

DO WE HAVE TO DO IT ALONG OUR ROADS?

(News Commentary aired on Radio Nigeria)

One of the most irritating things in this country is the sight of men and women urinating or defecating along our roads. This unsightly behaviour cuts across all age groups, sex and classes.

The paradox of it all is that this is a country that prides itself on being very religious and frowns at all sorts of immoral sexual behaviour. This is a country where indecent dressing attracts indescribably contorted pouts and wild comments of all shapes and manners. This is a country of countless priests, pastors, prophets, seers, diviners, and evangelists. This is a country where every nook and cranny is dotted with churches, mosques or religious houses.

The mental struggle of a decent mind is to understand our avowed religiosity in the face of our complete disregard for decent behaviour. It challenges the mind to understand the discrepancy between our religious pedantry, bigotry, fanaticism on the one side and our reckless display of our private parts in public.

What can be more ugly than watching a man on the roadside unzip his well-ironed trousers, hoisting his tie up to one side of his neck, arresting it there with a bent head and finally drawing out his manhood? Then he begins to urinate, punctuating the liquid flush with anal blasts, and creating such a terrible pull of liquid stench on our common roads.

Can there be a more shocking spectacle to behold than the sight of a woman carrying something on her head, holding it with one hand, spreading her legs provocatively, with the other hand holding her clothes, and finally causing a waterfall of putrefaction to cascade along the road? Can there be something more indecent than the physical pornography of a young girl unzipping her beautiful trousers, squatting on the roadside and releasing bodily liquids with crushing velocity?

Besides, after such primitive acts, you find the same people greeting others with the same hand with which they held their private parts, without any form of hand-

washing or sanitizing. You can imagine the amount of germs and diseases that are empowered to orbit the human environmental space through such behaviour.

It is not just the ugliness of the whole picture or a display of moral depravity surrounding the whole scenario that worries this writer but a shocking show of an abysmal lack of environmental consciousness.

When we defecate or urinate along the road, we pollute our environment with blood-freezing recklessness. The diseases we spread with much ease eventually cause tremendous damage to our health and that of our children. The result is a society brimming over with sick people. The economic and social cost of such a situation is incalculable. And this is happening in a society that is still struggling to pay salaries. And this is happening in a society already pronounced broke by its high priest the President himself!

In order to eliminate this primitive behaviour, the government should make urinating along our public roads an arrestable offence. But before giving birth to a law against, it may be advisable to raise the consciousness of the citizenry to the dangers of such an obnoxious behaviour. We can mount a campaign similar to the WAI (War Against Indiscipline), which our President Muhammadu Buhari initiated during his military administration. We can have something like WARU (War Against Roadside Urinating). Furthermore, government and owners of businesses along our roads should ensure that public toilets are available for those who have the call of nature. In Austria, for instance, all those who operate restaurants and businesses (petrol stations, for example) are mandated by law to have toilets available for use by those who need them. We can also encourage the private sector to build toilets which can collect little amount of money from the users. This is the practice in some countries.

Urinating along our roads has become such an oddity and embarrassment that all hands must be on deck to find a solution to it and to finally send it to the archive of forgotten reprehensible behaviour and shameful human acts.

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