PERSONAL-SOCIAL GUIDANCE: A SERVICE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF YOUTHS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Youths are the strengths of any society. The future of any nation depends on the youths. Nigeria has in recent times witnessed and is witnessing a social breakdown especially among the youths. Counselling, on the other hand, is a helping profession that helps people to adjust properly to a well meaningful life. In this write up, the authors are of the view that personal-social guidance which is one of the components of guidance, if properly administered in schools and non-school settings can help reform the students and youths. The paper highlighted the factors that require the necessity of personal social guidance to include, cultism, drug abuse, kidnapping, vandalism, moral degradation, religious and political unrests, among others, which are majorly carried out by the youths. Useful strategies to be employed by the personal-social counsellors for helping reform the youths and students are discussed. Recommendations such as setting up functional counselling centres group/ peer counselling, organization of workshops and seminars on challenges faced by the youths are found within.


Key words: Personal-social, Guidance, youths, students, social transformation.

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in the National Policy on Education (FRN 2014), while stressing the importance of counselling to post-primary education says "in the view of apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospect, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall be appointed in post Primary institutions" (FRN 2014:41). Looking at the Policy's statement, one of the major issues highlighted here as the role of counselling service to schools is the issue of personality adjustment. This means that students need career counselling and training on how to properly adjust in school and non- school settings. Personality maladjustment is an issue that is of major concern and can be handled under the personal- social guidance.

Personal-social guidance is one of the components of guidance (Akinade, 2012, Denga, 1999, Kolo,2003, Lar, Okpede & Bulus 1992). Some of the aims of personal social counselling as put forward by Bor, Lady, Gill and Brace (2002) are: to develop readiness for choices and changes to face new challenges, to motivate the youths develop and establish proper identity, to help students deal effectively with the normal
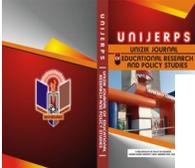
developmental tasks of adolescence and face life situations boldly; to identify and motivate the students from weaker sections of society; to help students in their period of turmoil and confusion, to help check wastage and stagnation and to minimize the incidence of indiscipline. They added that majority of students lack a sense of direction, a sense of purpose and a sense of fulfillment. Many students and youths indulge in destructive activities, which lead to social damage and loss.

Nigeria has witnessed a proliferation in unprecedented social problems at an alarming rate. All cannot be said to be well with Nigeria. As asserted by Tor-Anyiin and Adamu (2016), Nigeria is plagued by a social breakdown. Religious, ethnic, communal and resource conflicts which resulted in various devastating political and socio-economic conditions of the nation are prevalent. The rise in violent groups and crimes such as Boko Haram, militants, cultic groups, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, and others are negative trends confirming the breakdown of social order in the society. Most of these acts are perpetrated by the youths. Conflicts in values, attitudes and morals, all are pointing to the need for personal-social guidance, if the youngsters are to be adjusted properly.

The Concept of Personal-social Guidance
Personal-social Guidance is a component of guidance which is concerned with an individual's positive behaviour that enables such a person to live and adapt himself peacefully and positively in any community/society he or she finds himself or herself in the world (Elaigwu, 2005). Personal – social guidance facilitates knowledge of self and others. Students undergo so many problems in their homes, schools, streets and with their peer groups.

Some of these problems include alcohol, stress, sexuality, drug abuse, cultism, anxiety, examination malpractice, suicidal thoughts, inferiority complex, frustration, depression, rejection, failure, indiscipline, peer pressure, waywardness, experimentation, lack of information, financial problem, media influence, lack of decision making, no goal setting, lack of vision, poor relationships, grief over a loss of a loved one, loneliness among others. These problems, among the adolescents especially can be quite disturbing. The goal of personal –social guidance is the prevention of behavioural mal-adjustment. Personal-social guidance assists an individual to solve his emotional, social, ethical, moral as well as health problems. These problems of life are not usually covered under educational and vocational guidance. Personal-social guidance is also concerned with the problems of health, emotional adjustments, social adjustments including recreation and leisure time activities. It is the type of assistance offered to an individual to overcome his emotional problems and to help him control his emotions which do occur in the individual's life. A sound and satisfactory personality of an individual can be developed if he becomes able to check and control different powerful emotions such as fear, anxiety, jealousy, nervousness, joy and tension in different contexts of life. In an individual's life, anxiety, failure, frustration, disappointment comes to picture if he does not manage his different emotions. Therefore, from the beginning to the end of life, different emotions are manifested in different situations.

Purpose of Personal-social Guidance
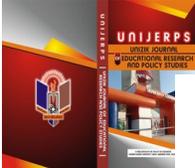
According to Vishala (2006) and McLeod (2013), some of the aims of Personal-social guidance are as follows:

1. Personal social guidance assists students to know emotional problems which occur in the day to day life of the students.
2. To solve the emotional problems of life.
3. To help to explore different adjustment mechanisms.
4. To help to carry out social and civic activities properly.
5. To help to develops awareness about personal health and physical activities.
6. To help students carry out character building activities.
7. Personal-social guidance helps students to understand various emotional characteristics of adolescents such as hostility, fear, anxiety, jealousy, etc and divert it in a positive and right way.
8. To assist students to adjust and cooperate effectively with their friends of the opposite sex in positive directions.

According to Mallum (2000), personal-social guidance entails the dispensation of information on such issues as;

1. Creating a realistic self-concept of oneself
2. Developing and sustaining workable relationship between same and opposite sex
3. Preparing for a satisfying mate selection
4. Understanding masculine and feminine roles
5. Accepting and coping with family responsibilities
6. Understanding the implications of physiological changes within an individual especially at adolescence
7. Developing personal and societal values.

Looking critically at the usefulness of this service and the nature of the prevalent social issues in the society, one can undoubtedly accept the indispensability of personal-social guidance in reforming the youths and students in the present dispensation.

Students and youths have to be helped to modify, change or adjust behavioural patterns in conformity with the societal norms. This has to be done to enable them function effectively. In the school setting, students have diverse personal problems which, many a times, have their root in the family background. Some students come from broken or divorced homes, some come from environments with strict rules and yet some may be coming from loose and unprotected homes.

The different environments show that students may have different behavioural patterns and psychological problems. According to Saidu (2016), these types of students may socially become maladjusted and may experience interpersonal adjustment problems with their classmates and peers. Many students are ignorant and may want to discover the level of their sexuality and sexual competence. They want to be loved, and to love, hence they make a lot of friends. Many of them have friends but sooner, friendship may break up as a result of disagreement. The problem of drug abuse is common in the society. All these problems have to be dealt with for the betterment of the individuals in particular and the nation in general. These issues can be handled through personal-social guidance.

The Concept of Social Transformation

According to Genov (1999), social transformation refers to the alteration of mechanisms within the social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behaviour, social organizations, or value systems. It is the
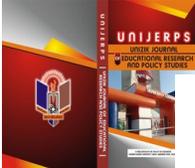
process of institutionalized relationships, norms, values and hierarchies over time. In the words of Castles (2000), social transformation is the process of altering or changing the negative attitudes and antisocial behaviours of individuals that are capable of destroying the positive values cherished by the society. In other words, it refers to all reforms aimed at reforming the behaviours of the people for a meaningful development.

Every society has standard ways of behaviour expected to be exhibited by its members. The code of conducts defines how the relationship of members should also be. The values and standard of the society are to be held to high esteem. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2014) spelt out the overall philosophy of Nigeria to be:

a. To live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice;

b. To promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.

In the same document, the national goals of Nigeria are stated to be:
   a. A free and democratic society;
   b. A just and egalitarian society;
   c. A great and dynamic economy;
   d. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Any factor working contrary to the attainment of the above stated philosophy and goals can be regarded as the breakdown of the social order. Antisocial behaviours that work against the values cherished by the Nigerian society shows the deviation from the social standard expected of, by the citizens. Ubom (2005) says, values encompass that set of beliefs, which guide and justify the action of individual. He mentions values like hard work and achievement, peace, honesty, cooperation, equity and democracy. When youths exhibit negative behaviours that may thwart the efforts of achieving the desired goals, peace and tranquility of the society, they should be helped to change such antisocial behaviours for good.

**The Need for Personal-social Guidance in Schools and Society**

There are a number of challenges that require the need for personal-social guidance in schools and the society at large. Some of them, as pointed out by Denga (1999), are as follows:

1. **Adjustment Problems in Schools:** As earlier pointed out in the National Policy on Education by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2014) the students' body is made up of different personality traits and need. The personality traits possess a lot of challenges to young adult. Some students want to socialize but do not know how to do so. Many of the students end up wailing away time by playing with peers forgetting the purpose of being enrolled in schools.

2. **The Problem of National Integration:** The youths in Nigeria constitute the majority of the population as shown in the 2006 census (Awoyemi, 2016). There are more than 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria, with different religions. Each of these groups is clamouring for her share of the national resources. The consequences of these have been political instability, religious intolerance, tribal rivalries, and all forms of vices which are often perpetrated by the youths. These factors are militating against national integration and development. For the nation to be healed of all these, personal social guidance has become an important service in reforming the youths for a better Nigeria.
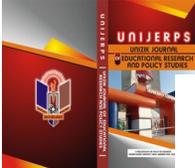
3. **Home/Family Upbringing Problems:** The home has a strong influence on the personality development and the direction of interest, abilities and values of the young stars. It is sad to note that instability in some families, single parenting and lack of moral values are making it difficult to properly train the young ones in the way they should go. Economic pursuit by many parents today has made it difficult for some parents to have time for the family and properly train their children. Many youths today are left at the mercy of television sets and other electronic media for training (Denga, 1999). Many adolescents today do copy and imbibe the life they see on the television without knowing whether such lives conform to the societal norms and values. Most of these television lifestyles are foreign to Nigeria and are among the causes of the degrading and eroding of societal values.

4. **Problem of Cultism:** A Cult is a secret society. The activities of cultism are highly secretive, members of cults do not want to be known by non-members and their activities are highly majorly done in the night hours. Occult activities are associated with violence and fear. Students who engage in cultism have constituted organised groups that often disrupt school activities and the peace of societies in general. When different cult groups dash, many lives are lost. Mailafia (2015) observed that these are special set of students that violate school rules and regulations and are responsible for disruption of peaceful atmosphere in the school and the society at large. He also observed that if not tamed at earlier stage they may likely end up being terrorist. To further expand of their nefarious activities, Ogbodo (2009) stated that many of the occultist members do engage in and take drugs to feel high and to enable them carryout their negative acts. The take of drugs itself is an act of self-destruction. The youths and students can be helped out of these through and during personal-social guidance.

5. **Drug Abuse:** This can be known also as substance abuse, it is the wrong use of any chemical or medical substance to cause a physical, environmental or psychological effect. Vishala (2006) lamented that many school students are deeply into drugs. The case of drug abuse in Nigeria is so glaring that many people do not take in isolation or are even bold taking it. Many youths do not know the repercussions of taking drug but feel is a normal way of socialization. Some take as a result of peer pressure.

6. **School Violence:** Many schools today have witnessed demonstrations which often results in closing down of school for some days. Many times when demonstrations are done lives and properties are destroyed. Students on the return will be asked to pay some damages incurred during the demonstrations. Students need to be taught the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation.

7. **Vandalism:** Vandalism is willful damage or destruction of public property. Non-chalant attitudes are often displayed by the youths and students concerning public utilities. Many youths today take pleasure in destroying what benefits them and others in the country. School properties, public utilities must be held to high esteem.

8. **Teenage Pregnancies:** The youths today do engage in premarital sex. Some take sex as a form of pleasure not knowing the implications that will follow. As a result, many young girls of school age do
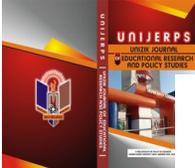
take in and with the advice from their peers do opt for abortion that very often results to deaths of many.

9. **Degradation of Value:** Values are generally shared principles which define standard code of behavior. They are those ideas and standard which the society hold to high esteem and will like to pass from one generation to another. It is very sad but apparent to see that the Nigerian society have degraded in values. Personal values, group values, positive values, religious/spiritual values that are considered to be the bedrock of personal and society building are no longer held to high esteem. Many youths in the society have chosen some negative values that are undesirable, harmful, unacceptable and worthless. Some of these negative values are cheating, disloyalty, dishonesty, indecent dressing, lack of dedication and un-seriousness noble task. These negative values prevent growth and development. The youths and students should be helpful to develop personal positive values that are desirable and useful to both the individual and society. They should be helped to develop and cherish hard work, honesty, humility, consistence and diligence. They should shun corruption, embezzlement, lies dishonesty and laziness.

10. **Political Violence:** Nigeria has been plagued by political violence and many of these violence are fueled by the use of youths. Politicians take the advantage of their vigour to achieve their aims. Bur (2000) mentioned associations like Bakassi boys, Oduduwa people's congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC) that use the youths to wreak havoc in the society. He lamented that the identity of youths in Nigeria is marked with destruction. This ought not to be so. Youths are expected to be good ambassadors of tomorrow. When

youths who are the hope of tomorrow are known for violence, it means something is wrong and urgent steps need to be taken to address the ugly trend (Bur, 2000).

All these and many more are the issues that can be resolved through personal-social guidance. Personal-social guidance has therefore become an indispensable tool in transforming the students and youths in the society to save them and the society from the negative trends. Many youths are head deep into destruction.

The roles of Personal-social Guidance in Transforming the Students and youths for National Transformation

The personal-social counsellor can adopt the following strategies in reforming the youths and students in the society:

1. **Assertiveness training:** This technique according to Lucky (2016) encourages adequate interpersonal relationships among people of various ethnic groups. This technique encourages youths to be open-minded, courageous and adventurous. Assertive youths detest aggression and exhibit tolerance, communicate clearly and do not intimidate other people. Personal-social counsellors should therefore employ every opportunity to train and equip students and youths with assertive skills that will help them have the courage to say no to any attempt to lure them into anything destructive. Doing this will help transform their lives.

2. **Group counselling:** In schools, society, and religious gatherings, giving the youths counselling against the negative issues that will help them build their lives is an important strategy towards reforming their lives.

3. **Values Counselling:** Values give insight into who we will really are. They give
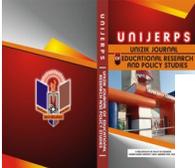
meaning and purpose and sticking to them leads to higher self-confidence, good self-esteem and a healthy sense of self. Values help in making good decision and give a sense of direction. Personal-social counsellors should focus on the development of personal and societal values that are constructive. This will help the youngsters develop and have a positive value towards self-development and the society at large.

4. **Awareness/Campaign:** Counsellors leading campaign awareness, enlightenment and sensitization of the youths and students about drug abuse, addiction and the consequences can be a helpful strategy counsellors can adopt to help the youths who are head deep into destruction because of drug abuse.

5. **Political Education:** Counselors through counseling sessions can help explain the meaning of election to the youths and students. By doing this awareness can be created among the youths. They will not be available to be used as political thugs and become victims of election violence.

6. **Inculcation of Self-control Skill:** Closely related to the strategy of health counselling is the inculcation of self-control skill. Rao (2015) explained that the sex drive is a natural aspect of life that needs to be both understood and controlled. The goal of sexual drive is biological sexual maturity- the capacity to love, mate and reproduce. The youths should be helped to develop the ability of self –control. According to Rao (2015), self-control motivated from within the individual is more effective than that resulting from outside forces. Youths and students should be helped to know as much as possible about their sexual adjustment in relation to the demand of the society. They need to become familiar with ways and means of exercising control.

Conclusion
Nigeria as a nation has experienced a lot of changes since independence in areas of politics, culture, technology, economy and many more. For the nation to grow, the youths must be stable, focused and integrated. The social vices being experience today are majorly centered on the youths. Counselling as a social service has to come in to position the youths in the right direction. Giving the youths education is good but education without good manners and social transformation will amount to chaos. The youths have to be helped to adjust properly and reverse the ugly trend for national healing and development.

Recommendations
Based on the discussion, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. Adequate fund should be made available by the government and principals for guidance programmes in schools for guidance workshops and seminars on some of the challenges youths are facing.

2. Guidance counsellors should focus on behavioural modification of students.

3. Counsellors should organise debates or competitions for students to meet with others in different places rather than their immediate environment so as to inculcate in them the spirit of national integration.

4. Group/peer counselling and enlightment programmes on health issues should be organise for students in schools to educate them on health issues.

5. Youths and students should avail themselves for counselling.

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