

THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The role of Guidance Counsellors in promoting good governance, democratic stability cannot be overemphasized. It is in the light of this reality that this paper examined the following sub-headings. The concept of Guidance Counselling, what is good governance? value of good governance and democratic stability. The roles performed by guidance counselor, suggested roles, if performed by the guidance counselor will help in promoting good governances for national security. Some of the challenges of good governances were highlighted after which suggestion/recommendations and conclusions were made. Consequently, these recommendations include the following: The three tiers of government should endeavour to provide money for conferences, workshops, seminars both local and international levels to help the Nigeria citizen get more exposed to good governance and democracy in practical way than theory within the country and it could be organized in different communities for the security purpose through the Counsellors.

Keywords: Guidance and counseling, Counsellors' Role, Good Governance, National Security, Challenges, Nigeria

Guidance simply put is the utilization of a point of view in order to help an individual. Anagbogu (2002), in Ogbodo (2017) states that guidance is to guide, pilot and direct an individual when he is not sure or when he cannot take a decision. Guidance aims aiding the client to grow in his independence and ability to be responsible for himself. It is universal as it can be found in all spheres of life including the homes, where it is informal in shape and practice, in school, industry, social life, in government and other human endeavour. Amadi (1991), in Ogbodo, (2019) defines Guidance as helping, aiding, directing or assisting an individual towards better understanding of himself and his world, which leads to adjustment for the individual. Denga (2004) in Tor-Anyii (2018) asserts that a person seeking guidance possesses immense resources or potentials that can be utilized, regulating himself, planning his goals and maximizing his talents. Such as person may however, be confused, troubled, devastated, momentarily frustrated or worried about problems and uncertainties. He may thus, need a dialogue with an expert in problems resolution for the purpose of clarification, empathy, encouragement and reassurance.

On the other hand, counseling denotes a wide range of procedures which includes advices giving, support in time of trouble or need, encouragement, information giving and test interpretation (Oladele 1987), cited in Ogbodo, (2019). According to Thompson and Pappen (1972), in Tor-Anyii (2018), counselling is a person-to-person relationships in which one person helps another to resolve an area of conflict that has not been hitherto resolved. The helper in the relationship is by virtue of his experience and training. In the same vein,

counsellor is a person who tries to assist the client in becoming an independent person capable of resolving his conflict situations. Okonkwo (2006/2007), cited in Sambo, (2016), opines that counselling is a process of helping a troubled person to understand himself and his world so as to feel and behave in a more personally satisfying way.

What is Good Governance?

Good Governance can be defined as the exercise of political power to promote the public good and the welfare of the people. The public good incorporates the norms or values of a free, just, ordered and law-governed society as well as those of happiness and the good life (Nwabueze, 2002), Ake, (2014). Democratic and good governance are indisputably complementary and mutually self-reinforcing. It is noteworthy that the quest for democracy and good government in Nigeria came as a response to the political uncertainty and arbitrariness occasioned by military authoritarian rule. This was characterized largely by misuse of power, lack of accountability in governance, corruption, political repression, suffocation of civil society, and denial of fundamental human right. Democracy can benefit from good governance as much as good governance can benefit from democracy.

In order to reinforce the inter-relationship between democracy and good governance, we invoke the definition of democracy given by Larry Diamond et. Ali (1998), in Ugwu, (2016) .it proposes that Democracy implies:“meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and recognized groups (especially political parties) for all effective position of government power. A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies at least through regular, free and fair elections, such that no major social group is excluded. A level of civil and political liberties, (freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join political associations and organizations) will be sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation”.

The Role of Guidance and Counselling in Good Governance

Guidance and Counselling is defined in this paper from the educational construct point of view. It is perceived as a “means of providing within educational setting experiences that help pupils to better self-understanding and self-actualization” (Nwachukwu, 2000:6) in Nwachukwu (2015). This perspective of meaning is adopted in this paper because of its comprehensive meaning.

It sees Guidance and Counseling as education. Thus, its scope embraces preventive, educative, as well as curative programmes both for immediate and future needs. Understanding Guidance and Counseling from this point of view makes its services very relevant to the achievement of the desirable political environment discussed above. This will in turn promote the survival of good governance in Nigeria. This understanding of the meaning and scope of Guidance and Counselling therefore makes great demands on guidance counsellors to contribute effectively to every aspect of the nation’s life. It demands assistance from professional Guidance Counsellors to the populace to enable them to develop those value and attitude that will be able to meet ethical, spiritual, social and political requirements for good governance in Nigeria. Guidance Counsellors can help the populace to acquire these desirable values and attitudes that will promote good governance in Nigeria by playing the following specific roles: Promoting inter-ethnic group understanding and co-operation. The need for this in a cultural and ethnic plural state like Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. This

assertion is especially true when one recalls that parochial ethnic knowledge leads to marginalization of people from other ethnic groups, gives rise to development of irrational ideas on anything about people from other ethnic groups, and finally leads to their dehumanization. These happen because parochial ethnic knowledge narrows down one's perception of the world to one's own ethnic group alone and beclouds one's visions of the rights and goodness of members of other ethnic groups (Agbakwuru, 1999) in Ugwu, (2016).

When this happens a basis of conflict in the political system is created. The Guidance counselor must therefore promote inter-ethnic group understanding and co-operation among his clients. He must strive to detribalize his clients. Every manifest act of ethnicity must be confronted and substituted with rational and socially acceptable behaviours and beliefs. In the school setting, the counselor can do this by encouraging students exchange programmes, spending one's holidays outside one's ethnic group, helping students to understand and appreciate the similarities between their ethnic group and other ethnic groups in the country and widening the similarities and narrowing the dissimilarities. Furthermore, counselors must also inculcate in their clients the 1948 United Nations Organization Declaration on Human Rights which states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

The counselor should also inculcate such virtues such as tolerance, co-operation, patriotism, selflessness, honesty, etc. among his clients. The achievement of this calls for proper socialization of children. It demands the introduction of Guidance and Counselling early in the child's educational career. This takes is therefore a challenge to the Counseling Association of Nigeria to bring pressure to bear on the Federal Government with view to institutionalizing formal Guidance and Counselling Services in the nation's primary schools. Values Re-orientation Programmes should be designed by Guidance Counselors and also pursued

vigorously. The purpose of this programme is to help the general public change or unlearn those negative impulses, which must be substituted with socially desirable behaviours and attitudes like tolerance, selflessness, accountability, love social justice, patriotism, etc. Guidance Counsellor must also sensitize the populace through different awareness programmes on those factors that were responsible for the collapse of our previous democratic experiments and the need for us to be constantly on guard against them. Mass mobilization of children youth and illiterate adults to avail themselves of the opportunity offered by the Universal Basic Education Scheme to become literate should be embarked upon by counselors. The need for counselors to embark on this mobilization exercise is based on the fact that the attainment of the level of functional literacy is pre-requisite to an individual's meaningful participation in the political process of one's society. This is in addition to the fact that literacy develops the individual's latent potentials and moral character for meaningful contribution to national peace, progress, and governmental processes.

Olayinka (1976) in Ogbodo, (2019), opines that students need counselling at various levels of their educational development because most of the times. They feel unhappy, unable to meet their needs, perplexed, disappointed, confused and frustrated especially when they experience failure in their studies. Since students encounter some of the problems listed above in the school. It becomes imperative that academic counseling be provided for them to assist individual to make the most of his educational opportunities. Counselling is expected to

prepare an individual for participation in a life activity which will be socially useful and personally satisfying.

Guidance and Counselling could therefore be seen as opportunities that could be enjoyed by students, policy makers, planners, counsellors, teachers, parents and other stakeholders for life transformation.

The Roles Performed by the Guidance Counsellors

MaringSams and Guyerrain Okonkwo (2007), cited in Ogbodo, (2017), state the function of the school counsellor, which are in line with the philosophy and vision of founding fathers of school counseling as: Providing students with accurate information about the world of work and existing career opportunity. Appraising students to make appropriate career choices for self-actualization, encouraging students to broaden their options as a precaution to future changes in career opportunities and the job market. Acknowledge the influence of diverse multi-cultural issues.

Guidance counsellors are required to perform excellently the various roles which law and tradition are assigned to them. It is important to state that, they teach, guide, lead, assist and pilot. According to Okonkwo (2007), Ogbodo, (2017), the roles are many and they include; instruction, guidance, counseling, problem solving etc.

Presently, the world is full of changes, instability, and uncertainty. In this context, the role of the guidance counselor is to mobilize the individual for personal-social, vocational and educational development, which will in turn lead to national integration through increase in real income per capital. The role of the guidance counsellors are summed up as follows: Appraisal Service, Orientation Service, Information Service, Placement Service, Research Service, Referral Service, Counselling Service, In-service Programme, Follow up, Evaluation Service, The Guidance Curriculum Service, Individual Planning, Responsive Service and System Support Service.

Suggested Roles of a Counsellors in Promoting Good Governance

Other programme and activities, which the guidance counsellor can carry out to help in promoting good governance according to some scholars such as Denga (2004), Okonkwo (2007), Ogbodo (2017/2019) are as follows: Organizing a short-term residential camps for the students and non-students, arranging for inter-state youth exchange programme, organizing for symposia and seminars on issues relevant to national integration, organizing multi-cultural activities on the theme of good governance, undertaking of research and publications on issues relevant to national integration, undertaking of community service by youth drawn from different regions, backgrounds and faith, planning execution on national youth festival, National Youth Award and organizing leadership-training camps for youth drawn from different region, backgrounds and faith.

National Orientation Camp

Counsellors organize short-term residential camps to confine the students (youths) in order to instill in them the spirit of good governance, through various activities, such as: Groups Discussions, Debates, Lectures, Essay and Elocution competitions on the theme for national integration. Counsellor should get involved in planning other community activities

life, Mass Literacy Campaigns, Anti-drug Campaigns, Health Awareness and Environmental Campaigns. They should also be involved in other activities, which do not require a expedition such as: reading and learning from scripture of various religious and books, which inspire the promotion of governance. This is why Elemi (2002), in Nwachkwu, (2015), opines that literature becomes a process through which the deep-rooted thoughts, speeches and actions of men are translated into symbols that could be adequately understood and shared by any society.

Inter State Unity, Youth and Students Exchange programme

The counsellor organizes this programme to facilitate the visit of youth living and working in one state or another with marked cultural differences. This is to help the youth to familiarize with the youth's environment, family life and social customs of the people living in different part of the country. It will also help to understand some common historical and cultural heritage of the country, as well as the problem facing the people of different regions (Okonkwo 2007) in Ogbodo (2017).

On getting there, they should undertake a variety of programmes life cultural programmes, seminars, discussions, and informal meetings. They join their hosts in social development, they take up community work, they participate in regional festival, they equally visit historical importance and sites of important developmental projects.

Organization of Symposia and Seminary's on Issues Relevant to Good Governance

This is to promote the idea of good governance among the youths in particular and among the masses in general, through lectures and discussions. This will go along way to support William (1988), in Anagbogu (2012) observation, that without a comprehensive counselling and guidance programme to address the needs of all students, developmental needs are overlooked and students unable to state their needs fall through the cracks. Symposia or seminary should be on topics relevant to national integration. Normally, a symposium or seminary should be of one day duration. The place should be easily accessible to all young people, free of cost and without any restrictions. The important dignitaries should be invited to share their thoughts on the topics chosen for the seminar.

Organization of Multi-cultural Activities on the Theme of Good Governance

This will promote the spirit of national integration among the youth in particular and among the masses in general through cultural activities. Gysbers (1990), in Elemin, (2013) observes that comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes call for counsellors reduced involvement in administrative and clerical work. They place counsellors in few one-on-one counselling situations. At the same time they strengthen counsellors accountability for effectively helping all students prepare for the world beyond high school. The participants should be staging plays (drama) and dance –drama, organizing musical sessions, film show, story and / or poetry recital sessions, exhibitions, and similar other sessions of workshops as may be enshrined in the rich cultural heritage of Nigerians, on one hand and do away with the regional, linguistic and religious barriers on the other.

Undertaking of Research and Publication on Issues Relevant to Good Governance

These activities will be, to delve into the labyrinth of political and philosophical thoughts of Nigerians greatest statement and seers which have a bearing on our precious cultural and spiritual heritage and to publish such research material for the benefit of the young and old. The research work will last for a maximum of one year duration in a suitable field to promote national integration and publications in journals and books of reading.

Organization of Leadership Training Camp for Youths Drawn from Different Region, Backgrounds and faith

This is to train an identified group of youths, in order to inculcate in them a spirit of national unity in such a manner that each member of the group is able to spread the idea in his locality and such other locations where need may arise. Industrial leaders claim that post-secondary students are not graduating with the “basic skills” needed for success at work and at home, (Carrevale et al: 1988) cited in Okonkwo (2006) in Ogbodo, (2017). This will be done through lectures, group discussion, practice sessions etc.

Challenges of Good Governance

In Nigeria, there are three major linguistic groups, known as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. They are found in Northern, Eastern and Western parts of the country respectively. They are all clamouring for a share in the national cake. Nigeria has almost 104 million inhabitants with population density of about 800 people per square kilometer, as judged by the 1995 census. The problems have been that of religious intolerance, tribal loyalties, political instability and all forms of vices, which have militated against the development. Okon (1984), in Denga (2004), cited in Ogbodo, (2019), opines that the survival of Nigeria as a nation depends largely on our degree of tolerance not only in economic, social and political stability but to a large extents, on the ability of every citizen to possess some measure of common understanding, attitudes, beliefs, skills and purposes. This attribute can be inculcated in youth very early in their educational development. Thus, the inevitability of guidance and counselling in this respect cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion

Having critically considered the theme if this submission, the writer is inclined to say that our challenges is on good governance which simply means the task of creating condition which will ultimately transform the nations human and natural resources. It must be admitted that counsellors have discovered a shortcut to solving the challenges of developing nations. hence, if the roles enumerate are adopted, Nigeria will be a better place to live in.

Suggestions/Recommendations

In view of the roles of guidance counsellors in the different spectrum of human endeavours, efforts should be made elevating it as a vital component in promotion of good governance. Government should endeavour to provide fund for workshops, seminars and symposia to be organized in different communities or regions whereby counsellors address the session. The guidance and counseling unit should gather professionally trained counselors for behaviour modification of the youth in facet of the society.

Government should make the study of Guidance and Counselling free to enable more students to graduate as counsellors. There should be media awareness to the public through television, radio and newspapers for available Guidance and Counseling programmes for the youth. Government, private and Non-governmental organizations should employ guidance counsellors within their establishments. Departments, banks and international agencies should support government in maintaining and sustaining free education for the Nigerian Youths. Non-governmental organization (NGO), the media, trade unions, employers of labour should be mobilized to monitor conditions in which people work and campaign against poor conditions of service.

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