

Research Article

Harnessing Traditional Institutions for Social Control : A Study of Mumuye Vaa/Vaka (Indigenous Mystical Fraternity) in Taraba State, Northeast, Nigeria

Hosea Nakina Martins¹ and Adegan Andrew Philips²

¹Department of Christian Religious Studies, Faculty of Religion and Philosophy, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria

²Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, Nigeria

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 05 June 2026

Received in Revised

Form: 22 June 2026

Accepted: 03 August 2026

Available Online: 28 August 2026

Keywords:

Social Control,

Mumuye, Nigeria and

Vaa/Vaka

ABSTRACT

Prior to the invention of modern institutions of social control in Northeast, Nigeria, traditional Vaa/ Vaka (Hidden Association) among the Mumuye of Taraba State has been in existence and proven to be efficacious in mitigating social ills compared to modern organs like police, military, civil Defence, immigration, judiciary, custom, road safety corps amongst others. The research is aimed at integrating Mumuye Vaa/Vaka with modern architectonics for effective social control in Nigeria. The paper made use of mixed methods of research approach combining qualitative and quantitative. Data were collected from oral interviews, participant observation , Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and books. The paper discovered that, modern architectonics of social control in Nigeria have not proven to be productive, sufficient and are at bay to cover a heterogeneous Nigerian society. Traditional architectonics like the vaa/vaka were more efficacious than modern architectonics mitigating social order . The paper further observed that, traditional organs of social order like the Vaa/Vaka are indigenously revered as symbolic ethnographic and cultural heritage of the Mumuye , whose activities remained secretive and sealed from non initiates especially women, children and strangers, and which also posed a challenge to being integrated in modern architectonics for social order in Nigeria. Vaa activities could also be dangerous if they go eventually go out of hand due to abuse and witch hunting by members of the cult in society. The research recommends that, positive aspects of vaa should be revitalised and integrated into modern architectonics for effective maintenance of social order in Nigeria. Custodians of Vaa , indigenous scholars and modern institution for the promotion of social order should be integrated to promote and maintain social order in a heterogeneous society in Nigeria now and in the future.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a heterogeneous country located in West Africa with more than 249 million ethnic groups, and three viral religions ; African religion, Christianity and Islam been practised by their adherents. Mumuye according to history, migrated from Egypt and sojourned to Kang in Bali Local Government Area of Taraba State and later migrated to Yorro from there they further migrated to other places like Zing, Yorro, Ardo Kola, Jalingo, Lau amongst others. Many Mumuye are dominantly residing in Adamawa State in places like Mayo Belwa, Toundo Jada Ganye and Fufore and Jimeta-Yola (Nyameh1) . The name 'Mumuye' was a nick name given to the people who speak "the language of Yorro" by Fulani and Hausa traders. Mumuye originally use pronouns like *shon/zang* and *Jaa* (meaning person or son or child from so and so village. For instance, a person from Dong will be addressed as *shon/zang- Dong* or *Jaa -Dong*.

Thus, man, who is a social being, lives in company of his fellow men, ought to obey constituted code of moral living in order for the society to be functional and stable in all facets of its endeavours. Prior to the emergence of modern architectonics of social control in Mumuye society, *vaka* has been effective , whereas modern architectonics of social control on the other hand have not been effective in the fight against drug trafficking, prostitution, armed robbery, kidnapping, gangsterism, nepotism, embezzlement of public funds, incest, abortion, child abuse, ritual killing, stealing, disrespect to elders and constituted authorities among other ills, which are been perpetrated on daily basis in the society today. It is customarily upheld that, in traditional Mumuye society, there is a working relationship between man and the spiritual beings, where *Vaa* act as architectonics of social control. Thus, even with introduction of modern means of social control, they are mared with alot of irregularities, compromise and inadequate funding resulting in their operations.

Modern institutions of social control are instituted by law, back up by law and operate under the ambit of Government, which are inadequate and proactive in the discharge of their duties towards effective social control in the society. In traditional African society, there are set of ways for ensuring every member behaves in an expected and accepted manner in order to keep the social organisation integral and functional (Nyabun, *Political Foot Print* 67).

African moral observances is inbuilt in their religious life, which does not exclude a person outside the context of the community' life if taken as corporate phenomenon (Nyameh 5). Thus, this research is going to explore integrating traditions with modernity in the furtherance of harmonious interaction of social control with traditions, customs, beliefs and moral behaviours of the society at large via instituted agents or symbols (Mbiti 221) integrating *Vaka* with modern institutions for effective social control in Nigeria.

1. Conceptual Clarification of *Vaa/Vaka*

Vaa is a Mystical Fraternity of strict secrecy mostly formed and reserved for the men folk. It is a link with the ancestors and also symbols of male domination. As also observed Nyazing, *Vaa* is a thing of the ancestors, which is used to further the course of human society" (25). In another view also, Walls posits that, "*vaa* is a symbol of boundless, personal greed and involvement with such an image for personal gain bring destruction on all ties that bind an individual to family friends and community and ultimately as time runs out of available sacrifices, the owner of dodo is himself devoured by the genie (138). While Bonzena sees *Vaa* to be among the three principal deities, which serves as god of morality or moral police" (2).

In another view also, *Vaa/Vaka* has been defined as Cordinated Hidden Association symbol of moral order, or a secret symbol that has power of doing everything because, it is a dominant secret cult among the Mumuye in regulating people' moral excesses" (Group Six 2). Neyt is of the also that, "*Vaa/Vaka* are symbols of forces of nature and the ancestors" (38). While Nyabun sees *Vaa/ Vaka* " as a secret cult for ritual groups that regulates Mumuye religious life " (5). Furthermore, *Vaa* is seen as a key moral agent for effective socialization and transmission of key beliefs and practices of the Mumuye which are considered sacred (Zanti Z., Oral Interview).

Similarly also, Martins asserts *Vaa/Vaka* to mean a mystical Hidden Association of religious symbol which represent the ancestors, deity, or the divine, and which serves as agent of instilling moral disciplines among the Mumuye" (Dessertation 81). He further to maintains that, *Vaa/ Vaka* are sacred instituted religious symbols usually empowered with efficacious rituals to serve as link between the visible and invisible worlds of men, ancestors and that of the spirits in instilling moral disciplines among the Mumuye (Martins, "Myths, rituals and symbols" 90).

2. Concept of Social Control

This can therefore be described as all the means and process by which a group secures its members, conforming to its norms, expectations and values (Arinze 27). In another similar definition, Detola defines social control also as " a means and process by which a group secures its members, conforming to its norms, expectations and values" (82). Fairchild succinctly defined social control as " the sum total of the process where by society, or any sub -group within society, secures conformity to expectation on the part of its constituent units, individuals or groups. Persuasive control emanates from the agencies of law and government while coercive control operates through all the various agencies and instrumentalities that induce the individual to respond to the standards, wishes, and imperative of the larger social group (279).

3. Origin of *Vaa/Vaka*

Vaa/Vaka according to Mabelang " emanated from ancestral spirit (*raamang*) whose origin also could be said to be from nature" (Oral Interview). *Vaa/Vaka* as they are commonly called, they are symbols that are empowered by rituals or rites as once practiced by the ancestors. Dong and Rudanyuba opines that, they are commonly referred to ancestral entities, which owed their origin from fore parents long time age. Thus, the origin of *Vaa/Vaka* could be said to be originated from the ancestral custodians or mostly divinities (spirits) (Dong and Rudanyuba 55).

Another version has it that, *Vaa/Vaka* originated from man's own worldview where there is interplay of forces in both physical and spiritual worlds, fostering of creative manipulation of forces of nature for effecting moral sanctions among the people" (Saleh, Oral Interview). Kola is of the view also that, Mumuye ancestors formed the cult as a bond of unity and obedience, which stresses moral obedience among members, and ensure stability of moral life of abundance to be realised by all " (Oral Interview). Thus, *Vaa/Vaka* was invented by the ancestors to foster a link with the departed ancestors and the living for moral instruction to be observed using repeated rites and selected symbols to represent identities as means of effecting the observance of moral order" (Mading, Oral Interview).

In another lucid view, *Vaa* is said to have emanated from the composition of spirit and nature objects or man made, which are being represented by various symbols of created ancestral spirits, or tapped powers and whose image represent the thought of their makers and custodians as inherited. However as observed, *Vaa/Vaka* origin is shrouded in great mystery because of its existence, origin and practice, which is shrouded in great secrecy till date" (Zanti, Oral Interview).

4. Features of *Vaa/Vaka*

Vaa/Vaka as a material and Mystical Fraternity activity of the ancestors is associated with common features which include spiritual and material as contained in Mumuye worldview:

5.1 Spiritual Nature

Vaa/Vaka possessed the spiritual nature, which are qualities received by the ancestors to effect moral change or moral

order among the people. Hence, the cult is said to be part of a spirit (*raamang*) whose power is metaphysically manipulated to enhanced a desired impact. It directly act as lesser gods and spirit as observed (Bonzena 12). No doubt as further observed, ancestral spirit is one of the qualities *Vaa/Vaka* possessed (Dong and Rudanyuba 56).

Vaa possessed spiritual efficacious qualities apart from the symbolic items used to depict it presence and use in the society"(Zanti S.,Oral Interview). Hence, there is enhance powers which are used for the benefit of the ancestral descendants, and which are considered also as spiritual entities of link with the Divine (Nyazing 25). However, such spiritual nature is given cognizance to have emanated from the ancestors, who possessed spiritual qualities too. Similarly as observed further, this religious symbols belong to the spiritual order of existence. It is a symbol densely populated with the spirit of the living-dead (Mbiti75).

5.2 Material Nature

Material nature of *Vaa/ vaka* is the corporeal or physical characteristics which are the cult possessed. Hence, these hallmarks denote that *Vaa/Vaka* is made up of weaved costumes, earthen, ropes, rocks,effigies and herbs which are material aspects that summed what *Vaa/Vaka* denotes entirely. Thus, *Vaa* is also represented with horned mask, long ropes, logs of wood, pestle like logs of wood of various sizes, *sal/ jalahan/Jalagana* (sacred carved images or effigies), rocks or *jeemang* (herbal plants).

These sacred symbolic objects have shapes and are considered efficacious as they are reserved and protected and handed by custodians to succeeding generations to ensure its continuity. Thus, in view of the above, symbolic features of *Vaa/Vaka* are mostly represented by desired objects either with musical instrument like drums, or weaved costumes, or herbs" (Dauda35).

5. Sampling Mumuye *Vaa/Vaka*

There are many types of *Vaa/Vaka* among the Mumuye, and the most popular that are going to be examine include:

6.1 *Vaadosung*

Vaadosung is commonly referred to as the god [Arcane Society]of eating and drinking. He is a very violent cult, and all things about him is never divulged (Bonzena 14). In another view, observed,*Vaadosung* features at the scene of celebration, and women non-initiates cannot see it (Nyazing 26). Similarly, *Vaadosung* cult is represented by two or more curved *waa/waka/kpen*(calabash) or even horns, which produces a terrifying sound depicting the voice of the ancestors. *Vaadosung* in another excerpt, is a cult used for the initiation for boys into adulthood , and its activities are very mysterious and as concerned in secrets by only its members (Martins,Dessertation93).

6.2 *Vaabong*

Vaabong is a symbolic cult which is been regarded as the most wicked of all other *Vaa/Vaka*. It is represented by a horned masked smeared or painted with red paint. It has knitted

costume which is worn on the body by its elected members. Its role is to test the braveness of the initiated, and it also accompany the corpse of an important person to the grave. It is also a disciplinarian to stubborn women and children in the society(Nyazing 26-27).

6.3 *Vaalansi/Dong Vorr*

This type of cult is a cult of agricultural productivity. It is also been regarded as a peaceful type (Dauda 35). In another word, *Vaa lansi* is been referred to as fertility cult. Martins further reiterates that, this cult is been represented by sacred rock, human and animal effigies which denote high sense of religiosity and efficacy in socio -cultural, moral and religious activities " (Myths, Rituals and Symbols95).

6.4 *Sukpanti Cult*

Vaabong is the male cult while *Sukpanti* is the female type. It is interesting to note that, when this cult comes out, the season of initiation is approaching. She is referred to as a beautiful cult, haven plaited head, and often wear conspicuous ear rings but very violent when people violated her ordinances(Group Seven 2).

6.5 *Vaa Kpa*

This is referred to as cult of war; they were mostly a conglomeration of herbs known as *jeemang/tongkorong*, which are joined with other related herbs and ready for work (Dauda 37). Hence,the Chief priest who joined these type of herbs in Dong is referred to as *Nee-Kove Gbaala*, and the cult is represented by the war herbs known as *jeemang* or *poori* (37-38).

6. Sacred Trust: *Vaa/Vaka* as A Sacred Custodial Symbolic Cult in Mumuye Religious Traditions

The cult of *Vaa/Vaka* is inherited or as customary cult that binds the Mumuye with their traditions. However morality is highly observed by the entire community through strong affiliation and support between the ancestors and the living custodians. However, *Vaa* practice and sanction is above an individual because the cult is part and parcel of Mumuye custom and tradition which defines its perception and stands on morality as encapsulated in Mumuye world view. Thus, *shon lansi/nee-gaa* (secret Society' custodians) are active in every facets of Mumuye religious observances. They are shields and promoters of the activities of the cult as handed down to them by their ancestors for the furtherance and maintenance of ontological harmony between men and the departed ancestors (Kala,Oral Interview).

It is worth reiterating further that, custodians are ardent supporters, who taught the dictates of religious cult to the younger ones to preserve it even for posterity. Hence, elected positions in the cult are filled by respected members at the confideracy scheduled season or time, where there is ranking from the most senior to the least. However, *Vaa* is one of the most revered, sacred , secret and Arcane Society represented by efficacious symbols believed to have been inherited from fore-fathers, and which serves as link representing the ancestors and

the living. Hence, mysteries surrounding *Vaa* practice are attributed also to the intervention of ancestors (Nyazing 27).

Thus, ancestral symbol among the Mumuye is a figure been represented by the *Vaa/Vaka*, which is believed to offer protection from diseases, theft and even bless the people with abundant harvest when sacrifices are offered as when they should be (Group Seven 3). In moments needs, ancestors are consulted as oracle and medium, who protect, grant favours, and even punish those who go wrong (Dong and Rudanyuba 60). *Vaa/Vaka* (secret cult) is kept and practice mostly in an enclosure of round thatch hut known as *Jaa-vaa/kuna*, situated far away from the scene of the community. It is in similar view also that, Sale reiterates that, there are private as well as community shrines among the Mumuye" (Oral Interview).

Furthermore, beliefs in God and ancestors necessitate people to exhibit good conduct and live moral lives which are hinged in Mumuye religious ethics as maintained and ordained by God, which are promoted and link by the symbolic role of *Vaa/Vaka*. In another similar view also, Martins observes that, *Vaa/Vaka* is a Secret Society which possesses supernatural order which puts the religious views and belief in ancestors as integral aspect of socio-religious way of maintaining life among the Mumuye (Myths, Rituals and Symbols 4). Hence, in Mumuye world as earlier stated, *Vaa/Vaka* plays a cementing role between sacred and the profane whose activities featured mostly during religious and symbolic events like birth, ceremonies; funerals and festivals among others.

7. *Vaa/Vaka* As Organ in Maintaining Social Control in Traditional Mumuye Society

Mumuye society is highly characterized by the activities of *Vaa/Vaka*, which serves as symbol of social control and principal mentors of morality in the society. Hence, moral excesses of every member is controlled by *Vaa/Vaka*, who act as secret police. Even in modern age today, *vaka* still commands respect and total obedience to its operational tenets. It also mete punishments on recalcitrant members of the society for sanity to be maintained in the ontological order to be maintained.

Hence, punishments are meted on those who commit incest, rape, adultery, fornication, poisoning, sacrilege, disrespect to elders, desecrate sacred places of worship and mischief makers with heavy fines of payment of goats (*jaa/beh*) and *saa/sis* (local wine), death or serious sickness or disaster. In view of this, Dong and Rudanyuba posits that, failure to pay the stipulated fines, it result to one losing his life or that of his family members (58). Any misbehaviours from any person in Mumuye society are easily put under control through the influence and punishment by *Vaa/Vaka*, which serves as moral police.

In another related view during festivals, ritual rites are observed as part of a purpose to ask the ancestors, who are associated with abundance and agricultural productivity to grant such intention with stimulated customary laws to be obeyed (Nyabun, *Hidden Treasures* 5). Violators of moral

codes as observed do not go unpunished because they are meted with sickness, misfortunes, ill luck or even death as punishment (Nyazing 25).

Hence, from birth, death, initiation, festivals, *Vaa/vaka* ensure social control of its members, whether inclusive or exclusive. Reward is often stressed on those who are obedient, while punishment are given to wrong doers. No doubt as observed, *Vaa* has visible and material acceptable societal means of spiritual authority in eradicating socio-moral evils among members, and whose role cannot be over emphasised in Mumuye worldview (Martins, "Myths, Ritual and Symbols" 6).

8. Effecting Social Control in Nigeria through Integrating Mumuye *Vaa/Vaka* with Modern Institutions

Effecting social control in Nigeria can only be realised when *vaka* is integrated with with modern institutions. Over the years, human society has taken many improved forms of social control due to modernisation with its wide tentacles, which have become more complex now. Thus, the gradual emergence of modern architectures of social control in today's Nigerian society when integrated with cultural *vaka* will indeed yield. Integrating *Vaa* with modern architectonics of social control will foster common respect for ontological harmony to be maintained in the society.

Thus, this will also invigorate rapid social relationship and human behaviours by providing social inclusion and shared connection opportunities (Goos et al 26). Since religion is a social institution which is built around the idea of a Supernatural Being or beings, and the relation of human beings to them (Fairchild 256), it cannot be separated from influencing an ideal moral way of living in the society which is been bedevilled by moral decadence on daily basis.

However, with the coming of modern religions like Islam founded by Prophet Muhammed in 632AD and Christianity founded by Jesus Christ in 33AD have indeed contributed immensely in condemning bad human actions in every nook and cranny of the world, and particularly among the Mumuye. Christianity has contributed in condemning and complimenting in reiterating people's right and wrong actions, perception and attitudes towards showing love and need to respect the sanctity of human lives as obtainable in traditional methods of social control (National Open University of Nigeria 50).

For example, the book of Mathew (22:17-22) states that "give unto Caesar what is Caesar and unto God the things that are God's". Also, Genesis (3:1-9) affirms the punishment meant for disobedience which is burden to breakers of laws. Exodus (20:5-6) also went on to states "God will punish children for the sins of parents to the third and fourth generations". Thus, this is a display of immense amount of coercive power that comes with the power to punish such degree of sin. John (4:2-3) warns about false prophets and seems to promote intolerance. Going further, Genesis (2:9) asserts that "in the middle of that garden true knowledge of good and evil lie". God forbids Adam and Eve from eating from this tree. Hence we see God's interference in the activity of men by regulating the excesses if men by such order" do not".

Christianity which derives its basic moral teachings from the life of Jesus Christ. Thus, The Christian Decalogue (Ten commandments) is a summary of basic Christian moral observances translating in social control of human actions by prescribing the dos and don'ts. For instance it reiterated "you shall not kill, steal, lie, commit adultery, call the name of God in vain, bear false witness, covet your neighbour's good, you shall honour your father and mother, keep the Sabbath holy, do not swear in vain or take the name of God are clear manifestations of how social control of human behaviours is reiterated by the Holy scripture and Christians are expected to obey always as guide to moral living, which are usually respected. Thus, integrating Mumuye *Vaka* code of social control with the Christian decalogue will go along way to foster effective social control in the society where social control architectonics are at the verge of total collapse due to ineffectiveness and inadequacy.

The Holy Qur'an also forbids adultery(17:32) and heavy punishment been prescribed for this crime; and order has not been qualified by any conditions. Verse (5:2) says, "do not let hatred of people incite you to aggression". In chapter (24:27) it forbids entering somebody's house except your own homes unless you are sure of their occupants consent. These two religions are morally monotheistic which emphasized upright living by members. Thus, social control are highly maintained by these religious with heavy condemnation of ill human actions with scriptural verses. When these ardent values of social control reiterated and harmonised with *vaa*, there will be effective realisation of social control in the Nigerian society bedevilled by continual rise of moral vices instigated by western cultures.

The Nigeria Police (NPF) with its coming into existence has as its task to protect lives and property of citizenry by fighting crimes and maintaining law and order. Furthermore, the institutions of courts (judiciary), Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) is to help maintain civil order in the society among citizens. Through the use of its organs like, the court has effectively handled case that pertains to related offences. Those found wanting are imprisoned under the custody of warders as they are fondly called today as "correctional officers". Integrating Mumuye *vaka* into its facets of operation will help to maintain some degree of societal control as urgently needed into day and in the future.

Hence, Social control architectonics like the Nigeria Custom Service (NCS) is an active operational body which ensures law breakers especially those importing fake or sub-standard products are punished.

National Food and Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NAFDAC) is also a body that is set up by the Government to fight fake drugs and food production. National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) is also a Government body that is saddled with the task of fighting illegal drugs transaction in the country. However, the Nigeria Immigration Services (NIS) checks illegal migrants, drug and human traffickers into and outside the country, and if found wanting, those people are prosecuted according to the dictate of the law dictating antidote from the secret cult when incorporated with

modern architectonics will help foster surveillance for effective monitoring and execution of wrong doers.

School authorities can also come into play by controlling moral behaviours of students by issuing moral sanctions on any found person found wanting when the role of secret initiates are taken into cognisance, it will help to foster proper social control of behaviours of people in the society. Mumuye like any other African societies have been involved for the common quest for moral control of behaviours of members. Thus, virtually in almost every strata of traditional African societies, modern architectures of social control are busy weakening and replacing traditional architectures of social control. This is not to say that traditional architectonics of social control do not perform their respective roles in the traditional societies, but they are eroding due to negligence, lack of patriotism and inability to inject vitality in them for desired results to be achieved. Thus, when *vaa* is complimented with modern architectonics of social control there will be balanced and effective social control of behaviours in the society which is morally decaying.

9. Challenges Affecting Harnessing Social Control by Integrating Mumuye *Vaa/Vaka* with Modern institutions

There are related challenges affecting social control in Nigeria by integrating Mumuye *Vaa/Vaka* with modern institutions, which include:

- i. *Vaa/Vaka* practices often lead to death of individuals in society when vital pre-requisites are not followed. Thus, heavy fines are levied, and inability for victims to pay such fines often result in death or sickness. Thus, the cult is designed to function within a set of cultural communities and not like modern architectonics like the police, courts, immigration, customs, army and civil defense which are promulgated by law to work for the entire interest of the country and with funding from the Government, while the former is in an exclusion these supports.
- ii. *Vaa/Vaka* is a male dominated cult which is highly secretive, and women are not allowed to see nor participate in its activity, except the one that belongs to the female folk. Hence, modern means of social control include women in its social control network thus, *vaa* cult is male dominated, and the modern architectonics are inclusive of both sexes without restriction to joining them.
- iii. *Vaa/Vaka* act as secret police of morality among the Mumuye. Hence, it over stressed its vital role when it comes to social control. Hence, there is fear due to its activities which would heighten crimes like injustices, infringement on people's fundamental rights.
- iv. Integrating *Vaa* with modern architectonics for social control in contemporary Nigeria will certainly leave indelible hallmarks of clash of cultures and values among diverse members of the society.
- v. Modern architectonics of social control are instituted and backed by law whereas, *Vaa* is instituted by

Amidst some of the challenges bedevilling effecting social control in Nigeria: integrating :Mumuye *Vaa/ Vaka* with Modern institutions, the paper has the following recommendations:

- custom and tradition with alot of secrecy and rules guiding its operation. Hence, the diversity of cultures in Nigeria will certainly posed a challenge for *Vaa* be accepted and harmonized with modern architectures for social control in contemporary Nigeria.
- vi. *Vaa* does not belong to Government approved architectonics for social control, but modern architectonics are established and funded by law,thereby people are selected or recruited based on professionalism to serve the heterogeneous Nigerian society under the watch of tge Government .
 - vii. Integrating *Vaa* with modern institutions for social control in in contemporary time will aid in threatening people and scaring away investors due to fear of any breached customary norms and values of the the society. Hence the two architectonics, would certainly be antagonistic resulting in clash with relevant authorities; government and custodians because of the heterogeneous society of Nigeria.
 - viii. *Vaa/Vaka* activities are very mysterious and remain vague in the eyes of non initiates. Thus, their intrinsic nature, essence , operation and effects are not to be investigated but remain secretive and sealed(Sale,Oral Interview). Any attempt to unseal it, brings untimely repercussions on those persons involved. Modernity is the anti thesis of tradition which would not be compatible to integrate *Vaa* with modern institutions of social control in Nigeria.
 - ix. Modern religions like Christianity and Islam forbid their members to join *Vaa* activities which they considered syncretic and diabolical . Hence, *vaa* is seen as barbaric, evil and retrogressive.
 - x. *Vaa* activities could be dangerous if integrated with modern architectonics of social control in contemporary time. As further elaborated, cult members and modern agents of social control can be selfish and engage in brutal judicial murder and exploit the weak and less privileged (Mbiti 221).
 - xi. Western religions are busy converting adherents of African Religion to their faiths which made indigenous custodians to abandon the practice in preference of the new faiths.
 - xii. Contemporary approach to social control gives credence to moral observance and punishment by documented and approval by law when compared with the traditional, which uses norms and custodians. Hence all kinds of mysteries surrounding the practice of *Vaa* are attributed to witchcraft powers of some members and also the intervention of the ancestors whose activities can be verified in this age (Nyazing27).
- 10. Recommendations**
- i. Custodians of *Vaka/Vaa* should link human society in modern era by backing up strong forces of affiliation for a just and social order to be maintained and integrated with modern institutions for effective social control in contemporary Nigeria. Thus, people should try to respect various institutions of the people and that of others. Hence, also they should accord reverence to festivals, initiation, funerals by reiterating on the need for social control to be instilled in such places (Gaiya 5).
 - ii. *Vaa* activities and custodians should harmonised social control architectonics with modern ones , taking advantage of advancement in security and scientific technology in order to promote its positive aspects and operation. As Zaranti further adds, " *Vaa/Vaka* is comprised of secret cult activities which should consider innocent members who might breached any of its socio- political and religious custom and tradition and they should be treated with caution and mercy"(Oral Interview).
 - iii. *Vaa/Vaka* (secret cult) activities should be left as an option for those who wished to join on their volition and not to be forced to do so as a hereditary cult. Hence, whosoever that wants to join *Vaa* according Ntamu "must be ready to face some of its challenges in a modern challenging world of today" (Oral Interview) where everything is becoming globally interconnected and sophisticated.
 - iv. *Vaa* when harmonised with modern architectonics for social control in contemporary time, should not be abused nor over stretched its boundaries by exploiting and infringing on people's fundamental rights.
 - v. *Vaa/Vaka* should be revitalized inorder to be integrated with modern institutions of social control. Hence positive aspects of *Vaa* should be harmonised and enforced with modern architectonics for effective social control to be fruitful in the society (Napu,Oral Interview).
 - vi. *Vaa/Vaka* custodians should assist researchers to document on some essential aspects of *Vaa* which need to be improved and documented for significant result yielding in the society, which will serve as link of social control now and in the future(Zaranti, Oral Interview). Thus,there is need for the *Vaa* to live up to expectations in order to be harmonised with modern architectonics of social control (Zakari,Oral Interview).

11. Conclusion

Prior to the coming of modern institutions of social control to Nigerian communities, *Vaa/Vaka* has been efficacious in the stabilisation of social control till day. It is sad to reiterate also that, social control in Nigerian society using modern

institutions has not adequately yielded enough results due to weakness, sentiments, corruption, lack of patriotism and acceptance to be harmonised by the plural existing nature of the Nigerian society among other reasons. Hence, *Vaa* is an ancestral cult of the Mumuye, whose positive aspects need to be borrowed, revitalised and integrated with modern institutions in order to salvage the society from continual moral decay. *Vaa* institutions of social control cannot be sufficient in mitigating immoral activities in an age of technological and scientific advancement without been integrated with modern approaches to serve one common purpose. Hence, there is need for synergy between modern and Mumuye *Vaa* to serve the purpose of ensuring social control in a society where moral ills are on the increase.

References

- Arinze, S. "Towards An Authentic Nigeria Liturgy". *Shalom Proclaim Peace*, 5. Enugu: Dora Prints Nigeria Ltd. 1983. Print.
- Justine D. "Baptism And Initiation Among The Mumuye People of Nigeria". (BST) Long Essay. Jos: SAMS, May, 1992. Print.
- Dong, Peter Marubitoba and Rudanyuba, Alphonsus Isa. Ed. *Excavating The Mumuye Heritage On Family Building And Ethics*. Jos: Nigeria Bible Translation Trust, 2014. Print.
- Detola, T.O. *Man and Society in Africa*. London: Longman, 1983. Print.
- Dauda, Pius Nyarere. *Historical Sites in Dong*. Kano: Olus Kreationz, 2013. Print.
- Fairchild, Henry Pratt. Ed. *Dictionary of Sociology*. Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams and Co. 1966. Print.
- Group Six "Examine the Place of *Vaa* (Secret Cult) in your People's Religion". Being A Paper Presented in Partial Fulfilment of Rel: 108: African Traditional Religion. Department of Christian Religious Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo, 2018. Print.
- Gaiya, Musa A.B. "Inter-Play Between Religion and Culture in African Traditional Religions". *Jos Studies*, 4.1, (1994). 5. Print.
- Goos, M. Manning et al. "Explaining Job Polarization: Routine -biased Technological Change and Off Shoring". *An Econ Re*, (2014). 26 Print.
- Mbiti, John Samuel. *African Religion and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1969. Print.
- Martins, Hosea Nakina. "Myths, Rituals and Symbols As Architectonics of Social Control in Mumuye Society" Being A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfilment For Rel 709 – African Philosophy, A Postgraduate Course in the Department of Religion and Philosophy, Benue State University, Makurdi, October, 2010. Unpublished.
- . "A Phenomenological Investigation of the Mumuye Traditional Religion in Taraba State of Nigeria" Master's of Arts Dissertation Submitted to the Postgraduate School, Benue State University, Makurdi – Nigeria, Feb. 2012. Unpublished.
- Nyameh, J. Kotasori. *A Brief At The Mumuye Communities In Lau Local Government Area*. Jos: Padane Ventures, 2006. Print.
- National Open University of Nigeria. *Course Material on Course CTH825-"Religion and Social Change"*. 2015. Print.

Journal of Arts, Humanities & Society. Iss.1(3) 2026. pp:108-114
Nyazing, Peter Hassan. "Mumuye Burial System as Expressions of the African Community Spirit" (B.Th). Long Essay, Jos: St. Augustine's Major Seminary, May, 1998. Unpublished.

Nyabun, Mathias. *Hidden Treasures of the Mumuye people: Mika Clan Perspective*. Jalingo: Matty Press, 2014. Print.

---. *The Mumuye Experience Review of Political Foot Prints A Posterity Measure*. Jalingo: Marty Press, 2019. Print.

Neyt, Francois. *Mumuye*. Paris: Galerie Flak, 2001. Print.

Sogwe, Vera. "The Role of Digitalization in the Decade of Action for Africa". *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*. 7 September, 2020. Print.

Walls, Levis L. *Hausa Medicine: Illness and Well being in a West African Culture*. Durham- London: Duke University Press, 1988. Print.

Www. World bank, org> program> all -afr- Retrieved on 26 June, 2023. Web.