

Secret Cult and Drug Abuse as Social Problems in Nigerian Education System: the Way Forward

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Abstract

Secret cultism and drug abuse among students in Nigerian educational institutions need remedy from society as they constitute a social problem. It is, therefore, the opinion of this writer that the Nigerian student instead of engaging in such social vices should channel his energy and intellect in pursuing goals that will liberate the masses from the pangs of poverty, hunger and diseases so that the dream of the Nigerian state as stated in the national policy on education might be actualized.

1.0 Introduction: Meaning of Social Problem

There are various definitions of social problem. For instance, Kornblum and Julian (1995:3) see a social problem as any condition that exists to threaten the quality of people's lives and the most cherished values of a people, who also agree that something should be done to remedy that condition. A social problem according to Horton, Leslie and Larsons (1991:2), is a condition affecting a significant number of people in society in ways considered undesirable, about which it is felt something should be done through collective or social action.

Lauer (2002:4) on his part, draws a distinction between social problem and a personal problem. A personal problem according to him is one whose causes and solutions lie within the individual and the individual's immediate environment, while a social problem is one whose causes and solutions lie outside the individual and the immediate environment.

Mills (1980:14-15) made a similar distinction, calling personal problems as "personal troubles of milieu" and social problem as the public issues of social structure. For Nwabueze (1992:1) social problems are some kind of strains within the system. He defines social problem as the product of certain objective conditions within the society that are inimical to the realization of other norms and values for members of society. Merton and Nisbet (1966:785) distinguished social problems from other problems by their linkage with institutional and normative context. Social problems according to them pertain to human relationships. Problems assume a social dimension when they affect relationships among people and disturb the social order. Aderinto (2002:337) provided a rather more inclusive or comprehensive definition when he asserts that a social problem exists when a significant number of people, or a number of significant people in society perceive an undesirable difference between social ideals and social realities, and believe that this difference can be eliminated by collective or social action. Such problems are distinctively those that concern the rules of relationship, formal and informal which the people of a society establish among themselves. In other words, social problems affect rules of human relationship therefore hampers and disturbs the social order of the society.

What is important in all these definitions is that the majority or a significant number of society's population perceive a certain social condition as undesirable and inimical to normal social life, in short, a malfunctioning of an essentially stable and conflict free society and there is also a willingness or longing for the 'abnormal' social condition to be ameliorated to ensure that most of the people adversely affected are helped at public expense to get over it. Emphasis is placed on society recognizing a condition as problematic and then acting through the government for its solution.

Social problems are associated with some sort of disorder, breakdown of norms and values, which all affect human relationships. It is necessary to add that it may be difficult to have a society with absolutely no social problem. Nevertheless, a social problem becomes intolerable when society can no longer cope with it. Most people will no doubt agree that drug abuse as well as violent crimes manifesting in the activities of secret cults among the Nigerian youths, in the country's educational institutions rightly fall into this category that society cannot cope with and so needs a remedy from society. What then are secret societies and drug abuse?

1.1 Definition of Secret Cult

Secret cult has become a household name in almost all educational institutions in Nigeria. Secret cultism as practiced in educational institutions in Nigeria has become a social menace to fellow students, administrators, parents and the society at large. This is because the activities of such cult groups have physically, emotionally and psychologically maimed and rendered a good number of our youth useless. Their existence in the country's educational institutions is an indication of the total breakdown of the law and order, morality and a mockery of discipline in the country's school system. In most recent time, hardly a week passes by when schools are in session without incidents of murder, maiming, raping of fellow students in Nigerian educational institutions especially the tertiary institutions due to the menace of cultism. Many awe-inspiring activities are linked with cultists on campuses. What then is a secret cult? The terminology secret cult according to Jekayinfa (2007:151) was coined for these groups by Nigeria's former Military President, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (Rtd) between 1983 and 1984, adding that, before this time these groups were called fraternities. Secret cult is a sect devoted to a belief or specific system of religious worship whose activities are kept hidden from public knowledge. They are always violent when defending their course.

The Special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offences) Decree No. 20 of 1984 defines secret cult as *a society or association, and solely cultural or religious body that uses secret signs, oath or symbols; whose meeting or activities are held in secret and whose members are under oath and obligation to promote the interest of its members or to aid one another under all circumstances without due regard to merit, fair play or justice; to the detriment of the legitimate expectation of those who are not members.*

Their activities including meetings and initiations which are often gruesome are held in secret places. They are, therefore, wicked associations of mediocre whose aim is to intimidate, frighten, terrorize, hurt or even destroy fellow students and staff because they see no authority which they can respect. They are lawless associations whose members are anti-social in nature. They, therefore, break rules and regulations with impunity. Members according to Nwanna – Nzewunwa, Girigiri and Okoh (2007:133) at initiation are bound by solemn oath with threat of reprisals to keep mute about their hidden activities. The reprisals range from severe punishments in the form of destruction of their property, self mutilation, kidnapping to even death. These are pointers that fear, insecurity, suspicion and tension surround these organizations which may lead to self destruction and that of the entire society. Accordingly even though externally, members appear great, inwardly cult members are empty, tensed and insecure and are always suspicion of betrayals from opposing cult members. In sum, therefore, cult members live in bondage.

1.2 Origin of Campus Cult at the Global Level

Cultism in tertiary institutions at the global level according to Tugbiyele (2008:117) started at William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia in the United States of America on 5th December, 1776 as fraternity when five close friends founded the *Phi Beta Kappa* due to the institution's frowning against students discussing social issues and 'straying too far from accepted beliefs'. On the 15th May 1851, the first female cult known as *Sororite* began at Wesleyan Female College, Macon, Georgia.

1:2:1 History of Campus Secret Cult in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004:4) is unequivocal in stating that "education would be used as an instrument par excellence in achieving accelerated national integration and development". In other words, education is expected to be a tool which man should use to subjugate and surmount his environment so as to make life comfortable for living. This made the nationalists to compel the colonialists to establish befitting educational institutions. Accordingly, the University College Ibadan as an affiliate of University of London was established in 1948 following the acceptance of the Hamilton Fyfe Report by the colonial office in London. Same university, unfortunately by sheer historical accident became the birth place of secret cults in Nigeria, following the formation of the Pyrate Confraternity by Noble Laureate, Wole Soyinka in 1952.

Its objectives at inception were laudable, as it encouraged humanitarian activities, fought colonialism and tribalism. This according to Okengwu (2004:7) could be seen in its four compass points of "against colonial convention (and its place, the revival of African conscience), against tribalism, for comradeship and chivalry and; humanistic ideas". For instance, in line with its belief against colonial convention and in its place the revival of African conscience, the Pyrate Confraternity was against the "coat and attitude of sigma adding that it was a

mode of dressing typical of colonial mentality and therefore adopted a motto 'sworn enemies of convention' - a position which portrayed it as a radical student group.

In other words, it was formed primarily to act as a check against injustice, oppression or victimization and anti societal issues by the university authorities capable of disturbing the peaceful atmosphere of the institution, thereby promoting sound moral behavior and promote academic excellence. This bid was corroborated by Tunji Tubi, a one time National Canon of the group in THISDAY Newspaper of Saturday (October: 18:1987:5) when he said "the Pyrate Confraternity was constituted because of some social ills and conformist degradation which were exhibited not only by students, but the society at large". One way by which it achieved its aims was through its publications where it exposed the various vices on the campus of the university. Due to the important role the Pyrates played in the University of Ibadan, it was registered as a student confraternity. The members of this group were very brilliant who professed their faith with extreme eagerness without trampling on the rights of their colleagues and members of the public. They socialize freely with their fellow students. They never displayed crudity and barbarity that is associated to the present day cult groups. The history of University of Ibadan shows that the first bulk of first class and second class upper honours students were usually found among this group of students. The Pyrate has done well in academics as having produced the first African Noble laureate in the personage of Professor Wole Soyinka.

It is from the noble idea hatched by the Pyrate Confraternity otherwise known as the National Association of Seadogs (NAS) that had changed to the complex menace known as campus cultism and gangsterism in the Nigerian education system. The achievement of these objectives could be seen in the bloodshed on our campuses and the number of cadavers in our medical colleges. The change of operation came to these groups when in 1972 some members of the Pyrate Confraternity who were suspended for anti-club activities instigated a rebellion. The rebellion according to Okengwu (2004:7) was led by Alora Robo Granuta and Alora Rica Ricardo. Their anger was that the Pyrate Confraternity over stepped its line of duties by intimidating innocent people. Due to this deviation from the original objectives, the Pyrate Confraternity was banned in the early eighties. The ban was, however, ineffective. Accordingly, other cults started to emerge. As it stands now, virtually all public institutions of higher learning in the country are not free from the virus of cultism. More worrisome is the fact that the membership which was confined to institutions of higher learning has shifted to our secondary schools. They have started taking their toll in the country's primary schools as well. Again, membership, which was limited to the male sex has in recent time, equally being extended to the female group.

1:2:2 Types of Campus Cults in Nigerian School System

Even though the actual number of secret cults in Nigerian schools cannot be properly ascertained as new ones are springing up almost on daily basis, Offiong (1999) claimed that currently there are more than thirty six (36) different cult groups on the campuses of Nigerian tertiary institutions unleashing terror on innocent members of the society. In spite of this number, the following have made their negative impacts on the Nigerian schools system.

- ✓ *Pyrate Confraternity* started in the University College Ibadan in 1952.
- ✓ *Buccancer Association of Nigeria* was established in 1972 in the University College of Ibadan by some suspended members of the Pyrate Confraternity.
- ✓ *Vikings Confraternity* was established in the University of Port Harcourt in 1983.
- ✓ *Eternal Fraternal Order of the Legion Konsortrum (EFOLK)* was formed in 1984 in the University of Calabar.
- ✓ *The New Black Movement of Africa* was formed in University of Benin in 1982.
- ✓ *The Brotherhood of the Black Brigade* has its origin from University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- ✓ *The Family Fraternity* otherwise known as *Confraternity* was formed in 1978 in Ilorin but started in Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife in 1980.

- ✓ *The Maphites Organization* was started in 1988 in the Abia State University Uturu.
- ✓ *Supreme Eiyé Confraternity* has its origin in the University of Ibadan from 1963. It has some big politicians from western Nigeria as financiers. It is also affiliated to the Eiyé Society, a classical cult existing in Western Nigeria.

Others include

Mgba Mgba Confraternity, Jurists, Black Cat, Black Cross, X Confraternity, K. K. K. Boys, Mafa Black Berret, Trojan Horse, Green Berret, Musheteers, Black Axe, Temple of Eden, The Mafiose, The Osiri, The Scorpions, The Red Devil, Blood Sport among others.

1:2:3 Female Cults Groups

Members of female cults also engage in clandestine and violent activities like their male cult groups. Some of the known female cult groups on campuses of Nigerian higher institutions according to Okengwu (2004:18) and Wokocho and Okujagu (1999:196) include:

- ✓ *Jezebel*
- ✓ *Amazon*
- ✓ *Pink Ladies*
- ✓ *Orange Girls*
- ✓ *Daughters of Doom*
- ✓ *Black Braziers*
- ✓ *Charles Angels*
- ✓ *Comic Queens*
- ✓ *Viqueens*.

These female cult groups do the following things to achieve their aims

- ✓ serving as pressure groups and liaising with the male cultists to ward off threats, real or imaginary from lecturers or/and other students .
- ✓ use of violence and keeping of arms for their male friends.
- ✓ engaging in prostitution and lesbianism. Parties are incomplete without some of them and so their integrity and morals are as skimpy as their swimsuits.
- ✓ putting pressure on fresh students by way of intimidation to join these groups.

2:0 Why Do Students Join Secret Cult

Majority of the people who join the new-age cult groups are within the age brackets of between eighteen to twenty-two years at the time of first contact which is the age of young adulthood. This is the age one is expected to be in the tertiary institution. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN: 2004:36), the objectives of tertiary education which is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses is aimed at

- ✓ contributing to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- ✓ developing and inculcating proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- ✓ developing the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- ✓ acquiring both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- ✓ promoting and encouraging scholarship and community service;
- ✓ forging and cementing national unity; and
- ✓ promoting national and international understanding and interaction.

In other words, the tertiary institutions are to enable the recipients of the education provided by them to contribute their quota to national development. Unfortunately same institutions have become the hot bed of secret cult activities thereby belying their original aims as purveyors of national development. Why then are these vibrant young adults joining secret cults in Nigerian institutions of higher learning, the engine rooms of national development?

Wokacha and Okujugu (1999:197-198), Okengwu (2004:39-42) and Fageyinbo (2004:116-117) have advanced the following possible reasons why students join secret cults in Nigerian educational institutions:

- ✓ *Giving maximum protection to its members at all time* - that is some students join cults because they feel unsafe and want some form of protection which they believe the cult group could give.
- ✓ *To further the interest of members in all ramifications* - that is enabling members to have a common identity on campus, thereby affording them undue advantage and enhance personality.
- ✓ *Enjoyment of economic assistance and more importantly a creation of an atmosphere for members to facilitate their attainment of their academic pursuit either by hook or crook.*
- ✓ *Depression* – that many young people are more vulnerable to cultic affliction during or immediately after suffering from severe crises.
- ✓ *Broken family* - that there is a strong relationship between broken families and cult related activities. That unmet emotional needs of a child from a broken, cold and abusive home may make a cult seem more attractive.
- ✓ *Lack of direction* - many young people who lack direction in life depend on others to govern and direct their lives and so are easily lured into cultism by others.
- ✓ *Indoctrination and deception* – some students join cults because of the false but magnified stories they were told about these cult groups. Some were for instance told that it would be impossible for one to get a job unless one becomes a member of such cult groups. Others are told that these groups are mere social clubs.
- ✓ *Coercion* - some students are forced or blackmailed into joining cult groups.

2:1 Other factors include

- ✓ *Extension of societal corruption into the school campuses* - societal value system has changed considerably and its impact is felt within and outside the campuses. The school system is a micro-society and whatever change, either positive or negative from the macro social system, filters down to it. An offspring of an adult secret cultist is a potential recruit into secret cults on the campuses.
- ✓ *Inadequate use of counseling services for students.*
- ✓ *Poor academic environment* - such as poor accommodation, poor library facilities and lack of recreational activities resulting from poor funding of education by those concerned.
- ✓ *Glorification of cult by the press.*
- ✓ *Weakness of school security system.*
- ✓ *Sponsorship of secret cult by some influential individuals of the society* - including old students as well as some university administrators (vice chancellors, registrars, professors and others) who were/ are members. It is alleged that some vice chancellors have student body guards comprising cult members, thereby giving a measure of legality to cultism.
- ✓ *Peer pressure* - many young adults and adolescents join secret cults just because most of their friends are members. This is done to avoid group rejection especially where parents do not spend quality time with their children.
- ✓ *Vengeance* - a student faced with oppressive and domineering elders may seek for vengeance. Secret cults as faceless collection of in-group members may serve as a means of retaliation for such embittered students.
- ✓ *Political ambition and sense of identity and recognition not minding the difference between fame and notoriety.*
- ✓ *Need to dominate and control others* - some students who are slow learners may decide to gain undue merit by intimidating their teachers. Struggle to possess friends of the opposite sex may also trigger the need to join secret cults.

2:2:1 Identification of a Cultist

A cultist according to Nwideduh (2003:227) quoting Chimereze (1999) and Ojioko (2002) could be identified exhibiting the following characteristics:

- ✓ Unique image and inscriptions on tee-shirts, caps, rings and pendants
- ✓ Heavy drinker and drug addict.
- ✓ Keeps nicknames, uses image when in operation.
- ✓ Has no fixed address.
- ✓ Spends lavishly on women as well as being involved in illicit sexual escapades.
- ✓ Highly secretive and carried charms, amulets and possession of illegal firearms.
- ✓ Mostly stone-hearted, courageous and desperate.
- ✓ Believes in superstition.
- ✓ Has particular words which are unique to the group.
- ✓ Combat ready or prone to sudden violence including involvement in armed robbery activities.
- ✓ Moves and operates with others in a group or as member of a gang.
- ✓ Lacks discipline in everything.
- ✓ Cheats in examination.
- ✓ Appears outlandish in dressing style.
- ✓ Keeps to oneself and therefore unreachable and uncommunicative.
- ✓ Displays disrespect to authorities and elders and;
- ✓ Killing of innocent students, academic and non academic staff, rape, arson, extortion, threats, physical attacks, blackmails and other unwholesome practices.

3:0 The Activities and Effects of Secret Cults on the Nigerian School System

Secret cults in Nigerian schools have been associated with the following practices namely

- ✓ oath taking and hazing during initiation, blood sucking covenant ceremonies;
- ✓ excessive consumption of alcohol and hard drugs such as cocaine and Indian hemp;
- ✓ acquisition and use of dangerous weapons such as guns, swords, spears, axes, knives, explosives, acid among others;
- ✓ killing, maiming, rape, kidnapping, armed robbery and arson;
- ✓ threats and intimidation of students and lecturers; holding secret and nocturnal meetings in scary and desolate places like cemeteries and jungles;
- ✓ excessive control over members;
- ✓ attack on those who seek to leave as well as;
- ✓ instilling a high degree of tension on the surrounding society.

These activities of secret cults have dealt negatively on the Nigerian educational system some of which include the following:

- ✓ Students and teachers are made to live under constant fear as there is a general state of insecurity and chaos.
- ✓ Destruction and vandalization of school facilities and property during rampages of cult members.
- ✓ Stealing of school property as most of them are involved in armed robbery using their power of intimidation.
- ✓ Disruption of academic calendars as well as social and recreational activities in schools as schools are closed due to campus cult killings and wanton destruction of property.
- ✓ Restriction of the exercise of the people's right to movement due to harassment, embarrassment, humiliation and intimidations.
- ✓ To the cultists themselves, many of them die every year due to cult clashes or during initiation ceremonies.
- ✓ Some are either rusticated or expelled from schools as their activities are at variance with the norms of the society. Accordingly, most of them caught never graduate from schools. The cost of such pre-

- matured graduation or temporary forced absence to the students and their parents/guardians is enormous as all the energies and materials expended on them become a waste for their parents and communities.
- ✓ Due to frustrations, some of them resort to armed robbery.
 - ✓ Those arrested for cult related activities spend so much money every semester to come out of police cases. In extreme cases, they are jailed thereby not fulfilling their educational ambitions and those of their family. This is in addition to the negative image given to the family (social stigma). People in addition to the psychological trauma are injured physically by cult members when they are in operation.
 - ✓ In extreme cases, the activities/operations result in the lost lives. Many student cultists, other students including lecturers and university administrators have being killed and others maimed for life. For instance, Falana (1999) graphically illustrated this with the following gory examples.

In 1997, at the University of Benin, the Secretary General of the Students' Union was killed by cult members invited by the school authority when the students gathered to discuss on commercialization and rationalization of courses.

The Principal Assistant Registrar of the Delta State University – Peter Otopo was murdered in cold blood by cultists over issues bordering on school administration.

Mr. Ileoje, the Head of Department at the Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Enugu was shot in his office by a female cult member early in 1997.

Early in 1997, a final year Banking and Finance student at the Ondo State University, Ado Ekiti (OSUA), was killed for deflection. He was murdered in his hostel after renouncing cultism.

On July 10, 1999, seven undergraduates of the Obafemi Awolowo University (O.A.U), Ife, were murdered in cold blood in their sleep by secret cult members from within and outside the campus.

At the University of Ibadan, the birth place of secret cult activities, the Chief Security Officer was brutally killed by cult members in the presence of his wife and children.

In 2007, a lecturer in the University of Port Harcourt, Dr. Ozuru, as hall warden of the graduate school was murdered in cold blood by cultists under mysterious circumstances. The Bayelsa State owned Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island which was established in 2002 is also not free from the notorious baptism of cult related killings as no fewer than twenty students have lost their lives due to inter-cult related clashes within its ten years of existence as a university.

In the past few years, the University of Ilorin, Ogun State University, University of Calabar, Kwara State Polytechnic, Federal Polytechnics and Colleges of Education nationwide have witnessed serious conflagration as a result of cultism. The degree of blood bath and level of sophistication is appalling and so something must be done to eradicate it. This will be our focus after turning our search light on the twin social problem of drug abuse.

4:0 Definition of Drug

A drug according to Adeyemi and Adediran (2009:72) and Agabi and Egbezor (2005:222) is a combination of medical chemicals or substances formulated and prepared by chemists and pharmacists for the treatments or cure of different illness under the recommendation and supervision of medical doctors. A drug, therefore, alters the state of functioning of a living organism when taken. Drugs are many and diverse in their simplicity and strength. Depending upon the nature of their effect, drugs according to Jekayinfa (2009:119) quoting NDLEA (1992) may be classified as *stimulant*, *sedative* and *deliriant* (mind-blowing).

Stimulant drugs are drugs that stimulate the brain and sympathetic nervous system resulting in alertness and increase in response and motor activity. The major drugs of this category are nicotine, cocaine, caffeine, etc. The addiction of stimulant drugs makes an individual dependent physiologically and psychologically on their ever increasing dose for the continuous stimulation of sense organs. On the long run, it results in severe loss of appetite and weight, constipation, increased anxiety and irritability, sleep deprivation and gradual impairment of intellectual functioning.

Sedative drugs are drugs that slow down the activities of an organism and diminish the response of the brain and nervous system. As a result they are used as pain relievers and sleep inducers and may be classified as narcotics and hypnotics. The major narcotic drugs are opium, morphine, heroin, codeine. The prolonged use of sedative drugs leads to increased tolerance and physiological as well as psychological craving for them. The immediate effects are pleasant as there is relief from pain and lessening of voluntary movements followed by euphoria. But these effects are short-lived and are followed by a negative phase of craving for more drugs and the consequent ill effects.

The addiction to narcotics results in loss of appetite and weight, constipation, lack of sexual desire and social interests. Unlike narcotics, the addiction to hypnotic drugs lead to intellectual impairment and disturbance of the motor functions dependent on the cerebellum.

The sudden withdrawal of sedative drugs results in dangerous withdrawal symptoms like restlessness, nervousness, excessive perspiration, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, severe headache, marked tremors, cardiovascular collapse and painful muscular cramps.

Deliriant or mind-blowing drugs are drugs that produce transient state resembling psychoses resulting in marked confusion, distortion in thought processes, delirium, illusions and hallucinations. Marijuana produces an euphoric state involving increased self confidence and a pleasant feeling of relaxation characterized by a feeling of floating. There is a considerable distortion of the sense of time and space. In some cases, the individual becomes irritable. There is a marked impairment in the motor and intellectual functioning but the users usually think that their efficiency has increased. This false sense of adequacy gives rise to incidents of reckless driving and other anti-social episodes. In many individuals, the intoxication of marijuana may produce acute psychotic reactions as found with hallucinogenic drugs.

4:1 What is Drug Abuse?

Drug abuse on the other hand according to Adeyemi and Adediran (2009:73), Jekayinfa (2007:120) and Fadeyiye (2005:27) is the persistent, sporadic and sometimes, excessive use of a drug in violation of medical advice. Put differently, it is when a drug is self administered in such a way that deviates from approved medical practice or when it is used without consideration for pharmaceutical safety or efficiency.

The NDLEA (1992) quoted by Jeyinkafa (2007:120) opined that a drug is abused when

- ✓ its used is not medically necessary.
- ✓ not recommended by a health worker.
- ✓ its used is forbidden by law or it is socially unacceptable.
- ✓ it is been used excessively if it is socially accepted substance such alcohol or cigarettes.

It is a social problem mostly connected with the youth or which starts in the youthful stage of life to chronic level in adult hood. It is crime without victim that is self inflicted. It is also a crime against morality. All drugs can be abused, even the one we consider mild e.g. paracetamol, phensic etc. can be abused. If a doctor or any medical officer prescribes a drug and the user does not follow the prescription, whether by under-using or over-using the drug, it is termed drug abuse. Therefore drug abuse is a situation whereby drug is not used in accordance with doctors or pharmacist's prescription or recommendation. Some people take drugs to give them sexual prowess; all these acts are drug abuse. Other drugs which are popularly abused and known by all and sundry are Marijuana or Indian hemp, Lacetyl-d-lysergic acid diethyl-lamide (LSD)

4:1:2 Causes of Drug Abuse

Drugs are abused in Nigeria particularly among Nigerian students in institutions of higher learning due to the following reasons.

- ✓ *Ignorance* - lack of knowledge about the consequences of drug.
- ✓ *Isolation and loneliness* - loneliness can be boring, frustrating and traumatic. To make up for isolation and loneliness, some people take to drugs. As the loneliness persists, they need higher dosage to meet up with their usual drug 'trips'. This leads to drug abuse and addiction.
- ✓ *Urge to commit crime* - some take drugs in order to be bold to do what ordinarily they would not do. They indulge frequently in hard drugs for the primary purpose of committing deviant behaviour.

4:1:3 Consequences of Drug Abuse

The government of Nigeria, through the NDLEA (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency) which was set up through the promulgation of Decree No. 48 of 1984 and NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration) have ever since been making concerted efforts to curtail the menace of drug abuse and drug trafficking in the Country. This is due to the grave danger of drug abuse. Some of these negative effects on the youths and others drug addicts are:

- ✓ *Increases crime rate* - youngsters and adults who are drug abusers are prone to commission of deviant behaviour such as rape, armed robbery, murder and duping including being members of secret cults in our institutions of learning.
- ✓ *It leads to mental and emotional disorder* - there are many patients in psychiatry hospitals who are drug abusers. Some have emotional disorders that make them psychotic or neurotic
- ✓ *It leads to low self-esteem and self-respect* - a drug abuser when he is 'high' becomes over-excited and when 'down' is withdrawn. Those that are fathers or mothers often neglect their roles to their partners and children. They consequently lose their self-respect and self-esteem in the communities they live.
- ✓ *Bringing shame to their kins and kiths as well as communities* – drug abusers/addicts are seen as disgrace to their family names and positions in society due to the intake of drugs without medical approval.
- ✓ *Dependence on productive members of society* - chronic compulsive drug abusers (the freaks), who are totally addicted are not engaged as part of the labour force. They are almost totally dependent on those that are working. They, therefore, further impoverish the already poor relative and friends who are working.
- ✓ *Educationally speaking*, drug abuse blocks meaningful use of time and creative thinking of the individual and therefore destroys a persons ambition to become great thereby making such an individual hopeless and unproductive.

5:0 Measures to Curb Activities of Secret Cult and Drug Abuse in Nigerian Schools

Nigeria is currently undergoing difficult times. Jobs are not available, the economy is in bad state, the family institution is weakening, it is therefore plausible to state that some of our current social problems as presented above in the in the form of secret cultism and drug abuse may continue for several years to come. These are no doubt social crimes against society.

Even though there are various decrees and laws both at the federal and state levels outlawing secret cult activities and drug related crimes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, the activities of cult gangs and drug abuse have attained dangerous dimensions. The various school authorities appear incapable of solving the problems. Not too long ago, the Federal Government of Nigeria gave some universities in the country millions of naira to particularly combat the menace of cultism. Several renunciation and denunciation meetings were held and some universities, for instance, the University of Ibadan, have since then established Anti-Cultism Campaign Committees. In spite of these efforts, the country as a whole appears to be loosing the war against these menaces and the worth of the certificates and degrees awarded by the country's educational institutions continue to deteriorate in value. Due to the adverse effects of these activities on the Nigerian educational system, the following are suggested as a means of curbing them for the health of the Nigerian school system.

- ✓ Students and indeed the general public should be sensitized on the inherent dangers of secret cults and drug abuse. Religious bodies and organizations should equally supplement the efforts of educational institutions in this direction through their preaching and sermons where the evils and possible rewards of these activities should be highlighted. With particular reference to drug abuse, information on types of drugs, reactions and effects should be disseminated within the school curriculum. This can be done through the introduction of drug education in the school curriculum. Teachers can help to detect early symptoms of drug abuse and recommend victims to appropriate quarters for rehabilitation.

- ✓ The mass media should avoid exaggeration and sensational reporting of drug-related issues and problems.
- ✓ The security departments of schools should be strengthened both in terms of personnel and equipment to fight the menace of secret cult.
- ✓ Recreational activities should be provided in schools to enable the students occupy themselves of their leisure hours. This is to keep the students busy as idle minds are usually the devil's workshops. In this direction, dramas, games (out and indoor) and educative films are some of the channels through which campus authorities can engage the minds of these youths profitably apart from academic work.
- ✓ Federal drug censoring agencies such as NAFDAC and NDLEA, that are in the forefront of drug control and administration and elimination of drug trafficking should be provided with adequate manpower and material resources to carry out their assigned duties. Corrupt officials among them should be sanctioned and efficient officers rewarded. Again, more health workers especially doctors and nurses should be encouraged to specialize on psychiatry and drug-related disorders.
- ✓ Sales of alcohol and other dangerous drugs in and around school campuses should be avoided.
- ✓ Periodic search of students to identify the signs and other items associated with secret cult and hard drugs should be conducted.
- ✓ Known cult members and drug addicts in the larger society should be exposed and deprived of certain privileges such as appointment into sensitive positions.
- ✓ The principle of meritocracy should be considered paramount in matters of admission so that only those who are qualified are admitted. This is so because it is mostly the never-do-well from wealthy backgrounds who find themselves in the school through their parents 'connections' that find enough time to engage in cult and drug related activities as a way of squaring up their academic inefficiencies.
- ✓ Again, the admission of under-aged children into the tertiary institutions should be discouraged as these fragile youth constitute easy prey for cult groups and drug addicts to be indoctrinated and recruited into their fold.
- ✓ Government should fund the educational sector adequately. This will enable the sector to provide the basic infrastructural facilities such as decent and adequate accommodation, sport and games facilities, well-equipped and stocked laboratories and libraries, workshops, adequate electricity, portable water among others. This is suggested because one factor that breeds cult related activities in our schools is the poor academic learning environment characterized by shortage of virtually all the enablers of the teaching and learning process.
- ✓ In the specific case of secret cult activities, the militarization of university campuses with the army, police and other uniformed personnel should be avoided. This according to Nzimiro (1999:17) is one cause of the existence of secret cults when he opined that

the very nature of military coupists, their characteristics and operations are similar to those of the cultists. In other words, both groups have common similarity of secrecy, discipline, vigilance and surveillance of each other and control of weapons of destruction to annihilate the enemy. That most of these cultists were born during the era of coups and counter coups adding that... a violent society has been our lot ... over(the) years....thus giving birth to secret cult.

Accordingly, the preventive measures of guidance and counseling should be used. This should be made functional to provide periodic counseling services to adolescence who are potential targets of these campus menace. This process will give students a sense of belonging and assurance that they are part of the society.

5:1:1 Parents Role in the Fight Against Secret Cultism and Drug Abuse

Parents as the first teachers can do the following to discourage their children from joining secret cults and being involved in drug related crimes.

- ✓ Be good role models.
- ✓ Showing genuine love to their children.
- ✓ Correcting evil and rewarding good behaviours.
- ✓ Teaching them to respect wholesome traditional values.
- ✓ Introducing them to God; and

- ✓ By not ignoring the signs of rebellion when children are small, for such signs will quickly develop into something serious that might result in these menace. Children in most cases do not understand the pressures on them. It is the parents who have to recognize these and do what they can to help their children in their proper moral upbringing.

6:0 Conclusion

The social problems of secret cultism and drug abuse have been major concern of parents, school authorities and the Nigerian society. This is because the worth of education lies in its servicing the needs of the society. In the case of the Nigerian society, the National Policy on Education (FRN: 2004:4) is unequivocal in stating the role of education as an instrument to promote excellence and ensure accelerated national growth, development and integration. Accordingly, anything that would work against this goal as epitomized by the activities of these moral vices as presented above should be avoided. The Nigerian student should channel his energy and intellect in pursuing goals that will liberate the masses from the pangs of poverty, greed, hunger, destruction and disease instead of engaging in such unprofitable anti-social activities so as to be seen as real agents of social change. It is only through this way that the five national objectives of the Nigerian state as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN: 2004:6) namely

a free and democratic society.

a just and equalitarian society.

united, strong and self reliant nation.

a great and dynamic economy and;

a land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens could be achieved for the development of the Nigerian society.

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