken away from the churches; the churches did not have the right to enter the schools during the period of religious instruction to assist the teachers; there was a good chance that the periods of religious instruction would be reduced and the appointment of teachers was outside the power of the church and so they could not do much to preserve the religious traditions of the schools (Burgman, 1990). Though these problems were ironed-out following subsequent discussions, it was an indication that the government did not regard the churches with much esteem as far as education was concerned and yet churches were and are still major stakeholders in education in Kenya since most schools and other institutions of higher learning are church sponsored.

The National committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976 chaired by Gachathi was even more critical of Religious Education as a means of teaching ethics. The committee argued that Christianity, in particular, was rejected from a social and political view because it was seen as a pacifying tool for the colonial master. The committee recommended the introduction of a common course on moral education (ME) for all students irrespective of their religious affiliation with the argument that RE had not accomplished the objective of inculcating national moral consciousness (Republic of Kenya, 1976). According to Burgman (1990), Catholic bishops in Kenya were, initially, happy to see how much the Gachathi-led committee stressed on the importance of social ethics. However, they became resistant when they learnt that the report thought that the churches were incapable of teaching the subject properly. They wanted to be recognized as the custodians of moral education. Mugambi and Nasimiyu (2003) observe that the Protestant and Catholic subject panels at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) separately, but co-operatively, opposed the recommendation by the Gachathi-led committee on grounds that one of the objectives of RE syllabus was to inculcate ME. They maintained that ME could not be taught effectively in isolation from religion.

In the National Mirror (February, 2006), it is observed in one of the main articles that religious leaders, and more especially the church leaders, were disquiet about was the exclusion of religious groups from the Education Review exercise of late 2005. They raised concerns based on the fact that approximately 64% of educational institutions in the country were church-based and the best performing in national examinations. Religious groups are major stakeholders in the education sector in Kenya. Therefore, their exclusion from an education review process meant the exclusion of their input that may not augur well with the education system. It may lead to problems during and after the implementation of some of the outcomes of the review process.

The Koech-led Commission’s Report (RoK, 1999) recommended that CRE and SEE continue being taught because they would contribute to the inculcation of religious, social and ethical values to the youth. According to the report, the programmes would be aimed at equipping the youth with necessary tools for dealing with the anti-social activities such as drug abuse and addiction, irresponsible sexual behaviour and indulgence in various cults with anti-social activities and behaviour such as devil worship (Republic of Kenya, 1999). These problems plague schools, according to the Report on the Task Force on Student Unrest in Secondary Schools in Kenya chaired by Wangai (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Every day, there are reports through the media on acts of lawlessness like car-jacking, robbery, rape and murder, among others, mostly committed by young people who, in one way or another, may have been consumers of the RE content, especially at primary and form one or two of secondary levels of education in Kenya. Christian Religious Education is the most dominant religious subject in the school curriculum in Kenya since the colonial period and yet incidents of moral decadence have been on the increase in Kenya, not sparing the church sponsored schools. Considering that most schools and many of the institutions of higher learning, both public and private, in Kenya are church sponsored, one is tempted to poise the following questions in relation to the role and status of CRE in the country: What is the learners’ understanding of the role of CRE? How is the learners’ attitude towards CRE? What is the learners’ ranking of CRE in relation to other subjects? What factors militate against the implementation of CRE? and what should be done to promote the implementation CRE?

MATERIALS AND METHODS
This study was a survey conducted in one of the educational zone of Nairobi province to determine views about the role and status of CRE in the school curriculum in Kenya. Three hundred and one respondents, comprising of 14 CRE teachers and 287 form three CRE students from eight secondary schools (1 National; 2 provincial and 5 district schools) were used to provide information. Stratified and convenience sampling procedures were used to select the schools in that the status and geographical position of the schools were put into consideration during the selection.
Both closed and open-ended questionnaires were administered to the CRE students to determine: their understanding of the role of CRE; their attitude towards CRE and how they rate CRE with other subjects. Specifically, the students were asked: if the CRE teachers had at one point explained why they learn CRE; to write down the reasons of learning CRE; to write down who influenced them to decide to offer CRE for KCSE and if it was a personal decision, why?; to show if they were in agreement or disagreement that CRE is an important subject; if they would continue learning CRE in case they qualified for university and if not, why? and to rank CRE with other selected subjects.

Consequently, both closed and open-end questionnaires were also used to collect information from the CRE teachers on factors militating against the implementation of CRE and suggestion for improvement CRE. Specifically, the CRE teachers were asked to show if they were in agreement or disagreement that the government in one way or another undermines the implementation of CRE; if CRE teachers were exposed to in-service training courses; if they were motivated as CRE teachers and it not, why; who was responsible for the decline in the number of students offering CRE at the university and to make suggestions for the improvement and promotion of CRE. The questionnaires were administered to the three hundred and one respondents by the researcher over a period of two weeks in the month of June, 2006. Frequencies of the responses were tallied to obtain the raw scores which were then converted into percentages to answer the questions. Descriptive analysis was applied to the information provided by the respondents and the findings were presented through descriptive tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Christian Religious Education in the school curriculum in Kenya is supposed to cater for the spiritual, moral and social development of the learner and the society as a whole. Consequently, it is supposed to cater for learning in the affective domain. Two hundred and twelve (73.8%) of the 287 CRE students who were involved in the study indicated that the teachers had explained to them the purposes of learning CRE and so were aware of the CRE curriculum objectives. However, when asked to write down the objectives of learning CRE, the findings revealed that there seemed to be no mutual understanding of the purpose of learning CRE.

The ‘others’ category represented reasons provided by one and two students each. That means that there were more than 13 reasons given by the 287 students to show why CRE was taught in secondary schools in Kenya. Though all reasons, except ‘Will boast performance in KCSE’, ‘It is easy to understand’ and ‘Can help one understand social issues’, directly or indirectly touched on the general objectives of the CRE secondary school curriculum in Kenya (http://www.elimu.net/Secondary/Kenya/KCSE), each one of the reasons was provided by less than 40% of the CRE students who participated in the study. Since most of the students indicated that the teachers had explained the purpose of learning CRE, it would have been expected that at least one of the purposes would have been provided by almost 100% of the CRE students and hence being treated as the main purpose of learning CRE. Most likely the teachers never stressed the main purpose of learning CRE during the introduction of CRE, especially at form one.

To establish why CRE students provided varied reasons for learning CRE may have required a series of observations of CRE lessons at different levels of the secondary school curriculum. This was not part of the study. With regards to who influenced their decision to take CRE for KCSE, 267(93.4%) of the 287 CRE students indicated that it was their personal decision. However, most of the 267 students seemed not to have been influenced by their knowledge of the objectives. The main reason they chose to take CRE for KCSE was because it was easy and would boost their performance in KCSE as shown in Table 1 which is not one of the objectives of the CRE curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Reasons Students Chose CRE for KCSE</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) It is easy and so it can boost my performance in KCSE</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I am a strong Christian believer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) It is in line with my career</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) I like the teachers who teach it</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) To raise the number of my subjects</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) I am not good at the sciences</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) I like the subject</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) I had no other choice</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) It will help me know more about God</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) I wanted to know more about Christianity</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Undecided</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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725
The other subsequent reasons apart from the ninth and tenth reasons that were provided by four (1.5%) and two (0.8%) students respectively had nothing to do with the general objectives of the CRE secondary school curriculum in Kenya either. The main reason that made CRE students choose to take CRE for KCSE confirmed views by Bennoars (1990) about the general view on examinations. Bennoars (1990) observes that, in Kenya, and in many other parts of Africa, there are extremely high expectations leading to labelling ‘failure’ as those persons who do not pass examinations. Achola and Pillai (2001) are even more precise when they observe that all schools in Kenya, parents and public leaders emphasize passing of examinations, and especially more in mathematics and the sciences, as the highest value.

This study established that the 287 CRE students, generally, have a positive attitude towards CRE though it is not reflected in practice. Though 211(73.5%) strongly agreed and agreed that CRE is a very important subject, the majority (171, 80.8%) indicated that they would not continue learning CRE in case they qualified for university. Only 76(26.5%) would continue learning CRE if they qualified for university. The majority of the 211 students (182, 86.2%) would not continue learning CRE because it does not guarantee employment. Other reasons were that: they were sure of doing well in the sciences (41.8%); it was not in line with their career (29.7%); they were sure of doing well in the languages (12.5%); it was just a boaster subject in performance in KCSE (3.9%) and the teachers were very discouraging (0.4%). Apparently, the kind of career seemed to be the driving force for most of the 76 students who indicated that they would continue learning CRE if they qualified for university. The majority, represented by 64 (83.6%), indicated that they would continue learning CRE because it was in line with their career. None of the students indicated that they would continue learning CRE if they qualified for university because it would make them know more about God or develop them morally. This raises the questions as to whether the students really appreciate the moral role CRE is supposed to play in their lives and the society in general.

Apart from most of the CRE students indicating that they would not continue learning CRE if they qualified for university, most of them ranked it as the one of the least important subjects among the selected subjects. The subject was ranked second least important in a list of selected subjects as follows: Mathematics (84.3%); English (69.6%); Chemistry (59%); Biology (57.8%); Kiswahili (46.1%); History (46.1); CRE (43.4%) and Geography (39.3%) despite it being one of the most popular elective subjects at the secondary school level of education in Kenya. It is also among the best performing subjects in KCSE. Mathematics, followed by English then the two science subjects, was ranked as the most important subject and yet it is alongside sciences as the worst performing subjects in KCSE according to the ranking of KNEC (2000; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007). Only one student refused to rank the subjects because, according to him, all subjects are important. Christian Religious Education is one of the subjects of the school curriculum that is expected to cater for learning in the affective domain. However, when career and employment opportunities are pegged on good performance in KCSE and at the same time no proper systems have been put in place to evaluate if learning actually takes place in the affective domain, chances are that learning of CRE may not go beyond the cognitive domain. That may partly explain why CRE has remained one of the most popular subjects of the school curriculum and also a subject that registers very good performance in KCSE in Kenya and yet the spates of moral decadence in schools have been on the increase.

The government’s lukewarm attitude toward CRE and other social sciences, while at the same time placing more emphasis on mathematics and the pure sciences, has been identified as a major obstacle to the implementation of CRE. Thirteen (92.9%) of the 14 teachers who were involved in the study indicated that the government undermines the implementation of CRE in the following ways: greater emphasis on Mathematics and Science subjects (65.2%); failure to give CRE teachers incentives such as seminars, in-service courses, recognition etc (57.4%); giving extra allowances to Science, Mathematics and Language teachers (51.8%); failing to make CRE a pre-requisite to join higher institutions of learning (46.2%); CRE being timetabled along with Physics (32.8%); making CRE an elective (30.8%) and portraying CRE as an easy subject (15.4%).

Hand in hand with the government being identified as a major obstacle to the implementation of CRE, CRE teachers have also blamed it, along with the church and parents, for being responsible for the decline in the number of students offering CRE at the university in the following ways: emphasis on the sciences and mathematics which undermines the social sciences (71.8%); failure to motivate CRE teachers (57.2%); the government’s policy on remuneration and employment of secondary school teachers (50%) and allowing CRE to be timetabled at the same time with Physics (21.4%). The church on its part has been blamed for not asserting its authority as a key stakeholder in the education sector in Kenya (42.9%) and also not being concerned about CRE teachers
(35.7%). While parents also play some role in the decline of the number of students offering CRE at the university, their influence seems to be quite minimal according to the findings of the study. Only two (14.3%) of the teachers reported that parents’ advice on choice of subjects and also some parents forcing their children to choose science related careers respectively were the causes of decline in the number of students offering CRE at the university.

The whole world is concerned with technological advancement and industrialization. Kenya is not left behind in that endeavour. The immediate former president of Kenya had declared that Kenya must be industrialized by the year 2020, a vision that was espoused by the NARC government and even extended the period to 2030. This led to the great emphasis being accorded to Mathematics and the Science subjects up to date. For example, Mathematics and Science teachers have a continuous in-service training programme known as Strengthening Mathematics and Sciences in Secondary Education (SMASSE), partly sponsored by the government through the MOE and the Japanese government. There is very little concern about the other subjects especially the social sciences and yet they have a special role to play in the overall school curriculum. For example, only two (14.3%) and three (21.4%) of the 14 teachers had attended in-service training course on CRE and were motivated as CRE teachers respectively. Christian Religious Education is one of the subjects that deals with some of the social and moral challenges affecting the society and that is why it is imperative that teachers are acquainted with those issues not only through books and mass media but also through interactive forums such as seminars and workshops. Through interaction with other teachers, teachers may best learn how to handle some of the issues affecting the society that are part of the CRE curriculum content.

To improve and promote CRE in the secondary school curriculum, teachers came up with suggestions. The findings suggest that concerns about CRE teachers should be given the first priority as a way of improving and promoting of CRE. More than 70% of the 14 CRE teachers suggested that CRE teachers should be given recognition and be treated equally in terms of remuneration and employment as ways of improving and promoting CRE respectively. Seven (50.0%) teachers suggested that RE should be made compulsory at all levels of learning in the country, a suggestion also made by the National Council of Christian Churches in Kenya (NCCCK) and the Catholic Church recently. The two church bodies called for making CRE compulsory and examineable in schools to curb the rising cases of strikes in secondary schools in Kenya. According to the two churches, the riots were a sign of breakdown of social order and value. The NCCCK went further to

One way through which workers (teachers) can be motivated, according to Agezo (2003), is through in-service training courses. Agezo (2003) says that workers (teachers) slated for training courses come back to the school rejuvenated to offer quality service and improve productivity because they see the school as being responsible for their development and upward mobility and they are motivated to work hard and remain in it. Christian Religious Education may be one of the best performing subjects in KCSE, as already noted, but may fail to achieve the expected outcomes due to lack of motivation of the key implementers who are the teachers. It is not be surprising that despite the good performance in CRE, the spate of moral decadence both in secondary schools and the wider society of Kenya leave a lot to be desired as to whether the CRE curriculum is helping the country to achieve the intended objectives through it. The performance of students in CRE in KCSE seems not to correlate with the behaviour of most of them. There is a concentration on the cognitive domain of learning while ignoring the affective domain. May be if CRE teachers were exposed to more in-service training opportunities, they could use them as forums to share ideas on how to handle the CRE curriculum content on social and moral issues and also identify and discuss the shortcomings of the implementation of the curriculum.
note that parents had become irresponsible, arguing that the role of laying foundation for discipline and values lies with the parents (http://www.propertykenya.com/news/543693-news-church-bodies-root).

Until the government, through the Ministry of Education, begins valuing CRE and other RE subjects as life changing subjects as suggested by some teachers, the CRE curriculum will continue failing to realize the intended outcomes and hence continued increase in moral decadence in Kenya. As much as the church may blame parents for abdicating their responsibility of nurturing their children into good moral beings (http://www.propertykenya.com/news/543693-news-church-bodies-root), it may not be of their making. Both employed and unemployed parents hardly have time for their children because they are struggling to make ends meet. The education system has dissociated children from their parents and extended family members especially grandparents who are supposed to be custodians of morals. Most children in Kenya start their formal education at a tender age three years and since then they are at school most of the time allowing them almost less than three months a year with their parents. Even when they are at home, they have homework to be done. Both the parents and the children have very little for each other. That is why RE, along with other subjects whose content touches on social and moral behaviour, should be treated with a lot of importance because the home environment may not be very conducive to cater for social and moral development fully.

Some of the reasons provided by students to show why they chose to do CRE for KCSE, and one of the factors militating against implementation of CRE, revealed that there is no clear policy with regards to the organization of the school curriculum. For example, schools schedule CRE at the same time with physics at forms three and four so that more students can take physics. The implication is that a student whose career is in line with physics and has interest in CRE cannot take the subject at form three and four. In this respect, the writer of this paper concurs with some of the teachers who suggested that in order to promote CRE (and other RE subjects), all the religious subjects should be compulsory. The report on TIQET (Republic of Kenya, 1999) observes that religious organizations do not consider RE just another academic subject. It is a subject expected to affect behavioural changes among learners. The writer consequently concurs with the report on TIQET that RE and for this case CRE should be taught by committed, practising and empowered teachers if the objectives of the subject have to be realized.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
Christian Religious Education which is part of the overall curriculum content in the school system in Kenya like other religious subjects is meant to cater for the spiritual, moral and social development of the consumers of that content. Christian Religious Education is one of the most popular elective subjects in the secondary school curriculum in Kenya and is also among the top performing subjects in KCSE. The findings revealed that, generally, CRE students have a positive attitude towards the subject though most of them are not ready to continue learning the subject in case they qualify for university mainly because it does not guarantee employment. Even for the few who will continue learning it at the university incase they qualify, the choice is dictated by their careers. The majority of them chose to take for KCSE mainly because it boast their performance. Though it is among the top subjects where students perform very well in KCSE, it is ranked among the least important subjects. Mathematics and the Science subjects top the list as the most important subjects. Very few students chose the subject or may continue learning the subject incase they qualify for university not because it has anything to do with their spiritual, moral and social development. This is very tricky because under such circumstances, the students may work hard in the subject to pass well but fail to reflect on the content and the implication it is supposed to have on their spiritual and moral lives. It is not, therefore, surprising incidents of moral decadence are on the increase in Kenya and yet more than half of Kenya’s population are the youth who presumeably majority have been consumers of the CRE content.

The findings revealed that, generally, CRE teachers are de-motivated because they feel they are not given recognition by the government like the Mathematics and Science teachers. The teachers also point an accusing finger at the government for undermining the implementation of CRE and also being responsible for the escalation of moral decadence in the country mainly because it places more emphasis on Mathematics and Science subjects with very little concern of the social sciences especially and also failure to recognise the CRE teachers. The church on its part has failed to assert its authority as a key stakeholder in education and is also unconcerned about the CRE teachers. On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations if implemented may enable CRE attain its rightful position in the school curriculum and also achieve its intended objectives:

1) The government through the Ministry of Education should begin valuing CRE and other RE subjects as life changing subjects as suggested by teachers, as one of the most important ways of promoting CRE in schools.
2) The government should not give equal recognition through extra allowances and in-service training courses to all teachers regardless of the subjects they teach.

3) Religious Education should be made compulsory at all levels of learning because its impacts permeates all spheres of careers.

4) CRE teachers need ample time to conduct some formal and informal research and also be abreast with moral and social issues highlighted by the media. Teachers cannot do this if they are overloaded with work due to understaffing. The government therefore should ensure that all schools are staffed with enough RE teachers.

5) The church on its part should assert its authority as a key stakeholder in education as suggested by some of the teachers. It should demand from the government that CRE teachers receive equal treatment with teachers of other subjects such as Mathematics, the Sciences and Languages. The church should show more concern and interest in CRE teachers. May be the church should think of adopting the recommendation by TQET that RE and for this case CRE should be taught by committed, practising and empowered teachers if the objectives of the subject have to be realized.

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