

THE USE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES TO MINIMISE INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Guidance and counselling service plays a significant role in every child development and if effectively utilized can inculcate in the youths the spirit of consciousness that promote peace, conflict resolutions and national security. Since the return of civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented series of attacks by armed group such as Boko Haram, bandits, cattle rustler, militants, kidnappers among other. The activities of these groups has brought widespread insecurity in most community in Nigeria especially in the north leading to loss of life, properties, means of livelihood and disruption of children education and national unity. The criminal armed groups have significantly undermined the country's internal security and mostly use young men as foot soldiers. It is against this backdrop that this paper examined the different causes of insecurity in Nigeria and suggested the use of guidance and counselling services in curbing insecurity in Nigeria. The concept of guidance and counselling, insecurity, and guidance services were also discussed in this paper.

Keywords: *guidance and counselling, insecurity in Nigeria, guidance. counselling services*

Introduction

Every nation is established to protect the lives and properties of her citizen and it is the responsibility of the government of such nation to care for the wellbeing of its people and protect them from any form of attack. While this is true with most country of the world, the situation in Nigeria is different. The country in recent times is faced with high rate of kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, cultism, political assassination among others. These have resulted to the loss of lives, properties and displacement of people from their homes and community. Despite effort put in place by government to mitigate insecurity in the country, the problem is still on the increase with no hope in sight. Thus, the need to use guidance and counselling services to minimize the level of insecurity in the country.

Past studies have shown that guidance and counselling programmes have a positive effect on forestalling insecurity in the society. Apart from controlling deviant behavior and other delinquencies among youth; the effective utilization of guidance and counselling services can inculcate in the youth the spirit of consciousness that promote peace, conflict resolution and national security. It can also equip the youths with the knowledge and skills that will help bring about peace through better understanding; enabling them to acquire constructive peaceful problem solving skills that promotes national security; inculcating in them consciousness for managing conflicts without resorting to violence and develop non-violent conflict resolution skills and spirit of commitment to working to realize a shared and preferred future (Oguzie, 2014). Through effective guidance and counselling services the values of peace, conflict resolution and national security which include among other things respect for life, sharing with others, rejection of violence, sense of justice, listening ability and solidarity would be inculcated into early stages of educational process to enable learners imbibe the right values that will guide them throughout life time (Igbuzor, 2011). All these of course can be achieved through effective utilization of guidance and counselling services render in schools.

Umar (2013) described guidance and counselling service as a strategy that involves helping youths to deal with real life issues that affects their lives and society in general, inculcating in youths the spirit of unity, nationality and patriotism; preparing them for effective adult life that cherishes and promotes harmonious relationship among members of the society so that they will enter into adulthood with skills necessary to prevent conflict peacefully; instilling in them appropriate value and skills to enhance their moral development; and inculcating in them such value like compassion, integrity, hope, justice, unity, gender fairness, caring for life, sharing, reconciliation and active non-violence.

Concept of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and counselling is seen as a programme of services based on individuals needs and depending on the influence of the various environments in which they live (Mapfumo and Nkomai, 2013). Esen (1998) cited in Oguzie (2014) stated that guidance and counselling is aimed primarily at assisting the receiver to discover his own hidden strengths and ultimately grow in independence and ability to take his own decisions, make choices or adjustments unaided. On his part, Nwachuku (2007) viewed guidance and counselling as a systematic and organized educational helping service, professionally given by a professionally trained counsellor to a learner of any age within or outside the school walls whose aim is to assist the learner understand himself, the situation and environment, discover his interests, potential and opportunities in life and learn how best to effectively utilize his assets as well as minimize his weaknesses, to live a maximum productive life. The process is aimed at making an individual's aware of the rightness or wrongness of his/her choices and the importance of the decision on which the individual future depends (kabir, 2017).

Meaning of Insecurity

Imuetinya and Obaide (2019) described insecurity as the absence of resistance to or protection from harm, peaceful co-existence and development at large. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor (2013), see insecurity as the opposite of security which tends to affect human life and existence. As a general term, it refers to a state of being subjected to fear, threat, danger, molestation, intimidation and harassment in all aspect (Obarisiagbon and Akintoye, 2019). Udoh (2015) on his part sees Insecurity as the state of being subjected to danger or injury and the anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. For Ezemonye (2011), insecurity is a state of being not secure, or lacking of confidence.

In recent times, insecurity has assumed an alarming rate affecting every facet of life in Nigeria. Imuetinya and Obaide (2019) argued that, the issue of insecurity is not only peculiar to Nigeria because other nations too also face such challenge. That what makes it unique is the way the menace is being managed in Nigeria. Udoh (2015) listed the contributory factors to insecurity in Nigeria to include the persistent tension between the north and the south, growing unrest in the Niger Delta area and other parts of the country resulting in rise in violent incidents and kidnappings, ethnic tensions, religious differences, unemployment and numerous social and political grievances which in the past had fueled unrests in the country leading to loss of life, properties and displacement of people. The problem today has heightened, leading to severe unimaginable social consequences which have affected every sphere of Nigerians life. Onuoha (2014) observed that, since the return of civil rule in

Nigeria in 1999, criminal armed groups have significantly undermined the country's internal security, mostly using young men as foot soldiers. The activities of these groups has brought widespread insecurity in most community in the north leading to loss of life, properties, means of livelihood and abandonment of children education. According to MERCY CORPS (2016), the activities of Boko Haram in the north east alone has killed nearly 17,000 people since 2009, displaced nearly 2.2 million people, devastated thousands of communities, and slowed the economy of the region. Despite efforts put in place by government in the past to forestall future attacks by the armed groups, the level of insecurity and terrorist attacks in Nigeria is still very high and government efforts have not produced the desired positive result (Ewetan, 2013). This of course have made Nigerians lost confidence in the ability of government to secure their lives and property especially against their inefficiency due to lack of sophisticated weapons and lack of modern day communication gadgets available for security agents to fight insecurity (Adegbam, 2013). With Boko Haram and other groups seemingly gaining in strength, questions now arise as to why people join these groups in the first place and what the government and other actors can do to prevent them (Onuoha, 2014).

Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

Drawing from existing literature on insecurity in Nigeria, the following are causes of insecurity in Nigeria:

1. Non-Prosecution of Perpetrators of Violence In Nigeria and Weak Judicial System:

The lack of arrest and prosecution of perpetrators and sponsors of violence has encouraged many more social deviants to throw caution to the wind to perpetrate evil in the land (Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim, 2013). Closely associated with the above is the weak judicial system in Nigeria. By the Nigerian Constitution (1999), the Judiciary is charged with the interpretation of the law and adjudication in civil and criminal cases. In doing this, it ensures that rules are not broken and social order is maintained. Unfortunately, as noted by Tella (2015) and Obarisiagbon (2017), the Nigerian judicial system is weak and encourages criminality as many of the offenders easily find their way home even after being arrested and prosecuted.

2. Weak and Poorly Funded Security Agency / Military Establishments

The statutory role of maintaining law and order in any given society according to Imuetinyan and Obaide(2019) rests squarely on law enforcement agents. However, the law enforcement agents saddle with the responsibility of protecting lives and property in the country appears unaware of the security challenges the country is confronted with. Temple (2013) observed that the law enforcement agents are not well provided for, in terms of life insurance, accommodation among others in spite

of the high security votes state government receive on a monthly basis, adding that their monthly salary is poor with no welfare packages. All security force/agents under federal control are weak institutionally, heavily politicized and poorly funded. This situation makes it easy for the nation's security to be compromised. Consequently, rather than be national peace keepers saddled with the responsibility of protecting Nigerian citizens, they take sides and fuel insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law (Imuetinya, and Obaide, 2019).

3. Economy- poverty and unemployment

Poor economy with high poverty and unemployment rate is one of the major reason for high rate of insecurity in Nigeria. Every year institutions of higher learning produce many graduates who regrettably, are thrown into the labour market with no hope in sight for jobs. In an effort to keep body and soul together, some become frustrated and go into violent and criminal acts such as kidnapping, militancy and armed robbery. Others have become prey to terrorists and are easily radicalized (Onifade and e tal, 2013), and government have failed to put in place measures that will reduce unemployment and poverty.

4. Ethno-religious conflict

Ethno-religious conflicts exist when the social relations between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontations to settle grievances (Onifade and e tal, 2013). Imuetinya, and Obaide (2019) observed that Nigeria in the past had witness frequent and persistent religious clashes between the two dominant religions and the end seems not to be in sight. Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have assumed alarming rates, making a mockery of the security order (Ezeoha, 2011). In fact, before the advent of the dreaded Boko Haram, there were several instances of security crisis due to the activities of religious fanatics in the North. The maitatsine riot in Kano, Kaitungo crisis 2000, Kala-Kato violence in Bauchi State, bombing of church in Madala, Niger State in 2011 and series of other burning of churches in the North remains evergreen in the memories of Nigerians

5. Porous borders

Imuetinya, and Obaide (2019) had observed that, the porous borders in Nigeria which facilitates unrestricted and untracked movements of people have greatly contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. Going further they argued that, apart from unrestricted movement of individuals into Nigeria, arms and ammunitions have found their way into the country undetected and have been used by religious fanatics, insurgents and militia to wreak havoc on Nigeria with little or no response from law enforcement agents. Edeko (2011) had reported that over 70% (about 8million) of

illegal weapons have been used to create security crisis in Nigeria, and the porosity of Nigeria border has led to uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly youths from neighbouring countries particularly Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin who have been majorly responsible for some of the criminal acts in Nigeria (Adeola and Olayemi, 2012).

6. Lopsided development, marginalization and inequalities in the country

The government of President Muhammad Buhari has severally been accused of ethnic bias and the marginalization of some sections of the country and these have greatly threaten the unity of Nigeria. Key political appointments presently have been given to people of Northern extraction while the South-East has been left in the cold. This perhaps explains the agitation for the Republic of Biafra and several security breaches that have accompanied the agitation (Imuetinya and Obaide, 2019). A vast majority of the public has a feeling of inequality, unfairness, marginalization and this has led to frustration and loss of hope, especially amongst the youths.

7. Absence of Institutional Capacity Resulting in Government Failure:

Igbuzor (2011) sees the state of insecurity in Nigeria as a function of government failure. This manifests in the incapacity of government to deliver public goods to its citizens. The lack of basic necessities by the Nigerian people has created a growing army of frustrated people who resort to violence at the slightest provocation or opportunity. Although Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of its people, the entrenched culture of corruption in public service has resulted in the deprivation of basic necessities and because of this situation, the crime rate shoots up and the security of lives and property are no longer guaranteed.

8. Inter-agency Rivalry

The failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, state security services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information has been identified as one of the factors negating the quick apprehension of culprits (Omede, 2011). Also, the failure of intelligence gathering by the security agencies as well as the near passivity of security operatives in proactively policing the country, coupled with the non-apprehension of culprits, is also a contributory factor to the rising tide of insecurity in Nigeria (Onifade and e tal',2013). When the armed forces and paramilitary agencies are not well-tooled with modern fighting and security gadgets and their welfare is not given priority attention, they may not want to make any sacrifices for the nation.

Frustration aggression theory

The Frustration-Aggression theory was considered as relevant to the present study. The theory is associated with works of Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, and Sears (1939). The core assumption of the theory is that "aggression is based on frustration

and this frustration always leads to aggression" . Dollard et al. (1939) posited "that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" . This theory presents the idea of relative deprivation as a perceived disparity between value expectation and value capabilities. When there is a gap between the level of value expectation and the level of value attainment, due to lack of capability to establish congruence between both levels, tension builds up due to the pressure of an unfulfilled aspiration or an unsatisfied urge or need. This, when not arrested in time, leads to frustration. Frustration, when it builds up, leads to the rising up of suppressed emotions of anger, which is often directed against the party considered to be the source of deprivation of satisfaction. This strong emotion finally finds an outlet through aggressive and invariably violent disposition towards the environment. The increasing trends of insecurity by several militia groups against the government in Nigeria are viewed in this perspective. This however, is perceived to be of sufficient generality to provide a basis for the explanation of virtually all forms of insecurity and aggressive behaviour which is the appropriate description of the increasing trends of insecurity in Nigeria.

Considering the negative effect of frustration cause by deprivation in the life of an individual and the nation at large there is need for increase role of guidance counsellors in Nigeria to ensure people find alternative way of meeting their own needs. This can go a long way in assisting people to understand their environment and to play the expected roles that could lead to peace, stability and harmony in Nigeria.

Guidance and Counselling Services as Strategy Toward Minimizing Insecurity in Nigeria

The need for guidance and counselling intervention programme/strategies to build-up the youths is one of the important options through which youths energies could be rechanneled so that they can becomes skillful, intellectual, social, productive and constructive to the nation, rather than using those energies for destructive activities in the menace of social vices. In order to achieve this, Egbule, (2005) said the following guidance and counselling strategies are to be carefully designed to orient, teaches, provide, engage and involves the youth on productive ventures:

- i. Gainful employment and entrepreneurial development:** Empowering the capacity of the youths, is an area that should be given priority by the government. This is because it will create an avenue through which youths can add value to the development of their country and by implication lessen disposition to crime, armed robber and insurgency.
- ii. Personal development programmes:** It is important to note that healthy

mind and body are basic requirements for the survival of the youth and their positive contribution to national development. Sports and recreation can facilitate and enhance both physical and mental growth of the youths in a positive direction instead of social vices. Guidance and counselling programme can come up with means for developing and awakening the best in individuals and helping them achieved that.

- iii. **Target Group:** The focus of this programme is to identify target groups such as students in post primary schools, tertiary institutions, unemployment youths, female adolescents, youths with disability, youth with health programme, youth engage in substance abuse, cultism, crime and delinquencies.
- iv. **Public participation and community development:** Youths clearly represents a core asset in our effort to improve the living and working condition of our people, this programme will promote the spirit of youth involvement and participation in decision making in all matters that affect their well-being as well as programme that encourage self-help.
- v. **Youths Rights and Empowerment Programmes:** This programme is aimed at identification and promoting of role models for the youths. It also involves human right education for youths in our institutions of learning. Mechanism for conflict resolution among the youths, it also involves training the youth to be self-reliance.
- vi. **Improving Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours:** In making transition from childhood to adulthood or from school to labour markets; adolescents or individual needs to acquire knowledge and develop the attitudes and skills that will help them participate as members of household, neighborhood and larger community. They most gain experience in making decision base on reason.
- vii. **Youths Sports, Recreational & health Development:** This strategy is geared towards developing and strengthening of recreation sports institutes and football academics. It involves interclub and interschool competition.
- viii. **Youths Employment and Social Security Programmes:** It involves training of master trainers through workshops, seminars on creation of employment opportunities and coping with underemployment. It also involves capacity acquisition programme for retaining graduant in skills that are highly demand in the job market. More so, it deals with social security scheme for youths

These strategies mentioned above can be achieved through the followings guidance and counselling services; orientation service, educational service, information service, vocational service, appraisal service, referral service and so on

1. **Orientation Service:** Orientation programmes can be used generally to state clear guidelines/rules and regulations of the school and the nation at large. According to Deaukee in Kute (2014) one of the most basic and common part of any traditional discipline system is the setting of rules. Kute (2014) explained that a rule identifies general expectations or standards for behaviour and added that giving the individual a clear set of expectations for what is appropriate will be a major start towards establishing a positive and productive national environment that would be devoid of unruly behaviour from the citizenry. It is essential that people understand exactly what behaviours are acceptable in a country and which ones are not and this is communicated through clear guidelines and rules, this can be through orientation programme and information services to citizenry from time to time, these can go a long way in changing the negative perceptions of those who have the intention to be involves in unhealthy activities that detriments to nation growth and development, such as insecurity among others.
2. **Education guidance services:** This is in an attempt to meet educational needs of students and providing assistance in solving the problems associated with it; the school counselor utilizes some educational services which are designed to expose students to educational opportunities and adjust them to the programme within the school system, these services can be provided to students through a variety of activities; **such as academic counselling, organizing orientation** programme, study habit inductions and when the students are well exposed to these services, it will help to minimize any forms of indiscipline among school children and this result into behaviour modification among school graduant. When teaching and learning improves, social vices shall reduce and the communities and the larger society shall enjoy peaceful co-existence
3. **Vocational guidance service:** The National Youth Development Policy (2001) asserts that the youths are the foundation of the society. Their energies and orientation define the pattern of development and security of a nation. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2010), young people in Nigeria account for 94 percent of the total unemployment population. To reduce the likelihood of Nigeria youth joining criminal groups, the school counselling programme must ensure students are provided with first hand vocational information to help them make realistic wise career decision that could lead to self-employment and self-reliance. This can be achieve through career conferences, field trips or excursion, vocational counselling among others. These services can provide the students with opportunities to have better vocational aspiration and work towards achieved it (Egbule, 2006).

4. **Information service:** Mallum (2000) submitted that gone are the days when education was regarded as an insurance policy for any types of job. In the past, a graduate from the university, secondary school and even primary school was regarded generally qualified for a variety of jobs that were available. In fact, one could shut his eyes and randomly choose his occupation from along a pool that was available and vocation guidance was not considered crucial since the labour market was largely virgin. However, the situation in Nigeria today is different. With the current situation of massive unemployment and underemployment which is one of the contributing factors of insecurity in the country, counselling becomes indispensable to helping these young and energetic people to take informed decisions on the world of work so that the individual can become productive and good citizenry devoid of any forms of crime. The school counselors are **required to guide and make available necessary information that could help the individual students** to actualize their academic dream and contribute to the development of the nation in all aspect.
5. **Counseling for alternative jobs:** Examining the importance of guidance and counselling services in minimising insecurity, Gibson and Mitchell (2014) stressed that Counselling should be multi-facet and multi-dimensional. To this end, counselling should focus not in one direction. People should be counselled to make decisions and enter career that focus in more than one direction. The situation whereby people could identify their life's work, enter career that would last for life without alternative should be minimised. Individuals should be trained in different areas of vocational and technical education such as, Agriculture Education, Fine and Applied Art Education, Home Economics Education, Business Education and Technical Education courses. These areas will give training to individuals to occupy positions in the economic sectors of the nation thereby reducing the rate of unemployed youths that may likely joined armed group wreaking havoc in the country. Creating jobs for them will also go a long way in minimizing dependence, reducing crime and encouraging economic independence and industrial growth of the nation.
6. **Personal-social guidance service:** This service according to Oyieyo (2012) is a service that helps the students to take care of socio-personal problems relating to personality maladjustments. Oyieyo (20112) enumerated the following as the objectives of personal-social guidance and counselling service:
 1. To make the students/individual happy, well-adjusted and self-confident.
 2. Identify students' feelings and attitudes towards others and improve on the feelings and attitude especially if they are negative.
 3. Identify the nature of students' relationship with friends and associates and

ensure that it is a progressive and beneficial one.

4. Help the student to assess and accept himself (Egbule, 2006).

7. **Appraisal:** This involves comprehensive appraisal of students/individuals with an objective of getting comprehensive understanding of a state of an individual's ability, aptitudes, interest and personality. When the personality of the counsellee is known, the counsellor will be in a better position to advice accordingly.

Conclusion

The importance of guidance and counselling services in forestalling insecurity have been discussed in this paper. In order for the government to minimize insecurity in Nigeria, there is urgent need for government to ensure that guidance and counselling programme are emphasize in school to inculcate in the youth the right values that can guarantee peace, stability and harmony in Nigeria. Guidance services can be used sequentially within school and outside school system to minimize behavioural problems such as indiscipline and moral bankrupt that could lead to insecurity problems in the country. The services have the capacity for preventing people from involving in acts of insecurity.

Recommendations

1. The Federal, State and Locals Governments should employed professional guidance counsellors personnel and provide them with material resources to squarely plan and execute guidance and counselling programme to re-oriented citizen on the economic implications of insecurity in the nation.
2. Government and non-governmental organizations should collaborate in organizing workshops, seminar and conferences on importance of guidance and counselling services for national unity and economic growth and development
3. Guidance and Counselling offices should be opened and empowered in all local government area in Nigeria

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