

Counseling Youths for National Stability and Integration: Highlight On the Nigerian Youth.

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ABSTRACT

The issue of stability and integration has been a major preoccupation of politicians in Nigeria, who have suddenly woken up to the reality of youth unemployment and how it constitutes a bane to our peace and security. Their effort would be laudable if proposed projects are implemented. With no reliable population statistics, we might assume that Nigerian youths constitute 70% of the population. It would be gross irresponsibility to neglect such a budding set of people full of potentials and whose lives could be tailored towards making Nigeria a great country. Contemporary values and their attendant frustration tend to influence youths to adopt almost a dissident position regarding traditional values that gave our older generation the enviable composure of people who had a purpose and an unflinching commitment to build societies, where equality and justice were supposed to be given a pride of place. This study is aimed at diagnosing the major problems that have caused instability in Nigeria and at proffering suggestions for national integration, while taking into consideration the peculiarities of youth integration in a cultural context that includes the values of selflessness, integrity, justice, equality, commitment, nationalism, patriotism, endurance to mention a few. Would counselling be the only solution to the problems of the youth as we observe today or would the Nigerian government purposefully wade into the intractable socio-economic problems to give our young ones hope and direction? Words and talk shows may be grandiose; cheaply portraying an array of theories propounded by some selfish sycophants, whose interests may be to be seen and heard. It will take a deep compassion to feel with others where they hurt in their lives. The monumental task may appear daunting in the reality of a huge population of over a million graduates that are turned into the labour market every year, nevertheless, where there is a will there is a way.

INTRODUCTION

Developmental psychologists like Erik Erickson and Jean Piaget identify the progression of the cognitive development linked with the psychosocial development of an individual as being fundamental to the person's adjustment in life and society. Adolescence marks the beginning of the period that we usually refer to as youth and this period goes on to middle age. A solid adjustment at the early childhood should pave way for a distinct ability to grapple with the reality of the complexities and challenges of human existence. Hence, all through preschool, primary, secondary and university the child should have learnt basic adjustment techniques that should see

him through life. However, stressors like failures, underachievement, unfulfilled aspiration, and difficulties with relationships, financial constraints, physiological problems, and hormonal changes, anxiety about life after school, unemployment, spiritual problems or social acceptability are often responsible for the trauma that may affect the adjustment of the youth. The hypothetical position of this paper is that “If the assistance of counselling psychologist had been sought early enough many Nigerian young adults should have exhibited less abnormality as seen in riots, crimes and lack of goodwill to promote the nation.” Nonetheless, should counseling about stability or integration be only addressed to the young population? Would it not be necessary to diagnose the issues that are fundamental to the present disintegration in the society? Can any youth that is not financially empowered solve his/her problems of unemployment or lack of funding to meet the essential needs of life? It is to this end that the questionnaire for this study was drawn up to solicit responses as regards the concept of the sample population about the causes of instability and inadequate integration of the Nigerian youth. An appropriate diagnosis should help us determine the way forward. I dare say that none of the issues involved is obtrusive as considerable sensation and propaganda have been created around empowering the Nigerian youth. To my mind the problem is too deep seated and extensive for a one off solution as there are many precarious tentacles to be put in place.

Frustrated youths are more likely to vent their anger on a system that pays little attention to their heart cry for meaning and fulfillment in the world. I would in the next segment discuss the challenges confronting the Nigerian youth today. This is needful because our leaders should know and hence determine the priorities in governance since the greater percentage of the national population is made up of young people.

CHALLENGES FACING THE NIGERIAN YOUTH AND CAUSES OF INSTABILITY

Like it has been mentioned earlier, most problems have a psychological undertone and that is why the counseling psychologist would proffer solutions that touch on the individual personal, emotional disposition, attitudes and adjustments. Therefore, we could assume that early childhood is a good time to inculcate the right values in the individual child. A consensus should be reached about the kind of values that the society should uphold. However, the big question is do we presently have positive values in Nigeria? If we do then we would have fewer cases of crimes, misappropriation of funds, debauchery, adultery, selfishness, discrimination, nepotism, ethnic jingoism, sorcery and occult practices in a bid to dominate others, lack of respect for elders, covetousness and jealousy. Government should look into these issues and resolve to make the citizens more comfortable, hopeful about the future, emotionally stable, participatory in national development, peaceful and progressively proactive. It is needless to say, that it also starts at the early childhood to old age. It is within this context that it is pertinent to discuss aspects of the youth social, economic, political and cultural life that affect his behavior and performance in national matters.

INCONSISTENT SOCIETAL VALUES

The changing face of world politics and culture has left the Nigerian youth in a state of confusion as to what is “it” or the real “thing” is. Every one of them wants to get rich all too soon because someone they know a classmate perhaps, has a rich father or a well- to- do uncle, who

have helped them to pull it through. This is not pouring aspersion on a quest for honest gain, after all older citizen still work to make an income till old age. No one wants to be left in penury in old age, at retirement, when one's income is drastically reduced. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, only fortunate people ever have financial ease at retirement since the system does not ensure regular payment of retirement benefits. Money is indispensable, as a meaningful life is almost impossible without money. Cases have been reported of pensioners who slumped while queuing up for verification or making claims for their rights. The stress is experienced by everyone who does not want to find himself in the state of nonplus. Our values have changed to such an extent that people are only willing to help when they hope to get gratified on the long run, hence the expression nothing goes for nothing. The traditional communal life in most ethnic groups in which a whole community raised a child has practically disappeared and no one wants to be prosecuted for being highhanded with someone else's child. The sense of right has disappeared in a world of relativity. Being a brother's keeper has given way to an almost incurable, murderous and deadly competition that often puts a rift in homes, corporate bodies and the family at large.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Short of being pedantic and redundant in my opinions about economic disintegration, making a quick remark will not be out place that the youth who goes through the stress of schooling and who graduates with no future is under undue stress. The motivation for enduring the hardship and exigencies of education especially in Nigeria where the facilities are slim is undermined since there is no more future in it. What the youth wants is a just remuneration for his effort. Therefore the present high rate of unemployment is an underlying factor in national stability and the integration of the youth.

POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

Political differences are the norm in all democratic societies; in fact it is a process that enables fairness and every body's participation in governance. However, our political system is devoid of political philosophies and ideologies that incorporate a viable system which takes into cognizance the cultural diversities of the Nigerian people. We have come a long way in denouncing the imposition of the legalization of homosexual practices and marriage or similar foreign incursions. Nevertheless, we need to stand aloof from the belief that some ethnic groups are destined to be leaders though there may not be a good charismatic leader emerging from those places. Seeing ourselves as people with a common goal should be a better approach to solving our national problems. Hence, individuals should be counseled about eschewing sectionalism and about their political attitude. History tells us that when individuals are overwhelmed by their sense of superiority, which is a complex, it spells doom for them and the society. Adolf Hitler of Germany got paranoid, a mental ailment that made him orchestrate the killing of over six million Jews. Of course, if Hitler had psychological counseling and got a true picture of the state of his mind he probably would have acted differently. Hitler found himself in a position that he could exploit to eliminate those who constituted a bane to his conscience; as it were, he killed his enemies en masse. History repeats itself everyday as newspapers report cases of assassination of political figures, the incessant killings by Boko Haram insurgents or in some other countries the murders carried out by Al Qaeda or Al Shabab insurgents. Many Nigerian

youths are often engaged as political thugs for a pittance, even if it were for a fortune, it should never be encouraged as untold number of people are killed. Why would anyone approve the elimination of people for momentary gain, vaulting ambition and power? It is a fallacy to feel that after a person is dead and gone s/he should continue to perpetuate a philosophy, an ideology or a lifestyle that has not brought any good to one's neighbour. These sordid acts indicate serious psychological deficiencies that counseling psychologists should rise up to address in the Nigerian youth.

Timothy M. Cain has this to say about Nigeria, in his book, *How Governments Work*. He observed that since independence from the United Kingdom on October 1, 1960, Nigeria has been torn by ethnic, religious and regional divisions in its struggle to become a democracy. His claims are that:

Mostly corrupt military rule, interrupted by coups and brief, unsuccessful civilian governments, has dominated. In 1999, Nigeria became a multiparty democracy with the election of President Olusegun Obasanjo and a revised constitution. Corruption and unrest, however, have marred subsequent elections, and Nigeria has yet to make a successful transition from one civilian government to another.

Since independence, ethnic struggles have dominated Nigeria's politics and government. Religious differences, inequalities in oil resources among regions and pervasive corruption and poverty have intensified strife. To counteract these divisive forces, Nigeria split its original three regions into 36 autonomous states so diluting the power of the large ethnic groups and enabling a wider distribution of government jobs. It moved its capital from the southern, Christian, Yoruba-dominated city of Lagos to the centrally located, ethnically mixed Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. It distributed revenues more equitably to states to compensate for unequal populations and oil reserves. Nevertheless, ethnic, religious and geographic conflicts have continually turned deadly.

Though a foreigner, Cain exhibits a comprehensive knowledge of the political scene in Nigeria, and did a succinct summary and appraisal, which I find quite truthful. We have not been able to take a truthful stance about our national politics.

RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY

The political analyst cited in the preceding quote, identified religious differences as being a major cause of strife. National stability and integration is about eliminating discord, which is the main focus of this article. Speeches and programmes have been made and conferences organized to bridge gaps and establish good rapport among devotees of various religions. Much as this sounds laudable, the issue at stake is that we need to put religion at bay when it comes to deciding the rights of the individual, especially in a multi-religious society, where notions of human rights are at variance. Religion is a personal and private affair, therefore making it a public affair and adopting it as an excuse to impose on others is the reason for instability. Religious bigotry presents that you are better than others and that you are so intimate with God and he tells you to do and undo in somebody else's life. It is quite questionable that the God whom a person has never seen should tell the person to kill for an eternal reward. Religions

should be upheld for whatever good they can bring to the society and not for the selfish benefits to be gained by the individual who claims that his/her religion can enrich and satisfy him/her in this world or the next at the expense of others. Though Section 3 of the Nigerian Constitution on Fundamental Human Rights is about the sanctity of life, human sacrifices are still practised directly or by proxy by various religions in Nigeria, for mundane and other selfish reasons as procreation, honour and good health.

In his book, *Reclaiming Virtue*, John Bradshaw, stated that moral intelligence is about doing the right thing. Moral intelligence is foundational to any claims of a viable and meaningful religion. After all, we should be able to do an informative and intelligent explanation of what we believe. God's genuine care that we see in nature is what humanity is expected to share with the Creator. John Bradshaw puts it in this remarkable way:

When we genuinely love and care for ourselves we cannot help loving others too and wanting their rights preserved in justice, because they share our humanity and have value in themselves, just as we do. One good test of our care for another is this: are we doing everything in our power to help them achieve their own self-actualization?

As our mutuality is nourished during each stage of our inter personal growth, our caring becomes an empathic desire to experience others from the inside, to walk in their shoes, to see things from their point of view, and to grasp their uniqueness.

Genuine caring for and connectedness with ourselves and virtues. Temperance, honesty, hope, self-love, self-esteem, industriousness, and thrift are virtuous ways we love and care for ourselves. Justice, charity, courage, compassion, responsibility, kindness, and generosity are virtuous ways we care for and become connected to others. Prudence is the engine and governing virtue of them all.

Though John Bradshaw has not identified with any religion in the quote, to my mind, if religion is about the worship of God, who has all the aforementioned virtues, we should therefore seek to have them as part of our lifestyle. In fact, the philosophical positions of Aristotle, Socrates and Plato, or Rousseau, who all gave a foundation to modern political theories, have taken all of the highlighted virtues into consideration. They are absolutes, whose values will never change for as long as the world exists. Of course they are values that are militated against by the pleasure principles as identified by Sigmund Freud. The following explanation of Thomas Aquinas as cited by John Bradshaw is of great value if taught to the Nigerian youth. In his *Summa Theologica* Aquinas presents the integral parts of prudence:

- The humility that moves a person to seek advice and predisposes her to new learning.
- The insight that comes from an informed conscience.
- A rigorous, honest long term memory that allows us to use our past experiences correctly in the present situation.
- The intuitive ability to find the exact mean or balance between extremes.

- Sagacity or expertise in practical reasoning.
- Foresight, the ability to evaluate the future consequences of one's choice
- Circumspection, the ability to consider all the facts surrounding the choice to be made.
- Precaution, the awareness that even seeming good choices may have a hidden potential for evil, and the willingness to probe these possible consequences.

It is important to note that being virtuous is about making a calculated choice to be. Virtue exists not only in the intellect and will but also in the emotions. Emotion plays an indispensable role in choice and judgment. This is supposed to be our reason for doing evaluation in the affective domain in our continuous assessment, but do we give it the time it takes? Since we are sometimes too preoccupied to listen and know what the youth want and for what they are clamouring. The present age is too fast for them to stop and imbibe all the virtues that have been identified above. Instituted religions do not provide answers, but they are sometimes a burden when rights are violated and hypocrisy is celebrated.

GODFATHERISM

This practice dates back to the primitive times of the survival of the fittest, of the prey and predators. The modern practice has its origins in Italian mafia and it is still very much with us but defined and instituted differently so much so that it is accepted as the norm. African governments often have the tendencies to perpetuate themselves as they leave government; they encourage the same kind of persons and styles to succeed them. Houphouët Boigny left his son Konan Bedie in power, who might not have been as performing and respected like “Le Vieux” who hung to power for so long, a fact which actually built up a disgruntled populace and was fundamental to the eventual political war. Longitudinal studies will have us believe that effects of individual, family or political decisions may not be immediately observed but future generations might suffer its aftermath. Zimbabwe seems to be on the same path if care is not taken. If at the age of ninety years Robert Mugabe is not willing to leave government with a free and fair election then it means no younger person is capable of leading the nation. Young people should be given a chance to lead without a godfather influence, with an invisible figure holding the successor on a leash for remote control.

This is not only on the political plane. A very good mother wants to impress the toddler's teacher by given little presents so that the child can be given special attention; after all, it is an expression of gratitude. The hard truth is that workers that are not well-paid jump at these treats and go the extra mile to the neglect of their main tasks, paying attention to the distinguished child while other children are left out. Gradually competition is introduced to the life of the child whose self-esteem should have been protected through equal treatment and attention from caregivers. The poor mother who cannot grease the palm of the teacher is left out, may not even get honored or invited to steer on the school's special programmes or PTA functions. This takes place from primary to university level and explains why political leaders, who are not willing to improve educational standards in public schools, the high cost notwithstanding, put their children in private schools, where they are well taught and with better facilities. A parent should actually

work hard to give his/her child a good and stable future, “we cannot turn over everything to government” as we hear from people, who feel those who are poor have not worked hard enough. Imagine a parent, who loses his/her job because s/he cannot play to the godfatherism or nothing-goes-for-nothing spirit that exists in most work places. The parent becomes jobless and the children are left to suffer. There is no form of redress for such an individual. Except by a providential shift, that family is set for instability and disintegration. Bickering, nagging, aggression and violence set in a pitiable cycle because of the godfatherism syndrome that leaves someone jobless or unemployed.

Taking a cue from the Great Britain, unemployment benefits and social security that provide government housing for individuals who have lost their jobs and have proofs of unemployment have helped to stabilize the society in many fronts. Unemployment benefits cannot take the place of the satisfaction of earning the commensurable salary to one’s training and qualification. It is not an alternative to deploying one’s intelligence and channeling it towards a personal vision and purpose for long term satisfaction and fulfilment. However, such benefits constitute a palliative measure that may keep the society sane and peaceful. Government should ensure jobs for our youths. Very many intelligent youths have been left out of the race for lack of godfathers or influential parents, whose pedigree could make a way for them. Other forms of gratification often used are sexual, monetary or as in inhumane societies where occult practices are rife, the demand of human parts or the death of cherished members of the family of the job, career or promotion seekers. While this act is difficult to comprehend, it has been used to create a classed society, in which only the initiated can progress and make profit. It is a system that allows favoritism and that bends the rules for the benefit of a select few who are corrupt and promote it. We will be able to raise a crop of useful leaders if deserving young graduates, who have worked very hard, are employed and are paid without greasing someone’s palm and without anyone putting in a word for them. Acknowledging merit should supersede whatever honour or gratification we want for ourselves.

MASS ILLITERACY

Education for all is a very good place to start in helping people know their rights and how to read documents that are of enormous importance to their existence. An individual who has not learnt to read the dosage or indications of a particular drug is bound to be poisoned or killed by drug abuse and self-medication. Gaining mastery in any field is a mediating variable in self-esteem and self-confidence and subsequent motivator for achievement in other fields. This might also be linked with learning properly and correctly. Half-baked, certified graduates have presented our educational system as being on the downward drain. If people are properly motivated they may not need to be persuaded about learning. What is encouraging in getting your certificate and tucking it away since there is no use for it with the high rate of employment? Nigerian youths should be praised for their resilience, because a large number still believe working for a higher degree is a predictor of financial success and upward move of their social status. Going by the number admitted yearly into various institutions of higher learning, the Nigerian youth are desperate for success and advancement.

Literacy becomes indispensable in national stability because not being able to communicate with people of other ethnic groups and languages is a primary cause of instability

in Nigeria. The National Youth Service Scheme was set up with one of the objectives being to foster national stability and integration. Recent hiccups experienced by the scheme have made many Nigerians to doubt its continued relevance and usefulness. Much as its goals and its benefits appear attractive and laudable, the present reality of the insecurity in which we live is a reason to demand its stoppage. When corps members are posted to places where education is rejected or hostile places where murderous cultural practices have not been abolished, the lives of such youngsters are endangered. Be that as it may, if the generality of people speak comprehensibly the English language, our official language, suspicions, feuds and rifts will be curtailed. Many stories of mishap in the NYSC scheme and the unrecorded number corps members who get killed are often swept under the carpet. Its pathetic parents who have nursed the hope of enjoying their children have to learn to live with the trauma of unfulfilled desire and loss.

UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Without doubt the main grouse with government by a people of any nation is usually underdevelopment. In developing countries, a great hue and cry is made against governments inappropriate spending, when priorities are discarded and public coffers are depleted for the benefit of a few empowered people. It is very interesting to know that there is no single road that is not cobbled in British suburbs and villages and this is mostly the sight in other European countries. African leaders and particularly Nigerian leaders make these countries their predilection as they seize every opportunity to get rich in order to give themselves the exclusive lifestyle that they observe and partake abroad, while resigning their compatriots to untold hardships from underdevelopment, lack of electricity, dangerous roads, inadequate medical facilities, lack of shelter and potable water to mention a few. It is a paradox that our leaders, who travel abroad and see such breathtaking development come back to continue to perpetuate the grimness of lack and penury. There can never be national stability and integration, where there is underdevelopment and individuals feel they do not matter in a country, where only a segment hang on to national resources and claim it is for their families, associates and region.

FOREIGN INTRUSION AND DISTRACTION

Earlier in this article, the issue of the recommendation that Nigeria should legalise homosexual marriage is broached. The stance by our law makers not to succumb to such blackmail is laudable. Nigeria cannot be an island apart, existing on her own; we need bilateral relations to survive. It is sordid to continue to plough back to the slavery and colonial periods to justify our choice to fail and lack of progress. There were other countries that experienced slavery and colonisation, China and India did. Yet their economy is not import dependent like ours. Why must we perpetually explain our resistance to change by the fact that so many of our artifacts were carted away? Since the independence that we so much desired, what meaningful and durable advancement can we lay claims to? What we see around is retrogression, due to selfish choices by people in power. Those who saw the former semblance of glory should mourn its demise, though it was only a shadow it could have become a reality if it was given the chance to form, but corruption ripped it off at an embryonic stage.

No one can stop the spread of universalism and the attendant issues of cultural

colonization, which has become the order of the day as our youths run after foreign tastes in clothing, food, education, music, and film. Perhaps the tide would have been stemmed if we had given value to our indigenous initiatives. So much has been achieved; however the ever increasing brain drain is of much concern. Being treated as second rate elsewhere is even a better option for our young ones who erroneously believe the best is out there. This fugue has a psychological undertone, as our children feel that the much they see on the internet, cinema and the television constitute a more exciting lifestyle and the reality that they will live better when they stow away and become illegal immigrant somewhere. The verdict is that we permit the intrusion and the distraction because we have not built and developed our own local structure to allow for long lasting and dependable output to benefit the young Nigerians.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA COLLECTED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The items on the questionnaire will be discussed systematically. The items were developed to elicit responses that could make anyone feel the pulse of respondents about the present state of affairs within the country and their opinions about the apparent causes of national instability and disintegration. The respondents are resident in the UK and randomly chosen. The remaining copies of the questionnaire were distributed inflight to Nigerians returning home. The researcher deemed it proper to include them since they had been away to comparatively more organized countries, where they might have seen substantial differences in civilization. The preceding presentation already explains the items included in the questionnaire.

SAMPLING

The sample population was randomly selected, in view of the fact that it was an out-of-station data collection; there were a limited number of respondents but a good spread. The researcher went abroad on a short stay in the United Kingdom and seized the opportunity to distribute the questionnaire to those who are resident there or have been outside Nigeria for a while and could therefore give an unbiased view of the present state of affairs in Nigeria. A total number of twenty (20) respondents participated in the study. There was no discrimination about the nationality as long as they were willing to participate. The nationalities were the following:

Nationalities	Numbers
British	5
British/Nigerians	3
Ghanaian	1
Nigerians	10
Irish	1

50% of the respondents fell within the age range of 35-55. 70% affirm they have a lot of

knowledge about Nigeria; their source of information is the media. On the personal data is a slot for the respondents' religion, this is in view of item 6, in which it specifically requires the opinion of respondents about "bigotry". The item was carefully worded in order to elicit an objective response in view of the present serious religious instability in the country occasioned by the Boko Haram sect. 30% of the respondents were not sure that religious bigotry blinds Nigerians to the importance of the National Constitution and its relevance for daily living. 25% agree and 25% strongly agree. It is evident that a merger of 25% and 25% strongly agree gives 50%, indicating that half the sample populations understands that religious bigotry is bad and a large number of people are not knowledgeable about the essence of the National Constitution. Evidently so many criminal acts in the society are linked to cultural practices that might have been latent due to missionary activities. Recent resurgence of such practices has led to ritual killings or religious strives as typified by the Boko Haram carnage in the Northern parts of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF ITEMS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Items 1 -3 are intended to elicit opinions about the counseling of young people in Nigeria. Would it make any difference to the stability of the country if young people were counseled? Could our educational system be ordered in such a way that young people are properly integrated into national life before they leave school? School curricula should put in place rubrics that teach the history of Nigeria, civics and our rights and responsibilities as early as pre-primary. For item 1, 55% agree and 30% strongly agree with counseling people for national stability and integration for its positive effects. 40% disagree with item 2 that instability in Nigeria is basically a problem of mass illiteracy. It presupposes that people do not have to be educated to work towards stability if they were better informed as 50% claim. This point of view clearly opposes the principle of sociology that the child must learn outside the confines of the home in order to get integrated into the society. Changes in the society have proved that the child would be narrow-minded if the exposure was limited. Hence if from early childhood to university the child is taken through various experiences in respect of fundamental human rights, ethics, etiquette, good manners, individual and corporate responsibility, our society should be more progressive, peaceful and livable.

Items 4-6 highlight our value system which affect our thinking and attitude towards others, why should anyone behave impolitely to others? For what reason would a person intrude in someone else's life uninvited? For whose benefit is it, when an individual suffers the trauma of being encroached upon? Of course, all of these attitudes stem from lack of respect for the dignity of the other person and a psychological faiblesse to cover up one's own inferiority or superiority complex. Underneath such aggressive tendencies as imposing on another is a complex which must be taken care of. Left unbridled many people have committed serious crimes in a bid to impose their own views and wishes. Sometimes, these tendencies are directly related to religious fanaticism and bigotry which are largely responsible for the insurgency in the Northern parts of Nigeria. Aggressive behaviours may be due to a feeling of inadequacy in the individual.

Foremost in our social interaction should be the act of respecting the fundamental rights of others. But how would people know that it is clearly stated in the Constitution what their rights are? Nigerians should be informed about their legal rights and the contents of the

Constitution. They need to know that they could get legal aid. The feeling of apathy makes people doubt if things would ever get better in a place where sorcery could not be prosecuted. The confessed sorcerer or voodoo practitioner is deemed sick mentally, while the victim who describes esoteric sensations and manipulations is also considered mentally inept. How then can people be made to see that being good to fellow human beings should be the ultimate goal of all humans and that no one should derive joy from the sadness of another? This is where programmed counseling sessions are mandatory for our youths and where parents should be incorporated in order to corroborate the efforts of the school. But which better guidance can a young person have than observing the significant persons in his life, parents and guardians and leaders model the desirable behaviours? After all, charity begins at home. Hence, parents and guardians have a fundamental role to play in integrating the youths into the larger society, in the development of the “we feeling” which gives him/her a sense of belonging and responsibility, not only to his/her family but to the larger society.

Items 7-15 touch on governance and what might be better done to make Nigeria a truly democratic state, where justice, fairness and ethnic equality are values that are promoted for national integration. They distinguish causes of national instability and the poor integration of youths as beyond the individual, but a case of leadership. If a youth has been trained by parents to graduation from school and he becomes a lay-about, so many problems are created in the process. Numerous psychological and stressful conditions are experienced both by the parents and the unemployed, some of whom though may be from good homes, would end up with split personality and a double-standard life. A new set of values must be taught to the youth at this challenging stage of his life. Needless to say that the foundation of proper guidance from early childhood through adolescence should suffice in helping a youth cope with different throes of stressors that may be engendered by joblessness.

Underdevelopment is so much a bane to national stability. For instance youth corps members who are posted to underdeveloped parts of the country have a lot to contend with, lack of electricity, potable water, medical care, internet and telephonic access to mention a few. There are no possibilities that such a situation could aid the integration of the youth, who will do everything s/he can to seek redeployment to another place. Apart from the economic waste of brain drain, if such a large number of unemployed young people are left unattended, a chaotic situation is in the offing. One would be appalled by the fact that since Nigeria became independent in 1960, no viable and adequate system has been put in place to ensure the welfare of Nigerians. The arbitrary projects to alleviate poverty are too momentary and temporary to inspire long term changes and solutions. So far, having practised abinitio, the capitalist system of “whoever gets rich, no matter how” it is important to see the welfare system as being more appropriate for the present Nigeria and for the stability of the nation and the integration of our youths, who should feel they owe much to their country and are therefore committed to nation building. A cycle of permanent corruption is set in motion when a leader leaves office and the successor wants to enrich himself/herself as much as the predecessor. These practices are carried out under the nose of Nigerians, who cannot arrest or change the situation. The same leaders ensure that their family members and their chosen favorites have large chunks of national funds. This spirit of myself and mine, accounts for the segregationists’ tendencies. Perhaps we have come a long way in denouncing money politics as news reports make us know that some

members of the electorate rejected bribes or accepted them only to vote for a candidate of their choice. It is not surprising that after these politicians have spent so much money in order to get into power, they want to recoup all from the nation's coffers. Ethnic jingoists spend so much money and throw their weight behind their candidates, so that the evil wheel of discrimination, segregation, tribalism, nepotism, and favoritism can continue to roll.

Short of painting a sordid picture of the national polity, it is quite necessary to present that the future of Nigerian youths is tied to a better restructuring of government and a good use of our resources. Think of a youngster from a poor family who has put in so much sacrifice to succeed against the odds of the social status of his/her family, of poverty, inadequate shelter, undernourishment and all the attendant psychological problems and complexes but ends up unemployed. The disillusionment is unparalleled for both the parents and the child. Quite often ladies end up prostituting abroad or at home, become drug traffickers, only to rot away unidentified in some prisons of the world, those become housewives may count themselves lucky to have a husband, who aggresses them at the slightest provocation, abuse them sexually or deprive them of their rights. It is inimical to our national growth that a young lady could not benefit from her education, because of discrimination or that government has no plan for her, meanwhile her parents had looked forward to a new life that a good job should bring. The anticipated remuneration is often the motivator that propels any learner through. It is sad and ironical that a fresh graduate with no significant income is asked to pay as much as four hundred and fifty thousand or more in order to get employed. Where would s/he ever get enough money to refund the sum loaned to pay bribe, assuming s/he got a loan? For what duration would s/he have to pay the loan? What would s/he have left at the end of the month?

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that so much of the reparation and development processes will come from government. Some recommendations were made in the course of the discussion, nevertheless the issue of unemployment is quite monumental and a threat to national peace and stability. Those youths who have the funds get set up by family into a business, but what might the prospects be in the face of competition and inexperience? It is in this wise that I strongly request that government should look into the possibility of a permanent welfare programme that takes care of the unemployed, who have proofs of citizenship, who have gone through structured school training and who present evidences of their low estate. The allowance should not be too much for it is not meant to be an end in itself. However, the continuous empowerment programmes and creations of jobs should give new vistas of hope and independence to the young ones.

It should be reiterated that consistent moral instruction and group counseling should be a regular feature at all school levels and it is particularly needful in higher institutions of learning, where undergraduates blinded by their freedom commit atrocious crimes. Programmed counselling and moral instruction should corroborate the effort of religious leaders, who should be encouraged to live true to their claims and lay emphasis on virtues and lasting values of human rights and dignity. Tribal intermarriage, laudable as it may be is sometimes complicated by cultural sentiments. Culture is dynamic; otherwise we would be living in caves, relishing human flesh and going about naked. As we mingle with people from other cultures, the crudities

in ours should give way to more refined practices that we perceive and learn from others.

TABLE FOR THE GENERAL COMMENTS OF RESPONDENTS

Of the twenty respondents only fourteen provided liberal comments on the possible causes of national instability and made significant recommendations.

	Nationality	Education	Occupation	Level of information about Nigeria	On causes of instability	Suggestion
1	Nigerian	Masters	Entrepreneur	A lot	Our value system, Corrupt leaders, Mono economy, Grassroots (local Government) neglect	Re-orientate ourselves; educate the new generation on how the country should be governed and on good morals; respect the rule of law.
2	Nigerian	BSc	Contracts & Commissioning Assistant	A lot	Corruption	Corruption should be alleviated.
3	Nigerian/ British	Masters	Business Owner	A lot	Warped mindset, lack of empowerment of youths	We should encourage inclusiveness and also encourage a selfless devotion to change and national service.
4	Nigerian	University Degree	IT Project Manager	A lot	Terrorism	Reduce the margin between the rich and poor through enabling

5	Nigerian		Business	A lot	Corruption	If there is love and fear of God, things will work well.
6	Nigerian	B.Sc Accounting	Hotelier	A lot	Corruption	Unity and duty to serve the nation without biases.
7	Nigerian/ British	PhD	Director	A lot	Foreign Intrusion	To educate our people about the influence of foreign powers destabilizing the country – by using “International Assistance” blackmail.
8	Nigerian	PhD	University teaching	A lot	Political corruption	Citizenship education should be enhanced. Ethnic/tribal and religious differences should be discouraged.
9	Nigerian	HND	Personal Shopper	A lot	Corruption, Fear of freedom of speech, Citizen welfare, poverty	Educate people and protection assurance when views are aired. Grassroots development and elderly and children welfare and care.

10	Ghanaian	PhD	University lecturer	Very little, rumours	Civil education, Self-discipline and corporate discipline, strengthening national and local institutions.	Citizenship education should be enhanced. Ethnic, tribal and religious differences should be discouraged.
11	British	GSCE, (student)	Ride Operator	Very little	Biased and prejudicial opinions, religion, leaders with incorrect priorities.	Stage a series of campaign (non-violent protests) and demonstrations to the leaders.
12	British	Diploma	unemployed	A lot	Selfishness of the leaders.	They should improve education matters and provide job for everyone.
13	Nigerian	B.Sc.	Civil Servant	A lot	Every issue has been covered.	By appointing qualified individuals to manage national funds. By monitoring the people appointed if they are performing their duties appropriately.
14	British	B.Sc.	Civil Servant	A lot	None that I can think of.	Transparency and accountability.

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT ENVISAGED BY SOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

Question C3 pointedly asked what contribution the respondent would make as a patriotic Nigerian to national stability and integration. Several ideas stated below have been mooted which I believe should help our youth choose what to do to enhance their participation in

national growth.

No 1 respondent:

- People should stop blaming the top but rather sort our individual problems from our homes.
- We should have a common ground and respect rule of law.
- Young people in politics and economic affairs should be motivated.
- We should be accountable and have more discipline to move Nigeria forward.

No 2 respondent:

- Integrity of individuals and families will go a long way in reducing corruption.

No 3 respondent:

- I can contribute by educating people on changing their mindset and developing a corporate citizenship so as to ethically contribute to the nation's development.

No 4 respondent:

- Maybe establish a scheme that also focuses on non-graduates.

No 5 respondent:

- Let all Nigerians seek the face of God and things will normalize.

No 6 respondent:

- My contribution is to obey laws and orders and to report any suspicious moves by any persons or groups of people.

No 7 respondent:

- I'll like to work with our women and girls to "educate a woman means educating a nation." They are the home starters for the future generation.

No 8 respondent:

- Everybody should be sincere to one another. While ethnicity and religion should be set aside.

No 9 respondent:

- Good job, education and security for everyone. (This was by a British. One understands that he has seen much of this in his own society.)

No 10 respondent:

- Doing the right things for other Nigerian to emulate. Having the right attitude that will give Nigeria a good name.

Some of the contributions envisioned by the respondents were duplicated. Nevertheless, an analysis indicates that many well-meaning Nigerians have laudable ideals. But will such ever be realized? This is apparently the concern of most Nigerians be they in the country or in the diaspora.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PROMOTION OF NATIONAL STABILITY AND INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

Dear Respondent

Kindly fill this questionnaire as truthfully as you can. It is a research focussed on the importance of national stability and integration in Nigeria.

Thank you

Dr (Mrs.) O. F. Siwoku-Awi

A. PERSONAL DATA

1. Age range 15-25 25-35 35-55 55 above

2. Sex Male Female

3. Occupation -----

4. Level of education -----

5. Religion -----

- 6 Nationality-----
 7 How much of Nigeria do you know? A lot Very little
 8 What is your source of information? Media Rumours

B.

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1. We would have stability if we had good educational system and counselling facilities.					
2. Instability in Nigeria is basically a problem of mass illiteracy.					
3. Most Nigerians are not well informed about national issues.					
4. Our values do not lay emphasis on our individual and corporate responsibility.					
5. Every Nigerian is selfish and does not have a sense of responsibility towards others.					
6. Religious bigotry blindfolds Nigerians to the importance of the National Constitution and its relevance for daily living.					
7. Perhaps the reason for instability is underdevelopment.					
8. Nigerian leaders have been more interested in irrelevant issues to national integration.					
9. National disintegration has been caused by leaders who do not spend national funds judiciously.					
10. Godfatherism and favoritism have placed persons without goodwill and vision in leadership.					
11. Segregationists' tendencies have affected our national stability.					
12. Money politics often places the wrong set of people in power.					
13. There is ethnic imbalance in Federal political representation.					
14. There is a lot of discrimination in the public system.					

15. Most of our national problems are due to foreign intrusion.					
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C.

1. What other causes of national instability have not been covered by this questionnaire?.....
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2. What do you propose should be done to improve national stability and integration?.....
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3. What contribution would you make as a patriotic Nigerian to national stability and integration?.....
.....
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