Youth Empowerment for Security and Human Capital Development: The Role of Counselling

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A b s t r a c t

The society is facing a lot of global crises. This crisis ranges from economic, political, social and religious aspect of our lives. This paper examines the youth empowerment for security and nation building: the role of counseling. The concept of National security and the state of insecurity in Nigeria, the concept of nation building, youths empowerment for security and nation building, counseling strategies for security and nation building. It is therefore recommended that; community empowerment efforts to poverty reduction and eradication should be based on common driven development in which the younger ones and also the adults would be involving in the decision making on matters affecting them for a sustainable development.

Keywords: *Security, Human capital, Counselling and Empowerment*

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Background to the Study

Nigeria has witnessed a lot of religious, political and ethnic crisis in the recent times, these crises have graduated into insurgency, terrorism, banditry, cattle rustling etc., which led to the destruction of lives and properties particularly in the northern part of the country, which slowed down the economic activities in that part of the region and the entire country at large. The educational activities in the region have also suffered a serious setback. According to Sababa and Adamu (2016), the main targets of the insurgents are schools and other government institutions. The Islamic insurgents see the acquisition of western education as a taboo or sacrilege. Those who have already acquired it are expected to demonstrate their loyalty to the sect by tearing their academic certificates. The main target of the insurgents (Boko Haram) is to destroy western education and democracy and govern the country under strict Islamic laws (Sharia).

The north-east region of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States has witnessed horrifying experience whereby schools have been attacked, students massacred and hundreds of female students abducted and married off based on Islamic rites (Olaniyan, 2015). In July 2013, the insurgents set fire to students' dormitories in Yobe State, burning some students alive and shooting others as they tried to flee. In their various attacks between 2013 to date they have burnt over 300 public schools in Borno and Yobe State, killing more than 10,000 students and teachers. Just recently, they abducted more than 600 students in Kankara village in Katsina State leading to the impromptu closure of the schools in the state and that of the neighbouring state like Kaduna, Jigawa, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger State in December 2020.These have drastically impeded peace and educational development in that region and that of the country at large (Voanews.com, 2021)

Meanwhile, Human capital is the great asset any country can boast of, because no matter the amount of resources invested on programmes in the country, its success or failure depends largely on the quality of manpower that plan and execute the policies and programmes. The Nigerian public sector responsible for good governance is generally admitted by Nigerians as definitely not functioning at high level. There are various lapses according to Alozie (2017) by government agencies which contribute to poor governance and by extension underdevelopment. No nation develops beyond the capacity of its public service and there is a broad consensus amongst Nigerians that our public service is non-functional. According to Kalu (2011), many have argued that Nigeria's problem is traceable to poor human capacity that sufficiently caters for the welfare (good governance) of the citizen, it is only a well-developed manpower that can manage resources properly and regulate both internal and external relations as well as effectively control the nations policy process.

The challenge staring Nigeria in the face as it concerns providing good governance to people largely depends on, but not limited to the capacity of her human capital development and management. It is expected that the focus, application and commitment of highly skilled manpower that can adopt and transparently implement good governance policies, and also can be within the ambit of human capital

development and management. Uzoeshi (2005) and Ordu (2012) asserted that counselling is the process of helping a normal individual to understand himself in forms of his strengths and limitations. These scenarios send a wrong signal that all is not well, hence there is the need for post-traumatic counselling to the people affected by the menace of insecurity for optimum psychological and emotional balance state. The counsellor seeks to guide people towards self-understanding, acquiring skills and knowledge to become useful to themselves and the society at large, counselling will also help the individual to channelled their energy into a more constructive ventures and work towards the political, social and psychological wellbeing of the citizens of the nation. A nation that is not secure cannot develop effectively no matter its highly skilled human capital development; it is against this background that this paper examines the role counselling can play in proffering solution to the security challenges facing the nation today.

Concept of Security and Insecurity
According to Akintunde and Musa (2016), security is perceived as a basic human need that contributes to effective learning. Psychologists proposed that security is crucial for human survival. Following the postulation of if hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow, the lower needs of man like food, shelter and security must be met before other higher needs like education, intellectual/cognitive (Akintunde, 2015). Security also involves existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function optimally in the society.

Best (2006) sees insecurity as a degenerated state of conflicts, threats to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death injury. To Olamosu (2000), insecurity is a state or condition in the life of a social unit system organization or society in which the existence of a problem assumes critical dimension to the extent that the survival or existence of the social system or structure is threatened. Corruption and poverty have been identified as some of the challenges threatening security in Nigeria.

The deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome. Recently, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from intra-communal, inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes; religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping and "Boko haram" insurgency (Mutiullah cited in Abubakar, 2011). Insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of unemployment, corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt and rising external debt profile (Ewetan, 2013). These problems have posed severe threats to socio-economic development in the country, in that it stifles business and economic activities and discourages local and foreign investors (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). The security of every nation is very important for the survival and growth of its economic, social and political systems. National security can be described as the capability of the state in catering for the defence and protecting of its people (Makinde, 1998). National security entails the nation's effort and strategies its states and its citizen

against national crisis through power projections such as military power and economic might. National threats endanger human rights and freedom, liberty to life, movement and the right to free expression (Momoh, 2016). Ali (2013) explains that national security borders on any incidence compromising the welfare and existence of the citizens of a nation and it is aimed at securing favourable living conditions for every member of the nation. To strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interest and objectives, to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development progress and growth improve the welfare and wellbeing and quality of life of every Nigerian.

Human Capital Development
Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills and competences embodied in the individual as a result of education, training and experience that makes him more productive. Human capital development according to Fagboungbe (2008) in Kalu (2011) has to do with the recruiting, supporting and investing in people, using training, coaching, mentoring, internship, organizational development and human resource management for its eventual realization. Since human capital represents human skills and capabilities generated by investment in education and health improvement of man is therefore paramount. According to the revised guidelines for training in the Federal Service in Nigeria, the extent of staff training and manpower development policy, is to lend a systematic approval to training efforts in the service and by so doing enact government to drive higher benefit from the massive investment in manpower development (Akpochato, 2018).

Youth Empowerment for Security and Human Capital Development
Youth in Nigeria today constitute the largest population, from about 47% of the economic and political active population (Obadipe, 1992). It is expected of them to contribute meaningfully towards development of the nation as they are believed to be invaluable asset, leaders of tomorrow and constitute the major workforce of the nation. Youth empowerment develops competencies in them towards actualization of the growth of the society and creates skills which will not only be for their empowerment but also bring about the much desired industrial and technological development of the nation.

Empowering the youth is also developing the nation's security and human capacity towards nation building. As identified by Miller (2008), to empower the youths is the desire to equip the young individual skillfully and proficiently enough in all chosen trade. Apart from the fact that it will empower the youths with what it takes to excel in the performance of a task, the benefit that is accrue to skilled individuals are numerous including; income generation, ability to become self-reliant and employer of labour. In a deregulated and industry driven economic nation like Nigeria, this heightens the need for the youths to be empowered to enable them contribute in generating a dynamic economy and political advancement. With this kind of economic advancement in mind, it is imperative that the youths will acquire relevant skills/knowledge that will make them attractive to employments of labour that prefer skilled and experienced workers, thereby

increasing the production capacity and boosting the economic strength and security of the nation.

Counselling Strategies for Security and Human Capital Development
Counselling form part of the services that offers help to the youths in personal-social aspect of their lives. Denga (1989), defines guidance as giving assistance to individuals to understand who they are as individual, become aware of their personal characteristics (values, abilities, aptitudes, strength and weakness), understand the world around them and people with whom they interact. From the above definition the relevance of guidance and counselling in every organizational aspect cannot be over emphasized. Counselling on the other hand refers to as a process whereby one person (counsellor) in a person to person or face to face relationship either in group or individual encounter to assist in resolving crisis in educational, vocational and personal-social aspect of their lives.

1. **Group Counselling:** Uzoeshi (2005), Defined group counseling as the situation where individuals are grouped under some variables, which include age, sex, level of maturity, and job interest among others. This is to enable the counsellor meet the specific needs of each of the group members in chosen the type of occupation that suit them. To meet the specific needs of the members, the counsellor is expected to provide useful data on jobs and the challenges involved in the job that can enhance the participation of the youths in the nation security and self-development.

2. **Individual Counselling:** Counsellors should make it as a duty to make themselves available and friendly with the youths. The counsellor should show empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard irrespective of their overt and covert behaviours. This will encourage them to participate actively in a more meaningful aspect of their development (Ordu, 2012).

3. **Mass Media:** Through the mass media, counsellors can disseminate information about youth empowerment programmes. Radios and television can be used to transmit this information in order to ensure such information get down to the grassroots for the benefit of both educated and uneducated youths; news bulletin can be erected at strategic points with newspaper cutting and clips from websites on empowerment and development for the youths.

4. **Public Lectures, Seminars and Symposiums:** The youth can be empowered through public lectures and seminars. The counsellors from time to time should as a matter of importance organise public lectures and seminar for the teaming youth with the intent of providing current information on career opportunities.

5. **Creation of Vocational Guidance Centre** where self-employment and entrepreneur skills can be inculcated to the youths. The centre should employ the services of professional counsellor for effective decision to those youths in schools and those dropouts from schools.

6. **Establishment of Counselling Centre in Schools:** These will enable us catch them young. Counselling is the best form of teaching that involved a jointly determined effort to help the client to evolve a new set of appreciable behaviour of attitudes (Skinner, 1970).

7. Enhancement of guidance counsellors capacity for global partnership development through the provision of modern information and communication technology gadgets in existing counselling centres and offices throughout the nation.

Conclusion

Helping the youths to become more productive, progressive and successful in life which may lead to greater responsibilities for lifetime. Human beings whether children, youths, adults or aged develop and interact with their environment, within the interaction processes some factors in the environment posses challenges, some of these challenges can be solve on their own, while other demand holistic approach. Therefore, it is cleared that for security and human capital development to build up, the young and the adults need to be empowered financially, vocationally and technologically in order to live a peaceful and crime free life.

Suggestions

From the foregoing, the following suggestions are necessary for successful security and human capital development.

1. Community empowerment efforts leading to poverty reduction and eradication should be based on community driven development in which the younger ones and also the adults would be involve in the decision making on matters affecting them for a sustainable development.
2. In the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasis should be given to the youth empowerment programmes and functional vocational, technical education in schools.
3. Government needs to intensify on productivity and self-reliant programmes such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE) where the youths will be creative and develop entrepreneur skills which may reduce unemployment.
4. Adequate funding in all development centres like schools, counselling centres, industries and different youth centres by the government and well to do persons in the society.
5. Parents and guardians should support, assist and encourage their wards in whatever occupation they choose.

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