

## **Counseling Students Against Cultism And Its Preventive Measure In The Institutions**

**Dr. Otakpo Chile<sup>1</sup>; John-Nelson Ihuoma<sup>2</sup> & Wike Confidence Obunwo<sup>3</sup>**

**Faculty of Education  
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

<sup>1</sup>[angelchile300@gmail.com](mailto:angelchile300@gmail.com); 07067884802

<sup>2</sup>[ihuomanelsonjohn@gmail.com](mailto:ihuomanelsonjohn@gmail.com); 08152248622

<sup>3</sup>[Obunwo83@gmail.com](mailto:Obunwo83@gmail.com); 07030812669

### **ABSTRACT**

The work examined students' activities towards cult and characteristics of the cult members such as indulging in secret meetings at odd hours. The study further examined the types of cults such as religion and satanic cult. It also discussed the functions of cult groups such as killing of opponents and embarking on evil missions. The paper highlighted the aims and objectives of cult groups such as initiation of new members that takes place in the forest and to gain respect. Further, it discussed the dangers of joining cults such as untimely death and character assassination. The work discussed the preventive measures such as regular orientation programmes to be organized for students as a means of sensitizing them against cultism. Finally, the study recommended that government should come up with strict laws and school heads should ensure that there is standing policy on cultism.

**Keywords:** Counselling, students, cultism, preventive measure.

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the problems bedeviling Nigerian educational system is the practice of cultism. Nigerian institutions are swimming on the ocean of cult activities perpetrated by the student (Mohammed, 2011). The campus cults in the institutions are involved in a variety of ill-activities. They perform rituals, holding of secret meetings and also involved in addressing political issues both within and outside campus set up. They are involved in all kinds of prohibiting activities in the campus such as ceremonial sacrifices, settling of disputes among students and raping of female students in the campus. The university authorities see or calls them secret cult because they are known as group of people that takes laws into their hands.

Campus cults started in the year 1953 with the formation of pyrates confraternity by Wole Soyinka and few others at the University of Ibadan. The mission of Wole Soyinka and his cohorts is to act as a formidable body that will assist oppressed students and ensure the right things is done in the University not killing or engaging on sacrifices that is forbidding in the University. But, the good objective of Wole Soyinka and others have turn to hijacking and re-naming of the confraternity as "secret cult". Whose agreement is to intimidate, victimize, stealing, raping and perfection of other social vices. Consequent upon this, Nigerian campus have turn into theatre of war and other criminal activities by the so called undergraduate youth.

Cultism has eaten deep into the fabric of our institutions and the ignorant of student in promoting cultism in the institutions has become a source of concern that should be properly looked into by the Government and school authorities. In the foregoing, cult activities have cross-carpeted to secondary schools in Nigeria. Secondary School students organized fighting among themselves which has given birth to formation of secret cults name as "Dey Ban" and "Dey well". Others are "Area boys", Avengers just to mention but a few. Presently, learning in schools lacks security and protection because of the activities of the unfortunate generation student. Life is valueless in the eyes of cultist and they do not respect God.

Nigeria institutions are in the hands of disgruntle elements that do not mean well for the society. School authorities fundamental rights has been infringed by nonentities whose target is to destroy and kill. Government should review the security architecture in order to bring the menace to a halt. Daniel (2013) opined that cultism in all ramifications is a prohibited activity whose reward is aimed at untimely death. He advised the student in institution to avoid belonging to prohibited group that will impune their integrity. A more concise definition is given by Ajoku (2020) who sees a cult as a group of people who cherish and believe in certain ideas and ethical conduct, which is known and effected only by the members.

Cults worldwide are to be distinguished by some key features. Ndu (2018) as cited in Morenda – Joe (2014) identifies three of such characteristics:

1. There are inscriptions of different designs on the bodies of members.
2. Each cult has her own unique dressing style or pattern.
3. Pericom, a world's leading cult expert (on-line), has contributed that all cults are based firstly on a thought – reform programme which aims at diluting people's individuality modifying their core belief systems and altering their concept themselves. Techniques used to obtain the sixth feature (also known as Groupthink) include the following:

1. **Vulnerability:** Cults believes on the vulnerability and naivety of the person, who is unaware of the indoctrination process being applied.
2. **Uncertainty:** A tool often used by cults is human aversion to uncertainty. Members supply ready-made answers for everything, thus helping to reduce insecurity and fear, while victims are expected to be unquestioning in their commitment to the group's identity.
3. **Mentoring:** Personal mentors are often appointed to make new members lose confidence in their own perceptions and opinions and gradually moving towards uniting and mind-control.
4. **Denial:** Just as nobody decides to join a cult (except in a very few cases), cult members never think or admit they are one.

### **The Functions of Cult Groups**

Wale (2019) highlighted the followings as functions of cult groups: they are as follows:

1. They kill their opponents.
2. They embark on deadly mission.
3. They are used as thugs during election.
4. They engage on kidnapping, raping and stealing.

### **Aims and Objectives of Cult Groups**

Badey (2018) listed the aims and objectives of cult groups. They are as follows:

1. Initiation of new members that takes place in the forest or isolated building. The initiation involves serious torture or drilling of the new member and finally taking of blood oath and other underground activities that is known to them.
2. To serve as protection to other members and so on.
3. To assume or claim supremacy.
4. To achieve their aims with ease or without struggle.
5. To gain unmerited respect and serve as an intimidation to others.

### **Aims of Joining Cults**

Ndu (2010) highlighted factors responsible for joining cults. These are as follows:

1. To be recognized as a hard man in the campus.
2. To create fear in the minds of people.
3. To gain respect and recognition in the campus.
4. To have easy access to female of their choice.

### **Consequences of Joining Cults**

Ven (2018) listed the dangers of joining cults. They are as follows:

1. It leads to untimely death.
2. It damages one's reputation or integrity in the society or institution.
3. It brings isolation to the person.

4. It also leads to character assassination.
5. It demeans one's personality.

#### **Punishment of a cult member in the institution**

Danbra (2016) listed the followings as the punishment. They are as follows:

1. If apprehended as a cult member, the person will be asked to forget about his admission and go home.
2. The victim will be remanded in correctional centre.

#### **Preventive Measures of Cultism in the Institution**

Dealing with cultism involved a multi-dimensional approach considered its barbaric nature that centres on deadly consequences. The underlisted are the techniques of dealing with it. They are as follows:

1. Consistent orientation programmes should be organized or arranged for fresh students as a means of sensitizing them against cultism, and to prepare them with skills to say No to it.
2. Institutions should be provided with trained counsellors to assist students who have problems. Teachers should work in synergy with counsellors in order to trace the victims and proffer solutions to their problem.
3. Institutions should create a conducive environment attached with security officers that will serve as a threat to them in order to denounce membership of a cult.
4. Heads of schools should campaign against cultism and get deeply involved in organizing seminars that will help students shun cultism. They should intimate them on the dangers and its reward.
5. Government at the local, state and federal should come up with strict laws that aims at life imprisonment to any cult member.
6. Institutions should come up with vigilante group that will not give secret cult members chance to perfect their evil.
7. Religious organizations should also assist in consulting God to help address issues of cultism in the institutions.

#### **Concept of Cultism**

The view is made up of definitions given to the concept of cultism. However for purposes of this write-up, a few of such definitions will be examined as they relate to our peculiar circumstance.

Pedro (2019) defines the concept of cultism very elaborately. According to him, a cult is a group or movement exhibiting excessive devotion or commitment to some person, idea or thing, and recruiting unethical manipulative or coercive techniques of persuasion and control (e.g isolation from former friends and family, debilitation, use of special methods to heighten suggestibility and subservience, powerful group pressures, information management supervision of individuality or critical judgement and fear of leaving it), established to advance the goals of the group's leaders, to the actual or possible detriment of members, their communities or families. Dango (2018) defines cult as a group of people who believes in certain agreement and ethical conduct, which is known and regulate the activities of the members.

#### **Characteristics of Cult Members**

Stephen (2015) identifies five characteristics of cult members:

1. Members indulge in secret meetings at eleventh hours or odd hours.
2. Members acquire dangerous weapons such as daggers, axes, guns, cutlass and masks, which are used during initiations or attack.
3. Members have a dressing code or pattern.
4. Members operate with difficult language that can only understood by them.
5. They have their own song and signs used in communication among themselves.
6. They are as gentle as dove.
7. They operate within the ambit of their constitution.

#### **Types of Cults**

Casin (2019) listed the following as types of cult we have. They are as follows:

1. **Cults of the youth:** The concern of these is the youth. They practice what other youths do.

2. **Political cults:** This type of cult cannot be predicted. Political cults or members can swerve to another party learn, which cannot tolerated in the institution cult.
3. **Cults of age group:** This type of cult believes on a target goal to achieve and development.
4. **Cults of religion:** They operate with a behaviour of a religious group and things are done according to hierarchy.
5. **Delivilish cults:** This is a sacrilegious cult where traditional sacrifices are done, human sacrifices, murders, using of babies for rituals are taking place and others.

## **CONCLUSION**

The secret cult in the institutions or campus is a social evil plaguing our institutions which must be fought to standstill by Government and other well-meaning Nigerians. It is obvious, that our institutions is nothing to right home about regarding security and we cannot fold our arms and watch our youth lavish. Government should understand that there is lacuna in our institutions and the youths can no longer exercise their learning fundamental freedom because of cultism and fear of being a victim. They do not enjoy their evening or night studies because of cult activities that has beclouded the institution. Based on these aforementioned reasons, we solicit for Government intervention to stamp out cultism in our institutions and to return school to its normal glory.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Parents should assist us monitor their children and advise them to shun cultism.
2. Religious leaders should pray without season by channeling this notable scourge to God for amelioration.
3. Government should use powers within the ambit of the law to deal decisively with any cultism.
4. School heads should preach against cultism through seminar orientation to the fresh and old students.

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