



Counselling for National Security and Political Stability in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role professional counselling can play in responding to the security challenges facing Nigeria today. Nigeria is faced with numerous national security challenges that are greatly affecting national development especially in terms of its political, economical, educational and social aspects. Insecurity is said to manifest itself through the activities of the Boko Haram (insurgency) at the North Eastern states of Nigeria and Abuja the Federal Capital of Nigeria. Kidnapping at South East and South South Nigeria, Nigeria labour congress strike actions here and there, oil spillages, religions crises, all forms it corruption (419), unemployment saga and a host of others. Insecurity is believed to be caused by a number of factors ranging from unemployment, corruptions, illiteracy, greed, misplaced sense of values, lack of transparency and accountability, rigging of election and a host of others. This paper sees insecurity and political instability as impacting negatively in the social, educational, political and economic life of the Nigeria (Africa). Counselling roles were itemized to curb these menace of insecurity in Nigeria. Recommendations were made and conclusions reached that good governance, accountability and sustainable democracy should be instituted. It was therefore concluded that counselling will be an effective tool for proffering solutions to the issues of national security as it relates to national development and political stability.

Keywords: Counselling, National Security, Political Stability, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Professions abound in Nigeria including guidance and counseling profession. Each profession has its peculiar roles to play in the general economy of Nigeria as well as functions of the operators in order to achieve the desired results especially for sustainable living in this period of security challenges. The extent to which the practitioners or members of a particular profession achieve the desired results depend on the performing the duties and roles ascribed to the profession. The practice of guidance and counseling as a helping service started as human existence is faced with many challenges. This is so because human needs and aspirations are insatiable. The means of achieving these needs and aspiration appears very limited. Apart from the limitedness of the means of achieving life objectives, there are many variables which negatively stand against the way of achieving life desires. The inability of achieving our wants, coupled with the obstruction of certain variables creates numerous problems/challenges for human existence. The challenges/problems are of different types and degrees thus personality matters, vocational issues, educational issues, marital issues, moral/religious issues, personal social, economic, political, problem, militancy, Boko Haram/insurgency problems and the host of others, which are too numerous to mention. Some of these problems are within our solution level, on range. However, there are problems which are beyond one person solution range. Therefore, external help for an effective solution to such problem may be the best option.

In a developing country such as Nigeria moving forward towards economic development and expansion with rapid population growth. The citizens are to face many serious problems from almost all aspects of human endeavour, most of their problems cannot be solved by the citizens alone. They need some external help to solve their problem specially this period of security challenges. Nigerian society to be precise is facing a lot of national security challenges which are overt in different parts of the country. These security challenges poses some threat to national development and political stability.

A nation that is in secure cannot develop effectively no matter its laudable developmental goals and objectives. It is against this background that this paper investigates the role that counseling can play in providing some solutions to the security challenges facing the nation today.

In recent time a lot of issues and problems have emerged in the society because of the movement of the world into a small village through the internet. Problem such as alcoholism drug abuse, broken love affairs, emotional disorder, in ability to face retirement, inability to face family, inter tribal war, inter-religious crises, student unrest labour union strike action, militancy, problems Boko Haram insurgency problems in the north east zone of Nigeria, kidnapers in south east and south south part of Nigeria and so on. This, scenario sends signals that all is not well hence; there is the need for counseling the people to be in an optimum emotional balance state. The counsellor seeks to guide people towards self understanding, acquiring skills and knowledge about the environment understanding one's role in the society and adjusting appropriately in the environment by behaving in a manner that is acceptable in the society counselling will also help their emotions channeled through constructive lines, so that citizens can work productively, cooperatively with economic, social and psychological satisfaction as effective citizens of the nation to Uzoeshi (2005) and Ordu (2012) counselling is the process of helping a normal individual to understand himself in forms of his strengths and limitations.

National Security

The growth of any nation depends largely on the nation's ability to maintain peace and good interpersonal relationship among all citizenry. The maintenance of peace and tranquility in a country can be achieved through education and re-orientation of the citizenry and national security. Education and national security are two major prerequisite for national survival. Through education and counselling, the citizens acquire useful skills and knowledge necessary to live in peace with one another and contribute positively to the development of the society. National security is a strategy/ method which is usually put in place by the society to maintain peace and harmony within its territories as well as the sovereignty.

The term security means development and protection from danger. Things that are done to keep a person building or country safe from danger or crime. Security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Mijah (2007) stated that security can also be seen as freedom from risk and danger doubt, anxiety or fear. It is an appreciable level of confidence. According to the Free Dictionary (2011), security may also be defined as the quality or state of being secure as a freedom from danger, fear, anxiety, prospect of being laid off etc. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2011).

National security is a strategy being put in place by a state or country to maintain peace and harmony as well as the sovereignty. Maier (1990) in Yahaya (2012) defined national security as a capacity to control domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community considered necessary to enjoy its self-determination or autonomy, prosperity and well-being. National security may be defined as the action and policies taken by a nation against all internal and external threats to its borders', economy and stability.

National security is not limited to the use of police or the military to maintain peace and order. It involves food security, economic security, energy security, environmental security, etc. (Wikipedia, 2012). It revolves around the idea of protection of the nation and its interest. It will be out of place to state that maintenance of the peace and order involves only the use of force. National security includes: empowerment of citizens in terms of political, social and economic needs, whereas the security of the nation can be threatened through different sources including hostile nations, multinational corporations, narcotic cartel, militant groups in Niger Delta Area, political crises, drug pushing and natural disasters such as earthquake. (Krauce, 2012) in Yahaya (2012) stated that national security involves protecting citizens from anxiety and pervasive threats to their personal safety, physical well being and core values. Yahaya (2012) identified six elements of national security thus:

- Military security, which he stated as the earliest form of national security meaning the capacity of a nation to defend itself and/or deter military aggression.
- Secondly, political security which he said, involves the stability of social order and the ability to maintain political stability and its sovereignty.
- The third element he identified is economic security which is the ability of a nation to maintain, sustain and protect its economic interests.
- Food security which implied the ability of a nation to feed its citizens without relying on importation of foods.
- Environmental security which involves the ability of a state to address environmental challenges which threaten the security of a nation for example; earthquake, food drought

and hazardous climates condition. '

Finally, health security which is the ability of a nation provide for the health needs of its citizens. This includes prevention of diseases and caring for the wife, the children and the elderly.

Political Instability in Nigeria

One of the factors of political instability in Nigeria is the military incursion into governance. This is to say that out of the fifty four years of independence, the military ruled for twenty nine years through over throwing the civilian government. The army had never allowed the civilian dream from their mistakes and correct themselves by voting any bad government out of power, if the civilians government were found wanting in one way or the other the army stake.

Another factor is the way and manner candidates for electrons are selected. This leaves much to be desired especially in most of the political parties. In some political parties, there are established principles highlighted by political parties on how their primaries could be conducted and members selected to stand for election in the party manifesto. This established primaries to select candidates does not take place rather candidates are imposed on the party members as long as such candidates could spend money or have influence on the people. The aggrieved contestants either dumped their party for another one or engage in activities that would derail the political system hence at time may attract the military striking.

Inconsistency of our electoral system is another factor that could cause political insecurity in Nigeria. In 1990 Nigeria political system witnessed option A4. It indicates that people had to que behind the party of their choice and vote according. In this system a period is set aside for accreditation and ones a person failed to be on the que to be accredited at the stipulated time, the person will be prevented from voting. This system promotes quick understanding of the number of voters even before actual voting commenced. This was a successful one but the annulment of the elections... June 12 1993. This system was abandoned for a more porous and manipulation prone system of voting at the voters discretion which permits multiple votes by a voter.

Another factor is election rigging in Nigeria Nwabueze, (2003) stated that election ringing refers to electoral malpractices which are palpable illegalities committed with a corrupt fraudulent or sinister intention to influence an election in favour of candidate(s) by means such as illegal voting, bribe treating and undue influence intimidation and other acts coercion exerted on voters, falsification of results, fraudulent announcement of losing candidate as winner. The consequences of election rigging are disastrous.

Power sharing among the geo-political zone of the country had been a cog-in the wheel of stability in Nigeria (Adedokun, 2002). A situation a particular geo-political zone would continue to dominate and rule the country over and over again would not augur well for the political stability of the country.

Unemployment is another factor that leads to national insecurity. Zakuria (2006) in Obunu and Ebuonu (2013) state that the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future, among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents provocateurs. These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues and greedy multinational that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions. Zakaria (2006)

believed that the absence of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness, with disastrous consequences.

Corruption is another cankerworm that is eating deep into the country's economic, political and social system. The World Bank (1998) defined corruption as the use of public office for private gain. The above definition includes bribery and extortion. Corruption is a social virus that has besieged most African States, its high level incidence involves public servants (civil servants, and politicians on one hand and members of the public who are seeking public services on the other hand).

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to capture the role of counselling for national security and political stability, thereby explaining some factors as challenges towards enhancing the economic, political and social development in Nigeria as a nation. The need to breakthrough insecurity and maintain political stability is a herculean task indeed. All hands must be on deck especially with the political will on the part of the authority and the determination of all Nigeria generally, the feat could be achieved. The best way to ensure national security and political stability is to provide for the needs of the people. The available resources in Nigeria are enough to provide minimum standard of living to all Nigerians, if there is political will and issue of corruption, is properly handled.

Recommendations

Since this study has established the challenges of national security and some of the causes of political instability in Nigeria the following recommendation were made in order to facilitate preventive counselling against insecurity and political instability in our society.

Peace counseling should be included in our educational curricula as well as employment of professional counselors to guide the citizen to pursue peace instead of violence.

Nigerians should cultivate the habit of seeking redress in a civilized and constitutional manner especially when a candidate loses an election. If one feels aggrieved by the result of such election, he/she should seek redress in the tribunal set to handle such matters. If the tribunal fail to address the matter as may deem fit, the person may move to appeal court or/and to any other court he/she may deem fit.

Nigerians should develop the spirit of sportsmanship needed to embrace the winner or loser. Once a contestant loses in an election, he/she should be courageous enough to accept defeat bearing in mind that when two more person are in contest one person must emerge as a winner. The winner should however, be magnanimous enough to accept and appreciate the loser.' The winner takes it all attitude should be avoided.

The promises made during electioneering campaigns need to be fulfilled. When a party wins, or come into power, it should try as much as possible to fulfill all its promises. This will rekindle hope into the party, the electorate will be happy to participate effectively in the political processes thereby stabilizing the polity.

The reorientation of the military on their role in governance should be a continuous process. They should be able to understand that their role is to defend the country against external aggression and protect the lives and property of citizens and not to rule.

The mass media has great role to play in ensuring political stability in Nigeria by the reports and comments. They should emphasize on the things that could unite the country rather

than engaging in biased comment.

Efforts should be made to ensure that people contest for any political offices should do that on free basis without undue influence from any person. This is to say that thurgery hooliganism and God fatherism should be discouraged.

Judiciary should play an important role in stabling our country polity. Accurate and constructive interpretation of the laws should be paramount.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should be up-to-date in their responsibilities as the umpire in the electoral contests they should not be bias and that the appointment off chairperson should be a professional or career counsellor.

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