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The Overlooked Corporate Citizen: A Corporate Social Responsibility Analysis of Religious Denominations as Environmental Sanitation Actors in Urban Nigeria

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Abstract

Academic and policy discourses on environmental sanitation in Nigeria have historically privileged legal, governmental, and technocratic frameworks while systematically overlooking the contributions of religious institutions. This article addressed this lacuna by examining the environmental sanitation activities of four religious denominations (RDs) in Ede, Osun State - St. Peter's Anglican Church, the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, Ikhwan Ratibi Mosque, and Ede Central Mosque - through the analytical lens of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) theory. Drawing on qualitative data from key informant interviews with eight religious leaders and eight host-community residents, supplemented by field observations, the study found that religious denominations in Ede function as de facto corporate social actors whose environmental sanitation activities - drainage clearing, road sweeping, grass cutting, pothole filling, waste bin provision, and community sensitisation - constitute a form of faith-motivated CSR that generates measurable public goods in their host communities. The theoretical framework, adapted from Bowen's (1953) foundational CSR concept and the Environmental Stewardship pillar of modern CSR theory, is applied innovatively to non-commercial entities, demonstrating that the CSR framework transcends its corporate origins to illuminate the civic obligations that religious denominations exercise in relation to their host communities. The article concluded that the absence of academic, governmental, and media recognition for these contributions constitutes a critical gap in Nigeria's environmental governance architecture, and argues for the formal incorporation of religious denominations as institutional partners in national and sub-national environmental sanitation programming.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, religious denominations, environmental sanitation, Ede, Nigeria, environmental stewardship, Islam, Christianity, qualitative research

Introduction

Environmental sanitation is essential not only to the wellbeing of human beings, but to the overall health of the ecosystem. However, the visible presence of solid waste in the streets of many communities in Nigeria has been clearly reported. For instance, a 2020 study showed that the amount of waste produced in the Nigerian ecosystem yearly is about sixty-six thousand eight hundred and twenty-eight (66,828) tonnes per day[1], thus affecting the aesthetic landscape of

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the environment. According to the World Health Organisation, "solid waste remains one of the most pressing global environmental and public health challenges – one that the health sector tends to overlook"[2] The Organisation further stated that global municipal solid waste – generated by "households, small businesses and institutions" – and driven by "rapid urbanisation, population growth and rising consumption" is projected to increase from 2.1 billion tonnes in 2020 to 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050.[3]

Yet the institutional architecture deployed to address this waste burden remains chronically under-resourced, structurally fragmented, and ideologically narrow: it privileges legal enforcement, government agencies, and private waste management contractors while leaving largely unrecognised the largest and most deeply embedded civil society institutions in the country - religious organisations. In a nation where religious participation exceeds 90 percent of the adult population, and where mosques and churches constitute the most regularly attended communal spaces in urban and peri-urban areas alike which Danoye refers to as the cement that hold the people together[4]. This institutional blind spot has significant practical and analytical consequences.

The Geography and Physical Environment of Ede

The town of Ede, in Osun State, provides a particularly illuminating case study of both the problem and the neglected solution. Ede is a semi-urban community of approximately 17,000 residents.[5] At latitudes 7° 4′ and 7° 4′ north of the equator and longitudes 4° 2′ and 4° 2′ east of the Greenwich meridian, Ede is situated south of Osogbo. The town is located along the Osun River's banks, which runs from Igede in the state of Ekiti towards the north.[6] Iwo and Ejigbo border Ede on the west, Edunabon on the south, and Osogbo on the north. About 70 square kilometres of land make up Ede, with a sinuous topography and a highest highland that does not rise above 609.6 metres above sea level.[7]

Ede is also a town of watercourses. The open watercourses (dams, reservoirs, and lakes) as well as rivers, streams, springs, wells, run-off waters, swamps, and wetlands all contribute to Ede's drainage system. Water basins, including the Osun River and water dams, are significant and in charge of capturing and

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[1] Obiora. B. Ezeudu, Jonah. C. Agunwamba, Uuzochukwu. C. Ugochukwu, & Tochukwu. S. Ezeudu, Temporal Assessment of Municipal Solid Waste Management in Nigeria: Prospects for Circular Economy Adoption. Reviews on Environmental Health, Volume 36, Issue 3, 2020, pp. 327–344. doi:10.1515/reveh-2020-0084

[2] World Health Organisation, Throwing Away Our Health: The Impact of Solid Waste on Human Health – Evidence, Knowledge Gaps and Health Sector Responses (Geneva: World Health Organisation, 2025, 1, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

[3] World Health Organisation, Throwing Away Our Health: The Impact of Solid Waste on Human Health – Evidence, Knowledge Gaps and Health Sector Responses (Geneva: World Health Organisation, 2025, 1, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

[4] Oguntola-Lagudu, Danoye, Religion, Man and Society (Lagos: Intes Training and Educational Services, 2006), p.11

[5] Information gathered from provisional census figure released by the National Population Commission in 2016

[6] Anthony Ikpeme Ankeli1 , Muhammad Bashar Nuhu , Abass IyandaSule , Adegbile Moses Adeleke , Oluwole Titilayo Alabi,Analysis of Urban Structure and Healthy City: Ede Metropolitan City In Perspective,http://www.rsisinternational.org/ pg. 159

[7] Anthony et. al. 2012

releasing water for the region's effective and extensive drainage system.[8] it is estimated that the area within 2 miles of Ede is covered by shrubs (45%), trees (23%), and farming land (22%), within 10 miles by agricultural land (42%) and trees (33%), and within 50 miles by farming land (38%) and trees (29%).[9]

Economic Activities and Waste Disposal in Ede

The economic activities in Ede is characterised by commerce, trade, and transportation. Since the construction of the rail line from Lagos in 1906, Ede has served as a major export hub for cocoa, palm oil and kernels in addition to being a local trading hub for cotton, palm produce, yams, corn (maize), cassava (manioc), pumpkins, okra and kola nuts.[10]

Furthermore, Ede's main market is located very close to a major road route in the town. Some businesses and road side sellers can be seen with their wares arranged for display very close to the road. This often leads to traffic jam and accidents. The selling of perishable/non-perishable goods mostly aid in the generation of refuse, thus making the surroundings dirty and creating other environmental hazards.

Ede Main Market, along Oke-Gada Road, Ede. This centre of economic and commercial activities adds to the generation of waste. Due to its proximity to the Oke-Gada stream, most of the waste generated from the market are indiscriminately dumped into the stream.

Educational and Administrative and Religious Structure of Ede

Ede is also a centre of learning; there are several private schools and public institutions of learning. It houses Redeemer's University, Adeleke University, Federal Polytechnic, Ede, College of Health, and numerous secondary and primary schools. Hence, a significant percent of residents are students and staff of various tertiary and secondary institutions of learning.

The traditional leadership in Ede, like other Yoruba kingdoms, is headed by an Oba, a traditional title of most Yoruba kings. The prominent statue of a warrior-like man holding a bow represents the first Oba of Ede, referred to as Timi.[11] According to Ayantoyibo, the statue is that of a hunter warrior, Timi Agbonran, the first Timi (Oba of Ede). He migrated from Oyo to settle in Ede after he had assisted the people of Ede – Ile to defeat the invading forces of Ijesa Arara who had terrorised the community for a long time. He was invited to come to the aid of Ede – Ile people. After defeating the invaders at Orita Awo (Awo Junction), he

[8] S.O. Audu, Ejenma, E., Emehute,V.C., Okoroafor, I.B., Oyediran, A.G., Njoku, I.O. and Nebo, A.I. 2015. Assesment of status of wetlands in Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. Journal of Environment and Earth Science, Vol.l 5 (1), 2015

[9] Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations. 2016. Land & Water. Available from: https://weatherspark.com/y/50047/Average-Weather-in-Ede-Nigeria-Year-Round [Accessed 3rd May, 2023].

[10] Samuel Johnson. The History of Yoruba: From the earliest time to the Beginning of British Protectorate (ed) O. Johnson, Lowe & Brydone (Printers) Limited, London 1921

[11] Inusa Sayeed, Chairman, Commercial Motorcycle Riders Association, Orita, Oja Timi, Ede North LGA. Interviewed on 1st May, 2023

came to settle at what is currently known as Oja Timi. That statue has become the symbol of other thirteen Timi that had ruled after him, the current one being Oba Munirudeen Adesola Lawal, Laminisa 1, who is the first to be Oba in the Laminisa lineage.[12]

There are two municipal governments that together make up Ede-land in the Ede community. These are Ede North and Ede South, which were officially combined into one local government in 1979 under the Muritala/Obasanjo regime as a result of the LGA Reform they implemented. When the Babangida Administration established new local government districts on May 3, 1989, it covered the land area that presently makes up the current Egbedore local government.[13]

Ede is a very religious town. It would not take any careful observation time to notice the Mosques and churches that dot the landscape of the town. The town is home to three main religious faiths – indigenous religion, Islam and Christianity. Prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity, the residents of Ede recognized the existence of God, divinities, and numerous spirits whom they worshiped via mediums such as Ogun (god of iron), Sango (god of thunder and lightning), Osun (river goddess), and Esu (god of rituals).[14]

Most of the physical environment of Ede town are characterised by indiscriminate refuse disposal, blocked drainage systems, inadequate government waste evacuation infrastructure, and a Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES). Adeyemi describes the functions of WES which include but not limited to evaluation of waste from household levels and illegal dumpsites, chlorination of wells, raining of food vendors, inspection and approval of regulated premises, school Health services, pest control, food hygiene and safety, Health education, prosecution of environmental sanitation offenders.[15] However, Olanike highlights some challenges faced by the department which includes lack of its own waste disposal vehicles and that it is chronically under-staffed.[16] Against this background, four religious denominations - two Christian and two Islamic - have independently developed and sustained environmental sanitation programmes covering drainage maintenance, road sweeping, vegetation clearing, pothole filling, waste containment, and community education. These programmes receive no government funding, no systematic media coverage, and no prior academic documentation.

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[12] Ayangboyega Ayantoyibo, (Male (65 years) is Head of the Drummers in the Oba's Palace. He is an appointee of the Oba. It is the prerogative of the Oba to appoint anybody to this office); Sakariyahu Salaudeen Ajegbile (Sekere Drummer and Oriki praise singer for the Oba); and Anyantoye Abideen Abefe (Gate Keeper at the Oba Palace)

[13] Information gathered from the handbook of the information of the Ede local Government Area; Published in October 1994., p. 3

[14] J.S. Mbiti, African Traditional Religion and Philosophy. (London: Heinemann Education Books Limited, 1969), P.23

[15]Adeyemi Toyin Grace is the Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer (ACEHO), Water and Environmental Sanitation Department, Ede South LGA, Oke-Iresi Ede. Interviewed on 4th May, 2023

[16] Owaniyi Olanike (HEHE). Water and Environmental Sanitation Department, Ede South LGA, Oke-Iresi, Ede. Interviewed on 4th May, 2023

This article addresses that gap. Drawing on original qualitative field research conducted in 2023, it presents a systematic academic analysis of the environmental sanitation activities of religious denominations in Ede, and situates these activities within the analytical framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) theory. The argument proceeds in three stages. First, the article reviews the existing literature on environmental sanitation governance in Nigeria and the limited body of scholarship on religion and environmental stewardship. Second, it presents the theoretical framework, adapting CSR theory for application to faith-based non-commercial entities. Third, it presents and analyses the empirical findings, before drawing conclusions for theory, policy, and practice.

Literature Review

Environmental Sanitation Governance in Nigeria: The Dominant Frameworks

The academic literature on environmental sanitation in Nigeria is substantial and draws on multiple disciplinary traditions. Legal scholars have examined the constitutional and statutory framework governing waste management, noting the failure of instruments such as the Federal Environmental Protection Agency Act (1987), the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency Act (2007), and various state-level public health statutes to generate the enforcement behaviour that would translate legislative intention into environmental outcomes .[17] A recurring theme is the gap between legal prescription and institutional capacity: laws prohibit indiscriminate waste disposal but the state lacks the vehicles, personnel, and political will to enforce them consistently.

Urban management scholars like Nnaji, Ogwueleka, and Taiwo have documented the logistical dimensions of the waste crisis: the mismatch between waste generation rates and collection capacity, the inadequacy of disposal sites, the challenge of routing collection vehicles through unplanned urban settlements, and the economic constraints on municipal waste workers.[18],[19],[20] From the human security perspective, scholars including Ikeke have framed sanitation as a rights-based concern, documenting the direct health consequences of poor environmental sanitation - elevated rates of

[17] Adebola Ogunba (2016). 'An Appraisal of the Evolution of Environmental Legislation in Nigeria.' Vermont Law Review, V. 40, Issue 3, pp. 673–710.
[18] C. C., Nnaji, Status of municipal solid waste generation and disposal in Nigeria. Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal, volume 26, issue 1, 2015, p. 53–71. doi:10.1108/meq-08-2013-0092
[19] T. Ogwueleka, "Municipal solid waste characteristics and management in Nigeria". Iranian Journal of Environmental Health, Science and Engineering, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2009, p. 173-180.
[20] Taiwo A. Adewole (2009). Waste management toward sustainable development in Nigeria: A case study of Lagos state. International NGO Journal Vol. 4 (4), pp. 173-179, April 2009. Available online at http:// www.academicjournals.org/INGOJ. ISSN 1993–8225 © 2009 Academic Journals

diarrhoeal disease, respiratory infections, malaria, and cholera.[21] What is conspicuously absent from this literature is a sustained engagement with religious organisations as environmental actors. The few exceptions - Ottuh[22], Okoye,[23] Wahab,[24] Shehu and Molyneux-Hodgson[25] - confirm the existence of religion-environment connections without applying CSR theory or generating Ede-specific empirical evidence.

Religion and Environmental Stewardship: Theological and Sociological Perspectives

The theological foundations for Christian and Islamic environmental engagement are well established. For Christianity, the dominant framework is stewardship - the mandate of Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 to tend and keep the created order, developed by eco-theologians including Moltmann (1985) into a comprehensive theology of environmental responsibility. For Islam, the environmental ethics framework is grounded in the Qur'anic concepts of khalifah (vicegerency) and amana (trust), which establish the human being as God's trustee over creation, charged with its responsible care.[26] The prophetic hadith tradition includes extensive injunctions regarding cleanliness – "cleanliness is half of faith" (Sahih Muslim) - and prohibitions on pollution of water sources and public spaces. Omar, Chowdhury, and Hashi[27] have analysed the Islamic ethics of waste management in relation to sustainable environmental health, finding substantial alignment between Islamic jurisprudential principles and contemporary environmental management standards.

The sociology of religion has increasingly attended to the civic and prosocial functions of religious organisations, including their role in environmental action. Skirbekk et al. found a complex, non-linear relationship between

[21] Mark Omorovie Ikeke. Environmental Sanitation and Human Security in Nigeria: An Environmental Ethical Perspective. Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, Vol. 16, No 6, 2014, 1-18 https://www.jsd-africa.com/Jsda/Vol16No6

[22] John Arierhi Ottuh, Climate Destabilization in a Religious World: The Role of Religion in Addressing Climate Change in Nigeria. UJAH, Volume 19, Number 1, 2018, p. 69 – 89. http://dx.doi./org/10.4314/ujah.v19i1.4

[23] Chuka A. Okoye, Religion and the Management of Environmental Problems in the 'Evolved African' System. Journal of Humanities and Social Science (JHSS), Volume 3, Issue 4, 2012, P. 38-46.

[24]Bolanle Wahab, African Traditional Religions, Environmental Health and Sanitation in Rural Communities. The Environscope: A Multidisciplinary Journal, Volume 1, Number 1, 2004, p. 1 - 9.

[25] Muazu Usman Shehu & Susan Molyneux-Hodgson, Faith Communities and Environmental Degradation in Northeast Nigeria. International Journal of Environmental Sustainability, Volume 10, Number 1, 2014, p. 27 - 40.

[26] H.S. Nasr, Islam, the Contemporary Islamic, and the Environmental Crisis. In Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust, edited by R.C Foltz, F.M. Denny, and B Aziza. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 85–105

[27] Suhaila Mohd Omar , Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury & Abdurezak Abdulahi Hashi, Islamic Ethics of Waste Management towards Sustainable Environmental Health. IIUM Medical Journal Malaysia, Volume 16, Number 1, 2017, p. 193 – 197. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31436/imjm.v17i1.1024

religious participation and environmental outcome at the national level.[28] Hitzhusen argues that religious and environmental values are more complementary than competitive, and that religious organisations represent underutilised assets for environmental behaviour change.[29] These theoretical resources provide the background for the present study's empirical investigation.

Corporate Social Responsibility Theory

Corporate Social Responsibility theory originated with Howard Bowen's (1953) Social Responsibilities of the Businessman, which argued that powerful social institutions bear obligations to society that extend beyond their immediate organisational purposes.[30] Carroll elaborated this into a multi-dimensional framework encompassing economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions, arranged as a normative hierarchy.[31] The environmental stewardship dimension of CSR - sometimes termed "green CSR" - focuses on the obligations of organisations to preserve and restore the natural environment in which they operate. While developed in relation to commercial corporations, the Committee for Economic Development's (1971) "social contract" concept - that institutions owe social obligations in proportion to the social resources and power they command - is analytically applicable to any powerful social institution, including religious organisations.[32] CSR is the ethical and social responsibility that organisations carry out for the benefit of their host communities, the idea of s faith-motivated CSR, refer to social actions that are not solely based on business ethics or public relations alone but on the organisation's religious beliefs and/or moral teachings of its leaders. Thus, faith-motivated CSR of Religious denominations in Ede on the issue of environmental sanitation is the care they give to their environment because they view the natural environment as God's creation and the religious denominations as its steward.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design conducted in Ede, Osun State, in 2023. The four study denominations were selected purposively to represent both Christian and Islamic traditions and to include both mainline

[28] Vegard Skirbekk, Alexander De Sherbinin and Susana Adamo. How Religion Influences our Relationship with the Environment. Published October 15, 2020 by Columbia Climate School. Accessed on the 10th May, 2023 via https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/10/15/religion-influences-relationship-environment/#

[29] Gregory Edward Hitzhusen, Religion and Environmental Concern in America. Columbus: Ohio State University, 2019. Accessed on the 13th July, 2022 via https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/enr3470/

[30] Thomas Insights. A Brief History of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Accessed via https://www.thomasnet.com/insights/history-of-corporate-social-responsibility/

[31] Carroll, Archie Bissell (1991). 'The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders.' Business Horizons, 34(4), 39–48. DOI:10. 1016/0007-6813(91)90005-G

[32] Committee for Economic Development. (1971). Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations. New York: CED.

denominations (Anglican, SDA) and local mosque communities (Ikhwan Ratibi, Ede Central) - enabling analysis of both inter-faith commonalities and intra-faith variation. Primary data were collected through semi-structured key informant interviews with two leaders from each denomination (eight total) and eight host-community residents, structured around five thematic questions: what activities, why they participate, when activities occur, what effects they produce, and what challenges arise. Participant observation over multiple visits supplemented interview data. A bilingual research assistant facilitated Yoruba-language interviews. Ethical clearance was obtained from Adeleke University. Data were analysed descriptively and thematically, aligned with the CSR theoretical framework.

Findings: A CSR Analysis of Environmental Activities

Profile of the Study Religious Denominations

St. Peter's Anglican Church, Idi-Obi, Station Road, Ede (approximately 250 members, led by Venerable Ajumobi Francis Olugbenga) is located along a major arterial road, generating significant public frontage that creates both the opportunity and the obligation for sanitation maintenance. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ilupeju area (approximately 250 members, led by Pastor Dr. Omotosho Olabode) organises environmental activities through distinct ministry arms - Adventist Men's Organisation, Adventist Women's Ministries, and Adventist Youth Ministries. Ikhwan Ratibi Mosque, Agbale Road (50-75 members, led by Ustaz Dhikrullahi Abdulazeez) maintains a high frequency of member assembly through daily prayers that creates regular opportunities for environmental maintenance. Ede Central Mosque, the principal Friday Mosque of the Ede Muslim community, commands a larger congregation and greater civic visibility, functioning as a hub for community-wide mobilisation.

Environmental Sanitation Activities

Clearing of Drainages and Gutters

The data collected shows a shared commitment among the religious denominations toward freeing gutters and drainages from solid waste. For St. Peter's Anglican Church, Ajumobi[33] explained a strict policy requiring the frontage along the road to always be kept clean, which prompts the youth to periodically hand-pick trash and use shovels to clear sand washed in by rain. Although picking trash with bare hands has health implications, doing something redemptive is considered better than doing nothing, and a Sexton[34] along with a volunteer family of six remain dedicated to this task. Akinwumi added that for twenty years (2003-2023), the church has taken responsibility for dredging waste in front of its premises and the adjacent shopping complex, even using its own financial resources to repair damaged drainage sections

[33] Ajumobi Francis Olugbenga (Venerable), is Clergy and Vicar of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Ede, and was interviewed on the 18th February, 2023

[34] A Sexton is an employee of the church who ensures the safety of the property of the church and performs other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the church leadership.

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without seeking government refunds.[35] Similarly, the SDA church actively involves ministries like the Adventist Men's Organization, Adventist Women's Ministries, and Adventist Youth Ministries in cleaning drainages,[36] leading to broader community efforts such as clearing the drainages around the local Ede market.[37]

In contrast to the periodic scheduling of other denominations, the members of Ikhwan mosque follow a mandatory system with no room for choice. They are required to turn up every single Sunday for the cleaning of the drainage systems around the mosque. While this strict regime may appear unsettling to an outsider, Abdullazeez insisted that the maintenance of one's environment is an essential part of Allah's injunction, which is why cleaning the drainages every Sunday was made completely compulsory for every single member of the mosque.[38]

Sweeping Church/Mosque Surroundings, Roads and Streets

Sweeping the surroundings, roads, and streets improves the visible outlook of the environment. St. Peter's Anglican church adopted an all-encompassing approach to ensure year-round cleaning, including lawn landscaping, family-by-family cleaning, a sweeping roster, and employing a regular cleaner. Akinwumi added that youth groups engage in fortnightly sanitation of the church premises. The SDA church utilises daily, weekly, monthly, biannual, and annual sweeping approaches, with dates determined by church leadership. Its community service involves periodic cleaning of Ede market, the environment, the roads, and drainages on Sundays. Regarding the Ede Central Mosque, Akajewole explained that members engage in weekly sweeping every Friday just before the Juma't services.[39]

Cutting of Grasses and Bushes

Data collected from all four religious denominations showed unanimity in cutting grasses and bushes within and around their premises at weekly or monthly intervals. Adiyesola, a local shop owner near the SDA church, observed that they pick trash and cut grasses once a month.[40] While it is usually a joint effort, the youth section of St. Peter's utilises special events like Christmas and Easter to clear outside the church's vicinity.[41] To ensure commitment to its divine stewardship of the environment, Ikhuan mosque constantly reminds and

[35] Isaac Tope Akinwumi, Church Member, HOD, Ministry of Health & Environment, Abere, State Secretariat, Osogbo Osun State, 18th February, 2023.
[36] Omotosho, Olabode, District Pastor, SDA Church, Ede. 28th April, 2023,
[37] Asiyawbola John Ayodele, Deacon, SDA Church, Ede, 22nd March, 2023.
[38] Dhikrullahi Abdullazeez, Imam, Ikhuan Ratibi Mosque, Agbale road, opposite Obinrinrere (Good Women), CAC Church, 7th December, 2022.
[39] Hussain Akajewole, Chief Imam of Ede Central Mosque, along Oja Timi, opposite the Oba's Palace. 15th January, 2023.
[40] Olufunke Adiyelosa. Operates a shop along station road, opposite SDA, Ede. Interviewed on 4th May, 2023
[41] Ajumobi

encourages members to keep the environment clean and healthy, although, not all the members have been faithful to this instruction.[42]

Parking and Disposal of Waste

Proper waste disposal strategy is vital to keep the environment looking attractive. The four denominations attest that after clearing, refuse is packed using local tools like shovels, basins, and buckets. Due to a lack of waste disposal vans, the general disposal method for all the religious denominations is burning, which takes place in gutters, nearby land, or behind the compound as seen at St. Peter's. However, the Ede Central Mosque sometimes utilises government waste vans whenever it is available.[43]

Filling of Road Potholes

The SDA church, Ikhwan, and Ede Central Mosque regularly engage in filling road potholes, an effort Adekilekun describes as a regular practice for his denomination.[44] It should be noted that roads are essential networks that give direction and make journeys easier.[45],[46], however, most roads within Ede vary from tarred to untarred. During the rainy season, tarred roads with potholes get filled with water and litter, creating driving inconveniences and posing as potential health hazards to the people. Ironically, the effort to fill these potholes creates another problem, as digging up soil creates pits and undulated landscapes that collect rainwater and cause erosion.

Waste Bins for Temporary Refuse Storage

Solid waste containment before final disposal is mostly done in an approved manner. All four denominations collect and dump solid waste in dustbins. These waste bins are provided as temporary storage of refuse for later disposal.

A proper understanding of sanitary issues will help curb perennial challenges. Findings show that these religious denominations raise awareness by preaching about the link between environmental sanitation and general health during sermons. The SDA church utilises its specific health department for this purpose. Furthermore, religious leaders collaborate on monthly basis with the Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) department and other stakeholders - including market leaders (Iya-Iloja and Baba-Iloja), the NURTW, the Police, and the NSCDC. Although, this is the initiative of the WES department of the local government. According to Adeyemi, an environmental health officer, the

[42] Ustaz Mubasiru (Abu Jafary), Assistant Imam of Ikhwan Ratibi Mosque, Agbale road, opposite CAC Good Women Primary School, Ede. Interviewed conducted on the 26th January, 2023
[43] Hussain Akajewole, Chief Imam of Ede Central Mosque, along Oja Timi, opposite the Oba's Palace. 15th January, 2023.
[44] Tijani Abdulateef Adekilekun, is Clerk and an Assistant Imam, Ede Central Mosque, Oja Timi intefviewed conducted 15th January, 2023
[45] Charles R. Doarn, Roads: Pathways to the Next Destination, Telemedicine and e-Health 26, no. 7 (2020): 835-836
[46] The Constructor. Classification of Roads and their Details, (2017). Available from: https://theconstructor.org/transportation/classification-of-roads/17470/ Accessed: 5th May, 2023

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religious leaders as mouthpiece of the department in disseminating sanitation information to their members and the community at large.

Comparative Matrix Table

Dimension/ RDs	St. Peter's	SDA	Ikhuan Mosque	Central Mosque
Scale of Activities	Sweeping	Sweeping	Sweeping	Sweeping
	landscaping			
	Grass cutting	Grass cutting	Grass cutting	Grass cutting
	Clearing drainages	Clearing drainages	Clearing drainages	Clearing drainages
	Waste bin storage			Waste bin storage
	Repairs of gutters			
		Filling potholes	Filling potholes	Filling potholes
		Picking trash		
Frequency	Daily, fortnightly and seasonal	Multi-tiered (daily - annual)	Daily, every Sunday	Daily and every Friday
Funding Sources	Internal church resources (funds a salaried Sexton)	Internal church resources	Internal Mosque resources	Internal Mosque resources
Volunteer Structure	Youth groups, a sexton, a volunteer, family of six.	Ministries like Adventist Men, Women, Youth, all members	Every member participation	General congregation
Geographic Coverage	Church premises, frontage, public roads, adjacent, shopping complex	Church premises, streets, Ede market.	Mosque surroundings, immediate drainage and road networks.	Mosque surroundings, public pathways, and adjacent routes along Oja Timi
Waste Disposal Method	Burning	Burning	Burning	Hybrid approach: Burning and utilising WES vans

Discussion: Faith-Motivated CSR in a Constrained Governance Context

The findings support the theoretical proposition that religious denominations function as corporate social actors in the CSR sense. Carroll's (1991) four-dimensional CSR framework maps instructively onto their activities: the economic dimension is expressed through resource investment (labour, equipment, funds) in environmental maintenance; the legal dimension is implicit in the denominations' support for and occasional substitution of unenforceable legal mandates; the ethical dimension is explicit in the religious motivations - Islamic tahara, Christian stewardship theology - cited by all four denominations; and the philanthropic dimension is most visible in the provision of infrastructure for host communities beyond the denominations' own membership.

The theoretical contribution of this analysis lies in demonstrating that CSR is neither limited to commercial corporations nor to the Global North contexts in which it was developed. Religious organisations in sub-Saharan Africa exercise forms of social power - community trust, moral authority, network reach, organisational capacity - that generate genuine civic accountability obligations. When it is faith-motivated and exercised responsibly, these generate the same public goods that CSR theory identifies as the normative outcome of socially responsible institutional behaviour. The absence of recognition for these contributions - no government funding, no systematic media coverage, no prior academic documentation - reflects a state-centric, secular analytical framework that treats religious civil society as peripheral to governance rather than constitutive of it. In contexts where state capacity is severely constrained, as it is in Ede, this analytical framework is not only incomplete but actively counterproductive, obscuring essential environmental actors from the governance view.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated, through original empirical research and a novel theoretical application, that religious denominations in Ede, Osun State, function as de facto corporate social actors whose faith-motivated environmental activities generate measurable public goods. The CSR framework, adapted for application to non-commercial faith-based institutions, provides the analytical vocabulary for recognising this reality and drawing out its governance implications.

Three recommendations follow. First, Ede's local government areas should formally recognise religious denominations as environmental sanitation partners, establishing coordination mechanisms that align denominations' activities with WES operational priorities and share equipment, training, and information resources. Second, state and federal environmental agencies should commission systematic documentation of faith-based environmental contributions as the basis for faith-inclusive environmental governance policy. Third, religious denominations should formalise their environmental activities through written policies, designated responsibility, and record-keeping - enhancing both their effectiveness and their case for institutional recognition. The environmental crisis in urban Nigeria cannot be resolved by the state alone;

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religious organisations are not part of the problem but an underutilised part of the solution.